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BULGARIAN HORRORS

AND THE

QUESTION OF THE EAST.

BY THE

RIGHT HON. W. E. GLADSTONE, M.P.

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Dedicated

TO

VISCOUNT STRATFORD DE REDCLIFFE,

WITH THE ADMIRATION WHICH ALL

ACCORD TO HIM,

AND THE ESTEEM WHICH HAS GROWN WITH A

FRIENDSHIP OF MORE THAN FORTY YEARS.

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BULGARIAN HORRORS

AND THE

QUESTION OF THE EAST.

IN the difficult question of the East, entangled by so many cross-purposes and interests, the people of this country have shown a just, but a very remarkable, disposition to repose confidence in the Government of the day : and the Government of the day has availed itself to the uttermost of that disposition. For months the nation was content, though measures and communications known to be of the highest interest were in progress, to remain without official information, and to subsist upon the fragmentary and uncertain notices which alone would transpire through the press. It had to dispense not only with official information, but with discussion in the House of Commons. Only on the thirty-first of July did the House of Commons receive, from the bounty of the Government, after interminable delays and in the dregs of the Session, a single night in which to review the transactions of the Administration, together

with those of other Powers, during a twelvemonth, and to ascertain the prospects and policy of the coming recess. The lateness of the period fixed for the debate went far to insure its inefficiency. But this was not enough; and further precautions were adopted. It was announced that, if the debate overflowed this narrow limit, it could only be finished in fragments; the ordinary business of the Government must proceed in preference to it, but it could doubtless be renewed on some day of yet thinner benches, deeper exhaustion, and greater nearness to the Twelfth of August, the principal and inviolate festival of the sportsman's calendar.

So much for discussion. Next as to information. For not weeks only but months together, appeal after appeal was made to the Government to supply Parliament with full and authentic information, in lieu of the scanty and uncertain notices which alone could be obtained from unofficial sources. Appeal after appeal was met with dilatory pleas. In these pleas, taken singly, there may often be much reason; but, in the aggregate, they were pushed to excess. Some measure was in progress, and could not be explained till it was completed; or was completed, and therefore a thing of the past, which had disappeared from the range of discussion; or was in contemplation, and the public interest would suffer by disclosure. During this time, instead of preparing the papers and documents, to be ready for instant presentation, when presenta-

tion might be allowable, they were left unprepared, so that after every reason and every pretext for withholding them had been exhausted, precious weeks were lost afresh in the necessary labours for, and of, the press.

And the ending of this extraordinary confidence on the one side, and of these free drafts upon it from the other, what has it been? That we have had by degrees, from private and voluntary exertion, the knowledge which it was the bounden duty of the Administration to supply: and that, by the light which this knowledge casts upon past events we learn with astonishment and horror that, so far as appears, we have been involved, in some amount, at least, of moral complicity with the basest and blackest outrages upon record within the present century, if not within the memory of man.

The effect of the course which was taken by the Government was by no means confined within the walls of Parliament. For securing the escape of a great question from public vigilance there is no expedient comparable to adjourning Parliamentary discussion of it until the dying hours of a Session. For thus it is brought before the public mind at a time when the nation is in holiday, when society as well as Parliament is prorogued, when the natural leaders of every country or municipal community are dispersed. It is the great vacation of the year, when no one expects, and few will consent, to be called to serious business. All, who are acquainted with the inner

working of our Parliamentary as well as our social system, know the weight as well as the truth of what I now say.

The state of the case, then, is this. The House of Commons has in the main been ousted from that legitimate share of influence which I may call its jurisdiction in the case. A subject of paramount weight goes before the people at the time when the classes having leisure, and usually contributing most to form and guide public opinion, are scattered, as disjointed units, over the face of this and of other countries. In default of Parliamentary action, and a public concentrated as usual, we must proceed as we can, with impaired means of appeal. But honour, duty, compassion, and I must add shame, are sentiments never in a state of *coma*. The working men of the country, whose condition is less affected than that of others by the season, have to their honour led the way, and shown that the great heart of Britain has not ceased to beat. And the large towns and cities, now following in troops, are echoing back, each from its own place, the mingled notes of horror, pain, and indignation.

Let them understand that the importance of their meetings, on this occasion at least, cannot be over-rated. As Inkerman was the soldiers' battle, so this is the nation's crisis. The question is not only whether unexampled wrongs shall receive effectual and righteous condemnation, but whether the only effective security shall be taken against its repetition. In

order to take this security, the nation will have to speak through its Government: but we now see clearly that it must first teach its Government, almost as it would teach a lisping child, what to say. *Then* will be taken out of the way of an united Europe the sole efficient obstacle to the punishment of a gigantic wrong.

I have thus far endeavoured to describe how it has come about that the nation, deprived of its most rightful and most constitutional aids, has been called upon at the season when the task would under ordinary circumstances be impossible, to choose between leaving its most sacred duties unperformed, and taking the performance of them primarily into its own hands.

Had the call upon the country been only that of Servia, Bosnia, and the Herzegovina, it would have been a grave one. But it is now graver far. By a slow and difficult process, the details of which I shall presently consider, and through the aid partly of newspaper correspondence, and partly of the authorised agent of a foreign State, but not through our own Parliament, or Administration, or establishments abroad, we now know in detail that there have been perpetrated, under the immediate authority of a Government to which all the time we have been giving the strongest moral, and for part of the time even material support, crimes and outrages, so vast in scale as to exceed all modern example, and so unutterably vile as well as fierce in character, that it

passes the power of heart to conceive, and of tongue and pen adequately to describe them. These are the Bulgarian horrors; and the question is, What can and should be done, either to punish, or to brand, or to prevent?

The details of these abominations may be read in published Reports, now known to be accurate in the main. They are hardly fit for reproduction. The authors of the crimes are the agents, the trusted, and in some instances, the since-promoted servants,* of the Turkish Government. The moral and material support, which during the year has been afforded to the Turkish Government, has been given by the Government of England on behalf of the people of England. In order to a full comprehension of the practical question at issue, it will be necessary to describe the true character and position of the Turkish Power, and the policy, as I think it the questionable and erroneous policy, of the British Administration.

Let me endeavour very briefly to sketch, in the rudest outline, what the Turkish race was and what it is. It is not a question of Mahometanism simply, but of Mahometanism compounded with the peculiar character of a race. They are not the mild Mahometans of India, nor the chivalrous Saladins of Syria, nor the cultured Moors of Spain. They were,

* Of these there are named Ahmed Aga and Tussum Bey (Mr. Schuyler); also Chevket Pacha (Consul Reade). Papers 5, p. 18.

upon the whole, from the black day when they first entered Europe, the one great anti-human specimen of humanity. Wherever they went, a broad line of blood marked the track behind them; and, as far as their dominion reached, civilisation disappeared from view. They represented everywhere government by force, as opposed to government by law. For the guide of this life they had a relentless fatalism: for its reward hereafter, a sensual paradise.

They were indeed a tremendous incarnation of military power. This advancing curse menaced the whole of Europe. It was only stayed, and that not in one generation, but in many, by the heroism of the European population of those very countries, part of which form at this moment the scene of war, and the anxious subject of diplomatic action. In the olden time, all Western Christendom sympathised with the resistance to the common enemy; and even during the hot and fierce struggles of the Reformation, there were prayers, if I mistake not, offered up in the English churches for the success of the Emperor, the head of the Roman Catholic power and influence, in his struggles with the Turk.

But although the Turk represented force as opposed to law, yet not even a government of force can be maintained without the aid of an intellectual element, such as he did not possess. Hence there grew up, what has been rare in the history of the world, a kind of tolerance in the midst of cruelty, tyranny, and rapine. Much of Christian life was contemp-

tuously let alone ; much of the subordinate functions of government was allowed to devolve upon the bishops ; and a race of Greeks was attracted to Constantinople, which has all along made up, in some degree, the deficiencies of Turkish Islam in the element of mind, and which at this moment provides the Porte with its long known, and, I must add, highly esteemed Ambassador in London. Then there have been from time to time, but rarely, statesmen whom we have been too ready to mistake for specimens of what Turkey might become, whereas they were in truth more like *lusus naturæ*, on the favourable side ; monsters, so to speak, of virtue or intelligence ; and there were (and are) also, scattered through the community, men who were not indeed real citizens, but yet who have exhibited the true civic virtues, and who would have been citizens had there been a true polity around them. Besides all this, the conduct of the race has gradually been brought more under the eye of an Europe, which it has lost its power to resist or to defy ; and its central government, in conforming perforce to many of the forms and traditions of civilisation, has occasionally caught something of their spirit.

This, I think, is not an untrue description of the past, or even of the present. The decay of martial energy, in a Power which was for centuries the terror of the world, is wonderful. Of the two hundred millions sterling which in twenty years it borrowed from the credulity of European Exchanges,

a large part has been spent upon its military and naval establishments. The result is before us. It is at war with Servia, which has a population, I think, under a million and a half, and an army which is variously stated at from five to eight thousand; the rest of those bearing arms are a hitherto half-drilled militia. It is also at war with the few scores of thousands of that very martial people, who inhabit the mountain tract of Montenegro. Upon these handfuls of our race, an empire of more than thirty millions discharges all its might: for this purpose it applies all its own resources, and the whole of the property of its creditors; and, after two months of desperate activity, it greatly plumes itself upon having incompletely succeeded against Servia, and less doubtfully failed against Montenegro. Shades of Bajazets, Amuraths, and Mahmouds!

Twenty years ago, France and England determined to try a great experiment in remodelling the administrative system of Turkey, with the hope of curing its intolerable vices, and of making good its not less intolerable deficiencies. For this purpose, having defended her integrity, they made also her independence secure; and they devised at Constantinople the reforms, which were publicly enacted in an Imperial Firman or Hatti-humayoum. The successes of the Crimean War, purchased (with the aid of Sardinia) by a vast expenditure of French and English life and treasure, gave to Turkey, for the first time

perhaps in her blood-stained history, twenty years of a repose not disturbed either by herself or by any foreign Power. The Cretan insurrection imparted a shock to confidence ; but it was composed, and Turkey again was trusted. The insurrections of 1875, much more thoroughly examined, have disclosed the total failure of the Porte to fulfil the engagements, which she had contracted under circumstances peculiarly binding on interest, on honour, and on gratitude. Even these miserable insurrections, she had not the ability to put down. In the midway of the current events, a lurid glare is thrown over the whole case by the Bulgarian horrors. The knowledge of these events is, whether by indifference or bungling, kept back from us, but only for a time. The proofs are now sufficiently before us. And the case is this. Turkey, which stood only upon force, has in the main lost that force. It is a Prussian, we learn, who has planned her campaign. Power is gone, and the virtues, such as they are, of power ; nothing but its passions and its pride remain.

It is time, then, to clear an account which we have long, perhaps too long, left unsettled, and almost unexamined.

In the discussion of this great and sad subject, the attitude and the proceedings of the British Government cannot possibly be left out of view. Indeed, the topic is, from the nature of the case, so prominent, and from the acts done, so peculiar, that I could

hardly be excused from stating in express and decided terms what appear to me its grave errors; were it only that I may not seem, by an apparent reserve, also to insinuate against them a purposed complicity in crime, which it would be not only rash, but even wicked, to impute. The consequences of their acts have been, in my view, deplorable. But as respects the acts themselves, and the motives they appear to indicate, the faults I find are these. They have not understood the rights and duties, in regard to the subjects, and particularly the Christian subjects, of Turkey, which inseparably attach to this country in consequence of the Crimean War, and of the Treaty of Paris in 1856. They have been remiss when they ought to have been active; namely, in efforts to compose the Eastern revolts, by making provision against the terrible misgovernment which provoked them. They have been active, where they ought to have been circumspect and guarded. It is a grave charge, which cannot be withheld, that they have given to a maritime measure of humane precaution the character of a military demonstration in support of the Turkish Government. They have seemed to be moved too little by an intelligent appreciation of prior obligations, and of the broad and deep interests of humanity, and too much by a disposition to keep out of sight what was disagreeable and might be inconvenient, and to consult and flatter the public opinion of the day in its ordinary,

that is to say, its narrow, selfish, epicurean humour. I admit that, until a recent date, an opinion widely prevailed, and perhaps was not confined to any particular party, that this game had been played with success and even brilliancy, and that, amidst whatever mishaps and miscarriages elsewhere, the Government stood high upon its foreign, that is, its Eastern policy, in the approval of the country.

Since that time, but two or three weeks have elapsed. But a curtain opaque and dense, which at the Prorogation had been lifted but a few inches from the ground, has since then—from day to day—been slowly rising. And what a scene it has disclosed! and where! Nearly four long months have passed, during which there has been maintained in this country, almost until now, an unnatural and deadly calm. We now look backwards over this tract of lethargy as over days of ease purchased by dishonour, the prolonged fascination of an evil dream. A voice, an almost solitary voice, sounded indeed over sea and land, in the month of June, to warn us of what was going on. There was no want of ears disposed to listen, when the tale told was of wholesale massacre perpetrated by the authority of a Government to which we had procured, in our living memory, twenty years of grace; and to which, without inquiring how those years had been employed, we had this year defied Europe in affording the strong

support of the British name. Nor was this all; for those wholesale massacres were declared to be complicated and set off with crimes, by the side of which the horror and infamy of massacre itself grew pale. But what then? These allegations came from a nameless, an irresponsible, newspaper correspondent. With the instinct of prudent Englishmen, startled Peers and Members of Parliament put question after question to the Government. The effect, the general sense of the answers was what I may call a moral, though not a verbal, denial. Whatever they were meant to produce, they did produce the result, not of belief qualified by a reserve for occasional error, but of disbelief qualified by a reserve for purely accidental truth. And this was the attitude which, conformably to general and needful rules, we could not do otherwise than assume. For what was the staple of those answers? They consisted of warnings against exaggeration; of general attenuations of the matter, as what must be expected to happen among savage races, with a different idea or code of morals from our own; of cynical remarks, such as that the allegations of lingering inflictions hardly could be true, since the Turkish taste was known to incline towards dispatch; of difficulties in deciding on which side lay the balance of crime and cruelty; of bold assurances that the insurgents were the aggressors, suggesting the reflection that the chief responsibility must rest on him who strikes the first blow; of

acquittals of the Turkish armies and authorities in general, by suggesting that we were really dealing with a momentary outbreak of fanaticism among a handful of irregulars, gone by almost as soon as come; and, above all, at first with calm denials of knowledge. It was these denials of knowledge, which we believed to amount to a negative demonstration.

For we know that we had a well-manned Embassy at Constantinople, and a network of Consulates and Vice-Consulates, really discharging diplomatic duties, all over the provinces of European Turkey. That villages could be burned down by scores, and men, women, and children murdered, or worse than murdered, by thousands, in a Turkish province lying between the capital and the scene of the recent excitements, and that our Embassy and Consulates could know nothing of it? The thing was impossible. It could not be. So silence was obtained, and relief; and the well-oiled machinery of our luxurious, indifferent life worked smoothly on. There was a pressure of inquiry, but the door was each time quickly closed upon the question, as the stone lid used to be shut down, in the *Campo Santo* of Naples, upon the mass of human corpses that lay festering beneath.

But inquiry was to be made. And at this point I think the Government are to be charged with a serious offence. For inquiry, in these times, means the employment of the Telegraph. But I

must here turn aside for a moment, in the endeavour to do an act of justice.

The first alarm respecting the Bulgarian outrages was, I believe, that sounded in the 'Daily News,' on the 23rd of June. I am sensible of the many services constantly rendered by free journalism to humanity, to freedom, and to justice. I do not undervalue the performances, on this occasion, of the 'Times,' the *Doyen* of the press in this country, and perhaps in the world, or of the 'Daily Telegraph;' and our other great organs. But of all these services, so far as my knowledge goes, that which has been rendered by the 'Daily News,' through its foreign correspondence on this occasion, has been the most weighty, I may say, the most splendid.* We are now informed (Parl. Papers No. 5, p. 6) that the accounts received by the German Government confirm its report. It is even possible that, but for the courage, determination, and ability of this single organ, we might, even at this moment, have remained in darkness, and Bulgarian wretchedness might have been without its best and brightest hope.

On the 26th of June, the Duke of Argyll, in the House of Lords, and Mr. Forster in the House of Commons, made anxious inquiries respecting the statements contained in a communication from the

* I believe it is understood that the gentleman who has fought this battle—for a battle it has been—with such courage, intelligence, and conscientious care, is Mr. Pears, of Constantinople, correspondent of the 'Daily News,' for Bulgaria.

correspondent of the 'Daily News,' which had been published in the paper of the 23rd, following a more general statement on the 10th. In order not to load these pages too heavily, as well as on other grounds, I shall cite or describe, in referring to these proceedings, chiefly the replies of the Head of the Government.

In answer, then, to Mr. Forster, Mr. Disraeli said, "We have no information in our possession which justifies the statements, to which the Right Hon. gentleman refers." The disturbances appeared to have been begun "by strangers, burning the villages without reference to religion or race." A war was carried on between "Bashi-Bazouks and Circassians," on one side, and "the invaders" on the other, and no doubt, "with great atrocity," much to be deplored. Since that time, measures had been adopted to stop these "Bashi-Bazouks and Circassians." "I will merely repeat," he concluded, "that the information *which we have at various times received* does not justify the statements made in the journal which he has named."*

I must add Lord Derby's concluding sentence:—

"As the noble Duke has thought the evidence in this matter sufficient to justify him in bringing the subject before the House, I will make further inquiry, and communicate the result to your Lordships."

There were reasons enough why others besides the

* 'Times,' June 27.

Duke of Argyll, should have thought the evidence sufficient to require some notice. For, in the statement of the 'Daily News,' there were contained these ominous words : *—

June 16.—“ Even now it is openly asserted by the Turks, that England has determined to help the Government to put down the various insurrections. England, says a Turkish journal, will defend us against Russia, while we look after our rebels.”

So much for the first attempt to throw light into these dark places.

On the 8th of July, the 'Daily News' inserted a second communication from its correspondent at Constantinople, confirming and extending the purport of the first. On the 10th, Mr. Forster renewed his inquiries. Mr. Disraeli stated, that there had not yet been time to receive any reply to the inquiries made. And this, though the Telegraph passes in a few hours, and the statement in question had appeared on the 23rd of June. Even now the only efficient instrument was not put in action, nor did this happen until July 14th;† and within five days after that date, a British agent was on his way to the bloody scene. It is absolutely necessary that Her Majesty's Government should explain why the Telegraph had

* Parl. Papers, Turkey, 1876. No. 3, p. 336.

† Papers No. 5, p. 1.

not at once been employed on the 26th or 27th of June.

But other parts of the First Minister's reply require notice. He hoped, "for the sake of human nature itself," that the statements were scarcely warranted. There had without doubt been atrocities in Bulgaria. This was a war "not carried on by regular troops, in this case not even by irregular troops, but by a sort of *posse comitatûs* of an armed population." "I doubt whether torture" . . . "has been practised on a great scale among an historical people, who seldom have, I believe, resorted to torture, but generally terminate their connection with culprits in a more expeditious manner (laughter)." Every effort had been made, and would continue to be made, "to soften and mitigate as much as possible the terrible scenes that are now inevitably occurring." Atrocities, he believed, were "inevitable, when wars are carried on in certain countries, and between certain races."*

Down to this date what we have to observe is—

First. The deplorable inefficiency of the arrangements of the Government for receiving information.

Secondly. The yet more deplorable tardiness of the means, adopted under Parliamentary pressure, for enlarging their store of knowledge.

* 'Times,' July 15.

Thirdly. The effect of the answers of the Prime Minister, from which it could not but be collected, by Parliament and the public,

- a. That the responsibility lay in the first instance with certain "invaders of Bulgaria."
- b. That the deplorable atrocities, which had occurred, were fairly divided, and were such as were incidental to wars "between certain *races*." What could and did this mean, but between Circassians on the one side, and Bulgarians on the other? It now appears that the Circassians had but a very small share in the matter.
- c. While the Bulgarians were thus loaded with an even share of responsibility for the "atrocities," we were given to understand that the Turkish Government, and its authorized agents, appeared to be no parties to them.
- d. That the "scenes," that is, as is now demonstrated, the wholesale murders, rapes, tortures, burnings, and the whole devilish enginery of crime, "were to be mitigated and softened as much as possible."

I am concerned to subjoin the following declarations stated to have been made by Lord Derby to a Deputation on the 14th of July.

“He did not in the least doubt that there had been many acts of cruelty, and of wanton cruelty, committed *by the irregular troops of both sides* . . . It was not a case of lambs and wolves, but of *some savage races*, fighting in a peculiarly savage manner.”* \

This declaration is a gross wrong inadvertently done to the people of Bulgaria; and it ought to be withdrawn.

Again, on the 17th of July, Mr. Baxter revived the interrogatories. By this time, as we have seen, the Government had used the Telegraph, and they had ordered *on the 15th* a real and special inquiry from Constantinople. The subject could no longer be entirely trifled with. The Prime Minister made a lengthened statement, which occupies two columns of the ‘Times.’ The main portion of it was extracted from official reports, which are now before the world; and which did not in the smallest degree sustain either the doctrine of a fair division of the blame of inevitable atrocities, or an acquittal of the Turkish Government. But the Minister added matter of his own. What wonder was it, as to the Circassians, that “when their villages were burned and their farms ravaged,” “they should take matters into their own hands, and endeavour to defend themselves?” “Scenes had occurred towards the end of May, and so on,”

* ‘Times,’ July 1.

“from which with our feelings”—what fine feelings we have!—“we naturally recoil.” “We were constantly communicating,” “I will not say remonstrating, with the Turkish Government,” for “*the Turkish Government was most anxious to be guided by the advice of the British Ambassador.*” And still the guilt was to stand as a fairly divided guilt.

“There is no doubt that acts on both sides, as necessarily would be the case under such circumstances, *were equally terrible and atrocious.*”*

Observe: though information on particulars was still wanting, one thing was placed beyond doubt, the *equality* of guilt and infamy. And I am still, writing on the 6th of September, dependent mainly on a foreign source for any official voucher to bring this testimony to the test. Mr. Schuyler, on the 22nd of August, reports to the American Government that the outrages of the Turks were fully established. He proceeds as follows, with more to the same effect: “An attempt, however, has been made—and not by Turks alone—to defend and to palliate them, on the ground of the previous atrocities which, it is alleged, were committed by the Bulgarians. I have carefully investigated this point; and am unable to find that the Bulgarians committed any outrages or atrocities, or any acts which deserve that name. *I have vainly tried to obtain from the Turkish officials a list of such*

* ‘Times,’ July 16.

outrages. . . . No Turkish women or children were killed in cold blood. No Mussulmen women were violated. No Mussulmans were tortured. No purely Turkish village was attacked or burned. No Mussulman house was pillaged. No mosque was desecrated or destroyed."

The declarations, which had proceeded from the highest authority in the highest Parliamentary Assembly of the world, produced, at the time, an immense effect. They did not remove suspicion, but they effectually baffled and checkmated it, so far as the prevailing sentiment in this country was concerned. So that when, on the 7th of August, the question of cruelties in Bulgaria was yet again raised, a member, and not a young member, "deprecated," says Mr. Ross, in his valuable Record, "party speeches against the Turkish Government."

But it was not only within these shores that the language of the Government was heard. It rang through an astonished Europe. It reached, and it was questioned in, Constantinople. The *Courrier d'Orient* was so bold as to criticise a declaration imputed to the Minister that the alleged burning of the forty girls had been found false upon inquiry instituted. For this offence, in a notice issued by the Director of the Press for Turkey, which I subjoin in the French original, and which referred to the impartiality of the heads of the British Government, and to "*the pretended excesses in Bulgaria*"—note

this was on the 9th of August—the journal was suppressed.*

Five attempts had thus been made to penetrate what was still a mystery in the official mind. A sixth and a seventh still followed, on the 9th and the 11th of August. With true British determination, Mr. Ashley opened the question for discussion on the 11th. He was ably supported; and this time, it is pleasant to say, from both sides of the House there

*“SUBLIME PORTE.

“MINISTÈRE DES AFFAIRES ÉTRANGÈRES.

“Le Bureau de la Presse,

“Vu le numéro du journal le *Courrier d'Orient* du 8 août :

“Attendu que cette feuille en mentionnant, dans sa revue politique, les déclarations du premier ministre du gouvernement anglais devant le Parlement britannique, (1) touchant les prétendus excès commis en Bulgarie, se fait une sorte de mérite d'avoir été la première à publier la relation de ces crimes supposés ;

“Attendu que la dite feuille se prévaut du silence que la Direction de la presse a gardé à son égard, soit par inadvertence, soit par excès d'indulgence, pour en induire que ses assertions étaient fondées, et que les déclarations du Chef du Cabinet Britannique sont entachées de partialité ;

“Après avoir pris les ordres de S. Exc. le ministre,

“Arrête :

“Le journal le *Courrier d'Orient* est et demeure supprimé à partir du jour de la notification du présent arrêté.

“Constantinople, 9 août, 1876.

“Le Directeur de la Presse,

“BLACQUE.”

might be heard the language of humanity, of justice, and of wisdom. It was in the dying throes of the Session. Mr. Ashley's action was especially judicious, because he had a right, which none could contest, to appear as a representative of Lord Palmerston. The powerful speech of Sir W. Harcourt was denounced by the Prime Minister in terms of great vivacity. He was assured that "from the very commencement of the transactions" the Government "were constantly receiving" from the Ambassador information on "what was occurring in Bulgaria." The Minister selected particular statements for contradiction of details, on which I am not yet sufficiently informed to pronounce; but what I complain of is that he still, on the 12th of August, effectually disguised the main issue, which lay in the question whether the Turkish Government, which was receiving from us both moral and virtually material support, had or had not by its agents and by its approval and reward of its agents been deeply guilty of excesses, than which none more abominable have disgraced the history of the world. For the Government, it was still merely a question of "civil war," "carried on under conditions of brutality unfortunately not unprecedented in that country," * namely Bulgaria. A repetition of language, which is either that of ignorance, or of brutal calumny upon a people

* 'Times,' Aug. 12.

whom Turkish authorities have themselves just described as industrious, primitive, and docile.*

Such then are the steps taken by Her Majesty's Government during the Session with respect to the Bulgarian atrocities, for enlightening the country as some may think, or for keeping it in the dark, as may occur to other and less charitable minds.

It is not the smallest part of the service rendered by the 'Daily News,' that it was probably the means of bringing into the field an American Commission of Inquiry. I have the fullest confidence in the honour and in the intelligence of Mr. Baring, who has been inquiring on behalf of England; because he was chosen for the purpose by Sir H. Elliot, and because I believe he personally well deserves it. But he was not sent to examine the matter until the 19th of July, three months after the rising, and nearly one month after the first inquiries in Parliament. He had been but two days at Philippopolis, when he sent home, with all the dispatch he could use, some few rudiments of a future report. Among them was his estimate of the murders, necessarily far from final, at the figure of twelve thousand.† The leaf, which contains his paper, is almost the only leaf in (the latest) Parliamentary Papers (Turkey, No. 5), "presented to both Houses of Parliament by

* In the Report from Philippopolis, to which I shall presently revert.

† Mr. Schuyler's estimate is 15,000 at "the lowest."

Her Majesty's command," which in reference to the main issue is worth more than a straw.* I have read that compilation with pain and humiliation, called forth by finding that this was all which, in the month of August, the whole power and promises of the Government could contribute towards the elucidation of horrible transactions, the greatest and worst of which occurred if not in April, yet early in May. Mr. Baring's Report exists no doubt for us: but only in hope. When it comes, we shall receive it with confidence, and with profit, although we may be very sure that the Ottoman Government will have done everything in its power to blind, and baffle, and mislead him. But is it equally sure, that it will be so received all over Europe? Or, after what has passed, can we reasonably expect that it should? Possibly, when it appears, it may dispute, and even correct, some of the statements now before us. It may establish a few deductions from the awful total. It is one of the painful incidents of a case like this, that injustice may be done unwittingly to this or that man, in this or that circumstance, even by the most necessary and best-considered efforts to attain the ends of justice. These questions do not admit of absolute, but only of reasonable certainty. What seems now to be certain in this sense (besides the miserable daily misgovernment, which, however,

* Paper No. 5, p. 5.

dwindles by the side of the Bulgarian horrors) are the wholesale massacres,

“ Murder, most foul as in the best it is,
But this most foul, strange, and unnatural,”*

the elaborate and refined cruelty—the only refinement of which Turkey boasts!—the utter disregard of sex and age—the abominable and bestial lust—and the utter and violent lawlessness which still stalks over the land. For my own part I have, in the House of Commons and elsewhere, whatever my inward impressions might be, declined to speak strongly on these atrocities, until there was both clear and responsible evidence before me. For want of this evidence, I did not join in the gallant effort of Mr. Ashley, at the last gasp of the Session. But the report of Mr. Schuyler, together with the report from Berlin, and the Prologue, so to call it, of Mr. Baring, in my opinion turns the scale, and makes the responsibility of silence, at least for one who was among the authors of the Crimean War, too great to be borne.

I express then my gratitude to Mr. Schuyler, and to the Government which sent him into the field. It is too late, as I have said, to hope to convince Europe by any report of ours. We may ourselves be sceptical as to Russian reports. Every European State is more or less open to the imputation of bias. But America has neither alliances with Turkey, nor

* *Hamlet*, i. 5.

grudges against her, nor purposes to gain by her destruction. She enters into this matter simply on the ground of its broad human character and moment; she has no "American interests" to tempt her from her integrity, and to vitiate her aims.

The ground, then, seemed to be sufficiently laid in point of evidence to call for action, when, as I am writing, a new piece of testimony reaches me* through the courtesy of M. Musurus. It is a French Translation of a Report on the Bulgarian events, dated July 22, presented to the Ottoman Government by a commission of Mussulman and Christian notables, and approved by the Administrative Council of Philippopoli. Since it is put forward as an official statement of the Turkish case (following the Report of Edib Effendi on the 'Vilayet' of Adrianople), I hope it will, for the sake of justice, be extensively read. Others may think differently of it from myself. I cannot but at once denounce it as a disgraceful document; confirmatory, in its moral effect, even of the worst parts of the charges. After all that has happened, it would have been too much to expect a word of penitence or shame; but it does not contain a word of sorrow or compassion. The reporting Commission, which was armed with the powers of the State, wonders that the Bulgarians should have risen against their "paternal" † government; describes them as a

* September 2nd.

† P. 17.

peaceable, primitive, and docile people;* and then charges them largely with murdering, burning, impaling, roasting, men, women, and children indiscriminately, with the extremest refinements of cruelty.† One of the most definite statements it contains is this; it cites,‡ as a proof of the “barbarous devastations” committed by the insurgents, the destruction of—a great bridge over the Railway. It is full of laudations of the humanity and consideration of the troops, the commanders, and the Mussulman population.§ It denounces those who have opened the eyes of Europe to this Turkish *Inferno*, as the “fantastic story-makers of dismal episodes.” || It takes no notice of the attested fact, that the bodies of slain women and children lie in multitudes, unburied and exposed; except indeed by alleging that at Prestenitza some of the insurgents slew their own women and children. Dated three months after the first outbreak, and full of horrible accusation, it contains hardly in a single instance such verifying particulars as would allow of the detection of falsehood by inquiry into the statement. And it winds up with a particular account of a Pan-slavic pamphlet, printed at Moscow in 1867!

Then, by way of Appendix, comes one original document in proof, which contains, in the form of a sort of Catechism, the plans and instructions of the

* Pp. 8, 17. † Pp. 9, 10.

‡ P. 9.

§ E.g. p. 15.

|| P. 15.

great Bulgarian conspiracy. They are signed by twelve names of individuals, without profession or employment specified; who may, for all we know, have been the most insignificant men in the country. The Report, however, states that the Insurgents had instructions to massacre the Mussulman population.* The sole document appended in proof of its charges contains, together with very severe provisions against such as should resist, the following passage :†

“ *Question 13.* What course is to be pursued with regard to those Turks who submit?

“ *Answer.* They should be put in charge of our agents, who will convey them to the headquarters of the insurrection. From thence, they will be sent, with their families and with the aged, to the places occupied for refuge by our own families. *They are to live there as our brethren. It is part of our duty to take care for their happiness, their life, and their religion: on the same ground as for the life and the honour of our own people.*”

The perusal of this statement of the Turkish case removes from my mind any remaining scruple. The facts are, in the gross, sufficiently established. The next, and for us the gravest part of the inquiry is, What have we had to do with them?

* P. 5.

† P. 22.

THE BRITISH FLEET AT BESIKA BAY.

It was on the 20th of April that the insurrection broke out in Bulgaria. In the beginning of May, the horrors of the repression had reached their climax. We had then no other concern in them than this very indirect one, that we were supporting rather too blindly and unwarily in the councils of Europe the supposed interest of the Power, which thus disgraced itself.

On the 9th of May, Sir Henry Elliot seems to have had no consular information about Bulgaria, except a statement (strange enough) from Adrianople, dated the 6th,* that as far as appeared the Turks were not committing any acts of violence against peaceful Christians. But, observing a great Mahomedan excitement, and an extensive purchase of arms in Constantinople, he wisely telegraphed to the British Admiral in the Mediterranean, expressing a desire that he would bring his squadron to Besika Bay. The purpose was, for the protection of British subjects, and of the Christians in general.† This judicious act, done by the Ambassador in conjunction with the Ambassadors of other Powers, who seem to have taken similar steps, was communicated by him to Lord Derby on the 9th of May by letter and by telegraph.‡

On the fifth, had occurred the murder of the French

* Parl. Papers, Turkey, No. 3, 1876, p. 145.

† Ibid. p. 146. ‡ Ibid. p. 129.

and German Consuls at Salonica. On the 15th, the Admiralty acquainted the Foreign Office that the squadron was ordered to Besika Bay, the 'Swiftsure' sent to Salonica, and (as Sir H. Elliot had also asked) the 'Bittern' to Constantinople.‡ These measures, were substantially wise, and purely pacific. They had, if understood rightly, no political aspect; or if any, one rather anti-Turkish than Turkish.

But there were reasons, and strong reasons, why the public should not have been left to grope out for itself the meaning of a step so serious, as the movement of a naval squadron towards a country disturbed both by revolt, and by an outbreak of murderous fanaticism.

In the year 1853, when the negotiations with Russia had assumed a gloomy and almost a hopeless aspect, the English and French fleets were sent Eastwards: not as a measure of war, but as a measure of preparation for war, and proximate to war. The proceeding marked a transition of discussion into that angry stage, which immediately precedes a blow; and the place, to which the fleets were then sent, was Besika Bay. In the absence of information, how could the British nation avoid supposing that the same act, as that done in 1853, bore also the same meaning?

It is evident that the Foreign Minister was sagaciously alive to this danger. On the 10th of May, he asked Sir H. Elliot for a particular statement of

‡ Parl. Papers, Turkey, No. 3, 1876, p. 147.

the reasons, which had led him to desire the presence of the squadron "at Besika Bay." * He indicated to the Admiralty Smyrna as a preferable destination. † And this he actually ordered; but he yielded, and I believe he was quite right in yielding, to the renewed and just instances of the Ambassador.

The Government, then, were aware of the purely pacific character of this measure, and also that it was one liable to be dangerously misconstrued.

There was another reason for securing it from misinterpretation. At this very time, the Berlin Memorandum was prepared. It was announced by Lord Odo Russell to Lord Derby on May the 13th; and, on May 15th, he sent to Lord Odo an elaborate pleading, rather than argument, against it. ‡ It became known to the public that we were in diplomatic discord with Europe, and particularly with Russia. Now the transition from discussion pure and simple to discussion backed by display of force is a transition of vast and vital importance. The dispatch of the fleet to Besika Bay, could not but be interpreted, in the absence of explanation, as marking that perilous transition. And yet explanation was resolutely withheld.

The expectation of a rupture pervaded the public mind. The Russian Funds fell very heavily, under a war panic; partisans exulted in a diplomatic victory,

* Parl. Papers, Turkey, No. 3, 1876, p. 130.

† Ibid. p. 131. ‡ Ibid. pp. 137, 147.

and in the increase of what is called our *prestige*, the bane, in my opinion, of all upright politics. The Turk was encouraged in the humour of resistance. And this, as we now know, while his hands were so reddened with Bulgarian blood. Foreign capitals were amazed at the martial excitement in London. But the Government never spoke a word.

Silence in these circumstances was bad enough. But they were worse than silent. They caused the clang of preparation to be heard in the arsenals. They progressively increased the squadron to a fleet; and, moreover, I believe it is true that they mainly increased it, not by sending the class of ships which had large crews, available for landing considerable numbers of men, for the purpose of defending such persons as might be assailed; but those vast ironclads, with crews relatively small, which principally, and proudly, display the belligerent power of England. If this be not an accurate statement, let it be contradicted.*

And this ostentatious protection to Turkey, this wanton disturbance of Europe, was continued by our Ministry, with what I must call a strange perversity, for weeks and weeks. It was so continued, when a word of explanation as to the true cause of the dispatch of the fleet would have stopped all mischief,

* July 27. Mr. Disraeli stated that the Fleet then in Turkish waters consisted of twenty vessels: eleven ironclads, and nine unarmoured ships of war.

dissipated all alarm. I admit, that it would have also dissipated at the same time a little valueless popularity, too dearly bought.

All this time, so far as we can learn, the sequels in detail to the wholesale massacres in Bulgaria were proceeding. In the latter part of it, the fencing answers of the Ministry about Turkish misdeeds had begun. And during the latter part of it also, the requests of members of Parliament for authentic information about the East, were repeatedly refused; on the ground that the production of it would be injurious to the public service! Nay more, compliments were accepted, with the silence which not only might mean consent, but could mean nothing else, from more than one Peer in the House of Lords, and from two members of Parliament in the House of Commons, on the vigorous policy which our Government was pursuing in the East.

Such is the spectacle which, during the present spring and summer, we have exhibited to Europe.

At last came a day of disclosure. Lord Derby received at the Foreign Office, on the 14th of July, a numerous and weighty deputation. They went there in the interests of peace, to which I cordially wish well, and of non-interference—a word which, in my opinion, must be construed, especially for the East of Europe, with a just regard to our honourable engagements, and to the obligations they entail. These gentlemen did not at all approve of the demon-

stration in Besika Bay. Lord Derby justified it, by admitting that portion of Parliament and the public, who formed the Deputation, for the first time, to the knowledge of the truth. He stated that it was sent, at the request of Sir H. Elliot, for the defence of the Christians against a possible outbreak of Mahometan fanaticism. The country, or great part of it, felt relieved and grateful. But the mischief that had been done by the moral support, and I say boldly by the material support, afforded to Turkey during all those blood-stained weeks (the Servian war, too, was now raging) was not, and could not be, remedied. To repair, in some degree, the effects of that mischief is now a prime part of the peculiar obligation imposed upon the people of this country. For, in fact, whatever our intentions may have been, it is our doing.

And how are we, in this particular, to set about the work of reparation? Any reader who has accompanied me thus far will probably expect that I, at least, shall answer the question by recommending the withdrawal of the Fleet from Besika Bay. But such, I must at once say, is not my view of duty or of policy. I would neither recall the fleet, nor reduce it by one ship or man.

We have been authoritatively warned, that the condition of the Christians in Turkey is now eminently critical. The issue of the war is still hanging in the balances, which have wavered from day to day. The lapse of time, and possibly aid from without, may

still do much to retrieve the vast inequality of chance, with which the brave but raw levies of Servia carry on the contest. We are told, with too much appearance of credibility, that if the fortune of war should veer adversely to Turkey, the consequence might be, in various provinces, a new and wide outbreak of fanaticism, and a wholesale massacre. My hope, therefore, is twofold. First, that, through the energetic attitude of the people of England, their Government may be led to declare distinctly, that it is for purposes of humanity alone that we have a fleet in Turkish waters. Secondly, that that fleet will be so distributed as to enable its force to be most promptly and efficiently applied, in case of need, on Turkish soil, in concert with the other Powers, for the defence of innocent lives, and to prevent the repetition of those recent scenes, at which hell itself might almost blush.

For it must not be forgotten that the last utterance on this subject was from the Prime Minister, and was to the effect that our fleet was in the East for the support of British interests. I object to this constant system of appeal to our selfish leanings. It sets up false lights; it hides the true; it disturbs the world. Who has lifted a finger against British interests? Who has spoken a word? If the declaration be anything beyond mere idle brag, it means that our fleet is waiting for the dissolution of the Turkish Empire, to have the first and the strongest

hand in the seizure of the spoils. If this be the meaning, it is pure mischief: and if we want to form a just judgment upon it, we have only to put a parallel case. What should we say, if Russia had assembled an army on the Pruth, or Austria on the Danube, and Prince Gortschakoff or Count Andrassy were to announce that it was so gathered, and so posted, for the defence of Russian, or of Austrian interests respectively?

Perhaps, in these unusual circumstances, before describing what it is that we should seek and should desire, it may be well to consider what we should carefully eschew. In the channel, which we have to navigate with or without our Government, there are plenty of false lights set up for us, which lead to certain shipwreck. The matter has become too painfully real for us to be scared at present by the standing hobgoblin of Russia.* Many a time has it done good service on the stage: it is at present out of repair, and unavailable. It is now too late to argue, as was argued sometime back by a very clever and highly enlightened evening Journal, that it might be quite proper that twelve or thirteen millions of Christians in Turkey should remain unhappy, rather than that (such was the alternative hardily pre-

* Yet it appears to be considered good enough for the electors of Bucks (I judge from a reported speech of Mr. Fremantle). They seem to be treated, as Railway Companies are sometimes said to treat obscure branch lines, with their worn-out rolling-stock, not presentable in more fashionable districts.

sented) two hundred millions of men in India should be deprived of the benefits of British rule, and thirty millions more in the United Kingdom made uncomfortable by the apprehension of such a catastrophe. But more plausible delusions are about. What we have to guard against is imposture; that Proteus with a thousand forms. A few months ago, the new Sultan served the turn, and very well. Men affirmed that he must have time. And now another new Sultan is in the offing. I suppose it will be argued that he must have time too. Then there will be perhaps new constitutions; firmans of reforms; proclamations to commanders of Turkish armies, enjoining extra humanity. All these should be quietly set down as simply equal to zero. At this moment we hear of the adoption by the Turks of the last and most enlightened rule of warfare; namely, the Geneva Convention. They might just as well adopt the Vatican Council, or the British Constitution. All these things are not even the oysters before the dinner. Still worse is any plea founded upon any reports made by Turkish authority upon the Bulgarian outrages. This expedient has been long ago tried by sending a Special Commissioner, Edib Effendi, who relates in effect that the outrages were small, and almost all committed by the Christians. Mr. Schuyler, officially, and with an American directness, declares that Edib's report contains statements on a particular point, "*and on every other*, which are utterly unfounded in fact," and that it

practically is "a tissue of falsehoods." Again; one of the latest artifices is to separate the question of Servia from the question of Herzegovina and Bosnia and of Bulgaria. How, asks the 'Pall Mall Gazette,' can Turkey improve their condition while war is going on? *Inter arma silent leges*. Give her peace, that she may set about reforms. If the people of this country are in earnest, they will brush aside all these and all other cobwebs, and will march as if they marched to drum and fife, straight, with one heart and one mind, *ohne Hast und ohne Rast*, towards their aim.

The case of the Servian war is, in outer form, quite distinct from that of the misgovernment in Bosnia and the Herzegovina; and these again, from the Bulgarian outrages. But they are distinct simply as the operations in the Baltic, during the Crimean War, were distinct from the operations in the Black Sea. They had one root; they must surely have one remedy, I mean morally one; and administered by the same handling; for, if one part of the question be placed in relief, and one in shadow, the light will not fall on the dark places, and guilt will gain impunity.

The case against Servia is the best part of the Turkish case. Servia, before she moved, had suffered no direct injury; she had no stateable cause of war. It does not follow that she has committed a wanton aggression, or has, in fact, been guilty of any moral offence. A small and recently ordered State, with a weak government, and a peninsular territory, she is

surrounded on every side by Slave populations; along three-fourths of her frontier, by oppressed and misgoverned Slave populations; along nearly half of it, by a Slave population in actual revolt, whom the Turks had been unable to put down, and whom Europe had ceased, since we succeeded in overthrowing the Berlin Memorandum, actively, though peacefully, to befriend. Could her people do otherwise than sympathise with these populations? Could they, ought they to have recognised in Turkey an indefeasible right of oppression? Further, Montenegro, at a very small distance, was throbbing with emotions similar to her own.

Now there are states of affairs, in which human sympathy refuses to be confined by the rules, necessarily limited and conventional, of international law. If any Englishman doubts that such a case may, though rarely, occur, let him remember the public excitement of this country nine months ago respecting the Slave Circulars of the Government; and ask himself whether we model our proceedings towards slaveholding powers, respecting runaways, on the precise provisions of international law. Now such a case did arrive in the position of Servia and Montenegro two months ago. As long as European action gave a hope of redress for their brethren, peace was maintained. I hold that in going to war, when that hope was finally withdrawn, they might plead human sympathies, broad, deep, and legitimate, and that they committed no moral offence. Their case

is, therefore, one with that of the oppressed provinces in their neighbourhood. It would have been as reasonable for the Thirteen Colonies of America in 1782, to negotiate separately for peace with Great Britain, as it would be for Europe in 1876 to allow that, in a settlement with Turkey, the five cases of Servia, Bosnia, Herzegovina, Montenegro, and Bulgaria, should be dealt with otherwise than as the connected limbs of one and the same transaction.

There is yet one other danger. Do not let us ask for, do not let us accept, Jonahs or scapegoats, either English or Turkish. It is not a change of men that we want, but a change of measures. New Sultans or ministers among Turks, new consuls or new ambassadors in Turkey, would only in my opinion divert us, at this moment, from the great practical aims in view. Besides, if we are to talk of changing men, the first question that will arise will be that of our Ministers at home, to whose policy and bias both Ministers and subordinate officers abroad always feel a loyal desire as far as may be to conform. In my hope and my opinion, when once the old illusions as to British sentiment are dispelled, and Lord Derby is set free, with his clear, impartial mind and unostentatious character, to shape the course of the Administration, he will both faithfully and firmly give effect to the wishes of the country.

We come now to consider the objects we should desire and seek for through our Government.

I trust they will endeavour to make up, by means of the future, for the serious deficiencies of the past. Let them cast aside their narrow and ill-conceived construction of the ideas of a former period. I am well aware of the necessity which, after the severe labours of the Parliamentary Session, obliges the Ministers to disperse for a period of repose. Nevertheless, in so grave a state of facts, I trust we shall soon hear of a meeting of the Cabinet. It is not yet too late, but it is very urgent, to aim at the accomplishment of three great objects, in addition to the termination of the war, yet (in my view) inseparably associated with it.

1. To put a stop to the anarchical misrule (let the phrase be excused), the plundering, the murdering, which, as we now seem to learn upon sufficient evidence, still desolate Bulgaria.
2. To make effectual provision against the recurrence of the outrages recently perpetrated under the sanction of the Ottoman Government, by excluding its administrative action for the future, not only from Bosnia and the Herzegovine, but also, and above all, from Bulgaria; upon which at best there will remain, for years and for generations, the traces of its foul and bloody hand.
3. To redeem by these measures the honour of the British name, which, in the deplorable

events of the year, has been more gravely compromised than I have known it to be at any former period.

I have named, then, three great aims, which ought I think at this crisis to be engraved on the heart, and demanded by the voice, of Britain. I may be asked, either seriously or tauntingly, whether there is not also a fourth to be added, namely, the maintenance of the "territorial integrity of Turkey."

In order to comprehend the force and bearing of this expression, it is necessary to go back for a moment to the Crimean War. The watchword of that War, and of the policy which preceded it, was "The integrity and independence of Turkey." Of these two phrases, integrity and independence, the bearing is perfectly distinct. The first is negative, the second positive. The integrity of Turkey will be maintained by a titular sovereignty, verified as it were through a moderate payment of tribute, in order that Ottoman sovereignty may serve the purpose of shutting out from the present limits of the Turkish Empire any other sovereignty, or any exercise, in whole or in part, of sovereign rights by any other Power, whether it be Russia on the Euxine, or Austria on the Danube, or France or England on the Nile and the Red Sea.

The independence of the Ottoman Empire is a very different affair. It meant at the time of the Crimean

War, and it means now, that, apart from Roumania and Servia, where Europe is already formally concerned, and apart from any arrangements self-made with a vassal State like Egypt, which can hold its own against Constantinople, the Porte is to be left in the actual, daily, and free administration of all the provinces of its vast dominion.

Now, as regards the territorial integrity of Turkey, I for one am still desirous to see it upheld, though I do not say that desire should be treated as of a thing paramount to still higher objects of policy. For of all the objects of policy, in my conviction, humanity, rationally understood, and in due relation to justice, is the first and highest. My belief is that this great aim need not be compromised, and that other important objects would be gained, by maintaining the territorial integrity of Turkey.

There is no reason to suppose that, at the present moment, any of the Continental Powers are governed by selfish or aggressive views in their Eastern Policy. The neighbours of Turkey, namely Austria and Russia, are the two Powers who might, in many conceivable states of European affairs, most naturally be tempted into plans of self-aggrandizement at her expense. But the peculiar conformation of Austria, in respect to territories and to the races which inhabit them, has operated, and will probably at least for the present operate, so as to neutralize this temptation. In the case of Russia, we have been playing, through our

Government, a game of extreme indiscretion. Pretending to thwart, to threaten, and to bully her, we have most mal-adroitly, and most assiduously, played into her hands. Every circumstance of the most obvious prudence dictates to Russia, for the present epoch, what is called the waiting game. Her policy is, to preserve or to restore tranquillity for the present, and to take the chances of the future. We have acted towards her as if she had a present conspiracy in hand, and as if the future did not exist, or never could arrive. But, regard it or not, arrive it will. It offers Russia many chances. One acquisition, if now made by her, would bring those chances very near to certainties. In European Turkey, it cannot too often be repeated, the Christian element is the growing, and the Turkish the decaying one. If a conviction can but be engendered in the Christian, that is for the present purpose mainly the Sclavonic mind of the Turkish provinces, that Russia is their stay, and England their enemy, then indeed the command of Russia over the future of Eastern Europe is assured. And this conviction, through the last six months, we have done everything that was in our power to beget and to confirm.

But we may, I hope, say truly what Louis Napoleon, in 1870, telegraphed in error: *tout peut se rétablir*. Russia has in late years done much to estrange the Greek Christians of the Levant: and the Slaves will, we may be sure, be at least as ready

to accept help from Powers which are perforce more disinterested, as from Powers that may hereafter hope and claim to be repaid for it in political influence or supremacy. It is surely wise, then, to avail ourselves of that happy approach to unanimity which prevails among the Powers, and to avert, or at the very least postpone, as long as we honourably can, the wholesale scramble, which is too likely to follow upon any premature abandonment of the principle of territorial integrity for Turkey. I for one will avoid even the infinitesimal share of responsibility, which alone could now belong to any of my acts or words, for inviting a crisis, of which at this time the dimensions must be large, and may be almost illimitable.

But even that crisis I for one would not agree to avert, or to postpone, at the cost of leaving room for the recurrence of the Bulgarian horrors. Nothing could exceed the mockery, and nothing could redeem the disgrace, of a pretended settlement, which should place it in the power of Turkey to revive these fell Satanic orgies : a disgrace of which the largest share would accrue to England, but of which the smallest share would be large indeed. The public of this country, now I trust awakened from sloth to nobleness, may begin to fear lest the integrity of Turkey should mean immunity for her unbounded savagery, her unbridled and bestial lust. I think these apprehensions, so reasonable in principle, or if there were

ground for them, may be dismissed upon an observation of the facts. We have, in the neighbouring province of Roumania, a testimony which appears to be nearly conclusive. For twenty years it has, while paying tribute to the Porte, and acknowledging its supremacy, enjoyed an entire autonomy or self-government. It has constituted a real barrier for Turkey against the possibilities of foreign aggression. It has overcome for itself serious internal difficulties, in the adjustment of the relations between class and class. It has withstood the temptation to join in the Servian war. Guaranteed by Europe, it has had no grave complaint to make against Turkey for the violation of its stipulated rights, which have indeed been not inconsiderably enlarged. With such an example before us, let us hope at least that the territorial integrity of Turkey need not be impaired, while Europe summons and requires her to adopt the measure which is the very least that the case demands, namely the total withdrawal of the administrative rule of the Turk from Bulgaria, as well as, and even more than, from Herzegovina and from Bosnia.

But even this minimum of satisfaction for the past, and of security for the future, I am sorrowfully convinced will not be obtained, unless the public voice of this country shall sound it clearly and loudly, beyond all chances of mistake, in the ears of the Administration. We have fortunately obtained a rather recent

disclosure of the purposes of the Government through the mouth of the Prime Minister. On the 31st of July (when we knew so much less than now), after endeavouring to describe the hopeless impotence of the Turkish Government, and to point out that any effectual measures of redress or security must lie in the direction of local self-government for the disturbed provinces, I expressed the hope that this end might be obtained compatibly with the "territorial integrity" of Turkey. The Prime Minister, who followed me in the debate, did me the honour to refer to this portion of my speech, and said I had recommended the re-establishment of the *status quo*. Across the table I at once threw the interjection, "not *status quo*, but territorial integrity." The Prime Minister promptly replied, that territorial integrity would be found virtually to mean the *status quo*. Now the territorial integrity means the retention of a titular supremacy, which serves the purpose of warding off foreign aggression. The *status quo* means the maintenance of Turkish administrative authority in Bosnia, Herzegovina, and Bulgaria. Territorial integrity shuts out the foreign state; the *status quo* shuts out the inhabitants of the country, and keeps (I fear) everything to the Turk, with his airy promises, his disembodied reforms, his ferocious passions, and his daily, gross, and incurable misgovernment. This, then, is the latest present indication of British policy, the re-establishment of the *status quo*. Let us take the phrase out of the dress of the learned lan-

guage, which somewhat hides its beauty. It means "as you were." It means the re-establishment of the same forms and the same opportunities, which again mean, on the arrival of the first occasion, the same abuses and the same crimes. This purpose of the Government, I feel convinced, is not irrevocable. But it will only be revoked, if we may take experience for our guide, under the distinct and intelligible action of public opinion. No man will so well understand as the Prime Minister what is the force and weight of that opinion; and at what stage, in the development of a national movement, its expression should no longer be resisted.

Since the ominous declaration of Lord Beaconsfield on the *status quo*, or "as you were" policy, there has appeared a letter from Mr. Bourke, the Under-Secretary of the Foreign Office; which could not have been written without higher sanction. Of this letter, the positive part is null, the negative part important. It assures us of the indignation of the Government at the crimes committed by the Turks. It might as well assure us of their indignation at the crimes of Danton, or of Robespierre, or of Nana Sahib. Indignation is froth, except as it leads to action. This indignation has led, he says, to remonstrance. I say that mere remonstrance, in this case, is mockery. The only two things that are worth saying, the Under-Secretary does not say. The first of them would have been that, until these horrible outrages are redressed, and their authors punished, the British

Government would withdraw from Turkey the moral and even material support we have been lending her against Europe. The other was, that after crimes of so vast a scale and so deep a dye, the British Government would no longer be a party to the maintenance of Turkish administration in Bulgaria. It is, then, the negative part of this letter that signifies. Mr. Bourke's words, viewing their date, are futile. But his silence is trumpet-tongued: it proclaims that even last week, on the 27th of August, the Government were still unconverted; and, warning us what we have to expect, it spurs the people of England onwards in the movement, which is to redeem its compromised and endangered honour.

It would not be practicable, even if it were honourable, to disguise the real character of what we want from the Government. It is a change of attitude and policy, nothing less. We want them to undo and efface that too just impression, which, while keeping their own countrymen so much in the dark, they have succeeded in propagating throughout Europe, that we are the determined supporters of the Turk, and that, declaring his "integrity and independence" essential to "British interests," we have winked hard, and shall wink, if such be, harder still, according to the exigencies of the case, alike at his crimes and at his impotence. We want to place ourselves in harmony with the general sentiment of civilized mankind, instead of being any longer, as

we seem to be, the Evil Genius which dogs, and mars, and baffles it. We want to make the Turk understand that, in conveying this impression by word and act to his mind, the British Government have misunderstood, and, therefore, have misrepresented, the sense of the British people.

But this change is dependent on an emphatic expression of the national sentiment, which is but beginning to be heard. It has grown from a whisper to a sound; it will grow from a sound to a peal. But what, *until* it shall vibrate with such force as to awaken the Administration? It is melancholy, but it is also true, that we, who upon this Eastern ground fought with Russia, and thought Austria slack, and Germany all but servile, have actually for months past been indebted, and are even now indebted, to all or some of these very Powers, possibly to Russia most among them, for having played the part which we think specially our own, in resistance to tyranny, in befriending the oppressed, in labouring for the happiness of mankind. I say the time has come for us to emulate Russia by sharing in her good deeds, and to reserve our opposition until she shall visibly endeavour to turn them to evil account.

There is no reason to apprehend serious difficulty in the Councils of Europe on this subject. All the Powers, except ourselves, have already been working in this direction. Nor is there any ground to suppose that the Ottoman Government will tenaciously resist a

scheme based on the intention to do all in its favour that its own misconduct, and the fearful crimes of its trusted agents, have left possible. To do this Government justice, a distinction must be drawn between what depends upon a decision to be taken at Constantinople once for all, and the permanent vitalizing force required for the discharge of the daily duties of administration all over its vast empire. The central agency at the capital, always under the eye of the representatives of the European Powers and in close contact with them, has acquired, and traditionally transmits, a good deal of the modes of European speech and thought. It is when they try to convey these influences to the provinces and the subordinate agents, who share little or none of that beneficial contact and supervision, that they, except here and there by some happy accident of personal virtue, habitually and miserably break down. The promises of a Turkish Ministry given simply to Europe are generally good; those given to its own subjects or concerning its own affairs are, without imputing absolute mendacity, of such tried and demonstrated worthlessness, that any Ambassador or any State, who should trust them, must come under suspicion of nothing less than fraud by wilful connivance. The engagement of a Turkish Ministry, taken in concert with Europe, that Bulgaria, or any other province, shall now settle and hereafter conduct its own local government and affairs, would carry within itself the guarantee of its

own execution. The only question is, whether it would be given or withheld. I am disposed to believe it would be given, not withheld; and for this reason. I know of no case in which Turkey has refused to accede to the counsel of United Europe, nay, even of less than United Europe, if Europe was not in actual schism with itself under unwise or factious influences. In the matter of Greece, in the Union of the Principalities after the Crimean War, and in the conduct of its relations (for example) with Persia and with Egypt, there has been abundant proof that the Ottoman Porte is no more disposed than other governments, in the homely phrase, to drive its head against a brick wall. It has known how to yield, not ungracefully, to real necessity, without provoking violence. And those of its self-constituted friends, who warn us against an outburst of wild Mohammedan fanaticism within the Cabinet of Constantinople, and in the year 1876, found themselves on notions drawn from their own fancy, or from what they call having been in the East, much more than on the recorded lessons of political and diplomatic experience.

No doubt there will be difficulties to overcome when these provinces set about their own affairs, in adjusting relations with the Mahometan minorities. These are difficulties insurmountable to those who have not the will to surmount them, but easily surmounted under the real pressure of such a case. They were sur-

mounted in Greece; and at this hour, as we learn by the very recent testimony of Sir Charles Trevelyan, Mahometan landlords in Eubœa live contentedly under the Government of that country. Mahometan, it must be remembered, does not mean the same as Turk. And in none of these provinces has it been in the main a case of war between conflicting religions or local races: nearly the whole mischief has lain in the wretched laws, and the agents at once violent and corrupt, of a distant central Power, which (having none others) lets these agents loose upon its territory; and which has always physical force at its command to back outrage with the sanction of authority, but has no moral force whatever, no power either of checking evil or of doing good.

But I return to, and I end with, that which is the Omega as well as the Alpha of this great and most mournful case. An old servant of the Crown and State, I entreat my countrymen, upon whom far more than perhaps any other people of Europe it depends, to require, and to insist, that our Government, which has been working in one direction, shall work in the other, and shall apply all its vigour to concur with the other States of Europe in obtaining the extinction of the Turkish executive power in Bulgaria. Let the Turks now carry away their abuses in the only possible manner, namely by carrying off themselves. Their Zaptiehs and their Mudirs, their Bimbashis and their Yuzbachis, their Kaimakams and

their Pashas, one and all, bag and baggage, shall, I hope, clear out from the province they have desolated and profaned. This thorough riddance, this most blessed deliverance, is the only reparation we can make to the memory of those heaps on heaps of dead ; to the violated purity alike of matron, of maiden, and of child ; to the civilization which has been affronted and shamed ; to the laws of God or, if you like, of Allah ; to the moral sense of mankind at large. There is not a criminal in an European gaol, there is not a cannibal in the South Sea Islands, whose indignation would not rise and overboil at the recital of that which has been done, which has too late been examined, but which remains unavenged ; which has left behind all the foul and all the fierce passions that produced it, and which may again spring up, in another murderous harvest, from the soil soaked and reeking with blood, and in the air tainted with every imaginable deed of crime and shame. That such things should be done once, is a damning disgrace to the portion of our race which did them ; that a door should be left open for their ever-so-barely possible repetition would spread that shame over the whole. Better, we may justly tell the Sultan, almost any inconvenience, difficulty, or loss associated with Bulgaria,

“ Than thou reseated in thy place of light,
The mockery of thy people, and their bane.”*

* Tennyson's 'Guinevere.'

We may ransack the annals of the world, but I know not what research can furnish us with so portentous an example of the fiendish misuse of the powers established by God "for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the encouragement of them that do well." No Government ever has so sinned; none has so proved itself incorrigible in sin, or which is the same, so impotent for reformation. If it be allowable that the Executive power of Turkey should renew at this great crisis, by permission or authority of Europe, the charter of its existence in Bulgaria, then there is not on record, since the beginnings of political society, a protest that man has lodged against intolerable misgovernment, or a stroke he has dealt at loathsome tyranny, that ought not henceforward to be branded as a crime.

But we have not yet fallen to so low a depth of degradation; and it may cheerfully be hoped that, before many weeks have passed, the wise and energetic counsels of the Powers, again united, may have begun to afford relief to the overcharged emotion of a shuddering world.

Having done with the argumentative portion of the case, I desire to perform yet one other duty, by reminding my countrymen that measures appear to be most urgently required for the relief of want, disease, and every form of suffering in Bulgaria.

Lady Strangford has, with energetic benevolence, proposed to undertake this work. It seems to me to go far beyond the powers of any individual, however active and intelligent. I will presume to urge that, under the peculiar circumstances of the case, there is a call upon Her Majesty's Government to take the matter in hand. I do not mean by means of a grant of public money: but by communicating with the municipal and local authorities, and submitting to them the expediency of opening subscriptions: by placing the whole machinery of the Embassy at Constantinople and of the Consulates and Vice-Consulates at the service of the undertaking; and by supplying men able to organize and superintend the distribution of relief from the military and possibly also the naval departments.

HAWARDEN, CHESTER,

5th Sept., 1876.

A SPEECH

DELIVERED AT BLACKHEATH,

ON SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 9TH, 1876;

TOGETHER WITH

LETTERS

ON

THE QUESTION OF THE EAST.

BY THE

RIGHT HON. W. E. GLADSTONE, M.P.

LONDON :

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SPEECH AT BLACKHEATH,

SEPTEMBER 9, 1876.

MY LORDS, LADIES, AND GENTLEMEN, — If a great and noble cause, and a vast assembly worthy of that cause, could remove all physical and intellectual deficiencies, then, indeed, I should feel more confidence than I can now profess to feel as to my power to do justice to this occasion. But I will endeavour to lay before you, to the best of my power, the considerations which appear to me, without assuming that all of us have our minds shaped in every particular and detail upon precisely the same pattern, to recommend the Address which has been submitted to you. And I begin, ladies and gentlemen, by alluding very briefly to two points which have come into notice since we met on the ground.

I observed that when the second Resolution was read, and that also when the Address was read, there were some portions of this great assembly who were not entirely satisfied with their terms, evidently under

the belief that what was demanded was insufficient for the end in view. There is among us, as far I am able to perceive, a perfect unity of purpose; but there are some who, considering the aggravation of the circumstances, are of opinion that in what we ask by our intended Address we ought, in order to make sure work, to have proceeded somewhat further. With reference to that matter, I would venture to say it is important that we should be united; and those who may think that more might have been asked will perceive that in the Address it is the cessation of the atrocities, and the absolute prevention of their repetition, which are recognised as the paramount objects. Everything else is secondary, and is in the nature of means to these objects. It has been thought a duty to propose the mildest means that might succeed; but I think we should all be for adopting any stronger means if they are found to be necessary for the end in view. In short, I believe we are all of one opinion.

Now Dr. Baxter-Langley, using, and I think legitimately using, the privileges of an English citizen, has censured, the Crimean War. I come in personally for a full share of that censure. On a proper occasion I am ready to defend my participation in that policy, but I will not trouble you at this great moment with one syllable of defence. I will not quarrel with Dr. Baxter-Langley. I will not quarrel with my excellent friend, Mr. Bright, on

the subject of the Crimean War. I will not quarrel with any one, or with any number of you, who may be disposed to censure the Crimean War. We can leave that battle unfought for the present. But I will say this only of the Crimean War, and I think I shall have the assent of Dr. Baxter-Langley, that in my view the Crimean War has entailed on us most solemn obligations, and has invested us with rights for their fulfilment, and it is with a view to the fulfilment of those obligations that I am here to address you to-day.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, I have lived long in public life. I have witnessed many vivid movements of the popular mind, but never one to compare with that which during the past fortnight has taken its commencement, and which has swollen with such immense rapidity, and such legitimate rapidity, to the dimensions of a movement truly national. On Monday morning last, between four and five o'clock, I was rattling down from Euston station through the calm and silent streets of London, when there was not a footfall to disturb them. Every house looked so still, that it might well have been a receptacle of the dead. But as I came through those long lines of street, I felt it to be an inspiring and a noble thought that in every one of these houses there were intelligent human beings, my fellow-countrymen — who, when they woke, would give many of their earliest thoughts, and, aye, some of

their most energetic actions, to the terrors and sufferings of Bulgaria. It is idle to deny or to disparage the character of this movement. It is absurd to connect it with the mere action of any political party, however powerful. As a member of one of the great political parties of the country, I rejoice that, with scarcely an individual exception, those whom I know in that party have the same sentiments as those which animate the present meeting; but I rejoice also to think that I have heard in the House of Commons, and have heard out of the House of Commons, many a sympathetic voice from men who profess Conservative opinions, and who are as sincere, as zealous, as energetic as any man can be, in the cause. For they feel that this question has a breadth and a height and a depth that carries it far out of the lower region of party differences, and establishes it on grounds, not of political party, not even of mere English nationality, not of Christian faith, but on the largest and broadest ground of all—the ground of our common humanity. I admit that, to me, it has been an unexpected movement. I have been astonished at its commencement and at its progress. It came upon us suddenly, and, selfish as we commonly are in the ordinary course of life, it came at what I may call the most selfish period of the year. It is the period when every man, who can relax at all, takes his relaxation. The natural leaders of local parties were

generally dispersed. They were bathing, or fishing, or stalking, or shooting, or yachting, or going up the mountains; seeking, in a thousand innocent pursuits, the means of resuming with full manly energy the ordinary occupations of their lives. The consequence of that was, that in our towns and in our counties no man was among his friends; every man was for the moment among strangers, in the particular sojourn of his choice. And yet, notwithstanding all the difficulty thence arising, how has this movement sprung up, as it were from the very soil! As it has been a national movement in contradistinction from a party movement, so it has been a popular movement in contradistinction from an aristocratic movement. Do not suppose for a moment I mean to imply that the peerage of this land, with whom national sympathies are generally so strong, is adverse to it. I mean nothing of the sort; and we have good specimens of that exalted order even upon this platform to support me in what I say. But the working men in the first instance raised the flag under which we are now marching. I rejoice that they did it. I rejoice that we follow them. This fact it is that vindicates, if anything was wanting to vindicate, the movement from suspicion and from reproach. They are not artful and astute politicians. They are as much attached to British interests as any class in the country, but their practice is to look for the promotion of British interests in the simple rule of

doing that which is just and right; and it is to do that which is just and right, and to promote, and, if we can, to exact, the doing of that which is just and right by some others, that we are met here to-day.

Now, my good friends, the first point to make good in our present proceeding is, that we should in our own consciences and understandings be able to give a rational and well-considered answer to this question: Are the horrors which are alleged against the Turks substantially proved to have occurred? It is a very serious matter to make charges such as I have made, and am about to make again, upon my fellow-creatures. The laws of justice, in my opinion, know no distinction of country, of race, or of religion; and we ought to be satisfied with the proof of these atrocities, before we presume to denounce them. Let me, then, briefly remind you how stands this part of the case. The intelligent and careful accounts given by the journals of this country, and above and before all by one among them, the name of which is very well known to you—I mean the ‘Daily News’—have remained before the world now for a part of the month of June and for the whole of the months of July and August. If those accounts are untrue, why have they not been confuted? The Turkish Government is in possession of power enough for the purpose; it is ruling Bulgaria with the sword; it is competent to draw out all true evidence in its own

favour, and possibly a little more than what is true ; and if strangers have been there, and have ventured to make untrue charges against the ruling powers, why have they not met and confuted those charges ? I have read three official reports of the Turkish Government upon the subject ; and I wish to Heaven you all could read every one of them, though I do not know that you would thank me for imposing such a task upon you. I wish them read by all, because the Ottoman Government is entitled to be heard in all that it thinks material for its defence. But I will presume to say that in those three reports, and I am ready to point out to any one the documents I mean, there is hardly any one of the charges of the ' Daily News ' which even so much as a serious and substantial attempt has been made to refute. They are, in brief, vague, self-glorifying declarations on the part of the Turks, that they have been humane and merciful, as well as prudent, all through ; and that the allegations of atrocity are nonsense and imposture. In my opinion, these Turkish allegations are among the greatest aggravations of the case. Well, then, gentlemen, I must say that we, the English, through our Consular authorities, have moved with but halting steps ; but Mr. Baring has, at any rate, sent to us some statements which prove to us, not the details, but which prove to us, in his judgment, that in the main and the bulk the earlier statements must

be true. But this is very far from being all. A very important witness has come into the field. His report produced, I must say, the most marked impression on my mind, in convincing me that the time had come when for me, as one of the authors of the Crimean War, the responsibility of longer silence was too great to be borne. I mean the report of Mr. Schuyler, the Consul and also Commissioner of the United States, who represents a nation that we rejoice to call our brethren, and whose personal character and trustworthiness, as I have taken pains to ascertain, are worthy of the office that he holds, and of the people whom he serves. Having, then, read these documents, and having heard the opposite party—having heard what the Turkish Government had to say, and finding that it only aggravates the case, I say that we are in a position to assert with satisfied understandings and clear consciences that these horrors are proved, and to consider what duties are incumbent upon us in consequence of that proof.

It may be said that we should not accuse others, as we have not got very clean hands ourselves. There is no nation in the world, my good friends, that has perfectly clean hands; and I am bound to say that, though I think the English and the people of these three Kingdoms, are a very great nation, I do not think that we are entitled on all occasions to such uniform and peculiar credit for humanity as we

sometimes claim for ourselves. I make that confession frankly. I will not refer, as I might, to the misdeeds of other nations. It is a mean form of apology. Let us speak only of our own. It may be said that some two hundred years ago there was a dreadful massacre at Glencoe; that sixty or seventy years ago there were great atrocities perpetrated after the siege of Badajoz in the Peninsular War; and, coming down to later times for instance, I am bound to say I cannot defend the proceedings that were taken either in what was called the revolt in Cephalonia, or in the more recent revolt in Jamaica. I cannot, and I will not, defend each and all of those proceedings; but, good heavens! to pretend to compare those proceedings with what we are now dealing with would be an insult to the common-sense of Europe. They may constitute a dark page in British history; but if you could concentrate the whole of the blackness of that page, for every one of them, into a single point, it would be pale, it would be almost invisible from its minuteness on any one of the pages, which will hereafter consign to everlasting infamy the proceedings of the Turks in Bulgaria. So much, therefore, for clean hands. I do not overlook the question, but I say that it does not absolve us from whatever duty may otherwise be incumbent upon us in reference to the great subject we have now in view.

Returning for a moment to the question whether

the horrors have been sufficiently demonstrated, I might indeed be content now to be bound by the declarations of the members of the Government themselves. Mr. Bourke, the Under-Secretary of State, has described them in language the strength of which it would be very difficult to surpass. Lord George Hamilton, appearing the other night at Sheffield, and delivering what our friends in America, I think, commonly call a sprightly speech—(laughter)—admitted, I believe, that these horrors were dreadful beyond description. He used in substance the same language that we use. A portion of the metropolitan press—not a very large portion, but a portion of the press—has defended Turkey with the most gallant spirit. There is a paper very much opposed to me in politics. (A Voice—‘The Standard,’ and laughter.) No, I mean the ‘Morning Post.’ (Laughter, and a Voice—“What about the old woman?”) I say nothing on that subject. I will only say this, that three days ago I read these words in the ‘Morning Post’ :—“It is lamentable beyond all description; it is perfectly astounding.” Now, what do you think it was that was lamentable beyond all description and that was perfectly astounding? When I read these words I thought, Well, at any rate, we are now going to have a stroke dealt at the Bulgarian outrages; but, on the contrary, it was not the horrors that were lamentable beyond de-

scription and that were perfectly astounding, but it was the present attitude of the people in regard to them. But I can announce from the highest authority the conversion of the 'Morning Post,' for I read in it this morning—and I rejoice in its accession, for I have a great respect for the paper after all—"Nobody now wants to be told how horrible the atrocities were." Well, then, I think that so far we may, upon the whole, be in a condition to proceed with a clear conscience.

The next question is—Who are implicated in these atrocities? Now, I have taken another opportunity of setting out as well as I could the facts of this case so far as it may be considered a question internal to ourselves, in order to define with as much accuracy as possible those special obligations of the British people which grew, as I think, out of what has recently occurred. I will not now say one word upon that part of the subject. I will keep, or endeavour to keep, the implied pledge with which I set out, that I would try to treat the question as a question in which all Englishmen have a common interest. I will strive, to the best of my ability, to avoid saying anything that can give pain to the mind of any Englishman, be his party what it may. The question, then, is—and it is a very great question—Is the Turkish Government implicated in these atrocities? I will tell you why I hold that they are; why I hold the Turkish Government to

be so deeply implicated in them, that it is impossible to draw an effectual distinction between the men whose hands perpetrated the deeds and the central Government of the country, in consequence of the course that Government has pursued with regard to them. In the first place, they might very well have anticipated what was to take place. They knew, if we did not know, the men whom they were employing. But I will not dwell on that point; I pass to what they have done since these deeds were blazoned in the face of the whole world. In the first place, they have taken every possible measure to conceal them; in the second place, they have punished and put down, as far as they could, those who endeavoured to divulge them; and I have myself printed, within the last three days, the actual original document, which suppressed a newspaper at Constantinople because it had questioned a statement made in this country in partial mitigation of the charge against Turkey. And in that original document issued, mark the date, on the 11th of last August, the Turkish Government had the audacity to speak of the pretended or alleged excesses in Bulgaria. Therefore they have concealed the acts, they have kept back the knowledge, they have punished those who endeavoured to supply their defect of duty by enlightening the world on what had taken place. That is pretty complete, I think. But there is one act besides—one worse

than any, and worse than all. It was this. They have rewarded, they have promoted, they have decorated with what they call their honours—("Shame")—the very worst miscreants who perpetrated some of the chief of these detested outrages; and when that has been done—and it cannot be denied, three names at least are perfectly well known, and have been printed over and over again—it is utterly ridiculous to contend that we are not to regard the Government of Turkey itself as deeply dyed, in hand and arm, with blood that has been shed, and as covered with the cloud of shame that has descended on that degraded land. Now I hold that these are some of the leading facts, on which your action should depend; and I address you as a specimen of the people of England, because the sentiments that beat in your breasts are at this moment throbbing in every other English and British heart.

I have now gone pretty fully through the elementary facts, except as to one single point. And what is that point? If you have read the journals of the last few days, you will find that those journals without any distinction—and among those who had been more or less favourable to Turkey I would mention the 'Standard' and the 'Telegraph'—pray observe that I am now speaking only to their impartiality in supplying information—you will find that they, as well as the 'Times' and

‘Daily News,’ have given explicit accounts of the manner in which the Turkish armies are at this moment apparently proceeding in Servia. You remember that one of the impostures set up to mislead you was, that the malefactors were only a few strangers or a few irregulars. Irregular and regular, it now seems that they are all pretty much alike. Have you read the detestable proceedings that are recounted in the journals of the last few days? You may say we have not got the authority of the Government to prove them. I wish to heaven we had their account! There is, I understand, an officer of high rank and great distinction in the Turkish camp—I mean General Kemball. I am truly sorry we have no report yet from him, any more than we have from Mr. Baring. But you will see that, generally, what is done, according to the best information we possess, may be described as an attempt to make Servia into another Bulgaria. You will see that, beyond all reasonable doubt, illumination attends the march of the Turkish army wherever it may go; and that illumination is the flame that rises from the burning of every village, so that the few whom the sword and torture shall have spared may, if possible, perish by starvation.

I would not dwell longer on this painful subject, nor enter upon its sickening details; but this I say—that, if it be true that the horrors which are so described in the newspapers of the last few days are

now proceeding in Servia, they ought to be stopped. (Cheers.) They ought to be stopped; and those who do not stop them, if they have the power, will be responsible for them. This is a matter, gentlemen, in which time is of the utmost importance. You know not on what day events of a character and consequence, vital to humanity, and vital to the struggle now in progress, may occur in Servia. Whatever happens, you must not be put off with excuses and half-hearted halting declarations. Whatever we ask of our authorities, one thing we must ask above all—that they be prompt; and another thing, that they be intelligible. It is the duty of Europe, and of the several Powers of Europe, to stop what we now denounce. It is not your duty to remonstrate against such deeds. I deprecate remonstrance. When that great storehouse was burnt down near London Bridge a few years ago, and the Thames was all aflame with the floating casks of oil or tallow, did the firemen, who so nobly did their duty, remonstrate with the conflagration? No; but you might just as well have remonstrated with those flames, as you could remonstrate with the Turkish Government with reference to those things which are said now to be going on; and the Government ought to know, and will, I hope, very soon know, whether they are going on or not. Then my affirmation is that, without reference to this or that movement of diplomacy, honour be to the Power, whatsoever its

name, that first steps in to stop them. I do not say that they are to be imagined to occur when they do not. I do not say that there is to be anything but a full conviction, and a substantial knowledge, of the facts; but if the facts be so, that, in my opinion, is the conclusion to be drawn, and the course to be pursued, or to be favoured, for arresting the course of inhuman and almost unheard-of outrage. So much for what has been. So much for what seemingly at the moment is. Let us now turn to the subject of provision for the future.

My lords, ladies, and gentlemen, what are the measures that ought to be taken in order to prevent the recurrence of these atrocities? In my opinion, they ought to be the mildest of which the case admits. But they ought to be effectual measures. And if I were, unfortunately, compelled to judge between that which is mild and that which is effectual; if I found that I had the power of judging, which I have not, for I speak simply as an individual to my constituents, and fellow-citizens, and fellow-men—if I had the power of judging and deciding—if I, then, found that that which was mild would not be effectual, and that which was effectual could not be mild, my choice would not be long in making. I must take the effectual, and I must put aside the mild. (Cheers.) Nevertheless, I do not despair of measures which I call and think mild, and which may, I trust, be effectual. You have read, perhaps—at any rate, you

have heard of—the letter in the ‘Times’ to-day, of Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, whom I may with truth as well as pleasure call my distinguished and venerated friend. Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, who was himself, among all English statesmen, perhaps the most jealous of the power of Russia, holds and argues that these States, in which Turkey has been perpetrating such unheard-of outrages, must be protected, not by the idle farce of a renewal of promises, not by the sorry jest of issuing more firmans, dependent on Turkey herself for their execution, but by positive measures, of a nature which will take it out of the power of Turkey again to redden with such bloodshed and blacken with such infamy the annals of mankind, by providing the material for similar recitals. Lord Stratford de Redcliffe leans—as I gather from his letter—to the appointment of a Foreign Commission, representing the Powers of Europe, appointed and empowered to exercise a conclusive control over all Turkish operations and proceedings in those provinces. Well, my respect for Lord Stratford de Redcliffe’s authority is such, that I am ready to say that, if some such measure could be adopted as we did adopt in Syria when Lord Dufferin was sent there, and could be adopted with good prospect of success, I should be contented, nay glad, to see it. At the same time, I am very doubtful whether we should by such a mode of action be conferring any favour on the Turks. I think the

position of the Ottoman Power would be a very awkward one, and perhaps scarcely tenable. I think the position of the authorities in this borough or in London would be very awkward if they could not take any measure for the government of the metropolis without the assent of a Foreign Commission. We should not like, we could not endure, that at all. I know that Lord Stratford de Redcliffe has lately looked to that plan without repudiating others, and I believe it to be a very great question whether the simplest course is not that which I have presumed—for it is somewhat presumptuous on my part—to recommend, that all Turkish authorities should walk out of the place. That is what they have done in Roumania. Four millions of people there are as completely emancipated from the practical control of the Turkish Government, as you and I are. It is true the Sultan is their Suzerain; it is true that they pay him, I think, 80,000*l.* a-year for discharging the duties of his office, duties which it would be very difficult to define. That is a great deal too small a matter to ask you to come to Blackheath to meddle with; and I am in favour of retaining that Suzerainty if we can retain it consistently with the great paramount end in view; because I am afraid the harmony of the Courts and Powers of Europe would be too severely strained were there a quantity of territorial plunder going, and it came to a question of the distribution of spoils. Now if any one asks

me how I would distribute the spoils, my answer would be this; I would not distribute them at all. These provinces were not destined to be the property of Russia, or of Austria, or of England; they were destined for the inhabitants of the provinces themselves. They have the best right to them. They can make the best use of them. They are not, as you have been unwisely and untruly told, savages. On the contrary, they are generally a well-conducted and industrious people, and they are a people who know how to manage their own concerns—at any rate, very decently and tolerably, if only they had the opportunity. I say, therefore, let our measures be as mild as they may, but for God's sake let them be effectual measures. If it can be done by a Foreign Commission which shall, without absolutely displacing the Turkish authorities, take the government of these provinces virtually into their own hands, let it be so done. I myself lean to the simpler method of saying to the Turk—which I believe to be very good terms for him—"You shall receive a reasonable tribute, you shall retain your titular Sovereignty, your Empire shall not be invaded; but never again, while the years shall roll upon their course, so far as it is in our power to determine, never again shall the hands of violence be raised by you; never again shall the floodgates of lust be opened by you; never again shall the dire refinements of cruelty be devised by

you, for the sake of making mankind miserable in Bulgaria.”

Thus far I have endeavoured to convey to your minds that what we have got before us is sufficiently proved, and that that sufficient proof entails on us, as an absolute, an indispensable, and a speedy duty, the business of effectual prevention. And I take this opportunity of saying—Do not suppose that your duties in this matter will have ended when this vast assembly has broken up. On the contrary, they will have only begun. It is now, that the resolutions of England are being shaped; it is now, that they are finding their way within the walls of the Council-room; and it is from that Council-room that they must go forth to be heard in the deliberations of Europe. You have got before you an arduous work. It must be part and parcel of your daily care till it is done; you must ask yourselves again and again what you have done and can do; and I rejoice to think there is much that you can do for the purpose of serving the interests of humanity and justice. I come now to the question—If there is to be this effectual prevention, and if it can only be had either by putting a double bridle on the executive of Turkey in Bulgaria, or, as I think, probably better, by requiring that the exercise of that administrative authority should cease,—by whom is this to be effected? It must be done, it can only be done with

safety, by the united action of the Powers of Europe. Your power is great; but what is above all things essential is, that the mind and heart of Europe in this matter should be one. I need now only speak of the six whom we call great Powers; of Russia, Germany, Austria, France, England, and Italy. The union of them all is not only important, but almost indispensable for entire success and satisfaction. Yet there are two of these great Powers, whose position is such that just now they stand forth far before the rest in authority, and in the means of effectively applying that authority, as well as in responsibility, upon this great question. Those two Powers are England and Russia. I wish, above all things, to be plain and distinct with you. It may be in the power of any of these six important States to mar and to frustrate the wise settlement of this question; but undoubtedly it is in the power either of England or of Russia to make a good settlement impossible. And, moreover, if there be so bad an inclination in them, it is in the power of either not only to make a good settlement impossible, but to do that with impunity. If we were wicked enough to prevent this great good, nobody could punish us for our misconduct. The Almighty, who has said, "Vengeance is mine," will take His own time for settling the account. The same is the case with Russia, if Russia entertains the diabolical schemes, or even the ordinarily selfish

schemes, which many people are so fond of imputing to her. I am not such a dreamer as to suppose that Russia, more than other countries, is exempt from all selfish ambition. But she has also within her the pulse of humanity; and for my part I believe it is the pulse of humanity that is at this epoch throbbing almost ungovernably in her people. Now, be assured that a really good settlement of this question depends, not upon a mere hollow truce between England and Russia, but upon their thorough concord, their hearty and cordial co-operation. Their joint power is immense. The power of Russia by land of acting upon these countries as against Turkey is at the present time probably resistless. The power of England by sea is scarcely less important at this moment; for, I ask, what would be the condition of the Turkish army, if the British Admiral now in Besika Bay were to inform the Government in Constantinople that from a given hour, until atonement had been made, until punishment had descended, until outrage had been effectually arrested, not a man, not a gun, not a horse, not a boat should cross the waters of the Bosphoros, or the cloudy Euxine, or the bright Ægean, to carry aid to the Turkish troops—those armies, made up mainly of Asiatic hordes, that are now desolating Servia, and that seem to be endeavouring to reproduce there the horrible portraiture of the murders that they have left behind

them in Bulgaria? To stop the passage of these waters at once cuts off the vital source of what is called Turkish power.

Such, my friends, is an outline of the present power of those two States. I rejoice to think, that the people of this country have lifted themselves up to a level far higher than that of ancient recollections of blood and strife. Why, gentlemen, we fought with Russia in 1854, and a gallant defence she made, though she was beaten; why should we not respect her as a former foe? Why should we not act with her for good? Why should we not reserve suspicion and resentment for the time when they are justified by some acts of hers, and not merely stirred up by old and invidious recollections? Why, think of the case of our great neighbour across the Channel, the case of France. Not one hundred years have elapsed—almost exactly ninety—since one of the most enlightened British statesmen—I mean Mr. Charles James Fox—was sufficiently under the influence of traditional prejudices to describe France in the House of Commons as “our natural enemy.” For thirty years after that time, at least during the greater part of those thirty years, we were locked in deadly conflict with France. But what is the case now? The whole of those ancient animosities have died away; and the very recollection of them has come to be so faint in our minds, that probably I raise in you a sentiment of surprise when I refer to that

declaration of Mr. Fox. We look back upon our efforts against France, and hers against us, with a just respect for her great military powers. We have said long ago if she fought so well against us, she will fight equally well along with us. It is the same with Russia. I for one, for the purposes of justice, am ready as an individual to give the right hand of friendship to Russia when her objects are just and righteous, and to say in the name of God, "Go on and prosper."

I believe that I have now nearly described the actual state of the case, so far as I am able to describe it. I am convinced that, as to means, the main object is the concord of England and Russia; but that concord itself would be worthless, unless it were to address itself decisively and immediately to the solution of the necessary parts of this problem. Allow me to say I have quite enough faith in this country to know that when the nation has a good purpose in view, its actual leaders, or, if they unhappily were to refuse, then some leader or other, will be found to conduct it to the result desired being accomplished.

Gentlemen, I have refrained, and I have advisedly refrained, from bringing before you those details, which in rank abundance have been published, of the misdeeds that I so feebly attempt to describe. I hope you will understand that it has been simply from a desire not to shock the natural feelings, both of

women and of men, by recitals which are scarcely fitted to pass from the mouth of a human being, much less to enter into his heart to accomplish. How we shall all rejoice if, in lieu of the perplexing, doubtful, and often harrowing considerations of the past few months, we are permitted, by the mercy of Almighty God, to see a state of things in which right and might shall join their hands, and march together to the achievement of a great and just and holy work. Not forgetting prudence, for prudence never can be forgotten without offending against justice; not forgetting prudence, but applying that prudence to the effectual attainment of the end in view. Never, so far as I am able to form any feeble judgment, never have I known a great object, so pressing in its urgency, upon which the Powers of Europe and the peoples of Europe were so cordially united, as they are upon this object. Of those six States, there is not one from which we have to anticipate anything but a likelihood of cordial and sincere concurrence. At the end of the Crimean War, when there was a question of giving constitutional freedom and popular government to the Danubian Principalities, political jealousies, from Austrian absolutism, were adverse to the measure; but that is no longer so, for Austria herself is rejoicing in the youthful but vigorous exercise of constitutional liberty, and has taken her rank definitively among the body of free nations. I know there is one other

difficulty. There is an unhappy jealousy of race between the Magyars of Hungary, and that large majority, composed of Slavonian population, among whom they live; but it would be impossible to suppose—and indeed it would be intolerable to allow—that these local jealousies, entirely internal in their character, could be permitted to dictate the essential law of the social and political existence of peoples beyond their borders. On the part of Austria, therefore, I have seen with delight that, overcoming these jealousies, she has set herself during the whole of this year, and I doubt not that she will so continue, to co-operate, and to co-operate with great power and efficacy, since her action is of very great importance, for the common purpose. Look next to Germany, the head of the Teutonic races, with whom we rejoice to claim near kindred. No one will persuade me that Germany will sully the great honours she has won, or endanger her moral power in Europe, by any attempt to turn to a base and low purpose the noble sentiment which is now thrilling throughout Christendom and throughout the civilised world. There is France, that great country which has done so much for civilisation, which has made so many great gifts to mankind, and which now, after her long and fluctuating agitation upon the stormy sea of politics, appears at length, and I rejoice to see it, to be feeling her way towards orderly, durable, and solid freedom through the possession of

such institutions, as hitherto have been almost the only gem that she had not already planted in her coronet. There is Italy. Ladies and gentlemen, I would presume almost myself to answer for Italy. This is not the first time, in the course of my life, that I have had to meddle with a matter of this kind. Six-and-twenty years ago, I endeavoured to stir up the public sentiment with respect to the abuses of government in Southern Italy; but let me render this justice to a defunct dynasty, that it would be a cruel sin and shame to compare for one moment, or in any of the most marked features of the late atrocities, that government of the Bourbon dynasty in Naples with the abominable system that has been desolating Bulgaria. (Cheers.) In Italy you may now see, aye, in its capital, in its great historic city of Rome, that the people have taken your and our method of expressing their opinions; and from the very first outbreak of these difficulties in the East, the sympathies of Italy have been freely given to the oppressed. You have, indeed, before you, as I have already said, an arduous task, but for the performance of that arduous work you have every encouragement. It is beyond our single power, but it is within your united power. Without union we cannot attain, but with union we may, under God, attain the end. Go forward then, gentlemen, with British pluck and resolution; go forward, you have much to do. You have error and neglect to repair,

but you have an example to set, and a great purpose to accomplish, which if you shall happily achieve, you will once again add to the glories of your forefathers, and make a solid and a worthy contribution to the happiness of mankind.

II.

LETTER TO MR. A. DAYS.

Hawarden, August 23, 1876.

SIR,—I am obliged by your intimation that a meeting of the working men of London, on a large scale, on the subject of the recent massacres in Bulgaria is about to be held. On a subject like this, which appeals so directly to our deepest feelings, and where our information on details is still far from full, I should have been glad if the whole duty of expressing the views of the British nation could have been left with safety in the hands of the Government of the Queen. But the manner in which it was treated by the head of the Ministry in the House of Commons was so inadequate and unsatisfactory, that I cannot but think it well that the people should seek opportunities to speak for themselves, and should assist the Administration to judge whether it is right that, by the re-establishment of the *status quo* in Bulgaria, opportunity should be given to its governors for the repetition of the recent outrages when they may see occasion.

I remain, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

W. E. GLADSTONE.

III.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR OF THE 'TIMES.'

London, September 8.

SIR,—With reference to the second article in the 'Times' of to-day, which criticises in so wise a spirit a pamphlet which I have published, I hope it was understood by you, and will be understood by the public, that my desire that the "Turks" should "carry off themselves" from Bulgaria is strictly limited to military and official Turks; as I have shown in the lines following immediately by enumerating "their Zaptiehs and their Mudirs, their Bimbashis and their Yuzbashis, their Kaimakams and their Pashas;" all of them titles indicating employment by the Government.

The civil rights, and the religious freedom, of Mahomedans have in my eyes precisely the same title to respect as those of Christians.

I remain, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

W. E. GLADSTONE.

IV.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR OF THE 'DAILY NEWS.'

Hawarden Castle, Chester, September 14.

SIR,—The speeches of Lord Derby at the Foreign Office on Monday undoubtedly constitute a Ministerial manifesto; and, after the part I have taken in the endeavour to evoke such a declaration, it may not be unwarrantable if I endeavour to sum up its effect, and to estimate its value.

The speeches deal—and deal, in my judgment, frankly—with the past and with the future; with charges, or supposed charges, against the Government, and with its inventions. The journals which support the policy of Turkey are naturally delighted with them, and exult in any disposition which may have been shown elsewhere to put upon them the most favourable construction. In my opinion they afford ample shelter (which is also fair notice) for a policy identical in spirit with that hitherto pursued. It becomes, then, the duty of the people to consider whether that policy has been satisfactory or not. Lord Derby is now at least chargeable with no undue reserve. His words, as reported by the 'Times,' are as follows: "I shall only say that we do not come before the country, and we shall not come before Parliament, in the position of persons who

have anything to unsay that we have said in the past, or anything to regret in what we have done.”

It appears to me that Lord Derby replies, in these discourses, to some charges that have not been made, and passes by those that have. I now give a summary of the real accusations, as I understand them, and of the conduct, in which Lord Derby thus states the intention of the Government to persevere. They are these :—

1. That Ministers have not recognised the rights and the obligations of this country, together with the other Powers of Europe, towards the subjects, and especially the Christian subjects, of the Sultan, growing out of the Crimean War and the Peace of 1856.

2. That they have not maintained, but rather have impeded, the concert of Europe in regard to Turkey, by which concert alone there is a reasonable hope of arriving at a proper settlement.

3. That they have overthrown the plans of other States without proposing any in their stead ; and have thereby precipitated a disastrous war which it might have been possible to prevent or postpone.

4. That by sending a squadron to Besika Bay without explanation, by raising that squadron progressively, after the occurrence of the worst Bulgarian outrages, to the character and force of a fleet, and by

withholding all information concerning the intention of these measures until the date of July 14, they have in fact, whatever the intention may have been, afforded moral, and virtually also material support to the Ottoman Government at the period of its most flagrant guilt and crime; and this in opposition to the general sense of Europe.

5. That by their singular and unexplained delays in asking and in obtaining information, they have retarded that knowledge, in the United Kingdom, of the Bulgarian outrages, which it was of the utmost importance to justice and humanity that they should expedite.

6. That in their limited state of information they made gratuitous declarations in answer to questions put in Parliament, such as tended to cast discredit upon statements which had then been made, and which have since been corroborated by further and generally sufficient evidence; and to convey an untrue idea of the outrages perpetrated in Bulgaria, and of the comparative character and conduct of the governing power on the one side, and of the inhabitants of the province on the other.

7. That now, nearly five months after the date of the outbreak, we still remain without any adequate statement of any portion of the facts from any responsible British authority.

8. That only so late as on the 8th of August, did Her Majesty's Government address to Sir H. Elliot

a letter desiring him to make known to the Porte the feeling of horror excited in them and in the people by the "statements received" of the Bulgarian outrages; and that down to the present time, so far as we know, they have never charged upon the Turkish Government any guilt in respect of those outrages.

So much for the past. I will only make a single further remark. It relates to the report of Mr. Baring. It has been stated, that he has conducted his inquiries in company with official persons representing the Turkish Government. In so far as this has been done, it will sadly impair the value of his results. I have had experience in this matter twenty-six years ago. In Naples, at that time, it would have been impossible to obtain true evidence in the presence of agents of the Government. Much more now, under the savage tyranny that rages in Bulgaria. Fairness may require that the information obtained be submitted to the inculpated Government before other use is made of it, but cannot require that we should poison the stream at the fountain-head.

I now come to Lord Derby's views of the Turkish Government, and of the policy to be followed. I collect them from the two speeches, as follows.

1. It appears to be considered by Lord Derby, that if the Turks can count upon our support or that of others they are sure to behave well; but if they

believe all Europe to be against them, then they will break out into excesses.

2. That we have no responsibility beyond the other Powers of Europe for the conduct of Turkey; although it was we who, in concert with France, took away the right previously enjoyed by Russia to protect her Christian subjects; and although it would be most unfair to expect France at the present moment to charge herself with special duties or cares.

3. That unlimited doses of protest and remonstrances are the proper mode of discharging our duty at Constantinople; and Lord Derby assures us that for one (disregarded) remonstrance recorded in the Blue Books, Sir Henry Elliot made a dozen (disregarded) remonstrances, which are not so recorded.

4. That no one at Constantinople either dictated or encouraged the outrages in Bulgaria. That is to say, the Turkish Government only denied them, suppressed the papers that told of them, promoted three at the least of the miscreants who ordered and superintended them, and sent a man (Selim) to inquire into them, who, as we now learn, put to the torture those Bulgarian witnesses who would not give such evidence as he desired.

5. That the evils which have occurred are, says Lord Derby, "due rather to the weakness than to the will of the Turkish Government."

6. That it is absurd to suppose Lord Beaconsfield the Sultan, or Lord Derby the Grand Vizier, and to cherish expectations accordingly. Why, then, did Lord Beaconsfield say on the 17th of July, that the Government was constantly communicating—he “would not say remonstrating—with the Turkish Government,” for “the Turkish Government was most anxious to be guided by the advice of the British Ambassador?”

7. That the policy of the Government has been the policy of the last fifty or sixty years. I contest this assertion; and I ask, How then does it happen that all the connections of Lord Palmerston, and that every public man of the day who has taken part heretofore in the Eastern Question and is responsible for the earlier policy, has dissented from the policy of the present Government, including Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, who agrees with them in general politics?

8. Lord Derby menaces us with the rule of Russia in Constantinople. I reply that more has been done by the policy of this year to bring Russia to Constantinople than at any former period; and that the way to keep her out of it is to give to the local populations liberties which (as has been proved in Roumania) they will value, and the means of tolerable Government.

9. That the Government are not hostile “in principle” to the further extension of such constitutional

changes in Turkey "as circumstances admit of." Not hostile in principle. What are they in practice? What single act have they done to restrain abuse, or introduce liberty in Turkey, beyond disregarded and now idle remonstrances? Let any one who wishes to estimate the views of the British Government (and we now know they have not changed) on local self-government, read No. 497 and No. 493 of the Papers, Turkey No. 3, and observe the evident sympathy with which Lord Derby details every difficulty raised by Austria in the way of such a system.

10. That Lord Derby "never will be guilty of the quackery of putting his name to a scheme which he believes" in his conscience will not work. I hope not. But why is this truism introduced here, and now? It is the case of the Berlin Memorandum over again. To oppose and frustrate the proposals of others; to put forward nothing in their place ourselves.

11. That as to an armistice and a peace, the Powers are agreed in desiring to have them "as soon as may be." But of agreement in their views of a just peace there is not a word. Nor can there well be, until the British Government has undergone a conversion, which is still in the future.

12. That we ought not to encourage hostility against the whole Turkish race and Mahometan peoples. Agreed.

13. That we are much more disinterested and philanthropic than the other Powers, or some of them. So we always say: I am not aware that others always say it of us.

14. That Turkey will listen to the voice of united Europe. The most valuable proposition, to my mind, in the two Speeches.

15. That offenders should be punished, and that the Bulgarians are entitled to reparation.

Reparation, in the main, is now impossible: and about punishment there is this difficulty—that we shall have no means of knowing whether it is just. With the Porte, as was demonstrated last May in the Salonica cases, it is not a question of justice, but of pressure. Under sufficient pressure, they will punish any number of persons, of any quality, and to any extent. We are now told they are going to punish some of those wretches whom they promoted for the outrages. I can believe it. They hear the incipient howling of the storm; and they appreciate it better, I must say, than some nearer home. I am fearful of an over-pressure for vengeance, and on this account I have said little of that subject in what I have published. If Turkey is to continue to administer the government of Bulgaria, I can understand the cry for vengeance on a large scale with a view to example. What we really want is, effectual prevention.

16. On this capital subject Lord Derby says, “ We

have a right to claim security against similar outrages for the future."

Will this crowning declaration satisfy the nation? "Security against similar outrages;" what security? Read in connection with what precedes, with the objections taken to local independence, with the reserve as to all the principles of future policy, and with the insinuations against foreign politicians and foreign Powers, I am compelled to say the meaning of the phrase is clear enough. It means more promises and more firmans, to be followed by more protests and more remonstrances. More of "You will represent to the Porte;" "You will urge upon the Porte!" "You will press strongly upon the Porte," all the lessons which we know it to be radically incapable, not so much of learning, as of putting into practice.

In the present most critical circumstances, it is time to protest against these protests, and to remonstrate against these remonstrances; which are in serious danger of degenerating into a system no better than an organized imposture on the nations of Europe. As well remonstrate with a pestilence or a flood. The time has come for saying, *you must.* Let Europe define carefully what is just, and then exact it; and let Great Britain be the guide of the chariot of Europe, and no longer the drag upon the wheel. The nation has shown its wish; but has yet to show that its wish is its will, and that it shall be done.

When I published ten days ago, it was my hope that the mind of the Government might receive the requisite impulse from the national movement, without invoking any other aid than that of its assembled wisdom. This hope has disappeared; and I now cordially follow Lord Hartington in the judgment he has given—that the circumstances of the time demand the early re-assembling of Parliament.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your faithful servant,

W. E. GLADSTONE.

LESSONS IN MASSACRE;

OR,

THE CONDUCT OF THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT IN AND ABOUT BULGARIA

SINCE MAY, 1876.

CHIEFLY FROM THE PAPERS PRESENTED BY COMMAND.

BY THE

RIGHT HON. W. E. GLADSTONE, M.P.

“Away, with me, all you whose souls abhor
The uncleanly savours of a slaughterhouse;
For I am stifled with this smell of sin.”

KING JOHN, iv. 3.

LONDON:

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.

1877.

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LESSONS IN MASSACRE.

I.

THE INTRODUCTION.

THE lesson, which the Turkish Government has conveyed to its Mahometan subjects by its conduct since last May in the matter of the Bulgarian rising, cannot be more pithily or more accurately expressed than in the three short English words, "Do it again." My charge is, that this lesson was conveyed; and not only conveyed, but intended to be conveyed; that it is as plain, as if it had been set forth expressly in a Firman of the Sultan, or a Fetwa of the Sheikool Islam. To comprehend aright this great lesson in Massacre, we must look at the facts as a whole, and must carefully scrutinise the details in themselves, as well as in their bearing one upon another. It may seem that one, who is no more than a private individual, is guilty of presumption in dealing with so great and perilous a question. But I have a great faith in the power of opinion, of the opinion of civilised and Christian Europe. It

can remove mountains. I have seen this in the recent past; and I seem to see it in no distant future.

Six months ago, England and Europe had just learned, upon official authority, the reality and extent of the Massacres, and of the outrages far worse than Massacre, in Bulgaria. Over and above the horrors of the perpetration, there was ground for the darkest surmises as to the seat of the ultimate responsibility for those fiendish crimes. Miscreants, fatally prominent in the proceedings, had been decorated and rewarded; and the solemn business of retributive inquiry had been visibly tampered with by the Turkish Government, to which we had been lending, through a blood-stained period, our moral and our material support. But the revelation of the facts was still new; and there had not been time sufficient for clearly carrying home the guilt beyond the wretched men, who performed the deeds of blood and shame. The belief that a Government in alliance with Her Majesty could stand in close complicity with crimes, so foul that the very possibility of them seems to lower the level of our nature, was a belief so startling, nay, so horrible, that it was not fit to be entertained, unless upon the clearest and fullest evidence. And all this time we were unblushingly assured, by one if not more of the organs of the Turkish cause in the London Press, that order, momentarily disturbed in Bulgaria by agents from

abroad, had been restored, and that life, honour, and property were secure under a calumniated but really paternal Government.

As time has gone on, and facts have gradually emerged, those surmises, which at first floated as thin vapours in the air, have acquired more and more of substance and consistency : and at length the copious, but not too copious, Papers supplied to Parliament have so accumulated the evidence, as to leave no longer any room for reasonable doubt. We have now to confront a fact, more revolting than the fact of the Massacres themselves. The supposition, which I have described as too shocking to be entertained in our state of imperfect knowledge, now stands forth as clear as the lurid light of a furnace against the blackness of a nocturnal sky. Let me try to make entirely plain the issue, which in these pages I desire to raise.

There were separate acts which, in September, it was perhaps possible to construe, by a large indulgence, as referable to weakness, to accident, or to the bewilderment and confusion attendant upon war, in a country which never had any but a military organisation, and which has now lost in the main even that solitary ornament. Such a construction would now be irrational. All the acts, and all the non-acts, of the Turkish Government, before the rising when we knew them scantily, during and since the lamentable scenes, when we know them but too fully, stand forth

to view in a dark and fatal consistency. It matters not who was Sultan or who was Vizir. Rushdi was as Mahmoud, and Midhat was as Rushdi, and Edhem thus far is as Midhat. There is a point of development and ripeness in a series of acts, at which tendency becomes proof of purpose; as there is also a point in the accumulation of evidence, at which not to see guilt is in some measure to share it. When deeds admit of no interpretation but one, that one can no longer be honourably avoided. The acts of the Porte, through nine long months, demonstrate a deliberate intention, and a coherent plan. That purpose has been to cover up iniquity; to baffle inquiry; to reward prominence in crime; to punish or discourage humanity among its own agents; to prolong the reign of terror; to impress with a steady coherency upon the minds of its Mahometan subjects this but too intelligible lesson for the next similar occasion, *do it again*.

I hope that my charge against the Porte is now intelligible and clear. My first duty was to make it so. My second is, to allow that no one should accept it from me as proved, but to ask every one to examine and pronounce upon the proof; which will be drawn principally, indeed almost exclusively, from the official information supplied by British Agents. If I take it as my third duty to look around for some palliation of what appears so monstrous a wickedness, I can only find it in this. In what we deem

atrocities, the Porte sees only energy. What we think crimes, the Porte holds to be services. To uphold the existing relation of domination on one side, and servitude on the other, by that FORCE, in which all along the Osmanli have lived and moved and had their being, is for the Turk the one great commandment "on which hang all the law and the prophets." Violence and fury, fraud and falsehood, are sanctified when, in circumstances of adequate magnitude, they are addressed to such an end. The utmost refinements of cruelty, the most bestial devices of lust, become either meritorious or venial, when they are the incidental accompaniments of the good and holy work. All these things, which are terrible to say, are, if true, yet more terrible to leave unsaid. I will therefore set about the proof; and, to give at once a true view of the scope of the undertaking, I will specify its heads.

I. When it had become plain, long after the fact, that the Massacres could not be hushed up, in the manner of an everyday occurrence, the Porte attempted to veil them by ordering inquiries not judicial, but simply illusory, in the hands of men altogether unfit.

II. This expedient having failed, the next was to appoint another inquiry under judicial forms, but with ample security, whether in the characters of the men, the forms of proceeding, or the instructions given, or

possibly from all, against its attaining the ends of justice. Even this inquiry was not extended, for many months, to the North of the Balkan.

III. The conduct of the insurgents in the rebellion afforded no warrant whatever for the conduct of the Turks in the suppression.

IV. After that suppression, after all the streams of blood that had been shed, Bulgarians were imprisoned by thousands, and detained in foul dens under the name of prisons, on the vaguest charges of complicity in the insurrection. Detained (mostly) for long terms, often, when no charge could be formulated against them, they were left to perish in their gaols. Large numbers were condemned and hung : while those who were liberated, or were sent in transit from prison to prison, were subjected to shameful, and in some cases murderous ill-treatment.

V. While all this was going on, honours and rewards were copiously showered upon the miscreants, who had distinguished themselves by superior atrocity.

VI. And, as a just counterpart to the last named proceeding, those Mahometans, who had nobly hindered or slackened the work of blood, sometimes at great risk to themselves, were in every instance either passed over or dismissed.

VII. We have distinct cases, in which Mahometan Commissioners on the bench shamefully interrupted the proceedings to hinder the course of justice ; and

the declaration of the Consul of the United States that Selim Effendi tortured prisoners in gaol to compel them to give the evidence he desired, which was made in September last, has not yet been met.

VIII. No attempt was made to restore in any sense the dwellings of the people, which had been destroyed wholesale, until there had come a peremptory diplomatic demand from England, scarcely less than an order.

IX. When these so-called restorations began, they appear to have been made by the forced labour of the people, principally of Christians already plundered and destitute; with a contribution from the Porte, apparently less than one-tenth of what English alms alone, to say nothing of Russian gifts, have supplied for the destitute, and less than one-hundredth of the ruin which, by its agents, it had wrought.

X. The extortions of the Government under the name of taxes were still continued in districts, and upon persons, whom their servants had reduced to misery.

XI. All this time the outrages were also continued; the same in kind, though on a scale less magnificent and imperial than in the month of May; and it is a moral certainty, that they continue still.

XII. Though it was only by a supply of regular forces, under proper command, that security could be re-established, these troops were advisedly kept

back ; and, when the diplomatic pressure for them was found too strong for direct refusal, a promise to supply them was made and broken.

XIII. Among all the descriptions, or references, by the Porte, touching these horrible and shameful excesses, there is not found one single word of condemnation or regret.

XIV. On the contrary, it is officially denied that any excesses at all occurred on the part of the Mahometans. The Commission down to the date of Oct. 30 had not been able so much as to determine that the great massacre of Batak was a criminal transaction.

XV. When the accused Bulgarians have been hung, and the prisons at length nearly emptied, but proceedings against Turkish criminals hardly begun, and when an Amnesty is demanded for the Christians, the Porte, by a counter-proposal of a general amnesty, seeks to cover its own still unpunished agents.

XVI. After all the acts of falsehood, concealment, obstruction, and delay have been exhausted, with reward or impunity for the bad, discouragement or dismissal for the good, and the careful maintenance of the reign of terror in the desolated region, it is officially declared by the highest authority, that the proceedings in the suppression of the Bulgarian rising were not worthy of condemnation but of praise.

XVII. And it may now be stated as a matter beyond doubt, that the inquiry into the excesses, the granting of which was a concession to pressure, has proved to be a fictitious and pretended inquiry, beginning in obstruction, and ending in mockery.

The English Government, which on the 21st of September demanded reparation, security, and signal punishment of principal offenders, is disparaged and insulted by the substantial refusal of its demands.

And I may now again sum up these accusations by saying that, if proved, they show that the Turkish Government has since the Massacres, by word and act, been steadily inculcating this one lesson—*do it again*.

Before dealing with the charges specifically, I must premise two or three observations.

First, the facts are incomplete; that is to say, they are not the whole facts. It is possible that there may be circumstances, unknown to us, which might in some points diminish the force of some among those known. But, in the first place, the known facts (and I have omitted very many) are such that, over and above what is needed for proof, they leave a large surplusage of force. Secondly, they have been collected by men impartial and, in almost every case, officially responsible. Thirdly, it is plain that the great hindrance to a yet fuller development of the case has not been the manufacture of false complaints by the Bulgarians, but

the terror of recollection, and the terror of anticipation, which has made it extremely difficult in many instances to obtain from them any full statements in accusation of their masters.* Fourthly, there is no portion of the evidence which leads to darker inferences, than that which is supplied by the language of the Porte and of its agents. Again, viewing the marked general character of the facts, the only reasonable supposition is that their further multiplication would only have worsened the case in its quantity; as to quality, nothing could worsen it. Lastly, I have laboured hard to make myself master of these Papers; but, from their great and miscellaneous mass, and the difficulty of tracing their order, I may in this or that instance have failed, not wilfully, to state the case with adequate fulness and exactitude.

Secondly. I hold it to be a reasonable inference from the whole circumstances, and in particular from the conduct of the Porte as an accessory after the fact, that the Bashi Bazouks were originally chosen as the main instruments of repression, together with the Mussulman population, in order that it might be the more effective, that is to say, the more terrible, the more bloody, and the more brutal. For we find that this was the surmise of those best qualified to judge (*e. g.* Papers I. 432). And again,

See *c. g.* Papers I. 524.

there is no other reason to be assigned for the employment of the irregulars, and for letting loose the population. There was ample time to supply troops between the first of May, when the first serious events occurred (Papers I. 144-6, and Schuyler,* Section on the Insurrection of May, 1876), and the tragedy of Batak, which occurred on the 9th of May.

To say they were wanted elsewhere, would be ridiculous. Only an insignificant fraction of the army was employed in Bosnia and Herzegovina; the empire generally was tranquil; and the war with Serbia did not break out until two months after the beginning of the brief revolt.

At the same time, we have not here the cumulative proof from acts anterior to the crisis, which establishes the subsequent sanction and adoption of the Massacres. The light, thrown by that after-conduct upon the prior measures, leaves little room for doubt, that a repression of such a character, as that which actually happened, was within the original intentions of the Porte. I state this, however, not as demonstration, but as reasonable inference.

* It may be well to mention that the Report of Mr. Schuyler, to which my references are made, is an enlarged and digested form of the document which appears in Papers I. 167. I translate from the French version, kindly sent me by the author. It is dated Nov. 20, 1876.

II.

THE PROOF.

I. It would appear that at the outset the Porte was thoroughly satisfied with the Repression, and had nothing to do but to imprison, try, and hang Bulgarians, and to distribute rewards like our War Office and Admiralty after some gallant service. It was very gradually made to understand that there was other work, not indeed to do, but to pretend to do. The first proceeding taken by the Porte in the vindication of justice was the appointment of a Commissioner, as late as July 17, to examine, as was pretended, into crimes committed in May. We read in the Papers of 1876, under that date (III. 376): "A Turkish functionary of high position has been sent as Extraordinary Commissioner to suppress the excesses being committed in Bulgaria. He will be furnished with full powers to inflict summary punishment."

It is necessary here to consider whether this Government, with its defective organisation, was in real, or only in official, ignorance of the gravity of the case?

We now know the proper answer, in connection with a most singular occurrence, which Sir Henry Elliot has mentioned, but not explained.

It was on the 26th of last June, that the first questions were put in the two Houses of Parliament to the Government of this country respecting the Bulgarian Atrocities. The answer, certainly given with perfect truth, was to the effect that there was no official information to justify the statements in circulation. But in February, 1877, we became for the first time aware that, twelve days before that date, Vice-Consul Brophy had sent from Bourgas a report, correcting or reversing a former report of June 4, and setting forth fully the horrible massacre of unresisting Bulgarians at Boyadjik by Shefket Pacha. "Of some 2000 men, women, and children, only about 50 escaped." There were the usual accompaniments of plunder and kidnapping. In the Caza of Bourgas "brigandage and robbery are, as usual, the order of the day." A man of ninety had been carried to the mountains, another man, who is named, had been burned with hot irons upon the breast, for purposes of extortion. A Commissioner had been sent; but "the local authorities had already concerted steps to prevent his arriving at the knowledge of the truth." Such are some of the contents of the despatch which, while England was still in the dark on this vital matter, was calmly slumbering in the pigeon-holes of the Embassy at Constantinople. But on the 8th of September, when the Indignation was already at its height, there arrived at the Foreign Office a despatch from Sir H. Elliot,

which commenced with the following unimpassioned remark. "The inclosed despatch from the Vice-Consul Brophy appears not to have been forwarded, as it ought to have been, when it was received" (Papers I. 116, 117).

It had been, however, immediately communicated to Safvet Pacha; and the business of ineffectual protest was, for the thousandth time, duly recommenced. Of the miscreant Shefket Pacha I treat elsewhere. What I now wish to bring home is this: that within a few days (as it must have been) after the 14th of June the Porte was made aware, on British and official authority, of one of the worst of the Bulgarian Massacres. It had appointed a Commissioner to inquire; and measures to make the local inquiry useless had already been taken by its own local authorities. It was with this knowledge of the scale of the horrors which had been perpetrated, that the Porte appointed Kiani Pacha to make his general inquiry.

Of the "full powers" to "suppress excesses," and "inflict summary punishment," with which the Parliamentary Papers of 1876 conveniently closed, and on which for a time we fed in delusive hope, we hear no more. But we find Kiani Pacha acquainting Mr. Schuyler (see his last Section) that the insurgents had slain a Mudir's wife and daughter; whereas he had no daughter, and his wife was alive and absent.

The Porte likewise sent other chosen Agents to

report upon the condition of Bulgaria. The most important inquiry, which embraced the Southern Vilayet, was intrusted to Edib Effendi.

Musurus Pacha, without doubt acting simply as the mouthpiece of his Government, on the 4th of August sends this Report of Edib Effendi, for the Vilayet of Adrianople, to Lord Derby, with the assurance that

“This conscientious Report exposes in the most impartial manner the latest events of which Bulgaria has been the scene ; it makes the facts appear in their true light, and shows in the most indisputable manner which side committed those atrocities that have so deeply moved the Sublime Porte and all Europe.” (Papers of 1876, No. V. p. 27.)

And so forth.

In this paper we hear much of the outrages committed by Bulgarians ; and the Commissioner, in winding up his preposterous account of what happened at Batak, bursts into a noble indignation, and even curses (‘ Rapport,’ p. 11) those who had induced the Bulgarians to rebel. According to him, there was a sanguinary battle, with heavy losses on both sides ! According to Baring (I. 154), there was “hardly any loss inflicted on either side in action.” Of the massacre, the burning, the heaps of unburied corpses of women and children, there is not a trace in the “conscientious Report” of Edib Effendi.

Nor is there, according to this worthy, a trace of

any one cruel, disgraceful, or even precipitate act by a Mussulman ; though he tells us of their extraordinary care in sparing women and children (p. 8). But as I am accusing the Turkish Government of deliberate and wholesale falsehood, used to conceal its other and still greater crimes, I will refer more explicitly to his account of the proceedings at Boyadjikevi, in contrast with that of Mr. Baring.

He says that, in a severe action, most of the houses took fire, and all the cattle attached to them thereupon took refuge with the Turkish soldiery. The losses of the Bulgarians were between 70 and 80 ; no women or children, except one single woman hit by a ball (' Rapport,' p. 13). The number was swelled, by the exaggeration of the villagers, to 100 or 110.

We turn to Mr. Baring (I. 158), and we find that, out of 139 houses, all were burned but 20 ; 143 men and 6 women were massacred ; 13,000 animals were carried off. Mr. Schuyler, at a much later date, gives the official number of the slain (Section on Sliven) at 170, including 2 priests, 8 women, and 8 children. The Kaimakam of Yamboli took 120 cows for his own share. It is not pretended that at this village any Mussulman had been slain. The cause, which led the villagers to meet together and consider their state, was that some Turks came to extort money on the 24th and 25th of May, and " ravished one man's wife and daughter " (I. 158).

We cannot therefore be surprised, if the Report

of Edib Effendi exhausted the long-suffering even of Sir Henry Elliot, and was described by him as "entirely untrustworthy;" if Mr. Baring treats it as "pretty correct" in the part which does *not* relate to the Massacres, and as false or worthless in what does (I. 155, 166); and if Consul Schuyler (*sub fin.*) bluntly characterises it as "a string of falsehoods."

Such was the official mendacity, by which the Porte, three months after the Massacres, strove to delude Europe and to conceal its crimes.

II. But the air was stirred disagreeably by strong vibrations from the English Parliament and Press, which partially forestalled the noble movement of the people; and the matter could not rest here; for, if opinion were too impudently braved, what would become of the moral support that had been officially promised, and the material support that had been actually given, and not withdrawn, by the ancient ally on whom Turkey could always depend? On the 29th of August, Earl Derby thought it necessary to warn the Government at Constantinople of the rising indignation and disgust of the nation: and about September 12 or 13 they must have been put in possession by the post of his despatch of September 5. At length, under the compulsion of the tempest from the West, so late as the 17th September, four months after the Massacres, a new Commission was appointed to do what we were told had been done in July; to inquire, and punish the guilty.

It would be instructive to see the terms of this appointment; but they have not been supplied (I. 371).

It was composed of four Mussulmans and four Christians. Among each moiety, says Sir H. Elliot, "were true and resolute men; but there are others in whom equal confidence cannot be felt." Unfortunately, he does not tell us which were which. In my eyes, the appointment of Christians as such is a matter of small moment. What we want is the virtue and courage of the man, not his religious profession. Of the Christian servants of the Porte, some are venal, some are servile. I rather think Blacque Bey is a Christian; but the name of a Blacque is attached to the shameful document which suppresses the 'Courier d'Orient,' and (August 3) speaks of the "pretended excesses" in Bulgaria.*

What I submit is this; that Turkey offered a fresh insult to us, and to the whole civilised world, in daring to appoint on this Commission, *quæ sera tamen respexit inertem*, any members, of whom Sir Henry Elliot has to record that confidence could not be reposed in their character and courage (I. 371): and of whom he does not even say, that they formed a minority in the Commission.

It was in part to encourage the better-minded

* *Prétendus*. 'The Bulgarian Horrors,' p. 29. The subsequent language leaves little room for doubt that *pretended*, and not *alleged*, is the true sense of the word.

Commissioners against their colleagues, that Mr. Baring was sent to attend the proceedings. Sir H. Elliot also thought it would encourage witnesses to speak, who might otherwise avoid the risk.

It was only at a later date that the Commission was empowered to include within its scope the Vilayet of the Danube. But it never went there at all.

We shall see farther on what was the conduct of the Commission.

III. It may be thought that a defence for the Turks is to be found in the allegations of cruel acts done by the revolted Bulgarians. On this plea, I take leave to assert that there is no such defence; nor the shadow of it.

1. Outrages by oppressed inferiors do not excuse like outrages by the race which has held them down, and ground them into debasement, by superior force: much less do they excuse outrages at least a hundredfold in amount, and immeasurably different in their savage and filthy brutality.

2. Assertions from Turkish agents of outrages by Bulgarians are of no more weight, than their denials of outrages by Turks, which are shown by impartial reports to be valueless. It is remarkable, however, that the Turks themselves deal mainly in generalities on the subject, and allege (Schuyler, *sub fin.*) not more than twelve deaths of Mahometan women and children.

3. The assertions by Christian Commissioners of

the Porte (I. 198), that the insurgents committed deeds of atrocity, are of no higher value, until we know that they were men of integrity and of courage, who would both wish and dare to speak the truth. They are also almost uniformly vague and without particulars.

4. Vice-Consul Dupuis has indeed reported (August 7, I. p. 51), that at Otlou-kevi the Bulgarians massacred eighty Mussulmans. But this appears only to prove his own credulity. Mr. Baring, in a document (I. 150) which "he thinks may be relied on," gives the number slain at Otlou-kevi by the insurgents at 14. The Christians killed at the same place, according to a detailed list, were 763 : viz.—

Men	...	...	...	...	262
Women	...	...	...	...	284
Children	...	...	...	...	217

Mr. Dupuis also reports two cases which, if they happened, were truly atrocious: that a boy had his fore-arms flayed; that a child was cut to pieces (and his flesh offered for sale—to whom?) Also that there were "unspeakable atrocities" on females. Mr. Baring, in a much fuller and more careful statement (I. 156), reports not one of these things; but says, two women were killed, one of them fighting. Mr. Schuyler, in summing up, mentions the same number, informs us that both were killed in a

skirmish, and adds the remarkable words, as applicable to the entire insurrection :

“ No woman, no child among the Turks was killed in cold blood. No woman was violated ; no Turk tortured.”

Mr. Dupuis ought, it would appear, either to support his statement, or to withdraw it. I see no cause, however, for ascribing it to intentional partiality.

5. Finally, we have learned from Mr. Baring, that the document called ‘ Catechism ’ or ‘ Instructions ’ of the Bulgarian leaders is authentic. In that document the orders are express (I. 194) ; “ no violence, no plunder, for men who submit ; the aged, the women, and the children, are to be watched over, as much as the honour and life of our own people.” (Nos. 12, 13.)

Mr. Baring sums up by saying on this part of the case : “ A small minority of the population committed reprehensible acts, which merited punishment ” (I. 166).

IV. The proceedings of the Porte against the perpetrators of massacre were slow, late, and reluctant ; those against the Bulgarians were brisk, lively, and spontaneous. On July 20 (I. 12) many Bulgarians had already been hanged for defending their houses and families against the Bashi Bazouks. Though it is impossible to obtain any full view of them from the Papers, it is also clear that the proceedings were wholesale.

Feeling the real importance of this count in the indictment, and of the contrasted proceedings against those who executed the Vengeance, I requested in the House of Commons on the 12th of February that the Government would endeavour, for greater accuracy, to put together succinctly the figures, so far as they might be at their command. With great courtesy, they sent immediately a telegram to Constantinople for the purpose; but as yet (March 10) without result.

Mr. Baring has given us certain figures for the districts of Philippopolis and Adrianople; at the first 1956 were imprisoned, and at the second he believes about 1200 (I. 159). To the northward, at Tirnovo, 430 were imprisoned (I. 162). At Philippopolis, 900 were still in prison when Mr. Baring came; on the 6th of September there were still 104 (I. 254). The total number of arrests, following upon the massacre of 15,000, may have been from four to five thousand.

As regards treatment in prison, Mr. Dupuis gives us the narrative of the priest, Peter Patcharutoff (I. 75). Charged as a rebel, he denied it. No evidence was produced. He was beaten, threatened with knives and with death by his "escort" of zaptiehs and Bashi Bazouks; compelled to save his life to sign a confession; and, on retracting it, he was first chained to the prison window, then shut up for five days in a sort of cupboard, where it was impossible to stretch his limbs or to sleep.

The Bulgarians of Philippopolis asserted (I. 147), that the greater part of the evidence was obtained by torture, while the Turks denied it. Three men told their own experience to Mr. Baring.

One was kept seventy-eight days in prison, nineteen of them in a cell with but just room to lie down. Declaring he had no evidence to give, he was partially hung, his toes just touching the ground, and kept so till he fainted. He was never examined; and at length was released (I. 147).

Another priest stated that he was confined for twenty-eight days, seven of them in a privy, and for three of them without either food or water.

A Greek physician who visited the prisons, thinks that, if there had been torture of these kinds, complaint would have been made to him. I am concerned to say that in my opinion a Greek, in Turkish employment at Philippopolis, was about the last man to whom a Bulgarian would be likely to complain.

Mr. Calvert some time later (September 6, I. 254), appears to have cleared up this subject: for he says that "the testimony of numerous eye-witnesses," as well as of sufferers, established "that violent means were used to extort the required confessions." In the case of three men from Tchirpan, a Turk confirmed the testimony (*ibid.*).

We now come to the savage vengeance of the Porte through its tribunals; not tribunals appointed to try the authors of the Massacre, but those which

dealt with charges of complicity in the poor and feeble rising.

In the Vilayet of the Danube, the movement had been very slight. Chakir Bey, in his Report dated July 2 (p. 7), says the losses of the Mussulmans consisted in some children and some shepherds killed near Yeni Kevy, with some wounded in actual conflict. The Prosecutor for the Government in the proceedings reported by Consul Reade on Aug. 21 (I. 53) charged two men capitally. But the Court condemned three; and they were executed at the end of the same sitting. In one case the cord broke three times; and the fourth time the man was partially held up by the soldiers, that it might not break again. This is not lawful execution, but death by torture. The other two were "most inhumanly treated" on their way to execution. Other severe sentences were pronounced; and "a few were acquitted."

The special tribunal of Philippopolis had so soon as Aug. 5 condemned to hard labour 65 Bulgarians and to death 27, of whom 25 had been executed. At Adrianople 18 were hung (I. 159). Two men, wholly unconnected with the revolt, were seized by Fazli Pacha, who got drunk, and ordered them to be hung immediately (I. 161). One officer refused obedience; another more docile was readily found, and the act was promptly performed. Twenty-two were hung at Tirnovo (I. 162). Twenty-five died in

prison at Philippopolis. It is plain that we are to count in hundreds the lives destroyed by sentence or by ill-usage. Mr. Baring stated the hangings (Oct. 30, p. 668) at about a hundred. These trials were but an afterpiece to the Vengeance, and an afterpiece in perfect keeping with the principal performance.

Hanging, on a smaller scale, was still proceeding in November (I. 752).

Mr. Baring says that whether the prisoners were tortured or not, there is no doubt that they were, while being conveyed to Philippopolis, most brutally ill-treated. Four hundred men, heavily chained, were "mercilessly beaten by their escort, and pelted and insulted by the Mussulman mob." Prisoners were beaten by zaptiehs, even on the way from the prison to the court. Of eighty sent from Philippopolis to Sofia, five died on the road (I. 147). Within the prison, 265 men were confined for four days in a bath, without the slightest attempt at drainage, and with such a stench, that the guards could not sit even in the ante-room, but remained in the street. Nami Effendi, First-Secretary to the Government, found the room-doors within the khans open on account of the heat: he ordered them to be shut. The state of things had been mitigated by July 21st (I. 148).

On August 11 (I. 61) it was promised by the Porte that all the prisoners not actually under trial,

except ringleaders, should be set at liberty without delay. But it was on November 1 that we find the trials of the remaining Bulgarian prisoners, who had been in prison since May, were only about to begin (I. 670). Finally (II. 60), on December 4, Mr. Baring *hopes* that in a short time all the prisoners will be set free.

V. I come to the important subject of the liberal rewards bestowed by the Turkish Government upon its most distinguished miscreants, to encourage them in their profession.

And as it is desirable, without neglecting others, to concentrate attention on one conspicuous case, let us state, at least partially, that of General Shefket Pacha.

As the praise of a certain early Christian was in all the churches, so the infamy of Shefket Pacha has sounded throughout Christendom.* It is enough to refer to the reports of Baring and Schuyler, and to my slight sketch from Vice-Consul Brophy (see *sup.*, p. 17). "The atrocity of his proceedings," as reported on June 14, says Sir H. Elliot, "has been fully confirmed by all subsequent inquiries" (I. 116). "At Boyadjik there was not a semblance of revolt, the inhabitants were perfectly peaceable" (I. 159). Every house was burned except 20: 143 men and 6 women massacred (I. 158). For this service he received a

* Respecting Shefket Pacha, see I. 92, 116, 158-9, 257-8, 417, 729, 753; II. 131. Schuyler, Section on Sliven.

“high place in the Palace” (I. 159). Under pressure from without, he was dismissed on Sept. 2 (I. 92); but he was almost immediately (Sir H. Elliot, Sept. 26, I. 417) named a Member of the Military Council; and he is still retained upon it, although frequent representations have been made to the Porte that, in the face of the grave charges against him, his employment, till he had cleared himself, was “*almost* a defiance of public opinion.”

As if all this were not enough, recently it was stated by the ‘Times’ Correspondent that Shefket had been appointed to a command on the Danube. The statement was contradicted here, in answer to a question in Parliament. But, says the Correspondent (‘Times,’ March 1, 1877), it had been published in two Turkish Journals on Jan. 29 and 31, on Feb. 12 in the ‘*Courier d’Orient*’ and the ‘*Phare du Bosphore*,’ and on Feb. 13 in the semi-official ‘*Turquie*.’ And all without contradiction or notice on the spot from the Censors of the press. It is a fair inference, that this further appointment was intended; and that, had not public attention been drawn to the subject, it would have been made.

Meantime, the General is not without defenders; and the ‘Times’ (March 1, 1877) further quotes the following passage of supreme eulogy from the ‘*Vérité*’ of February 12, 1877, which is described as a Government organ. It refers to accusations of conspiracy made against this “important personage.”

“S. E. Shefket Pacha, entre autres, est un des meilleurs officiers de l’armée, dont le caractère, le mérite personnel, *et le passé*, sont les plus sûrs garants; son zèle, son patriotisme, et sa fidélité envers son pays militent trop en sa faveur pour qu’une enquête ait été jugée nécessaire.”

The fact that this paramount offender should have remained unpunished, rewarded, free, becomes yet more astonishing when we remember not only his place in the reports of Baring and Schuyler, but the efforts of Sir Henry Elliot, from the middle of June onwards, and at the very time when, according to Lord Beaconsfield, Turkey had no other wish than to take the advice of England, to obtain some measure of justice in this instance. The Porte did not attempt to show his innocence. She had in the Salonica case tried and retried, sentenced and resentenced, her own official servants under French and German pressure; and now we, the darling Power, could not obtain the smallest *modicum* of justice against Shefket. There is but one explanation. He was an agent; there was a principal behind. Who is that principal? Did Abdul Kerim, the General of the Army in Serbia, prevent his being sent to Philippopolis to be tried, and receive in consequence the thanks of his harem? (‘Times’ Corresp., March 1, 1877.) Does Shefket carry a telegraphic order of that same General to burn the village of Slivno, which Haidar spared, and was thereafter dismissed? Is he or is he

not a relative of Midhat? All this may be capable of disproof. Why was it not put to the test, by sending the sanguinary miscreant to Philippopolis for trial?

These ideas are not the mere offspring of carelessness or malignity. Sir Henry Elliot, incredulous to the last degree of any charge against a Turkish functionary, but ever honourable and plain-spoken when he sees the truth, returned on the 26th of November to the subject he had been so wearily and hopelessly treating for many months, and spoke to the Minister of War as follows (I. 729):

“I told him that, as the General professed to have in his pocket orders which would show that he had done no more than carry out his instructions, his continued impunity would lead to a belief in the truth of his assertion.”

From May to September, from September to November, from November to March, his impunity has continued. Could the wit of man have devised a more eloquent instruction to “do it again?”*

But though Shefket may be considered the Choregos of iniquity, some of those, who for like distinctions obtained other rewards, must not remain unnoticed.

Hakki Pacha, who, when acting as a judge, took

* He appears to have succeeded in diffusing round him a congenial tone; for Vice-Consul Brophy reports that he heard a Secretary of his “declare that the whole race of Bulgarians, innocent or guilty, ought to be exterminated.”—I. 10.

part against the Bulgarians whom he tried, was appointed in September to be Governor of Widdin (I. 296, 331). The Ambassador is desired to warn the Porte against the probable consequences of so unwisely an appointment. The result, as usual, is *nil*.

Achmet Aga, in acknowledgment of his monstrous cruelty and iniquity at Batak, received the order of the Medjidje (I. 155). Presently a storm arose. He remained long at large; but it was at length found necessary to arrest him, Sept. 2 (I. 92), and to try him. After much shuffling, he was, on the 27th of December, condemned to death. Bulgarian Christians, when condemned, were executed forthwith. Achmet Aga still lived at the date of the latest news.

For the pillage and burning of Yenikur, Nedjib Effendi was decorated (I. 161), so was Toussoun Bey, the hero of Derwent (or Klissoura) (I. 165, 522, and Schuyler). Hafiz Pacha (I. 165) received a command in Serbia (I. 165).

Many others are denounced by Mr. Baring (I. 156, 255), and Schuyler (*sub fin.*). Not one has been executed. The Vali of Adrianople has been dismissed, and there have been a few sentences to hard labour. We have not the smallest security that they will be carried into effect.

The statement of Sir H. Elliot, that Shefket Pacha alleged he carried with him justifying orders, is thus enlarged in the report of Schuyler.*

* Section on Sliven.

“Shefket Pacha quitted Boyardjik with the intention of subjecting the surrounding villages to a similar fate, and produced a telegram to that effect from the Serdar-ékrem Abdul Kerim Pacha, which ordered the destruction of those places.”

Here is a positive, public, and official statement ; to which we hear of no contradiction.

VI. My sixth charge is that those Mahometans, who had hindered or slackened the work of blood, sometimes at great risk to themselves, were in every case either passed over or dismissed.

There is hardly a more touching chapter in the whole sad story, than the conduct of these good Mahometans. From the bottom of our hearts let us cry, “May God reward them !” Having the same temptations as others to indulge the spirit of revenge, yet, in the teeth of their co-religionists, and despite the well-understood sentiments of their Government, they did their duty in the day of need ; and in the Day of Judgment, without doubt, their doing it will be remembered.

It is a pleasure, alas ! a solitary pleasure, to record them.

Aziz Pacha, who was unfavourable to the arming of the Mussulman population, was recalled from Philippopolis (I. 146).

Hamid Pacha, who succeeded him, saved the city, says Mr. Baring (*ibid.*), by his firmness and impartiality.

Haydar Effendi, the Mutessarif of Slimnia (I. 383 ; I. 166, 247 ; II. 208, 210) was spoken of by the Christians "in terms of the highest praise," and delivered that Caza or district from devastation. He then frustrated the design of Shefket Pacha to burn the village of Slivno ; and he has been dismissed, according to the Correspondent of the 'Times' (March 1, 1877), from his place.

Yamboli was saved from the destruction intended by Shefket Pacha through the interference of "a Mussulman named Hafiz Effendi, a most noble and liberal-minded man. Braving the opinion of his co-religionists, he took as many Christian families as he could into his house, and, going to Shefket, insisted that the plundering should be stopped." (I. 158).

The case of Hadji Shaban requires a longer notice. He was Mudir of Kazan. Hearing that 300 Bashi Bazouks were marching upon the village of Virbitza, he started, alone, to overtake them. Two Christian peasants came into view. The ruffians began to observe one to another that it would be as well to kill them, for they might have money upon them. Hadji Shaban thereupon halted them, and went himself over to the two peasants. Hearing murmurs, he boldly pointed his gun at the 300, and ordered them to pass on. Abashed, as is constantly the case with the Turk, by manful conduct, the body marched forwards the fifty paces he had com-

manded, and Hadji Shaban took the rescued peasants home. Now mark the Vice-Consul's conclusion (I. 383). "Shortly afterwards, Hadji Shaban was dismissed from his post; I do not know for what reason."

In the district of Tournova (or Tirnovo?), after 600 Christians had been destroyed on the side of the people, and six Mussulmans on the side of the Government, *only* twenty-four Bulgarians were executed under judicial sentence. But this number "would have been at least tripled," says Mr. Baring, had it not been that Ali Shefik Bey, the President of the Commission, was "a just man," and did what he could on the side of mercy (I. 162).

Eshrif Pacha, Vali of Salonica, was indefatigable in his efforts to obtain the deliverance of the women and children kidnapped from Batak (II. 81).

Ismail Effendi, sent to Isladi to recover the stolen cattle, was met by a proclamation from the authorities of the place that any man who claimed cattle, and failed to establish his claim, would be punished. He left to report the facts, and was sent back. Here we lose sight of him (II. 278).

Others, named by Vice-Consul Brophy for good service, are Ahmet Effendi, at Slimnia; Ismail Bey, at Karnabad; Ibrahim Aga, at Aidos (I. 247).

I close this head with an extract from Mr. Baring's Report of September 1st. His list, framed at that date, is of course not exhaustive.

“Those, who have committed atrocities, have been rewarded; while those, who have endeavoured to protect the Christians from the fury of the Bashi Bazouks and others, have been passed over with contempt.

“For example :—

“Shefket Pacha holds high office in the Palace.

“Hafiz Pacha has a command in Serbia.

“Achmet Agha has been decorated; so have Toussoun Bey, and Nedjib Effendi, Kaimakam of Plevna.

“On the other hand, has any reward been given to Hafiz Effendi, who saved Yamboli; to the Mutevelli of Karlovo; to Husni Effendi, commander of the troops at Yamboli, who saved those places; to Rustem Effendi, Yuzbachi at Tournova, who, having fought against insurgents really in arms, saved the prisoners from the fury of the mob; or to Haidar Effendi, Mutessarif of Slimnia?” (I. 165).

The answer is, No! and the reason is plain. The miscreants were rewarded, the humane and just were treated, in the words of Mr. Baring, “with contempt,” in perfect consistency with the whole method of the conduct of the Porte since the rising, and for the more emphatic inculcation of the lesson to *do it again*.

Many times (*e.g.* I. 28, 729, and 581) the Porte, with its usual and incomparable hardihood, has pleaded imperfect information as an excuse for the

honours and preferments bestowed on the miscreants. In what strangely crooked channels must this imperfect information have run, when it led the Government *both* to pass over or punish all the good men, and to reward all, so far as we know, who were conspicuously bad!

This imperfection, however, was removed on the 7th of October. On that day, not through his own exertions, but by information from the British Ambassador, Safvet Pacha was made aware (I. 488) who were the good Turks, that had nobly striven for humanity and justice. Five months have elapsed since the list was supplied; and we do not find that, even for decency, or even to lull suspicion, so much as one among these good men has been re-appointed or rewarded. Is it possible that circumstantial proof can further go?

VII. I have touched on the character of the Commission; I now come to its conduct.

On the 21st of October Sir H. Elliot (I. 581) gives an account of an interview with the Grand Vizir.

“I said that Mr. Baring’s Reports showed that the Commission, in conducting this inquiry, were desirous of favouring the accused, rather than of eliciting the truth.”

The Grand Vizir’s language in reply was “not satisfactory.”

On the 5th of October (I. 521) Mr. Baring had conversed with the whole of the Commissioners. All

of them told him the relations of Mussulmans and Christians had become excellent; that Achmet Aga (since condemned to death) had by his promptitude averted a great public calamity: the fact, that the Bulgarians feared to move about, was admitted; but the reason was that, "knowing themselves to be guilty of all sorts of excesses, they shrank from meeting their Mahometan neighbours."

We have here a tolerably just measure of the character of these judicial functionaries: and it even seems to include the so-called good, as well as the bad.

With reference to the great case of Batak, Mr. Baring proceeds:—

"The Commission attaches great value to the evidence of some Turks, and of some Bulgarians of another village: but they appear to treat with contempt that which is offered by inhabitants of Batak itself" (I. 522).

Otlou-kevi, Avrat-Alan, and other villages had not yet been visited: Dervent (or Klissoura) had, but only one old woman's evidence was taken down. Other witnesses were to be summoned to Philipopolis (I. 522), where it was apparently a practice of the Commission to keep the impoverished people waiting for an indefinite time (I. 583). *Why* the evidence was not taken down at Dervent seems pretty plain.

"In this village the inhabitants certainly spoke out manfully, in spite of the presence of their authorities" (I. 522).

Now as to the capacity of the Commissioners. It appears (I. 582) that Ikiades Bey "was the only member of the Commission who really knew how to examine, the others being utterly inexperienced;" except Selim Effendi, of whom I shall have enough to say further on.

Ikiades Bey examined Achmet Aga, the hero of Batak, with great skill; but, says Mr. Baring (I. 582):—

"I regret to say he was frequently interrupted by the Mahometan members; to such an extent, that at one moment he refused to proceed."

The most atrocious charge, however, that has been raised in connection with the conduct of the Commission, was that of Mr. Schuyler, against Selim Effendi. I will shortly relate the circumstances, so far as I know them.

Mr. Schuyler and the Correspondent of the 'Daily News' ('Daily News,' Sept. 14, 1876) charged on Selim Effendi, a Commissioner, that before the trials he had visited the prisoners in their gaols and made use of torture to procure from them such evidence as he desired.

To this accusation I referred in a letter of Sept. 14th to the 'Daily News,' published on Sept. 16th.

At a later period, I received a letter from Selim Effendi, written in perfectly becoming terms, and complaining, as if innocent he might well do, of so grievous a charge. He entered into details,

the whole of which were connected with the forms in the Court, not to acts before the trials. He pointed to these forms, as clearly demonstrating that nothing of the kind could have taken place.

I lost no time in forwarding his letter to the 'Daily News,' that it might have the advantage of immediate publicity, and it was at once printed by the Editor (Dec. 19, 1876); but he very properly pointed out that the charge related to one thing, and the defence to another.

I pointed out this remarkable fact in a letter to Selim Effendi, dated Dec. 16, and published in an English version on that day by the same journal; I explained who were the real authors of the charge, and expressed my expectation that he would at once address himself to the consideration of it.

Since that time nearly three months have elapsed; but not another word has, to my knowledge, proceeded from Selim Effendi.

Consul Schuyler, however, informs me that he on his side intends to produce evidence in proof of his charge.

VIII. The failures, excesses, and crimes of the Porte are not commonly prompted from without; but the ideas of duty, justice, mercy, are purely exotic, and, as it were, mechanically, if at all, infused into the system. I have not found from the Papers that in May, or June, or July, or August, it had occurred to the Turkish Government that some assistance

ought to be afforded to its houseless, plundered, and be it remembered unaccused, subjects. First (I believe) on the 25th of September (I. 316), we learn, on Turkish authority, that a sum of money had been sent into Bulgaria. But this was four days after * the peremptory despatch of Lord Derby had been written, in which (I. 238) the restoration of buildings, and of industries, was demanded.†

IX. It is, then, four, nay, more nearly five, months after the Massacres, when we begin to hear of the restorations. To repair the devastations of every kind, apparently of a hundred times the amount, the Porte, under the extremest pressure, slowly supplied a sum of 18,000 Turkish pounds (I. 316) = about 16,000*l.*: and ordered the people to find and carry the wood of which the houses were to be built. Mussulmans and Christians were alike included in this command: the latter impoverished and plundered, the former (as a rule) untouched, or enriched by spoil. Mr. Baring says: "I fear it is not too much to say that the greater part of this forced labour will fall on Bulgarians, who can ill afford to give it" (I. 430, 431).

* I take it for granted that the substance of the important despatch of September 21 was made known in anticipation or through Musurus Pacha by telegraph.

† The Turks might certainly have retorted upon Lord Derby the strange plea he had used in May. When they had spent far less, he objected to a demand of this kind in the Berlin Memorandum, on the ground that Turkey had no money to meet it. See Papers of 1876.

To find materials, and bring them to the spot, was imposed upon the rayahs, who could not move out in safety to seek for them : and the cost of restoration was actually entered as a charge against those who were thought likely to have at a future day the means of paying for it (I. 525). From those who had means—means to pay a second time for their own houses—payment was exacted at once : and thus was the work of restoration performed by the Government !

The Christian inhabitants of Peshtera were ordered to provide at Begha 4800 beams of wood, or about eight beams for each able-bodied male (I. 525). A like requisition was made on the Mahometans, but they were rich with plunder, the Christians had only the roof over their heads.

And how was the work carried on ? Mr. Baring tells us on the 8th of October, that of forty-three Turkish houses in the place, no less than forty were then rebuilt or were in course of it, “not a single Christian house (out of sixty-one) had been touched” (I. 526).

All that was wanted to make the scheme of these restorations perfect, was supplied by placing over them Ali Bey, as a superintendent. Mr. Baring says :—

“ If the Commission wished to select a man, whose name would inspire terror in the hearts of the Bulgarians, a most admirable selection has been made ” (I. 670 ; compare 669).

Had there been a spark of human feeling in the breast of the Turkish Government, it would have endeavoured to make palpable to the people the sense of a desire to do justice, and a moral change. But, in point of wantonness, the deeds which followed the great Vengeance almost exceeded those which were included in it. Thus about the middle of July, before we had even learned officially any appreciable portion of the truth, irregulars forwarded by rail from Adrianople to the seat of war amused themselves "in many places" (I. 13) by firing from the train on such Bulgarians as dared to labour in the fields, and even women, as well as men, were wounded in this manner.

True, however, to the arts of falsehood, the Porte continued to send forth anodyne assurances; and, when Sir Henry Elliot had been fairly choked with them, assured the British Government through Musurus Pacha (Nov. 23, I. 716) that all that was needful had been done. Houses rebuilt; carpets, victuals, blankets distributed; peasants supplied with agricultural implements and advances in money. And all this out of a fund of 16,000*l*.

On the 21st of November (II. 265), according to Turkish account, only 1598 houses out of 5300 had been rebuilt. The sum of the matter, under this head, then, is that to the free action of the Porte there is due nothing whatever; that what has been done was extorted by Lord Derby; that it has been

small in amount, late in time, partial in distribution, and a new instrument of oppression to many who had already suffered much.

X. Although the idea of restoration or alleviation in any form does not seem to have occurred to the Turkish mind, one department of the State at least did not forget Bulgaria; that was the Taxing Department.

On September 20, Consul Reade at Rustchuk hears that "the war and other taxes are being peremptorily levied; and that many who have lost their all, and cannot of course pay, are treated with great severity" (I. 415).

He adds, at that date, he is convinced that a system prevails which, "if the insurrection should be renewed, will bring on a far worse state of things than hitherto."

By September 20, this demand had been "suspended" (I. 418) in that district. But at Panagourichta, writes Consul Schuyler, where the local industry was entirely ruined, the people were forced to pay the usual taxes, and to make good the damage done by the Turkish troops. They had been so careless as to burn a granary belonging to a tax-gatherer, and the inhabitants were required to bear the loss. (§ Repression.)

XI. My eleventh head of charge is on the continuance of the outrages, through many weary months after the Massacres. And here the only

difficulty is how to escape from overwhelming the reader with the abundance of the evidence.

In July, writes Vice-Consul Dupuis on the 20th (I. 12), after all that had occurred, there was a fresh levy of Bashi Bazouks at Hasskevi.

“After committing excesses in that town, which ought to have been sufficient warning to the authorities, they were suffered to depart for Philippopolis. The *Caıza* of Hasskevi, and the *Makié* of Kinoush, “which had escaped, comparatively speaking unhurt, the former *razzia* of the Bashi Bazouks,” “were destined this time to become the scene of new outrages, and fresh horrors.”

He then describes the careful organisation, under which these ruffians conducted the business of plunder.

Mr. Reade, who on Aug. 11 reported from Rustchuk the hangings of Bulgarians, on the 15th reports the gross maltreatment of a boy, including the “beating him unmercifully over the head,” by a “regular,” that is to say, a Turkish marine officer; which I name, because he happened himself to witness it. He reported it to the Pasha, who “did nothing whatever” (I. 66).

On the 19th, he mentions that he has “every now and then” reports of robbery, violence, and often murder by the Circassians; a few days before, of six Bulgarians murdered by them. No Bulgarian dare move about, unless with a Turkish guard, “whom he has to pay heavily.” “I have over and over

again spoken to the Pasha on the subject, but to no purpose" (I. 67).

Mr. Brophy, on Aug. 18, reports from Bourgas (I. 117) how on July 21 eight Circassians attacked a Bulgarian family at midnight. The father and son were pricked with daggers to obtain money; the daughter, of thirteen or fourteen, was twice violated, the second time "before her father's eyes." He has heard, but is not quite certain, that the girl was dead. Other outrages were committed on Aug. 3 or 4; and on the 12th, when four Circassians, on a sheep-stealing excursion, fired at the two shepherds. One was killed, the other not expected to live.

On Aug. 26 Mr. Brophy writes from Bourgas (I. 247): "On every side the Bulgarians are robbed, beaten, or killed, by their Circassian or Turkish neighbours. The rayahs are in many places afraid to go to their fields to plough, or to the mill to get their corn ground. The Mussulmans of all races seem to consider that it is lawful to despoil the 'infidel' in every way, and, if the 'infidel' dare to resist, to murder him."

With much more to a like effect; and with a notice of some honourable exceptions "among officials and private gentlemen."

Observe that these reports are from a portion of Bulgaria hardly implicated in the rising. Let us now pass to the south of the Balkans.

Mr. Baring reports on Sept. 26, four months after

the Massacres, "no visible improvement has taken place in the condition of the Bulgarian villagers." The people were taken from their own grounds, to execute forced labour for the Turks, in a case which he names, and he is assured the same goes on throughout the Province (I. 431). On the next day he writes thus from Tatar Bazardjik (I. 432): "Not a day passes without the rayahs being insulted, threatened, and made to feel their inferiority." On the same day, Acting V. C. Calvert reports (I. 430): "The inhabitants of the burnt villages stand so much in dread of the Pomaks,* that they dare not go to the forests to cut wood for new dwellings; whilst the Pomaks make continual raids on the shelterless people, and take what few things they possess."

Passing again to the North, we find that Consul Reade on the 5th of October reports thus (I. 519):—

"The open acts of tyranny and oppression of the chiefs of police, municipality, and such other authorities in power, that are also of daily occurrence, are alone sufficient to goad any people into revolt."

About the same time, October 6th, Consul Sanderson reports on the raids of the Circassians in the Dobrutscha. I will not dwell on the details of plunder and maltreatment: but it is well to notice that when these ruffians came up to serve as troops

* The local name for Mahometan Bulgarians.

to Toultscha, by the order of the Governor, "many of the inhabitants buried their goods." This is one of the minor facts, perhaps more instructive in respect to the daily and habitual life of the subject races in Turkey, than any number of details concerning actual crime.

On the 5th of October, writing from Philippopolis, Mr. Baring repeats his statement "that no improvement had taken place in the condition of the Bulgarians" (I. 521), and supports it by some cases. The murder of a Christian at Strelidja by two fellow-villagers; the women there unable to repair to the field, as the Turks violate them; a man sent to the place to work at harvest, but the Turks attempt to violate *him as well as* his mother, and they fly. A theft happening at Bellova, two Bulgarians are seized; and then two more, who are beaten until they consent to give evidence against the first two. A Bulgarian girl is beaten by a Mussulman gipsy, for refusing to do forced labour for him. Christians demanding the restitution of stolen goods, are threatened for it by the depredators who hold them. Wounded Bulgarians are seen in three cases by Mr. Baring himself: but in the last of these, wonderful to say, and probably owing to his presence, the malefactors had been arrested. Such are a set of instances, wound up with a declaration that "nothing . . . can possibly be worse than the condition of the Christians in this part of Turkey" on the 5th of

October; when the Porte had already had four months to repent of and redress the villainies, which, instead, it protected and rewarded.

One day later, Mr. Calvert writes from the same place (I. 525):—

“As regards the general condition of the Christian peasantry, I regret to say that it is as deplorable as ever. One well-authenticated incident will give an idea of the universal manner in which the Mussulmans are armed. A Pomak child, receiving the other day some real or imaginary offence from a Christian woman in a village near Peshtera, drew a pistol, and fired point blank at the woman, wounding her severely in the belly.”

She lay at Philippopolis “in a precarious state.” For the boy (of 8 or 10 years) the law provided no punishment. For the last four months, at Hasskevi, the Christian inhabitants had been forced to work without pay for the Turks.

In the Kalofer case, the ‘*Courier d’Orient*’ was suppressed for criticising the declaration by Lord Beaconsfield of the falsity of the story that forty girls had been burned there. It was false. In every case of terror, such as this, however large the truth may be, it is sure to be exaggerated here and there by fable. But in that very place the villagers who contradicted the story, said “that many women had been ravished, often in the presence of their relations” (I. 161); a favourite practice, as the

Papers prove, with the Turks. Many women were also killed (I. 14).

At length, on the 12th of November, Mr. Baring reports "a change for the better in the state of public security." But again on the 4th of December, he regrets to have learned "several cases of robbery and violence," and a regular raid, made upon Avrat-Alan by a number of Turks. There were troops in the place, and the robbers fled: but "no arrests were made" (II. 60, 61).

On the 11th of December (II. 78) he reports two deaths "under suspicious circumstances," at Perous-titza, which he fears will make it more than ever difficult to obtain evidence against any Turk. A Bulgarian peasant has been found murdered on the road to Bazardjik. A policeman (zaptieh) steals the cat of an old man; perhaps the only living thing, which was now left him in the world to love. When the old man came to reclaim it, the zaptieh cut him down, and gave him a severe wound in the wrist. He went to Bazardjik to complain; but the brother policemen, with a fine feeling of loyalty to their comrade, drove him off. The zaptieh, thus under Mr. Baring's eyes, was captured; but (p. 79) he escaped. News came, Dec. 15, that he was recaptured. And we hear no more. It is the old story. Everywhere the insolence of old domination breaks out in crime; committed, in a large share of instances, by the professed ministers of the law. If the agent of

a foreign Government be near, if he chance to hear of it, if he be humane, intelligent, active, bold, and persevering, then the Porte is compelled for the moment to mask its habitual purpose of shielding and rewarding outrage in a case like this, and to take some lazy measure towards a trial, in the nature of a first step which need not be followed up. So it is under the happy combination of all these *ifs*, which does not always happen. It did happen in the case of Mr. Baring. But how was it possible, even for him—and I think that the Queen has never had a braver or a better servant—to follow up continuously every case, to track the Porte and its agents through all its shiftings and escapes, to inspire, into what was for every purpose of good no better than a corpse, the hearty pulse of justice?

On the 30th of November (II. 33) Mr. Calvert reported that owing to the presence of soldiers, at last obtained, and to the punishment of some *recent* outrages, a gradual yet continuous improvement was observable. The country was now full of relief-agents, every one of whom would be a centre of protective influence; and it would have been somewhat difficult to keep the troops out of Philippopolis at a time when it had become necessary to mass them in the Peninsula of the Balkans on account of the threatening attitude of the Russian forces.

But on the 19th of December, Mr. Baring is again found entreating protection for the village of Petruch

from those who were its legal, and should have been its zealous protectors. Here, he says, near the Vilayet of Sofia, the Turks show a most lawless spirit, and commit continual robberies (II. 178).

Again going northwards, we find from Mr. Reade on the 30th of December, that through the Vilayet of the Danube the Christians are in great and general alarm; that, while he was there, robberies and violences were committed by other Mussulmans, as well as by Circassians; that Fandoukly Sultan, a notorious and wholesale offender during the massacres, had been all this time at large, until, under pressure from him, bail was exacted; that the villages enjoying security only obtained it by paying Circassians for immunity, at the rate of 3000 to 4000 piastres a year (II. 208).

Here closes the sickening series of official reports. These outrages were thus constantly committed, with abundant shelter from a Government which towards outrage at least was truly paternal, upon a people most of whom had no concern whatever in the rising; and at a time, when the rest were subdued, and even grovelling, under abject terror, and under the memory, mingled with the anticipation, of abominations hard to believe, and in some cases far too foul to name.

Happily we have the promise of a further report from Consul Schuyler upon this subject. In the meantime, for the months of January and February,

I refer to, the petition of Bulgarian Notables, dated Feb. 3, in the 'Daily News' of March 3; to a petition, which has been presented from the villages in the district of Tatar Bazardjik to the Representatives of the Six Powers, and of which I possess a copy; finally to the declaration of a Bulgarian, whom Mr. Jasper Moore, an English gentleman well known in political life, attests to me as among the very best authorities in the country. I subjoin his description, dated Feb. 26, 1877, from Philippopolis.

“The Juggernaut of Turkish extortion is abroad; a debased paper currency, forced labour for transporting military stores, or for working at military works, a second compulsory war contribution, squeeze the very life-blood out of our people. . . . Murders, outrages, and robberies by Mussulmans on Christians are occurring almost daily. Why should they not? Midhat's Constitution was made for the Europeans, and not for the people of this country?”

Such is the continuing condition of Bulgaria. One outrage perhaps in a hundred repressed or noticed, and that always under representation or influence from the agents of foreign Powers; who do not perceive or appreciate the normal utility of these outrages in producing the submissiveness, which is regarded as the only secure basis for the Turkish domination.

XII. The presence of a military force in Bulgaria has been but a bad security against outrage. But it was the only one; since the presence of Bashi Bazouks, or the free action of the Mussulman Pomaks,

was invariably a security not against outrage, but for it. The regulars were heavily implicated, on various occasions, in the crimes of the suppression.* Something of even their character may be inferred from the Blue Books of last year. I quote the case, because I stated it with full detail in Parliament on July 31, 1876, and no contradiction has been or could be given. A party of twelve refugees came back from Dalmatia to Herzegovina, on the invitation of the Porte, under the escort of a party of regulars. The refugees were attacked, and massacred to a man, by some local Mahometans: the appointed guardians stood by and looked on (Papers of 1876, I. 49). However, there was a chance that they might do their duty in Bulgaria, on which the eyes of all Europe were now set. Without them, the ordinary routine of plunder, murder, rape, and bestiality, was certain. Without them, also, says Mr. Sandison, it was not easy to say (I. 372) how far the Commission would or even could do its duty.

* See, for example, Mr. Baring's Report, I. 157. After a recital of horrors (such as the *violation, followed by the murder, of a girl of fourteen, in the presence of her mother*), he says, "The case is not improved by the fact that these deeds were committed not only by Bashi Bazouks, but also by regulars; the Arab soldiers in particular, distinguishing themselves by their licentiousness and ferocity." Again. "I am told," says Mr. Marsh (I. 986), "that the soldiers in Sliven number 600. . . [But I myself have seen and experienced their lawlessness. The city would be safer without them!]" Also see Mr. Schuyler on Novo Mahallch and Peroustitza.

On the 26th of September, nearly five months after the Massacres began, Mr. Baring reports, from the central point of Philippopolis, as follows (I. 431):—

“No troops have been sent here from Constantinople; the 3000 men who left last week, and some of whom were said to be destined to garrison this town, went on to the seat of war.”

This passage opens up another of the dark labyrinths of iniquity and falsehood, into which we must now descend.

The practice of the Turks and their devotees, since the Massacres, has been persistently to ascribe “what occurred” to the want of regulars. On their own showing, then, it was the first duty of the Porte to supply this want. It would be ridiculous to contend that this Empire of forty millions, ready as it is stated to face the eighty millions of the Czar, or even all Europe, in arms, could not supply 3000 or 4000 men for Bulgaria, because it had to conduct military operations against populations numbering say two millions, who were aided in Serbia by three or four thousand Russian volunteers. From May to July 1, however, even such a war did not exist.

We find, notwithstanding, that Bulgaria remains denuded of military, to such an extent that Acting Vice-Consul Calvert has to move the Porte through Sir H. Elliot, by telegraph from Philippopolis, on two successive days, to provide for the peace of one of its

own provinces lying next its capital. On the 16th of September he announces that threats are freely used by the Mussulmans, that isolated outrages are frequent, and "can only be stopped by considerable reinforcements of troops and police to disarm Turks." On the 17th, we are told the local Governor had already applied to Constantinople, but without result. "Bloodshed on a small scale possible, unless more troops sent at once" (I. 373). The Governor had made a second application. All in vain!

On the 19th, Sir H. Elliot sent his Dragoman to represent the case. With the two applications of his own Governor in his pocket, the Grand Vizir impudently replied, "that the news received by the Sublime Porte were satisfactory, and that nothing necessitated the Government sending troops in the direction of Philippopolis."

This, it may be said, was the Grand Vizir, not the impeccable Midhat. But unfortunately the next words of the Dragoman are, "Midhat Pacha has confirmed the words of the Grand Vizir" (I. 374).

It seems, however, to have been felt that this portion of the miserable farce had been rather over-acted; and Sir H. Elliot writes on the 20th (I. 373), "I have since been told that a considerable number of troops have been sent to the district in question." Join on to this Mr. Baring's report of the 26th; and the picture is complete, as to the particular transaction.

But the particular transaction must also be joined on to the original proceedings of the Turk. At the outset of the rising "the provincial authorities sent urgent appeals to Constantinople for troops;" but the Grand Vizir did not send them (I. 164).

Mr. Baring insinuates that he listened to the evil counsels of Russia. But where, in this great emergency, were the good counsels, and the boasted influence, of England? If it be true that Russian agents recommended that the Massacre should be allowed, it is all the more expedient that we should keep out Russian ascendancy by now at length showing the Slavs that they have something else to lean on; but no counsel of Russian agents can in the least degree diminish, though it might cumulate, the abominable guilt.

Why were not the Bashi Bazouks recalled when their horrible proceedings had become known? Sir H. Elliot incessantly pressed it. (Papers, I. 9.)

On May 23, 1876, Mr. Sandison, by the order of the Ambassador, strongly remonstrated against the employment of the Bashi Bazouks in Bulgaria, peace still prevailing; but the Grand Vizir replied that he had referred the matter to Abdul Kerim, the Commander-in-Chief; to that Abdul Kerim, whose written order to kill, burn, and destroy, we are told that Shefket Pacha carries, as the amulet of his safety. (Papers of 1876, III. 214.)

On the 8th of June (Papers of 1876, III. 267),

the Ambassador was assured that the irregulars had been recalled. But on a later day of the same month, the Porte expressly refused to withdraw them; and we now further know that at a later date a fresh levy of them, and also of Circassians, was made. (Papers of 1877, I. 12.)

On the 5th of October Mr. Reade reports, that for want of police and military, "the public security is very unsatisfactory," both in the Dobrutcha, and almost throughout the Vilayet of the Danube (I. 518).

This relates to Bulgaria north of the Balkans: we have already accounted for the country to the south.

XIII. Among the many recitals of the defensive or apologetic language, by which the Porte was obliged to conceal its real sentiments respecting the Massacres, there is not to be found one single expression of condemnation, nay, not even of regret, for the utter ruin, and ineffable sufferings, of so many Bulgarians. It appears that no pressure of words from England, no dread of acts from Russia, has been able to draw from the Porte one syllable against the Massacres. From a certain point of view, this is even creditable.

The favourite method is to describe the Bulgarian outrages as "recent events" (II. 50), "occurrences" (I. 316), "what has occurred" (I. 750). But sometimes there seems to arise a vision of diminished

receipt from Bulgaria ; and we hear of the "troubles" (II. 319), "losses" (II. 225), "grievous sacrifices" (II. 24). The nearest approach to decency that is found practicable is in the phrase "unhappy business" (I. 61), used by Safvet Pacha on the 10th of August, and "sad episode" on December 23rd, (II. 225). Turkey sought too, "to heal the wounds of the civil war," by the means faintly imaged in these pages. The true spirit comes out in the speech of Ali Effendi, delivered for the Government in the trial of Alish Pehlivau, on the 20th of December, as it is reported by Mr. Baring. "Had it not been for the gallant efforts of those public benefactors, the Bashi Bazouks, the Empire would have been placed in great jeopardy" (II. 179). And this is borne out by the judgment of Mr. Baring in another dispatch (I. 432).

"The vast majority of the Mussulman population look upon the perpetrators of the horrors not as criminals, but as heroes, who, for their praiseworthy efforts to extirpate a noxious race, have deserved well of their country.

XIV. I have not discovered in a single document proceeding from the Porte an admission that any excesses had been committed by the Mahometans in Bulgaria. When Sir Henry Elliot says he had received promises (*e.g.* I. 419), that the "guilty" should be punished, he does not profess to be quoting official language. In the view of the Porte,

and in the declarations of the Porte, there are nowhere any guilty, except Bulgarian Christians.

Two methods of proceeding, however, seem to have been pursued. In communicating with the British Ambassador, it would have been perilous to say outright there was no outrage, no atrocity, in the execution of the Vengeance. The indirect method is therefore adopted. On June 19, 1876, the Grand Vizir (Papers of 1876, III. 344) dwelt upon the exaggerations, which were but here and there; on the atrocities of the Christians, which cannot be said to have existed in the sense in which the Turks flooded Bulgaria with atrocities; of the foreign agents, respecting whom Mr. Baring spoke in his first Report, but explained in a later Paper that they were not foreign at all, but were expatriated natives of Bulgaria. Again, Safvet Pacha complained bitterly that the deeds of the Turks were exaggerated by the newspapers: and this at a time when British official agents had hazarded the astounding statement that it was uncertain on which side the greatest amount of crime had been committed!

But for the outer world, a different and bolder course was adopted. I refer again to the Order of Blacque Bey, in which he speaks, on the 8th of August, of the pretended excesses committed in Bulgaria, and recites as part of the ground for suppressing a newspaper, that it had ascribed to

itself a sort of merit in having been the first to expose those imaginary crimes (*supposés*).

So on the 5th of October (L. 524) Toussoun Bey stoutly maintained "that there had been no massacre at Dervent." This worthy's performances at the place are thus recorded by Mr. Baring (L. 523) :—

Men slain at Dervent	58
Women and children	192
Infants	30

And surely, in addition to his other decorations, still enjoyed, he deserves the title of "the Infant-Slaughterer."

But it is not necessary to multiply the denials of inferior authorities in detail; for we proceed next to the highest of all authorities. It is however well to mention that, in close parallelism with the denials and evasions, ran the careful suppression of intelligence.

On one occasion the Porte had put into action a perilous machinery. After the scandalous affair of Edib Effendi, it sent two Christian Commissioners of its own to Philippopolis; and moreover it instructed them to tell the truth. It appears that they tried to do so. With regard to "the principal scenes of slaughter" their report did not "differ materially from that of Mr. Baring," except as to numbers slain; and they denounced the conduct of those who executed the Vengeance in the severest terms. At

Batak they set forth that the villagers had given up their arms before they were assailed ; and that “ men, women, and children were ruthlessly slaughtered by the Bashi Bazouks, led by Achmet Agha, his son, and his son-in-law ” (I. 418, 419).

But this report has been kept back by the Turkish Government ; and it was not from them, but by some other means, that Sir H. Elliot obtained an acquaintance with its contents (*ibid.*).

XV. On the 11th of January, 1877 (II. 190), Lord Salisbury sends home a list of proposals to which as an irreducible minimum the Russian representative, and to which also the other representatives, had agreed. Among these is named—

“ General amnesty to Christians condemned for political reasons.”

In II. p. 274, Midhat is represented by Sir H. Elliot as having declined the proposal.

In p. 302, Lord Salisbury mentions on the 12th of January, a concession proposed by Midhat. He offered “ to grant an amnesty to Mussulmans and Christians.” This amnesty would, as Lord Salisbury proceeds to observe, have included Shefket Pacha and Achmet Aga.

XVI. We may now proceed to consider the authentic Ottoman account of the Bulgarian Massacres. It was delivered by Safvet Pacha, in the assembled Conference, on the 23rd of December. We shall find that it did not stop short of eulogy. Assuredly of blame

it does not contain a word, except for the "revolutionary party," and the Bulgarian people.

The revolt broke out, said Safvet Pacha, "in a country as quiet as it was prosperous:" of which the moral wants had been the object of a special solicitude, so that the Porte was even accused of an undue partiality for the Bulgarians (II. 225).

No attempt is made to sustain by evidence this string of gross untruths. It was perhaps hoped that we should have mistaken the schools, which the energy of the people had built for themselves at their own cost, or which in some cases missionary activity had supplied, for a sign of the moral solicitude of the Turk.

These ungrateful Bulgarians, he continues, deluded by the strangers, rose against their benefactor, and massacred, pillaged, and burnt out the Mussulmans. But the movement was repressed, "without that effusion of blood which was pretended." Quite on the contrary "one would be astonished that an insurrection, which had for its object the conversion of all the Peninsula of the Balkans into a vast field of slaughter, could have been suppressed and completely annihilated, in so short a time, and without having had more losses to complain of."

Such is the estimate formed by the official Turk of orgies, which hell itself might have envied. But he is not yet content. In the face of Europe, he pronounces a deliberate eulogy upon his crimes (II. 227).

“ Turkey can say that it is her firmness and moderation which have overpowered that great revolutionary conspiracy, which openly aimed at the overthrow of the Ottoman Empire, and at profoundly disturbing the peace of Europe.”

And for this, and the whole of its services (*ibid.*), “ The Ottoman Government believes it has acquired new claims to the sympathetic interest of the Great Powers.”

These declarations entirely support my view. From first to last the Porte has been consistent. Compelled at times for a moment to dissemble, it has returned, upon the earliest opportunity, to its point of view. The bloodshed in Bulgaria was small not great, the whole proceedings good not bad. How, if this fails, is it possible for us to be 'undeceived as to the character, in its internal government, of an ally with whom the British Ambassador hopes to see us drawn into yet closer ties of sympathy and friendship (I. 425) ?

XVII. The inquiry, originally wrung from the Porte, has been proved, by its history and upshot, to be a fictitious and pretended inquiry, a mockery and a prostitution of justice.

I might lengthen this pamphlet by setting out in detail the series of complaints by the Ambassador, the Consuls, the Foreign Secretary, Mr. Baring, respecting the delays, the evasions, the partiality, of the Commission, its evident determination to do as

little as possible, and to do nothing that was effective, or (which is the same thing) that could bring it into collision with the inflamed and savage temper of the Mahometan population of Bulgaria.

As respects Lord Derby, it may be enough to say that on the 24th of November (II. 14) he addressed to the Porte through Lord Salisbury a most severe condemnation of the Commission; and that this condemnation was cited by the Government on the 12th of February, 1877, in the House of Commons, a fact showing that we must consider it as still in full force.

Lord Derby contrasts the laxity shown in bringing the Mussulmans to justice with "the activity displayed by the Porte in punishing the Christians;" and says of the Commission, the amended and final Commission (*ibid.*):

"The conduct of the Commission has also been in many other respects most unsatisfactory: the few members of it, who have shown any capacity for judicial investigation, have been checked and hindered by the interruptions of their colleagues; and, months after the massacre of hundreds of women and children, and of unarmed men, the Commissioners are still considering whether such murders are crimes."

Down to this date the Turkish Government had only supplied a sum of 7000*l.* for the restoration of the village. Nothing done to restore the industries. It was doubtful how many of the kidnapped women

had been brought back. No examples on the spot. The trials far from the scene of the outrages. "The proceedings have thus been delayed, the effect of example lost, and the ends of justice to a great extent frustrated" (*ibid.*).

While Lord Derby described as above the conduct of the Commission, the Porte, at very nearly the same date, on the 22nd of November, assured the world (I. 751) that its progress was "most satisfactory;" that the character of its members "offered every guarantee" for justice; that "it was doing its work so speedily, that nothing further could be desired."

Until after the severe despatch of Lord Derby, dated September 21, we now hear from Mr. Baring (September 27, I. 432) that "not one of those who committed the atrocities had been put into confinement."

What, then, is the upshot, as far as at this date we know it?

It is important to bear in mind that after the murder of the Consuls at Salonica by a fanatical populace, not acting under the orders or according to the mind of the Government, the Porte made no difficulty about hanging at once six, and condemning to death six more, of the offenders. The extraordinary contrast between this proceeding and the course followed in the Bulgarian case, cannot possibly have been without a cause. The Porte does not desire the murder of Consuls. The Salonica mob

had not understood the Government; the offenders in Bulgaria had understood it, and fulfilled its will.

On the 12th of February, the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs gave the following account of the sentences pronounced in Bulgaria for excesses in the execution of the Vengeance.

Two condemned to death: Achmet Aga, and an insignificant person, Melto Behtash.

One to hard labour for life.

Three to hard labour for terms.

Two to short imprisonments.

Two functionaries recalled.

Of the execution of these sentences, Mr. Bourke had nothing to say. They were sentences only. They were ten in number. In the case of the two Consuls at Salonica, where the Turkish mob really had some sort of excuse, they were *twenty-seven*. (Papers of 1876, IV. 56.)

I am not sure that this answer did full justice to the Turk. We hear from Mr. Brophy on July 22 (L. 13), that a Bashi Bazouk was stated to have been hung, it did not appear for what crime. Somewhere else the death of another obscure malefactor is reported. If we add these two to the list it stands, as follows:—

	For the murder of two Consuls.	For the murder of 15,000 Bulgarians, and very much besides.
Hung	6	2
Sentenced, not hung	6	2
Other sentences ...	15	8

III.

CONCLUSION.

Our results on the whole may be summed up as follows :—

The Porte at first intended no inquiry at all into the repression, but energetically followed up the Massacres with further and rather sweeping vengeance.

It did not trust to avowed vengeance only; but prolonged the reign of terror and suffering in Bulgaria by advisedly withholding military guardianship.

To make its teaching yet more intelligible, it rewarded the most prominent cases of cruelty, and other yet worse outrage, by decorations, commands, and offices, as exhibitions of virtuous and patriotic energy; and it excluded from reward, or even visited with the punishment of dismissal, the cases, not a few, of courageous humanity among the Mussulmans, as exhibitions of a spirit unfaithful to the domination of Islam.

So far its action was perfectly spontaneous, as well as consistent; and it was singularly favoured by the extraordinary reticence, which kept back from the people of England the officially-attested knowledge of the Massacres, until in the month of August,

three months after they had occurred, it began to ooze out.

Then arose the indignation of this country; it resounded in every other; and in a sudden manner, and probably with surprise, the Porte, which had been exulting in the success of its great achievement, found itself charged, in the hearing of all Europe, with having committed through its agents a portentous mass of crimes.

When the first mutterings had previously reached it, Commissioners were sent out, and official papers contrived, and circulated in Europe, which by omission, and by positive falsehood, wholly put aside the charges. This measure was carefully backed by the suppression of a newspaper for daring to support them; and false confessions were extorted from the terrified population, to assure the world that they were unfounded.

After other shifts, as the Indignation "did not pass but grew," a Commission was appointed to proceed judicially. Men known to be bad were placed upon it to mar the action of their more honourable colleagues. The support of adequate force, which it required in order to withstand the exasperated pride of the Mahometan population, was withheld. Evasions and delays of every kind were practised; the Christians charged, and sometimes the Christian counsel who defended them, exhibited the most abject terror. The bad men of the Commission bullied and domineered from the bench. The sen-

tences have been few, slowly extorted under incessant diplomatic pressure, with the threat of Russian arms, and with the presence and incessant vigilance of foreign agents, especially of Mr. Baring. They have also been illusory, for as to those of confinement with or without hard labour, we have no means of knowing whether it has ever been inflicted, or whether if begun it will be continued. The only real, that is the only irrevocable sentence has been that of death, pronounced after some months of delay on one or two persons; in December, on a Pomak who had previously been rewarded for his crimes: and this sentence has not yet, in March, been executed. Even were the Turks to alter now the character of their proceedings, it is far too late. We have before us, "with ample verge and room enough," the true character, first of their spontaneous view and action on the Massacres; secondly, of the niggardly amount of make-believe inquiry and retribution, which gratitude for favours too many and too recent, which the fear of estranging friendly sympathy too long maintained, which humanity, which reason, which policy, which anything short of coercion could wring out of a State, of which the heart is on this subject harder than the nether millstone.

"Duris genuit te cautibus horrens
Caucasus, Hyrcanæque admôrunt ubera tigres."*

* Virgil. *Æn.* IV. 366.

It had become too late, for a long time too late, by any spasmodic change of proceedings to abate the force of the evidence here inadequately sketched, when on Friday, the 1st of March, the Under-Secretary of State was asked whether it was true that Toussoun Bey, the Infant-slaughterer, an offender second only to Shefket Pacha, with his batch of coadjutors, had been acquitted, and whether Mr. Baring had taken away the sanction of his presence from the Court which had performed this shameless mockery of justice? The answer was, that Toussoun and his accomplices had been absolved; that Mr. Baring had departed; and that no more trials would take place.

This is not a treatise on the subject of the East at large. But the Bulgarian outrages, though they are not the Eastern Question, are a key to the Eastern Question. They exhibit the true genius of the Turkish Government. Externally an isolated though portentous fact, they unlock to us an entire mystery of iniquity. Vast as is their intrinsic importance, they are yet more important for what they indicate, than for what they are. The heaviest question of all is not what was suffered in a given district at a given date, but what is the normal and habitual condition of eight or ten millions of the subject races, who for fifteen generations of men have been in servitude to the Turk. This is, I may say, the question of questions. And of this we can best judge by observing what is the conduct of the Government and its

agents upon a great and palmary occasion, when, for once, it is brought fully into view. Let us see, then, what light has just been cast upon it. With the outrages the Porte now stands unalterably identified; and a Government so identified is not merely weak, or impotent, or passionate, or cruel in this or that particular: it is a Government which reverses the great canon of right and wrong; and which, in the holding down of the subject races, adopts the motto given by Milton * to his Satan

“Evil, be thou my good.”

Not, indeed, that this inverted law is for the Porte an unvarying rule of action. There is no such thing in the world. Man is never consistent, in evil or in good. Hope, fear, interest, shame, a better nature breaking into light upon occasion, may produce, in its commonplace and secondary action, much that is less evil, and even some very few things that are good. But as in individual life, so in the life of Governments, it is the great crisis that searches nature to its depths, and brings out the true spirit of the man. The Bulgarian rising was a great crisis. A people of five millions, the most docile, patient, and submissive in all Europe, had dared to commence a revolt. It was as if the sheep were to attack the butcher, and fill him for a moment with alarm. Much violence, some cruelty,

*Paradise Lost,' iv. 110.

might in those circumstances well be understood. Habitual brutality, exasperated by fear, so far from remembering in the hour of wrath the long endurance of a suffering race, determined that in proportion to their effeminacy in bearing should be their deep descent into the pit of suffering. Bulgaria had on the whole theretofore exhibited the most splendid example of successful Turkism, in its perfect submission to terror; in the seeming extinction even of the wish to murmur; lastly, in the copious revenues yielded by its dogged industry. Alfieri boasted of the Italians, long years before their resurrection to a nation's life—

“Siam servi sì; ma servi ognor frementi.”

In Bulgaria generally, even the last sigh had been stifled; it seemed not even to fret for freedom. And it is no wonder if to those who had spoiled this magnificent success, this great work of art, there was due, on the principles of Turkism, under the impulses of the wild beast that dwells in human nature, an exemplary vengeance. This is not new. The wars of the Serbian and of the Greek Revolutions* supplied apparent parallels to the great Bulgarian Vengeance. But Christendom had not then the open channels, which happily it now possesses, for tolerably full communication of the facts;

* See *e.g.* the admirable paper of Mr. Godkin on the Eastern Question in the ‘North American Review’ for January, 1877.

and though we may believe, we are not judicially entitled to assert, that the Turkish Government had at those junctures, as it has had now, the wretched perpetrators of the acts for the mere tools of its master-spirit, working from the centre at Constantinople for the misery of man.

This, I say again, is upon the whole the great anti-human specimen of humanity. To exorcise it will be easy, when the exorcisers are agreed; difficult only as long as some remain wrapped in contented ignorance, others case-hardened in political selfishness, and some even possessed, as the British Ambassador has been possessed, with the belief that the condition of the subject races of Turkey ought to be supremely determined by whatever our estimate of British interests may require.* A little faith in the ineradicable difference between right and wrong is worth a great deal of European diplomacy, bewildered by views it dare neither dismiss nor avow. In this state of things, and even with the great example of Mr. Canning in the case of Greece before us, it was natural to hope, as long as hope was not irrational, that the disease of Turkey was curable; that

* "We may and must feel indignant at the needless and monstrous severity with which the Bulgarian insurrection was put down; but the necessity which exists for England to prevent changes from occurring here, which would be most detrimental to ourselves, is not affected by the question whether it was 10,000 or 20,000 persons who perished in the suppression."—*Sir H. Elliot to the Earl of Derby, Sept. 4, 1876. Papers I. 197.*

the mild and gentle tone, which the spirit of our Century has infused into so many Governments, might find access even to the hard heart of the Porte. But this hope only could be rational, only could be even excusable, so long as it remained ready to own the truth, to conform itself to the teaching of experience. This teaching we have now, to our sorrow, perhaps even to our shame, obtained. Neither weakness, nor accident, nor ignorance, nor an occasional fit of fury, nor the unfaithfulness of agents to their principal, lies at the root of the Bulgarian Massacres. They are the true expression of the spirit and policy of the Turkish Government in seasons of emergency; when, passing from the indifference and contempt with which it commonly regards every function of civil government, except the receipt of money, it dispels the precarious ease for which at times that indifference and contempt leave room, and in the words of Bluntschli, "does not shrink from sanguinary horrors" in support of its "barbarous domination."*

Again, then, I repeat the accusation. The Turkish Government, which debases its subjects when they submit, and by its agents plunders, violates, and murders them "at its own sweet will" from time to time, has a more developed and consistent method for seasons of crisis. On the occasions when they rise, as in Bulgaria, it exhausts upon them, it must be

* "Das Recht der Europäischen Intervention in der Türkei."
—In 'Die Gegenwart,' Berlin, December 9, 1876.

deliberately said, all the resources of a wickedness more fiendish than human, either by instigation beforehand, which is not yet proved, or by reward, protection, sanction afterwards, which is proved. After the most solemn and reiterated pledges to endow them with equality of rights, after incessant boastings of its own beneficent and paternal spirit, after trampling in the dust all these promises, and confuting all these boasts by its acts a hundred times repeated, it is inexhaustible like Proteus in ever new forms of evasion and escape, available to cozen none except those who are, lazily or perversely, willing to be deceived. Thus it is now going to be regenerated, for the hundredth time; it has launched, at length, its written Constitution. On this I do not waste a word; but I simply refer to the straightforward declaration of Sir Stafford Northcote,* and to the masterly and lacerating exposure of Lord Salisbury.† If ever, in the whole history of human action, a negative was demonstrated by experience, it is the moral impossibility that the Porte either will or can efficaciously transmute by self-reform the relation between itself and its subject races. And are we thus to go on from day to day, and from year to year?

“The days will grow to weeks, the weeks to months,
The months will add themselves and make the years.”

We palter, we excuse, we set up false lights to draw

* ‘Times’ of Feb. 9, 1877.

† Papers, II. p. 302.

us off the path ; at last with huge effort we appoint a man, yes, a real man, to speak ; but he is well warned that his big brave words at Constantinople shall be well understood to be words only. What in the meantime is the state of these subject races ? It is this ; that their Government is the incarnate curse of their existence. If the child can laugh, if the maiden can breathe freely, if the mother can tend the house and the father till the field in peace, it is when, and so long as, the agents of this Government are not in view ; and it only proves that tyrannous Power has not yet found the alchymy, by which it can convert human life into one huge mass of misery, uniform and unredeemed. What civilisation longs for, what policy no less than humanity requires, is that united Europe, scouted, as we have seen, in its highest, its united diplomacy, shall pass sentence in its might, upon a Government which unites the vices of the conqueror and the slave, and which is lost alike to truth, to mercy, and to shame. It is not a harsh sentence, but a mild one, that, at least where its guilt is thus fully proved, where the restoration of respect and confidence is hopeless, it shall submit, if not as I should desire to confine its claims to acknowledged dignity and liberal tributes,* yet at the very least to such restraints on

* I must, once for all, beg leave to assert my strong conviction that the method of a real autonomy, superintended from abroad in the transition-stage, is the method by far the most favourable, among all that have been proposed, to the Porte itself, as well as to its subjects, and to the peace of Europe.

the exercise of administrative power, as all Europe has declared to be indispensable. But above all, let us not cover with the name of compromises the new shifts we may devise to hide the nakedness of our minds, and the feebleness of our wills. A "respite" for Turkey is simply a respite to the criminal, not from punishment, but from prevention; a solemn licence to continue his misdeeds. "A year of grace" to Turkey is to Turkey's victims only another year of debasement; of want; of misery and shame, felt more or less keenly by them just in proportion as they may less or more retain the higher senses and capabilities of humanity. In this free country, every man has his word, and every man his responsibility: the action of every man contributes to make up that tide of opinion, which moves the moral world. I ask of England, that we redeem the pledges which we gave to the subject races by the Crimean War, and by the Peace which followed it. Let others if they choose invite the spreading of new snares, and walk into them in open day. With a share of the responsibility of the Crimean War upon me, I respectfully decline to join them: and I have a firm conviction that, when the people of England tell their mind to the world and to the Porte in the choice of their representatives from time to time, the lesson conveyed by their acts, so far as it goes, will be, "You shall *not* do it again."

March 10, 1877.

BULGARIAN HORRORS,

AND THE

QUESTION OF THE EAST.

A LETTER ADDRESSED

TO

THE RIGHT HON. W. E. GLADSTONE, M.P.,

BY

H. A. MUNRO BUTLER-JOHNSTONE, M.P.

THIRD THOUSAND.

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THE EASTERN QUESTION IN 1875 ;

ALSO

THE TURKS : THEIR CHARACTER,
MANNERS, AND INSTITUTIONS,
AS BEARING ON THE EASTERN QUESTION.

BULGARIAN HORRORS.

SIR,—A wit once said of you that you hated a certain person (since dead) as much as so good a man as you could hate anybody. If he had waited till the publication of your last pamphlet he would probably have seen reason to omit the qualification. It cannot be denied that you have made proof of a quite profane capacity for hating. Edmund Burke was of opinion that, “it was a serious thing to bring an indictment against a whole nation,” but you apparently have no compunction of this sort. It is the whole Turkish nation and Ottoman people whom you impeach. I will quote your own words:—“They are not the mild Mahometans of India, nor the chivalrous Saladins of Syria, nor the cultured Moors of Spain. They are upon the whole, from the black day when they first entered Europe, the one great anti-human specimen of humanity. Wherever they went, a broad line of blood marked the track behind them; and as far as their dominion reached, civilization disappeared from view. They represented everywhere government by force, as opposed to government by law. For

the guide of this life they had a relentless fatalism : for its reward hereafter a sensual paradise.”

The first remark that I would make on this passage is, that your feelings against the Ottomans have led you to do more than justice to a political rival. You surely cannot mean seriously to exclude from your picturesque category the Right Honourable the Earl of Beaconsfield, whose “fine feelings” in one part of your pamphlet (p. 15), you jeer at, and whom in another (p. 17), you accuse of “ignorance or brutal calumny.” Your indulgence in restricting your Inferno to the exclusive possession of the Ottomans is a violation of poetical consistency. Dante, if he had shared your views, would certainly have relegated the monster in question to the very last circle of damnation, unless indeed, as is more than probable, he had described a new one for his special benefit.

Now, with regard to the Ottomans, my hair stood on end whilst reading your description of that people. You who have rummaged into pre-historic times, and weighed the character of Helen, and sympathized with the temper of Achilles, must assuredly at some time or other have studied the history of the Ottoman race. May I ask you in what history, on the authority of what author, you have gathered the impressions of that monstrous picture, the repugnant details of which you hold up, at such a moment as this, to the gaze and execration of the people of England?

Not a student of that history, I believe, but will tell you that, from beginning to end, your picture is a caricature, and your history a travesty, its contents elaborated from your own inner consciousness, without the shadow of a shade of foundation in fact. The history of the Ottoman people, written in the pages of history, and open to all who like to read it, is this. Somewhere in the eleventh century four hundred Seljukian families, whose names are recorded by the historian, crossed over the Bosphorus and settled in the Greek Empire. The Greeks, who were continually at war with their northern (Slave) neighbours, gladly welcomed these brave and disciplined strangers, whose martial virtues they hoped would supplement the deficiencies of their own enervated and unwarlike natures. They gave them land to settle on, where they increased and multiplied like the people of Israel in the land of Goshen. In course of time this handful of nomads became a powerful people, so powerful that their alliance became a matter of importance to, and was equally courted by, Greeks and Slaves. By policy and skill they soon came to hold the balance between these two Powers. It was their character, their virtues, and their discipline, no less than their courage and their warlike qualities, which enabled the Ottomans first to maintain themselves in Europe, and eventually to become the possessors of its fairest portions. The Greek eagerly enlisted

the Ottoman in his ranks to fight against the Slave whom he feared, and the Slave no less eagerly to fight against the Greek whom he detested. And when, by these means, the Ottoman people became the preponderating power in the Peninsula, no allies proved stauncher or worthier, no support of the Ottoman power more effectual, than these same Slavonian races. In the two great historic battles of early Ottoman history, that of Angora against Timour the Tartar, and that of Ismid against the Seljukian Turks, it was their Slave allies whose valour and steadiness prevented the former from turning into a rout, and in the latter gave the victory to the Ottomans. It is worthy of remark at the present crisis, that it was for sternly repressing and punishing the irregularities and cruelties committed by these Slavonian allies that the discontent and misunderstanding arose which led to the events that culminated at the battle of Cossova. If at one time the Ottoman threatened to overrun Europe, and thundered at the gates of Vienna, I have yet to learn that in an age of might and conquest, conquest and victory are to be charged to the discredit of a race, and I defy any one to point to a single incident in history in which cold-blooded cruelty and lust can be shown to have been more conspicuous in the Ottoman ranks than in those of any other conquering army. It was John Sobieski, the Pole, who saved Europe and stayed the Turk;

and nobly has the Turk avenged this historic wrong. Europe, saved by the hand of the Poles, allowed Poland, a century afterwards, to be partitioned and destroyed. The Turk alone remonstrated, and went to war in consequence. Again, in 1849, when masses of Poles and Hungarians, defeated and dispersed by overwhelming forces, sought safety for bare life, it was the Ottoman Sultan who received them, and who, to the angry demand for extradition, preferred with menaces of war, by the two greatest military Powers in Europe, replied :—“ Am I, the Sultan of Turkey, who cannot refuse the right of asylum to the meanest of my subjects, to be denied the right of receiving and protecting these suppliants who have come to me ? ” The “ black day ” on which these strangers first entered Europe was, on that occasion at any rate, a day of salvation to hundreds and thousands of brave and unfortunate men.

I cannot here omit to notice a pitfall into which you have rather characteristically stumbled. Your historic previsions are proverbially unfortunate. In attempting to write history by anticipation the events that you anticipate very rarely come off. You proclaimed to the world that Jefferson Davies would make a nation. Jefferson Davies did a great many wonderful things, but this is exactly what he did not do. You send a pamphlet in hot haste to Murray’s press to announce to the world that the Ottomans have lost their martial virtues,

had failed against Montenegro, and could not succeed against Servia; and, whilst your ink is still wet, one of the most brilliant episodes perhaps of modern warfare occurs to vindicate the reputation of Ottoman prowess, and prove the singular accuracy of your judgment.

For what was Alexinatz when the Turkish army won the signal victory so graphically described in the *Times* of September 4th? It was an entrenched camp, surrounded on all sides by hills crowned by eighteen redoubts powerfully armed and commanding one another. For months past it had been put into a state of defence by every means that the skill and science of foreign engineers, and extraneous help, could supply. It was held by an army more numerous than that of the assailants, composed of brave men fighting behind entrenchments, where courage can compensate for inexperience, and where raw levies have often checked and defeated tried veterans. It was moreover led by distinguished foreign officers and commanded by a general of repute. From such a position as this it was that the Ottoman soldiers, those miserable and degenerate savages, who have lost even the fighting instinct of savages, drove the Servian army, general and staff, officers and men, natives and foreigners, McKellar and his uniform, "bag and baggage," helter skelter, *pêle mêle*, flying to Deligrad!

Allow me to notice another point connected

with the same subject. You talk of the Turk not being able to suppress this "miserable insurrection." Now, what is meant by a "miserable insurrection," and in what sense is the Turk "unable to suppress it?" Is an insurrection, in an intricate mountainous country, drawing unlimited supplies along an extensive line of inviolable frontier, fed by a continuous supply of men and money provided by benevolently neutral-allies (I am not responsible for this horrid solecism), such a "miserable" affair after all? Have not highland insurrections at all times tried the valour and the resources of the mightiest nations? Did the whole force of Spain consider a Carlist rising in the mountains of Biscay "a miserable insurrection?" Did not Schamyl and a few hundred followers give employment to whole armies in the mountains of Daghestan? Did the Scottish Highlanders never give trouble and concern, out of all proportion to their numbers and resources, to the might and chivalry of England? And, by the way, talk of cruelties and savage repressions, without recurring to the massacre of Glencoe, if I mistake not, history records the exploits of a "a butcher Cumberland" whose "track indeed was marked in blood," and who might well compare, for deeds of savagery, with the veriest leader of Bashi-Bazouks.

God knows no man in this country or century is going to defend or palliate those Bulgarian atrocities, the revolting details of which have made

the heart of Europe sick. That the rebels should, confessedly, have been the first to lead this dance of hell, and massacre, burn, and ravage everything they met with, is no excuse whatever for those who followed in their ghastly track. That condign and signal punishment for the hellish miscreants is demanded by the voice of outraged humanity none will for a moment deny. But I do protest, with all the energy of which I am capable, against the grim suggestion in your pamphlet (page 12) that the Ottoman Government or Ottoman people are directly responsible, by complicity after the event, for the horrors that have happened. I challenge contradiction when I say that for humanity, gentleness, and compassion, the Mussulman population of the Ottoman Empire—some wild Kurds perhaps alone excepted—will bear favourable comparison with any people under the sun, and to paint them as consenting to, and sympathizing with, horrors and atrocities such as these, is, I will not say, in your own forcible language (courtesy forbids me), “a brutal calumny,” but a monstrous and cruel injustice.

You have shown far less candour and fairness in this respect than Earl Russell. He forsooth cannot be accused of present partiality for the Turk. No one has dealt them sharper blows. This aged Brutus has struck home his dagger right into the heart of his former friend. But dealing with patent ascertained facts, of public notoriety, he will not overstate his case. He allows in his

published letter, that the insurgents commenced the perpetration of these foul deeds. You refuse to concede even this. To make the devil appear blacker than he is, you paint his adversary snow white.

But you are not contented with this. The contrast to the brutal Turk must not only be with the lamb-like Bulgarian, it must be with all nations and all ages. Not only in this country, but perhaps since the world began, there never were such atrocities as these. It is a sickening and ungrateful task to measure enormities with each other, so as to assign them their due rank in the hierarchy of crime, but foul and hideous as these Bulgarian atrocities have been, it took away my breath to read (p. 8) that they were "the basest and blackest upon record within the present century, if not within the memory of man." Has then the French Revolution quite slipped out of memory? That was not a case of dark and fiendish deeds perpetrated by gaol birds inconsiderately let loose and armed in a spasm of panic. It was the reign of Terror itself enthroned in the broad daylight, for two long years, in the very heart of the capital of the civilized world; and proceeding with its devils' work deliberately, calmly, inexorably. The massacres in the prisons, the Revolutionary tribunals, the noyades and fusillades and mariages républicains, all committed in cold blood, by executive order, by the consent and in the name of

a whole people, and that people the most polished and civilized in the whole world—surely for “blackness and for baseness” and devilish “refinement” these deeds pale even the horrors of Bulgarian atrocities.

I have purposely chosen the French Revolution for a comparison, not only because it is well “within the memory of man,” but for another reason;—not certainly to offer any apology or excuse for these atrocities—God forbid!—but to offer an argument in mitigation of the criminality of arming and employing the villains who committed them—for this, it seems to me, is the real charge to be laid to the door of the Ottoman local authorities. I borrow the argument for palliation from the distinguished Republican apologist of the French Revolution, Louis Blanc. “Try and place yourselves,” he says, “in the position of the French ‘patriots:’ consider the mortal terror they were in: weigh the circumstances which deranged the balance of their minds. Brunswick was approaching the frontier: a Congress of kings was being held: ‘the Emigration’ were collecting for revenge: traitors were intriguing at home: ‘the State was in danger.’” Now observe, whatever force such an argument may have, as applied to the French Revolution—and I confess I do not think it has much—it will apply with ten times the force to the case of the Mussulmans in Bulgaria. For here, whilst the regular army was away fight-

ing at the frontier, the Province itself denuded of troops, the air filled with rumours of foreign intervention and domestic treachery, the Sultan generally accredited with madness and his Vizier with treason, behold the foul details of a gigantic conspiracy, with its "catechism" of blood, comes to their knowledge, threatening extermination to every Mussulman man, woman, and child, and destruction to the Empire; and almost before they can take the first precautions against the imminent peril, the glare of burning villages and hideous panic striking rumours confirm and deepen their apprehensions. If ever the State was in danger it is now; if ever the maxim *Salus Republicæ suprema lex* had any vital meaning this is the moment. What occurred? They telegraphed to Constantinople for troops, and for leave to defend themselves till they arrived. The answer to the request was affirmative. They forthwith put arms into the hands of every able-bodied Mussulman they could lay hands on, and emptied the very gaols for that purpose—hereby incurring, I allow, a fearful responsibility. It was the scum of the villages and especially of the large towns of Bulgaria, far more than soldiers regular or irregular, Circassians or Bashi-Bazouks, who committed the atrocities which have filled the world with horror, and brought this fearful weight of odium on the Ottoman people and Government. That horror and indignation should be excited and

aroused by the narrative of the atrocities which occurred, nothing more natural, nothing more righteous; that the humane people of England should meet in their hundreds and their townships and give forcible utterance to their feelings and sentiments on the subject, nothing more creditable, nothing more honourable, but that an English Statesman of the first rank, "an old servant of the Crown," should out herod Herod, and go out of his way to flog and lash humanity into frenzy, that a highly cultivated and polished student should travesty history and calumniate a whole people, that a responsible politician, a dignified Emeritus, should descend into the market-place and stir the seething cauldron of passionate inconsiderateness, throw policy to the winds, and the Ottoman Empire to the spoilers, surely this cannot be either natural or creditable or righteous.

Not content with denunciations, you have recourse to artifices. Your devices to excite prejudice against the Turks are ingenious but not original. O'Connell long ago frightened an old woman out of her wits by calling her a parallelogram, and you seem to wish to scare the people of England out of all remaining sympathy for the Turk by the roar of a poluphoisboio thalassees terminology. Good people of England! What a ferocious, blood-stained, lustful, hateful, wicked, abominable people must that be who indulge in Zaptiehs, Mudirs, Bimbashis, Yusbashis, Kaima-

kans, and Pashas! A parallel case to yours and O'Connell's occurs to me. During the Indian mutiny, a correspondent wrote to say that, among other indescribable horrors, he had been pursued from village to village by a "ferocious Dhoolie." People in England shuddered: they did not know, the writer probably did not know, that a Dhoolie is a sedan-chair!

I should like now to say a few words on the policy involved in all this. Passion is proverbially a bad counsellor, and what are the counsels which are offered to us in this day of frenzy? There is something amusing in one sense and melancholy in another, in the various solutions of the so-called Eastern Question proffered by the political Quidnuncs of our country. Not a day passes but a bran new solution of this ancient question is launched upon the world. To listen to these persons one would think that the scratch of a pen, a ray of common sense, would settle the whole matter for ever and a day. A numerous set of doctors, having made the original discovery that the northern races of the Ottoman Empire are Slaves, and seeing that Servia and Montenegro are quasi-independent Slave states, forthwith pronounce *ex cathedrâ* that Bosnia and Herzegovina must be allowed to follow their example. The internal religious, political, ethnological difficulties in the way of such a solution are no more to them than is the resistance of the Ottoman Empire.

They are moving *in vacuo* and laugh at space and friction. Another set of advisers, improving on the first, make the really *very* remarkable discovery that the Bulgarians are Slaves too, and forthwith throw in this tiny province, with its paltry four millions of inhabitants, into the bargain and the Confederacy. Another gentleman, addressing a large and important manufacturing city, improves on all this by a truly business-like and attractive suggestion. Considering its marketable value, and that base imitators, like Mr. Grant Duff, are already filching from him the idea, he ought to take out a patent for his invention. Not only does he propose to erect these Slave and Bulgarian States into a "Confederacy of the Danube," but seeing that an English Prince has married a Russian Princess, he would have no difficulty "in finding a natural chief for this Confederacy with its capital at Constantinople." This enlightened gentleman evidently thinks that Constantinople is on the Danube!

It would be a weary and very useless task to criticize seriously these brilliant lucubrations. They sound like pages torn from the imaginative dreaming of Edgar Poe. But you, Sir, are in a very different category. What comes from you will be received on all sides with respectful attention if not necessarily with approval. If ever a man had a right to enunciate or defend a policy it is one who having spent the best years of his

distinguished life in the Councils of his Sovereign, can say of the events of the last twenty years, "Quorum pars ipse magna fui."

Your policy has the merit of being clear. Tear Bosnia and Herzogovina from the corporate body of the Turkish empire, erect them into vassal provinces giving the Sultan a titular sovereignty over them, and let us have done with the matter. But this last is exactly what would not happen. If you attempted this, you never would have done with the matter. The 500,000 Mussulman Bosnians, the warlike denizens of a military frontier, would light up such beacons on their mountain tops, before they acquiesced in your arrangements, as would illuminate the whole of Eastern Europe. And as you seem to lend your high authority to the proposal of dealing in a similar manner with Bulgaria, I will ask you seriously do you think that the Ottoman race would retire from that rich province before rousing the whole Islamic world to do battle with the Infidel? You may think this apprehension visionary. If you do, I will put a question to you. What would be your own feelings, and what would be your policy, if you were an Ottoman Statesman, and an ultimatum such as this were presented to you? You have evidently your misgivings, for you think the difficulty can be overcome by what you term the "European Concert." Surely the "European Concert" would have to mean the "European Crusade," and are

you prepared, with your humanity and philanthropy, to preach a European crusade against Turkey? It seems to me that like Peter the Hermit you *are* preaching a crusade against Turkey; but I observe there is this difference between the modern and ancient crusaders : Peter the Hermit led his motley followers across Europe to fight hand to hand with the "chivalrous Saladins." The modern crusaders will never march beyond Blackheath! As Mr. Disraeli put it, the more you look at it the more you will find that territorial integrity means very much the same thing as the *status quo*.

You have repeatedly lately defended your present policy by a reference to the past policy of the Crimean War. To sum up your argument it is this : "We purchased by our support *then* the right to dismember Turkey *now*." "The experiment of 'propping up' the tumbledown Ottoman Empire having conspicuously failed, we must now try an entirely different system." I have a particular word I wish to say on this point. I am neither going to defend nor impugn the policy of the Crimean War. That is a matter which stands by itself. But the twenty years' Eastern policy which succeeded it! For that you are more peculiarly responsible than any living statesman, seeing that you have held high office in the State almost continuously since then, and for no inconsiderable portion of the time have been First

Minister of the Crown. Now, during all this interval, what has been the distinguishing historical feature of Turkish politics? The suspension of the Constitution, and the preponderating influence of the Western nations exerted through the Embassies at Pera. The old Turkish Constitution provided, above all things, checks against arbitrary power. The Grand Council of the nation, most auspiciously revived the other day by the Sultan Abdul Hamid, was the great deliberative body of the State. Ministers proposed, the Sultan executed, but the Council decided. Its functions resembled those of the Privy Council in England before that important body was practically suppressed and its place usurped by the Cabinet. Now the first result to Turkey of the Crimean War was the suppression of this Great Council. It was a *coup d'état* of the most portentous magnitude. For the first time in Ottoman history a peace was signed without its terms being submitted to the deliberation of the great Council, the Mejlis Ommounyi. A strictly limited monarchy was converted into a despotism; all checks were swept away; and the arbitrary will of the Sultan became law. The fatal consequences of this revolution soon manifested themselves. As long as Ali Pasha and Fuad Pasha lived, an enlightened despotism effected a good many beneficial reforms, and Europe, and you no doubt, applauded such results as were achieved. But in course of time these statesmen passed away,

and the brain of the unfortunate Abdul Aziz became affected.

Now was the hey-day of jobbing ministers, bold adventurers, and intriguing middlemen. Lavish expenditure, profligate waste, and bloated dividends were the order of the day. Not an ill-omened bird of prey in Europe but marked Turkey for his quarry, engineers, contractors, agents, crimps, "financiers," a horde of plunderers and an army of spoilers. The Porte too was not exempt from the contagion, and the descendant of the Caliphs fattened and batted on the general corruption.

Contrary to the practice of the past, the principles of their religion, and the traditions of the Empire, a national debt was created. Extravagant interest, fancy premiums, and exorbitant commissions necessitated fresh issues and new loans. Merrily went the quotations. Not a thought of the advancing and inevitable ruin. At last the crash came, and the hideous gangrene, of which bankruptcy was only one manifestation, was revealed in all its nakedness.

Now for this "anarchical misrule," for this ruin and bankruptcy, for the international complications and European crisis which have come out of it all, I have no hesitation in saying that you, Sir, are more directly responsible than any other living statesman out of Turkey. It is not an "infinitesimal share of responsibility," but the whole unmitigated undivided portion of it which I lay to

your door—the responsibility of a man who could have shut the floodgates of corruption, and stayed the torrent of misrule,—and who neglected to do so.

For, in the first place, none of the things *could* have occurred if the old Constitution had not been violated, and the Great Council suspended; and the suspension of the Constitution—the head and front of all offending—by which rein was given to the mad will of a demented sovereign, and a whole legion of evils let loose on this devoted land, was the direct result and first fruits of the influence of the Western nations on the councils of the Porte. A principal actor in these events, is it, or is it not, just to saddle you with the responsibility?

In the second place, such was the influence of England at Constantinople that a word spoken there at the right moment, such a word as Lord Stratford de Redcliffe knew how to pronounce and when to pronounce, would have overturned the whole conspiracy of misrule and corruption, and given heart to the National party, who, with patriotic anguish in their hearts, foresaw the ruin which they were impotent to prevent. A word from the English Ambassador, pronounced in earnest against the blighting régime, which lasted in Turkey all through your long premiership in England, would have been to them like a beacon in the darkness, a flash of hope, a signal for

recovery. That word, for ten long dreary years, was looked for in vain. You were far too engrossed with your compound householder, your upas trees, and the silvern streak which bounds our insular politics, to give even a passing thought "to the cloudy Euxine and the bright Ægean." That is not all. When a private independent member, under an honest sense of responsibility, and acquainted with the facts of the case, brought the subject of Turkish misrule before the House of Commons last year, predicted the inevitable bankruptcy, and called upon the Government to interpose and prevent the crisis, where were you? You now talk of our solemn right to interfere by virtue of the 9th clause of the Treaty of Paris. Why, that was the very ground of Mr. Yorke's motion. Were you there to support him? You were conspicuous by your absence. Although the eleventh hour, it was not even then too late. Bankruptcy had not occurred: bankruptcy, as is now confessed, might even at that late hour have been averted: and bankruptcy, as we know, was the signal for, and partly the cause of, the present difficulties. As long as the mischief could be stayed, you were mute and silent as cold marble: but as soon as the crash came—the crash for which you were yourself responsible—in the many tongued chorus of condemnation there was no voice louder than yours, no reproach more bitter and vindictive.

And yet, with sublime irony, you talk (p. 12) of “a government to which we have procured 20 years of grace,” of “England and France trying a great experiment in remodelling the administrative system of Turkey,” and of “their drawing up reforms at Constantinople!” Shades of Othman, Soleyman, and Mahmood !

It is not for me to defend the present Ministry. They are old enough and big enough to take care of themselves, and you who have invoked the clear intellect and impartial judgment of Lord Derby, must be particularly gratified by the clear analysis of your arguments and the impartial judgment on your pamphlet vouchsafed by the “Grand Vizier.” On one point alone I would wish to add a word. You accuse the Minister of postponing debate for party purposes. Not only is the charge unfounded, but it is exactly contrary to the facts of the case. When Mr. Bruce obtained a day, already late in the session, for his debate on Turkish affairs, he asked the leader of the House whether there would be any objection to the debate coming on. The answer was,—as I can state on the authority of Mr. Bruce, who told me at the time,—“The Government, *quâ* Government, have no sort of objection to, on the contrary they desire, a debate, and believe it would be advantageous to them; but there are other interests of greater magnitude which they are bound to consider, and they think that a debate at such a

moment would not be conducive to the public interests." You will scarcely say that all this was a solemn piece of acting. When a Minister converses confidentially in the lobbies with a political supporter, there is very little acting, for very little acting is required. At the time too, even those who, from a Turkish point of view, desired a debate acquiesced readily in the plea urged for postponement.

You are particularly indignant that the Government did not employ the telegraph on the 26th and 27th June. One would think that Constantinople was in China! It takes just five days for a messenger to go from London to Pera, and considering that the mischief was done, and the atrocities committed, it is difficult even to conceive what practical purpose could have been served by this telegraphic anticipation of a despatch. The only person to whom a telegram could have been sent to any purpose was the mythic leader of the Bashi-Bazouks: "The English Grand Vizier to Ahmed Selim Mohammed Aga, chief of Bashi-Bazouks, Tatar Bazardjik, Bulgaria: Monster of blood! Stay thy red and gory hand, or by the beard of thy father I will send the great Eltchi to thee." Was it to our harassed and bewildered Ambassador at Pera that hysterical telegrams ought to have been sent? Why, as it was, that unfortunate functionary must have been driven very nearly off his head by the accumulation of duties

suddenly thrust upon him, and the difficulty of the parts which he was called upon to play. It is quite evident that, if you had been Minister at the time, you would have finished him off entirely. Delicate diplomatic negotiations are not unknown to you. Has your experience of the too free use of the telegraph been altogether satisfactory? Why, poor Edward Herbert, Lloyd and Vyner might still have been amongst us if you had not bombarded our poor Minister at Athens with undecipherable telegrams and incomprehensible instructions.

You present to the Ministry the horns of a dilemma. If they sent the fleet to Besika Bay to seize the first spoils of the inheritance of the Padishah, their purpose was purely mischievous; if to prop up the Ottoman Empire, it was criminal. Considering that Ministers have over and over again repudiated both alternatives, it is difficult to see on what fresh grounds you renew the charge. You surely do not pretend that these alternatives exhaust all possible divisions of Eastern policy founded on the despatch of the fleet. The Ministers are neither Brigands nor Don Quixotes. As long as British interests are not directly involved, Turkey must take care of herself, (and I suspect she is at last able to do so.) But English interests, which are essentially maritime, cannot allow the important bays and seas which communicate with the Mediterranean, to fall into the hands of a new

and possibly aggressive Power, and events which tend in that direction, in a greater or less degree, cannot possibly be matters of indifference to this country. As Napoleon said, "Constantinople is the world." Another great statesman once said, "If the Turks did not exist they would have to be invented, for in any other hands Constantinople would be a standing menace to the world." Such was the policy enunciated on the first day of the session by the Prime Minister, and emphatically repeated on subsequent occasions. If ever a policy was clear and unambiguous, it strikes me it was this policy. It might not suit enthusiasts, whether so called Christian or Turk, but it was in conformity with the dictates of patriotism and common sense.

But here I must ask your pardon for a moment. Patriotism, in the good old sense of the term, has not lately been much in vogue with your party. It cannot be denied that you are in your right, so far as consistency is concerned, in your expression of disapproval of a Ministry that have preferred "the narrow selfish" interests of this country to cosmopolitan sentimentalisms. The very mention of the word "prestige" has the effect on some people that a red flag has on a bull: it completely unhinges their minds. A ministry, therefore, that has promoted "narrow selfish British interests," and restored the "prestige" of the country, must be peculiarly odious to a party that for ten years

never lost an opportunity of sacrificing the one and lowering the other. Of course they were right in doing so. Cosmopolitan interests must necessarily be more comprehensive and dignified than those of such a tiny speck, as England is, of this vast Cosmos, and, as the less is included in the greater, an intelligent regard to cosmopolitan interests will necessarily at the same time preserve and safe guard all that is worthy in British interests. Only one thing puzzles me. If Prince Gortchakoff regards solely the narrow selfish interests of Russia, Prince Bismark the narrow selfish interests of Germany, and the Duke of Magenta the narrow selfish interests of France, do not *our* narrow selfish interests (after all not wholly unimportant to us) run some risk of going to the wall if those specially charged with their guardianship repudiate the obligation? Depend upon it, it is neither bigotry nor Chauvinism which makes the masses of a nation revere the memory of peculiarly national Statesmen. It is the fashion, I know, of a certain school of enlightened politicians to sneer at Mr. Pitt. Will many of the Cosmopolitan Statesmen of the present day go down to posterity with the halo that surrounds the memory of that essentially English minister?

I do not charge you or any other man with being actuated by party motives. A man's actions are often incomprehensible enough without seek-

ing to discover their secret springs. But if any one thinks that this Bulgarian agitation will promote a party purpose, I sincerely believe that he will find that he held the common sense and "narrow" patriotism of this country a great deal too cheap, and when the inevitable reaction shall set in, and the storm of passion shall abate, and calmer counsels prevail, those who wished to convert a righteous indignation into a party victory, and ride triumphantly on the storm, may find themselves more effectually than ever stranded on the shoals of discredited faction.

H. A. MUNRO-BUTLER-JOHNSTONE.

THE
EASTERN QUESTION.

BY

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THE EASTERN QUESTION.

CHAPTER I.

SINCE the debate on Mr. Yorke's motion in the House of Commons, the condition of Turkey has been much discussed in the press and in the country. But the chief issue raised has been that of the solvency of the Ottoman Government—an important part, no doubt, but still only a part, of the much wider subject which is known by the name of the "Eastern Question." The other issues raised by this question—viz. what are the British interests involved in the maintenance of the Ottoman Empire? whether or not the integrity of that empire is now compromised beyond redemption? whether there are elements of vitality and recovery still left in Turkey? what are the chances of these recuperative elements being promptly developed? whether any interference on the part of England would avert a catastrophe? and if so, whether we have, morally, politically, and diplomatically, the right to interfere, and what form that interference ought to take?—these have only been lightly and incidentally touched upon; and yet, as far as this country is concerned, they have a very momentous bearing on its policy and its interests. These, then, are the questions which I propose to discuss.

It ought not to be necessary to prove the importance to England of maintaining the integrity of the Ottoman Empire; for when a policy has been consistently maintained for a century past by every English statesman who has governed the country, the burden of proof ought certainly to lie on the shoulders of those who would alter or disturb

that traditional policy. Now Chatham, Pitt, Wellington, Castlereagh, Canning, and Palmerston were all of one way of thinking on this subject, and, in our own time, we thought it worth while to undertake a costly war in order to vindicate that policy. Chatham went so far as to say that he would not condescend to argue with a man who did not see the vital importance to England of maintaining the Ottoman Empire.

But, besides those of England, all the great statesmen of Europe have been agreed on the importance of pursuing the same policy; Gustavus III., Frederick the Great, Hertzberg, Napoleon, Talleyrand, Metternich, all agreed in this. But I know that authority alone, however weighty, will not do in these days; and I will try to prove this point, not only by authority, but by reasoning, for it is the cornerstone of my argument, and if this is not firm, the whole superstructure will be insecure. This is all the more necessary, inasmuch as by constant repetition a maxim of policy, once recognised as a practical truism, acquiesced in by everybody, becomes treated first as a trite commonplace, and afterwards as a vulgar error.

When people say that the Turkish Empire is our "road to India," I really believe that in the majority of cases they are thinking of a material road, and consider that if we can only secure Egypt, our "road to India" is safe. The Emperor Nicholas, in his offers to Sir Hamilton Seymour, took advantage of the *équivoque* contained in the expression, and offered to secure our "road to India" by putting this material road in our hands.

Now the Ottoman Empire is our "road to India" in a very different and a much larger sense than one simply geographical. We have 30,000,000 (sometimes computed at a very much higher figure) of Mahommedan fellow-subjects in India. On the whole, these subjects are not at present disaffected towards us. There are, no doubt, numerous fanatics among them, who give us from time to time

a good deal of trouble. There is on our north-west frontier a permanent camp of Wahabee fanatics, which is the refuge of Mahommedan disaffection throughout our possessions, and it has cost us a good many expensive campaigns, and may yet cost us a good many more. But the Mahommedans in general in India, and especially the well-to-do and wealthy Mahommedans, have always discouraged these fanatical manifestations; and, fortified by the decrees of their law authorities, have declared that Mahommedans may acquiesce peaceably in the British rule.

Hunter's "Mahometan Subjects" goes into the details of this subject, and proves this conclusively. Now this somewhat critical allegiance of 30,000,000 of our Indian fellow-subjects—the most fighting, and therefore dangerous element in India—depends in a great measure on the fact that there does exist, and has long existed, a close alliance in Europe between the head of their faith, the Caliph or Vicar of the Prophet, and the Sovereign of England and India. Hunter mentions the effect produced at a meeting held among Mahommedan natives at Calcutta, in order to discuss this very question of the obligation to revolt, by an old sheikh who appeared among them, having lately arrived from Constantinople, and who spoke to them of the friendship and alliance subsisting between the Sultan and the Queen. On this subject there is a letter written by Sultan Selim to Tippoo Sultan, quoted in Lord Wellesley's despatches, which is well worth referring to. The Turkish Sultan counsels submission to England, on the express grounds that an attack upon England in India would weaken her power in Europe, where her influence was absolutely necessary to the general balance of power. To what an extent the difficulty which we at present experience in governing India would be aggravated by a rupture or cessation of the old alliance between England and Turkey it would, of course, be difficult to estimate exactly; but it is not in a geographical or material sense,

but in a political and moral sense still more, that Turkey is our "road to India."

So much for our Indian interests. Now for our interests in Europe.

Let us suppose a partition of Turkey in Europe. I do not care whether we secure Egypt as part of the plunder or not; twenty Egypts—a hundred Egypts—would, I think I can shew, be no compensation to us whatever. When Catherine of Russia took a famous journey through the Crimea with Joseph II. of Austria, they entertained each other (among other topics, I should fancy) about a partition of the Turkish Empire. A successful partition of Poland had made partitions popular and fashionable. The conversation went on smoothly enough till the Austrian Kaiser asked the Czarina, "How about Constantinople?"

Their scheme had struck on a rock and foundered. "Make it a free city," you will hear some innocent people say. I should like to see you do it. If you did, how long would it remain a "free city?" Why, the coveted prize, *that* in virtue of which the "Eastern Question" has been before the world for two centuries, is not Bulgaria or even Roumelia—it is Constantinople. Servia, Roumania, and the kingdom of Greece may, and no doubt do, desire an extension of territory, a revendication (as the French call it) of their old frontiers; each at the expense of Turkey, and at the expense also of the conflicting claims of each other. But, since the time of Peter the Great, and long before, Constantinople has been the dream of the Czars and of all true Russians, and there is not a Greek professor who does not hug the belief of living to see the re-establishment of the Byzantine Empire. It has been the dream of ambition for three centuries past, and does any rational man believe that men will forego the realization of this dream out of a disinterested regard for each other's feelings?

Where are the "free cities" of Europe now? The examples of Cracow, of Frankfort, and of Hamburg, must be

particularly encouraging to the creators of "free cities;" and make Constantinople a "free city" to-morrow, how many months or weeks would you give it to remain so? As a stepping-stone to acquiring it, I can understand those who advocate this policy. It is far easier to absorb and swallow a "free city," than the capital of an empire with a standing army and a large fleet. But, for any one else to be duped by such a transparent pretext, I confess, fills me with compassion. That Constantinople, if it ceases to be Turkish, will before ten years elapse become Russian, appears to me the least hazardous prediction to make in the whole range of politics.

Consider for a moment, now, what would be the consequences to us of Constantinople falling into the hands of a first-rate Power. The balance of power in Europe was seriously deranged by the partition of Poland; among other reasons, because it created a *solidarité* of interest among the three great military Powers in Europe. What is called (though technically, not quite accurately) the Holy Alliance was one consequence of it, and the alliance between these same Powers at the present day is a remote consequence of the same thing. Now that France's influence is practically extinct, these three Powers can do exactly what they like on the Continent, provided, of course, they are agreed; their power being only limited by the fact of England being still master on the seas. But if the Turkish Empire were partitioned, not only would a new principle of *solidarité* spring up among the partitioning Powers, but it would now be a maritime league, and a league with resources which must wrest the mastery of the seas from us. Fancy a great Power with the keys of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles in its possession! The Sea of Marmora would become one gigantic harbour, as large as all the harbours of Europe put together; in the hands, too, of a nation with inexhaustible resources, a practically unlimited supply of Greek sailors, and all the appliances of modern society at

its command. Wilhelmshaven and Kiel, two miserable scraps of harbours in comparison, have been supposed to endanger our maritime supremacy in the German Ocean. What would become of that maritime supremacy in the Mediterranean, with Constantinople in the hands of a first-rate Power? Constantinople in the hands of a first-rate Power, that knew how to apply its splendid resources, means, among other things, absolute supremacy at sea. But this is not all. Turkey and Russia are the two nations in Europe from which the raw material of manufactures is exclusively derived; place both countries under the same government and the same tariff, and the supply sources of your manufactures become dangerously contracted. Again, Turkey, including the nations who are bound by the Turkish tariff, is the very most promising field for our manufacturing enterprise. The progress of English cotton goods in Turkey has been prodigious, and it is capable of almost indefinite development. Now, Turkey has an almost nominal tariff. The Russian tariff is the most highly protective in the world. The very keystone of Turkish commercial policy (as I will shew in more detail in another chapter) is Free Trade. The whole basis and tendency of Russian commercial policy is protection. It was Turkey which defeated the policy of the Berlin decrees, and afforded British commerce an emporium and a means of inundating the Continent with its wares, in spite of and in the very teeth of those decrees; and it is Turkish commercial policy which offers English manufactures at the present day those advantages of free competition, by the help of which it is enabled to command the markets of the East. Wherever Russian influence extends, a prohibitive tariff makes successful competition with their own inferior products impossible.

Here, then, are a few cheerful results to England. Let us recapitulate them:—1. A loss of grip on the loyalty of the fighting element in our Indian possessions. 2. The loss of the command of the sea, the one weapon left in our

hands to counterbalance an absolute preponderance against us on land. 3. Our manufacturers deprived of their best and cheapest supply of raw material, and of the best markets for their wares.

So much for England. Now I do not much affect cosmopolitan and philosophical ideas, but no educated man will absolutely reject to entertain the following considerations. The importance in the world of the Mahommedan religion is a fact, which some may regret, but all will admit. It fills at this moment a greater space, and has a hold on the affections of a greater number of people, I believe, than any extant religion. Without attempting to fathom the designs of Providence, is it not remarkable that the one point of contact between the Christian and the Mahommedan civilizations, the only place where the one can hope to influence the other, is at Constantinople? And, if Christianity and Christian civilization have any new triumphs to achieve—if they are destined in any way to affect and improve the numerous populations professing the Mahommedan faith—it can only be by the influence which they can acquire at Constantinople. The Sultan—as Caliph or Vicar of the Prophet, on the one hand (and as such the recognised spiritual head of the whole Mahommedan Sunnite world in Africa, Asia, and Europe), and, on the other hand, as chief of a European State brought by degrees into the European State system, and therefore obliged to consider and conciliate European public opinion—is alone, in the Mahommedan world, amenable to powerful Christian influences, and able at the same time to give effect to those influences among the numerous populations subject to his political and spiritual supremacy. If Christianity and Europe wish for a field for new moral victories, where will they find a field so vast and so grand as is offered them here? Cut off the connection between the Turks and Europe, chase them into Asia, drive Moslemism back into itself, and the whole of this vast field of moral conquest—which we are taught to be-

lieve is so much grander than material conquest—is lost to European Christian civilization, and two huge Powers, represented in the old crusading phraseology by the Crescent and the Cross, stand confronting each other, deprived of all means of reciprocal action and influence. It has sometimes been suggested that Egypt might take the place of Turkey in this respect, and that European civilization might create for itself a field of influence in the Mahommedan States of the Khedive. Besides other weighty objections, the conclusive answer to such a suggestion is that the spiritual influence of the Caliphate—that by virtue of which alone the Sultan is enabled to exert influence over the Moslem populations—would be altogether wanting to a Sovereign of Egypt. You might as well propose to substitute his Catholic Majesty of Spain for the Papal Vicar of Christ, and endeavour to influence the Catholic world from Madrid instead of from Rome. The unsatisfactory condition of our Mahommedan subjects in India, in spite of the (in many respects) admirable and equitable administration of the country by the English, is a crucial instance of the difficulties which European civilization meets with in its direct dealings with Mahommedans. The same difficulty which we find in India, Russia, in spite of her boasted congeniality with Asiatics, experiences in an equal degree in the case of her Moslem subjects in the Caucasus, the Crimea, and Siberia, not to speak of the newly-acquired Khanates in Central Asia.

These last considerations may perhaps be considered philosophy, and not politics; but I trust that I have given some exclusively political reasons, independently, too, of authority, for thinking that the integrity of the Ottoman Empire is essential to England and to Europe.

In the next chapter I will shew, I fear too easily, that that integrity is at the present time seriously jeopardized.

CHAPTER II.

IF the integrity of the Ottoman Empire is of vital importance to us, the good government of that country must be a matter of corresponding interest. Notorious, palpable, flagrant, ruinous misgovernment must jeopardize every interest we have, and involve in ruin a country with even greater resources and capacities than Turkey. Now what are the financial and administrative conditions of Turkey?

Mr. Yorke's statement in the House of Commons on the financial condition of Turkey was so exhaustive and conclusive that it has never been challenged. Explanations, palliations, and excuses, have been volunteered from various quarters, but the facts themselves have never been disputed. The general result of his statement may be summed up by saying that Turkey has in twenty-one years accumulated 150,000,000 liras of debt (the lira equals 18s. 2d.), which imposes a fixed annual charge of 15,000,000 on her revenue; and that as the total amount of that revenue can by no possibility be set down at more than 22,000,000, there remains only 7,000,000 to meet all the requirements of her public service—those of the army, the navy, the huge civil list, and the whole Civil Service of the Ottoman Empire. In such a state of things, and with the greatest conceivable economy in every branch of the public service, an annual normal deficit of between 4,000,000 and 5,000,000 liras is inevitable. The gross deficit this year amounted to 11,000,000 liras, but this was made up by a number of extraordinary payments which may not occur again. The normal deficit may be set down as 4,244,445 liras. Such being the general condition of Turkey's finances—a condition of virtual bankruptcy, actual bankruptcy being only staved off from year to year by new loans, imposing increasingly larger annual charges—can it be wondered at that every branch of the public service is starved; that the administration of justice is a mockery and a farce, and that

capital flies a country where it is subject to confiscation, and where civil justice has to be bought? This last feature is the saddest of all. Bad as is the financial condition of Turkey, the administrative condition is still worse. It is, in fact, the root of all the evils in Turkey; and a radical reform of its abuses must be the first step towards the regeneration of the country. A great English lawyer has said that the whole machinery of the State was only a frame for the twelve judges. Any one holding such an opinion, and conversant with the working of the mixed courts and the commercial and maritime tribunals in Turkey, with the ignorance and venality of its judges, the delays, miscarriages, and corruption which characterize them, will assuredly pronounce that the whole "state of Denmark" is rotten to the core. With judges living in a town as expensive as London, and to whom the decision of large commercial concerns is confided, and receiving a salary less than that of a body clerk of a justice of the Common Pleas in England, can we be surprised that "backshish" reigns supreme, and corruption becomes an obligatory vice? These facts are so notorious to every one living in the Levant, and indeed to all those having any business relations with the East, that of all the different assailants of Mr. Yorke's positions not one has ventured to impugn them. If conclusive evidence were needed, here it is:—We have twice lately been obliged to break off all communication with the maritime tribunal of Constantinople owing to its notorious corruption, and to refuse to refer British interests to this sink of iniquity; we have 2,000 British vessels annually passing in these waters; we have enormous maritime interests at stake, and these are confided to a court where the corruption of the judges, their ignorance and greediness, reduce the proceedings to a farce, for which suitors pay, and by which commerce is defrauded. This, then, is the state of justice—the backbone of a nation's prosperity and well-being—in Turkey. Is it marvellous that capital, ever

timorous and sensitive, flies from such a country, and that its vast resources lie unused and undeveloped ?

In Turkey, all companies having business in the country must by law be registered in it, and are amenable to its courts of law ; and this fact, coupled with the notorious incompetency and corruption of the judges, has the effect not only of discouraging, but driving out foreign capital and enterprise from a country where capital ought by every conceivable means to be encouraged. It can scarcely be matter of wonder, then, that with virgin forests and the richest mines, the forests are almost entirely neglected, and the mines unworked. Geologists tell us that Turkey contains the richest mineral wealth in Europe. In the flourishing times of the Turkish Empire there were ninety mines in active work ; now there are two. Manufactures, too, requiring the outlay of large capital, and consequently security of property, are unknown in Turkey. Agriculture, therefore, is the one form of industry which is the source of wealth, and consequently of taxation, in the country. When people therefore talk of increasing the revenue and taxes in Turkey, that which must in the ultimate analysis bear the burden is the land. No foreigner has been able to make even a living out of the land ; land is already burdened to the extreme margin of profitable cultivation. The following is a list of the taxes which fall exclusively on the cultivator of the soil :—The tithe, amounting to 8,565,000 liras ; the tax on sheep, 2,020,000 ; that on pigs, 32,000 ; that on silk, 36,000 ; on spirits, 290,000 (with the exception of 30,000 which is paid by the holders of licences) ; Tapou mines, 565,000 ; tax on salt, 762,000 (minus 100,000 paid by the urban population)—making a total of 12,270,000 out of 22,000,000 liras total revenue paid exclusively by the agricultural population *quâ* agriculturists ; for, as general consumers, they necessarily pay their quota also of the remaining taxation. Not only is the taxation increasingly burdensome, but the mode of levying the taxes makes the

yoke intolerable. The chief tax on the land is the *dime* or tithe. This is taken in kind, and, originally amounting to one-tenth of the produce, has received additions till it now stands at not 10, but $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., and has been as high as 15 per cent.

Now the cultivator is not allowed to remove his produce till the tithe-collector has been round; and, as this functionary is under no obligation to make his call at any particular time, and often (from the fact either of capriciousness, or from the extent of his jurisdiction), comes at very late and inconvenient periods, the whole labour of cultivation is suspended for the convenience of the tithe-collector; and sometimes the harvest lies on the ground, and is spoiled before he arrives. Then the whole produce has to be weighed to ascertain the amount of the tax due. What a waste of labour must ensue, if all this weighing throughout the vast empire is put together! Then the cultivator is obliged at his own cost to convey the amount of the tax to the district depôt, sometimes a distance of fifteen miles—an additional tax upon him. But does all that is collected go into the Treasury? Far from it. The several sources of revenue are farmed to bankers and middle-men, and the largest fortunes in Turkey have been amassed by these farmers of the revenue. But although there is waste here, and a waste measured by the fortunes of the farmers of the revenue, so corrupt and arbitrary is the administration in Turkey, that I believe the people generally prefer having to do with the farmers of the revenue rather than with State tax-gatherers; the former, who make a commerce of the business, have an interest in conciliating the cultivators, so as to increase their profits, and their ways are less high-handed and tyrannical than would be the ways of official collectors. The very essence of a tithe is to discourage improving agriculture, and the tithe, injurious in itself, and excessive in amount, is further aggravated by the vicious mode of collecting it which I have described. The oppressive nature of the

tithe in a bad year is very clearly shewn by comparing the proportion of the tithe with the amount of the net produce of the land, the tithe itself being, of course, assessed on the gross produce of the land. Let us take as unit of comparison the Turkish deunum, equal to about 1,000 square yards, and 15 okes (the oke equals about 2.8 lb. avoirdupois) of seed-corn for the sowing of a deunum, and 50 piastres as the minimum cost of the cultivation of a deunum (2,000 piastres is considered the minimum cost for 40 deunums), and 1 piastre for the price of an oke of corn; then, when the harvest yields 14 to 1, the gross produce will be 210 okes, the net produce will be worth 160 piastres, or 160 okes, the tithe will be $26\frac{1}{4}$ okes, and the proportion of the tithe to the net produce 13 per cent. But, in a bad year, when the yield is only 4 to 1 on the seed sown (as has lately been the case in Asia Minor) the gross produce will be only 60 okes, the net produce will be worth only 10 piastres, or 10 okes, the tithe will be $7\frac{1}{2}$ okes, and the proportion of the tithe to the net produce 75 per cent.; thus taking little from those who have much, and taking nearly all from those who have little. The whole system of taxation, falling as it does almost exclusively on the producer, obviously required revision, and after the promulgation of the Tanzimat this necessity was recognised by the Government. The Khaththy Cherif of Gulkhave, as well as the Khaththy Humâioun of 1856, went so far as to enunciate the principles on which the revision should proceed, but unfortunately this necessary and salutary reform, like so many others, has hitherto remained a dead letter.

When, therefore, we consider that in Turkey commerce is free, and has always been free, that manufactures (except domestic spinning and weaving) do not exist, and that the whole weight of additional taxation falls on the cultivator of the soil, it is obvious that under such a system, there being no margin of profit and accumulation, a bad year, which would under ordinary circumstances be successfully tided

over, plunges the whole country into misery and want. This has been the case during two years past in Asia Minor. The severity of taxation, and the onerous mode of collection, are in a great measure responsible for the deplorable condition of that country. But that is not all. The famine was only local. It depended on the absence of rain during the growing season, and the absence of rain was only partial. In some parts of the country, separated by no great interval from the famished districts, there were rich harvests and great abundance; but the entire absence of means of communication, not only of railways, but of high roads, made it impossible for the abundance of one district to relieve the distress of another; and so sluggish and backward was the Administration at Constantinople to grasp the importance of the crisis, that no timely provision was made to relieve the famine, and large stores were collected at the ports without any kind of means of pushing them forward into the distressed districts. With £150,000,000 of debt incurred in twenty years, there has been scarcely any attempt to lay out even a portion of the money in the very first necessities of government, in opening up communications, and giving an outlet to the wealth of the country. Palaces, ironclads, Krupp guns, unproductive expenditure generally, have engulfed it all; whilst the primary, indispensable, unconditional duties of good government have been neglected; and the Asia Minor famine, which is computed to have cost 150,000 lives, is directly chargeable to a Government which has been guilty of this culpable neglect. Can we much wonder at the general administration of the country being so vicious, when we remember that easy compliance with vice and corruption at head-quarters is the sole present recommendation for office, and that, since the deaths of Ali and Fuad Pasha, there has only been one man, Midhat Pasha, who has had the courage even to attempt to carry out their policy, and that the average duration of each Viziership has been about five months?

The following is a brief summary of the ministerial changes which have taken place in the lifetime of the present Sultan. On his advent to the throne he found the late Mahmed Kypristy Pasha at the head of affairs. This Vizier was soon succeeded by Fuad Pasha, who, however, only remained a short time in power, and then resigned with his whole Ministry, and was succeeded by Youssouf Kiamil Pasha. Youssouf, in his turn, had to make room for the return to office of Fuad Pasha, who this time remained there over four years before he fell into disgrace. He was then replaced by Mahmed Ruchdy Pasha, called the Matéréredjian, who only enjoyed chief power for eight months, and was after that relegated to the War Office, being succeeded in the Grand Viziership by Ali Pasha, who remained there till his death. After him came Mahmoud Pasha, who disorganized everything that Ali Pasha and Fuad Pasha had been at such pains to build up, and was, after ten months' destructive tenure of office, positively driven out by the scandals which he created, and by the outraged voice of public opinion. Midhat Pasha was then called to the head of affairs. This reforming Vizier is undoubtedly the most popular man in Turkey, his popularity having been much enhanced by a comparison of his merits with the demerits of his successors. He is at the head of the reforming party in Turkey, and of those who consider that the regeneration of Turkey can only be effected by following in the lines traced out by Reschid, Ali, and Fuad, Pasha; but his own incorruptibility, and his determined opposition to corruption at head-quarters, brought about his dismissal after only seventy-five days' tenure of office, and Mahmed Ruchdy Pasha, the Matéréredjian, came a second time into power, but only to remain there four months, and to be succeeded by Essaad Pasha, who, after fifty-eight days' tenure of office, was dismissed to the governorship of Conia. Another Mahmed Ruchdy Pasha was now called to supreme power, to remain there eleven months, and to be succeeded in his turn

by Hussein Arny Pasha, the Soldier-Vizier, whose whole thoughts were concentrated on the organization of the army, and who seemed as incapable of grappling with the financial and administrative difficulties of the country, as of preserving it from the innumerable diplomatic rebuffs and defeats which it has lately undergone. He, too, has quite recently been dismissed from office, and for reasons which are creditable to him, having declined to yield to the pressure which the three military Powers have latterly attempted to put on Turkey in the matter of Baron Hirsch's railway concessions and schemes. He has been replaced by Essaad Pasha, who comes to office, if not with much administrative experience, with an unsullied reputation at any rate, and the prestige of a highly successful rule in the province of Conia. Unfortunately, recent news from Constantinople affirms that he, too, is to be no exception to the *régime* of ephemeral Viziers, and that his dismissal is already decided on, and his successor named. What but confusion and disaster can result from such a *régime* as this ?



CHAPTER III.

DESPERATE as the state of things described in my last chapter undoubtedly is, I shall endeavour to shew in my next that it is not altogether hopeless, and that there are elements of regeneration in Turkey which, if vigorously used, may yet save the State. But there is a previous question which must be disposed of—Have we a right to interfere in the internal affairs of Turkey? I shall endeavour to shew that we have.

I have already shewn the enormous stake which we have in the integrity of Turkey. This stake might be considered sufficient on grounds of high policy to justify our interference in time to prevent disintegration. But for some,

such an argument is too general and vague. Nor will I lay too much stress on our right to interfere, grounded on the enormous pecuniary stake which British holders of Turkish bonds (up to £100,000,000) have in the financial integrity of the country. If people, "tempted by usurious interest, deliberately embark their capital in a financially insecure concern, it may very plausibly be argued that they have no right to invoke the interference of their Government when the inevitable collapse occurs. But, on the other hand, £100,000,000 is a large sum, and represents important interests, and the claim of these bondholders on the aid of the Government in the event of a collapse is not without high precedent.

There is on this subject a circular memorandum of Lord Palmerston's, dated January, 1848, and addressed by him as Foreign Secretary to the representatives of her Majesty abroad, in which he clearly lays down that it is "entirely a matter of discretion" whether the British Government should interfere authoritatively to protect the British holders of foreign bonds in the case of repudiating States, and that its "right" so to interfere was, so far as international law was concerned, indisputable; and exactly the same doctrine was laid down by statesmen on both sides of the House, Lord Palmerston included, in a debate in the House of Commons in June, 1847, on a motion by Lord George Bentinck. If, then, we have a clear and indisputable right to "interfere authoritatively" in the event of a financial collapse occurring, it is surely not too much to argue that our right to "friendly remonstrance," to prevent such a collapse when it seems imminent, is equally indisputable; and with a normal deficit of something like £5,000,000 in the annual Budget, is or is not a financial collapse imminent? But I do not rest our right to interfere either on the general or the special plea.

The Crimean War, again, and the costly sacrifices which it entailed on us, might fairly be considered to give us a

right to interfere even "authoritatively," when we find the objects for which that war was undertaken and carried to a successful issue, jeopardized by influences which it is in our power to control. Now what was the object of the Crimean War? Certainly not the neutralization of the Black Sea; that was only an incident, an afterthought, a means, and only one means, of effecting our objects. These objects were—

1. To take away from Russia the pretext of single-handed interference in the affairs of Turkey, which she claimed by right of sympathy with 8,000,000 co-religionists, and in virtue of a forced interpretation of a particular clause (7th) in the Treaty of Kouchouk Kainardji, which she long and stoutly maintained gave her a protectorate over all the subjects of the Ottoman Porte belonging to the Greek Church. In lieu of this single protectorate, the Treaty of Paris created a kind of joint protectorate of all the Great Powers.

2. The second object aimed at was to make Turkey enter into the European family of nations, to strip it of its exclusively Oriental character, to bring it within the pale of European influences and opinion, to make it count in the scale of nations, and become more self-sufficient for its own defence by encouraging the means of European civilization—in a word, by becoming progressive instead of remaining stationary.

So distinctly was this one of the objects of the Western Powers, that Turkey was induced, not exactly to embody in the Treaty of Paris, but to communicate to the representatives of the States there assembled, the text of the "Khaththy Humâïoun;" and the importance of this act was brought into full light by a solemn reference to it in the 9th clause of the treaty. It must be clearly understood that it did not give the collective Powers a treaty-right to interfere to see the clauses carried out; on the contrary, such a right was distinctly denied; but, next to this, it

was the most solemn engagement the Porte could take, and was, in point of fact, an engagement in honour on the part of the Sultan towards the contracting Powers, for the due and faithful execution of this solemn instrument.

Now what was the *Khaththly Humâïoun*? It was a confirmation and extension of the *Khaththly Cherif* of Gulkhavé of November 3, 1839, which opened the era of equality and reform in the Turkish Empire—equality as between Christians and Mahommedans, reform and progress for the Empire generally. It was the enumeration and explication of the reforms initiated by the Sultan Mahmoud under the general name of the *Tanzimat*. The *Khaththly Humâïoun*, together with the *Khaththly Cherif* of Gulkhavé, may be called the charters of equality and progress of the Ottoman Empire. The *Khaththly Humâïoun* consists of thirty-five articles, and may be roughly divided into three parts:—

1. Those clauses which secure liberty of worship and equality of rights to the Christian inhabitants of Turkey.

2. A promise of codification of the laws, the establishment of mixed tribunals and special courts, a re-organization of the police and general administration of the country, prohibition of farming the revenue, correction of the abuses of collection, and severe laws against corruption and speculation.

3. A promise of a number of public institutions, such as banks, railroads, and canals, and a number of measures calculated to develop the material resources of the empire.

Now of the thirty-five articles, 7, 8, 12, 13, 16, 19, 22, and 23 have remained dead letters. (*a*) There were to be mixed tribunals of justice, codification of the law, translations of the codes into the different languages of the empire, settled modes of procedure; this has been translated, as we have seen, into mock courts, unpaid judges, arbitrary procedure, and corrupt decisions. (*b*) Farming the revenue was to be abolished, and a sounder fiscal system established; nothing of the kind has been done. (*c*) A solemn undertaking was entered into to grapple with the evil of corrup-

tion; at present the whole administration is corrupt, and corruption is sanctioned and practised at the "Fountain of Honour." (d) Banks were to be established, to assist agriculture and come to the aid of commerce; nothing of the sort has been thought of. (e) Roads, canals, and railroads were to be pushed forward with vigour, so as to open up the resources of the country: the absence of roads and canals has prevented the relief of a famished population; and as to railroads, the only important line finished was a cloak for a most notorious scandal. (f) Foreign capital was to be invited and encouraged by every means, so as to develop the great resources of the country; such vexatious obstructions have been placed in the way of foreign capital, that it has shunned the country, and men of integrity like Scott Russell and T. Brassey have had all their offers rejected; unless the pashas catch a glimpse of "backshish," foreign enterprise is an abomination in their eyes. (g) Christians were to be admitted into the army on the principle of general equality; nothing of the sort hastaken place.

These are some of the principal points in which the Khaththy Humâioun has been violated, or rather unfulfilled. Now, as early as 1867, in answer to remonstrances from Lord Lyons as to the imperfect fulfilment of the terms of this firman, Fuad Pasha (at that time Minister of Foreign Affairs—he and Ali Pasha took turns as Grand Vizier and Foreign Minister) issued to the representatives of the Porte at all the great Courts in Europe a very remarkable circular, accompanied by a memorandum, containing considerations on the execution of the Khaththy Humâioun, and which is worthy of the most serious and attentive study at the present day. In this circular the following remarkable sentence occurs:—"Notre but n'est pas de montrer que nous avons tout ou assez fait; au contraire, nous voulons prouver que, si nous avons pu accomplir une partie de notre tâche, nous sommes aussi capables d'achever le reste." And in the memorandum he goes into many de-

tails, to shew that a real *bonâ fide* attempt had been made to carry out the terms of the Khaththy Humâioun, and that a real progress along the whole line had been actually achieved. He proceeds to point out the great difficulties which the advocates of reform in Turkey had to meet and overcome—difficulties proceeding often from the prejudice and fanaticism of the populations; and he claims great credit for the success with which this prejudice and this fanaticism have to a great extent been removed. These practical difficulties, he says, are rarely taken sufficiently into account by the theoretical reformer. In the parts of the country farthest removed from the influence of the Government these difficulties were greatest, but no effort was left untried to instruct the populations, and to bring the whole country under the influence of enlightened ideas, and substantial progress had been attained. In the matter of religion, absolute toleration had been universally and successfully established, and as much effected in this respect in twenty years as had been accomplished in the course of centuries elsewhere; that in the way of administrative reform the whole country had been divided into “vilayets,” and every effort made to improve, organize, and purify the administration; that with reference to the other heads, as much had been done as could be done in the time; and he concludes the memorandum, as he had done the circular note, by saying that what had been done in the past was an earnest and a measure of what might be hoped for in the future.

This was in 1867. Unfortunately, in 1868 Fuad Pasha died, and when he and Ali Pasha had both disappeared, blank darkness fell over the destinies of Turkey. Fuad was succeeded by Mahmoud Pasha, who undid in three months what it had taken twenty years to build up; and with the exception of the brilliant but too short interval of Midhat Pasha’s Grand Viziership, absolutely nothing has been done to carry out the provisions of the Khaththy

Humâïoun; and the work, which Fuad Pasha's memorandum shews was *bonâ fide* commenced, absolutely ceased. Since then the Khaththy Humâïoun has been a dead letter, and corruption and incapacity have brought Turkey to such a pass that her very best friends almost despair of her recovery.

But what I am trying in this chapter to shew, is our right of interference. I contend that Lord Lyons's remonstrance about the imperfect fulfilment of the Khaththy Humâïoun, and the whole tenor of Fuad Pasha's reply, elaborately setting forth as it does the good faith of the Porte in the matter, clearly establish that, in the opinion of the Turkish Government at any rate, our right to interfere was incontrovertible. Let me recapitulate my arguments on this point:—

1. Our general interest in the welfare of Turkey gives us a general right to "friendly remonstrance."

2. Our special interest as the largest holders of Turkish bonds gives us a special financial interest, and a moral right to friendly interference at any rate, grounded thereon.

3. The expenditure of life and treasure in the Crimean War gives us a right to see that we are not filched of the objects for which that war was undertaken.

4. The communication of the solemn document of the Khaththy Humâïoun to the assembled representatives of the Great Powers at the Congress of Paris, and the reference to it made in the 9th clause of the Treaty of Paris, invest it with a character quite different from that of an ordinary firman, and constitute an engagement of honour on the part of the Porte towards the European Powers, which we, as the nation chiefly interested in the well-being and integrity of Turkey, have a right to call upon her to fulfil.

5. The fact of our having remonstrated on the tardy execution of the Khaththy Humâïoun when *bonâ fide* attempts were being made to carry it out, gives us *à fortiori* a right, and indeed puts us under the obligation, to re-

monstrate, when all attempts to carry out the provisions of that instrument have been abandoned.

Before I conclude this chapter, I must anticipate an objection which may be offered. It may be said that the Treaty of Paris expressly forbade the interference of any single Power in the internal affairs of Turkey. Now the answer to that is, that the interference contemplated by the prohibition had direct reference to the protectorate of the Greek subjects of the Porte claimed by Russia, to put an end to which the war was undertaken; and that an interference to the extent of a friendly remonstrance on the subject of the non-fulfilment of honourable engagements, is a totally different thing. Moreover, Lord Lyons's interference in 1867, and the whole tone of Fuad Pasha's reply, dispose conclusively of this objection. Over and above these arguments, and without laying undue stress on the repudiation of the Black Sea clause, let me point out that the Great Powers have continually violated this prohibition, if, indeed, any such there were; and that the three military Powers of Europe are busily engaged in meddling in the internal affairs of Turkey at the present moment, and that not only without the concurrence of England, but in spite of England's disapproval. Take the action of Russia, Germany, and Austria in the matter of the Roumanian treaties of commerce, or of Hirsch's railways, for example. Besides, from circumstances partly historical, partly founded on sympathy of interest, England stands with regard to Turkey in a totally exceptional position from the other European Powers. The interference of England is, as every one well acquainted with Turkey will testify, loudly invoked by patriotic Turks. "Why does not England interfere, and save Turkey from the corruption of our rulers?" is the refrain of almost every conversation on the subject. England is alone trusted of all the Powers in Europe; and her interference, so far from being resented, would be accepted as the sole means of salvation. But more of this hereafter.

I think I may consider that two steps towards my conclusion have now been taken, by the establishment of the fact that Turkey is at present in a very bad way, and that England has a moral, political, and diplomatic right to interfere. The question of course remains, whether that interference would produce any good result. This point I shall reserve for a future chapter.

CHAPTER IV.

I HAVE said that the condition of Turkey, in spite of all appearances, still admits of hope. I will in this chapter and the following try to establish this. I will by no means confine myself to any general argument derived from the fact that for three centuries the destruction, the rapid and immediate extinction, of the Ottoman Empire has been a favourite prophecy, and that, in spite of all these predictions, it has hitherto remained upright; nor from the fact that it has already weathered many a crisis apparently more dangerous and menacing even than that which threatens it to-day. At the time when its military prestige was destroyed by the war ended by the Treaty of Adrianople, its maritime power broken by a European coalition, its integrity destroyed by the forcible establishment of the kingdom of Greece, its ancient military force broken up by the destruction of the Janissaries, its recruiting ground subtracted from it by the revolt of the Albanians, and its very existence threatened by the arms of Mehemet Ali—all these events, each pregnant with destruction, occurring together—Turkey was saved by the genius of a Grand Vizier—Mehemet Redschid Pasha. To say that an empire, which in a few years passed almost unscathed through the ordeal of such a concurrence of disasters, has not some inherent principles of stability and prosperity, appears to me wholly inconsistent. I shall endeavour, in this and the following

chapter, to discover what these principles are. But I feel that no such general argument will suffice; the evils which oppress and threaten Turkey have been pointed out in detail, and it is only by entering into details of its recuperative resources, that the impression which the details of its financial condition and administrative corruption are calculated to produce can be effaced.

And now with reference to its finances. If Turkey were in the position of a country in which the sources of wealth had been fully developed up to the limit of its capabilities, and, notwithstanding this, shewed a normal deficit of anything like £5,000,000 annually, the case might be considered desperate. But, on the contrary, the wealth and resources of Turkey are untapped. The geological formation of the country shews her to be in possession of the richest mineral wealth in Europe. Her boundless forests, containing the finest timber, are themselves mines of wealth. Her soil, favoured by a genial climate, is naturally the most productive in the world. Her population is numerous, intelligent, peaceable, and industriously inclined. Together with these natural advantages what do we find? Her rich mines left unworked; for the avarice and greed of the Government prevent the "exploitation" by individual enterprise of what it has not the energy and intelligence to work on its own account. The rich forests are neglected and unused, and the revenue derivable from them, which might be calculated at a very high figure indeed, is at present simply nominal. The rich and favoured soil, which might afford exports for the whole world, is not cultivated to the extent of one-half of the cultivable lands; and the mode of agriculture, from the discouragement chiefly to improvement which the ruinous system of tithe-collection causes, is innocent of all improvements. From calculations of experts on the subject, Turkey is capable of producing more than four times the amount of agricultural produce that she does at present; and the reduction of cost of trans-

port, which the establishment of roads, canals, and railways would effect, would in many cases double the value of the increased production. I do not think, then, that it is too much to say, that the resources of Turkey are absolutely untapped.

And what may be done by even a poor nation, with infinitely fewer resources than Turkey in the way of recovering the balance by its receipts and expenditure, is shewn by what Italy effected in this way a short time ago, before "the war scare" again deranged its finances. One of the most remarkable phenomena in the East is, the power of quick recovery shewn by Oriental States when good government replaces corrupt administration. The reason for this will, I hope, presently become obvious; but, in the meantime, the fact is worthy of attention. Midhat Pasha (afterwards Grand Vizier for too short a time) was appointed Governor of the "vilayet" of the Danube. Within two years of his appointment he managed, by upright and honest administration, to raise the value of the revenue from his large "vilayet" by 50 per cent. A similar result followed Ahmed Vefyk Effendi's commissionership at Broussa. The same thing occurred at Toulja during Ismail Kémal Bey's too short administration of that province; and it is a subject of hopeful augury to Turkey that all these three men are still alive and in the prime of their intellect. Turkey is not deficient in able and honest men: it is the Government that lacks the desire to employ them.

This phenomenon of rapid recovery, this apparently miraculous springing up of prosperity on the contact of good government, is often witnessed in the East. In Malcolm's "Sketches of Persia," vol. ii. p. 184, he says: "The city of Ispahan has more than doubled its inhabitants, and quadrupled its manufactures of rich silk and brocade, during the twenty years that Hazi Ibrahim has been governor." The connecting cause between good government and prosperity, which, in a complicated condition of civilization, is

indirect and sometimes difficult to trace, in the case of these primitive Oriental communities consists in a simple link.

All this would tend to shew, what is, indeed, the fact, that it is not the Turkish system which is at fault, but the administrators of the system. There are, in fact, no systematic evils in Turkey, no gulf, no hatred between classes as classes (I am talking of what exists between Mahomedans—the religious difficulty is of another kind), no industrial interests opposed to each other, such as those of agriculturists and manufacturers. All classes have the same interests and the same feelings, and the community is not divided by conflicting theories and principles of government. Vicious and corrupt administrators are the bane of an otherwise wholesome condition of society. Remove them and replace them by men like Midhat Pasha, Ahmed Vefyk Effendi, and Ismail Kémal Bey, and wealth and prosperity spring up of their own spontaneous energy.

The fact is, that Turkey is the only country in the world of which it can be said that anarchy comes from above. The system is sound and workable, the people peaceable and even resigned, and remarkably industrious; but the lower functionaries are invariably corrupt, and the higher corrupt and incapable as well. For Turkey is the purest instance of an autocracy in the world. In Russia, (the only other instance of an autocracy in Europe,) absolutism is limited by the public opinion of the army, by the powerful Tchén (the Civil Service), and by the Moscow "press;" in Persia and the East generally, by the Divine right of rebellion and the weakness of the Central Government. But in Turkey, absolutely no other power whatever balances or limits the caprice and power of the Sultan. This was not always so. It dates only from the reforms of the Sultan Mahmoud. Before his time two distinct powers limited the absolutism of the Sultans, and, when these were destroyed, a third power was called into play to do duty for the other two. These limitations were:—

1. The Janissaries, an unruly soldiery, a kind of Prætorian guard, themselves requiring to be held in check by the Albanians, who in their turn were counter-checked by the Christian Armatoles. Such was the system of checks and counter-checks which supported the fabric of the Ottoman Empire, and which lent itself as the instrument of change and revolution when these soldiers became, as they often did become, affected by the contagion of discontent, which too long a course of misrule excited in the body of the people; they then made themselves the armed organs of public opinion, and the "bad ruler," in the emphatic words of the historian, "disappeared." The Janissaries have now themselves disappeared, their destruction being the first-fruits of Sultan Mahmoud's reforms. Their turbulence and insolence, and their opposition to the Sultan's reforms, made them odious in the eyes of the people (a distinct proof that public opinion in Turkey is not necessarily unprogressive); and when Mahmoud appealed to the people against them, his appeal was answered by a rising *en masse*, and the Janissaries were massacred.

2. The second limiting principle of absolutism consisted in the Derebeys and great Provincial Pashas. Orders might be issued from Constantinople, but those great feudal chiefs, supported by their armed retainers, as independent as the Percys and Norfolks of our early Plantagenet kings, disregarded these orders as it suited them, and the Sultan's writ, so to speak, only "ran" in the provinces so far as they thought proper to permit it. The Sultan Mahmoud, with his Grand Vizier Mehemet Redschid Pasha, were the Louis XIII. and Richelieu of the Ottoman Empire. The Derebeys were destroyed, and their power utterly broken. Then the "Tanzimat," or new organization, was introduced; and the local aristocracy having been destroyed, and the Janissaries having disappeared, it was no longer necessary to humour the Albanians as a counterpoise. These, in their

turn, were reduced by the Grand Vizier, and the Nizzam, or regular force, substituted in their place.

Such, shortly, was the general course of Sultan Mahmoud's reforms, which mark such an important era in Turkish history. He was supported throughout by the Ulema and by the public opinion of the country, whose pride and confidence in the old order of things had been thoroughly broken by the national disasters to which I have already alluded. The public, too, felt the tyranny of the local magnates and their armed force, and looked upon the Central Government as a benign and reforming power, which was bent upon freeing them from it. The personal character also of the Sultan, and especially of his Grand Vizier, inspired the people with confidence—they had yet to learn that the yoke of the Central Government might be made ten times heavier than that of the Pashas, and that they soon would be flogged with scorpions. The mistake (and a very great one it was) which the Ulema and people committed—and they were masters of the situation (as without them the Janissaries could not have been destroyed and the reforms introduced)—was their failing to insist at the time on the formation of a great national divan, of a more or less representative character, which would have been a guarantee and security for the future; as it was, the old order of things was swept away, and pure, unmitigated absolutism substituted in its stead.

3. Ali Pasha and Fuad Pasha (who were real statesmen, and had a true instinct of the situation) deliberately resolved on a course of policy which should have the effect of strengthening their hands as against the autocratic power of their master, and they called into play a new balance to take the place of the old checks which had disappeared. They invited and encouraged the interference of foreign Powers, and especially of England and of France—so long as the latter supported England—and they thus found in diplomacy the counteracting and balancing force which

they could no longer look for in any power existing in the country. The immense personal influence exercised by Lord Stratford de Redcliffe over the Sultan himself—of which there are so many anecdotes at Constantinople—was in a great measure an influence created, and a weapon forged, for their own purposes by these two Turkish statesmen. So far from being jealous of it, or opposing it, they accepted it as the firmest support of their policy and views, knowing that they never could have carried out the reforms which they effected, but for the support—often given under the diplomatic form of remonstrance—afforded by the English ambassador.

Unfortunately, the third limitation of autocracy has also disappeared. Two sets of circumstances contributed to this result:—Firstly, the events of the Crimean War, coupled with French diplomatic encroachment, substituted French for English influence at Constantinople; French influence, too, instead of being employed for the good of Turkey herself, was occupied far more with petty French commercial and other private objects, and was made odious in the eyes of the Turks by the arrogance by which it was enforced. Then came the German War; and the Turk, always keenly alive to questions of prestige and power, threw off with undisguised relief, and, indeed, with total disregard of diplomatic “convenances,” the yoke which had so long galled him.

Then came a great opportunity for England. England had only to step into the place forcibly vacated by France. The Turk, who had not yet learned to rely on himself, having by a long schooling acquired the habit of recognising a controlling direction at Pera, would have rejoiced beyond measure to see the empty place occupied by England. At this crisis came Prince Gortschakoff’s famous despatch and the Black Sea clause controversy, and as a consequence of it the Russian ambassador was installed in the place which England dared not occupy.

And since that time, to all appearances and for all practical purposes, General Ignatieff's influence is paramount at Constantinople. Perhaps it would be still more correct to say that no diplomatic influence—in the sense in which Lord Stratford exercised it, and Ali Pasha and Fuad Pasha understood it—is possessed by the European Powers at the present day. For General Ignatieff's aims and views are perfectly understood by the Turks, and his action during the Cretan insurrection, which earned him from the Greeks a very uncomplimentary title, is not more highly appreciated by the Turks. The influence which he wields at Constantinople, backed as it is by the German and Austrian Embassies, is an influence founded purely and simply on fear. General Ignatieff's policy is generally considered by the Turks to consist in endeavouring to weaken their country by every means in his power; externally, by supporting the vassal States in all controversies with their suzerain (as in the Roumanian commercial treaties, the Montenegrin Podgoritza business, the Servian difficulty, the Cretan insurrection, &c.); and internally by discrediting the administration at every opportunity, picking quarrels through consuls with local governors, and in every case supporting the consuls by diplomatic action with the Porte, so that general resistance should be encouraged by the certainty of support at head-quarters; and all the time to be in close and intimate relations with the Sultan himself, and to encourage him in his autocratic courses by assurances of the sympathy of his brother Autocrat. For these reasons General Ignatieff has been called the Mephistophiles of Turkey.

Now, what is the policy of Germany and of Austria? Germany, having no very direct or immediate policy in the East, and being greatly concerned to secure Russian support in the West, has lent herself to be the handmaid of Russian policy at Constantinople, and Baron Werther, the German Ambassador, is the shadow of General Ignatieff.

Austria (unfortunate, too, in the selection of her present ambassador) has really abandoned all *haute politique* at Constantinople. It is a luxury which, in her present crippled condition, she cannot afford herself. The one condition which would justify her in even contemplating such a policy would be the active support of England; and she remembers what Prince Bismarck told her Minister at the time of the Danish negotiations, "England has ceased to count in Europe." The only independent policy open to her at Constantinople is a commercial policy, and she is energetically pursuing that, with the object of pouring Hungarian produce and Bohemian manufactures into the vassal States and into Roumelia. She is not even strong enough to pursue this policy without the diplomatic support of Russia, who exacts a reciprocal support in matters where she is herself interested. The commercial treaties with Roumania, and the diplomatic action of the three Powers in the matter of Baron Hirsch's railways, and the consequent fall of the late Vizier, were the immediate consequences of the *solidarité* of the three Powers.

Such being the diplomatic position at Constantinople, what has England been doing? England, not many years ago absolutely supreme at Constantinople, has entirely abandoned the field. I have heard it said, "So much the better; let England wash her hands of all participation in the intrigues and diplomatic scandals of this hotbed of scheming and jobbery. It is far more dignified to stand aside and have nothing to do with it." Some people can bear with this sort of argument better than I can; but let me just ask, who wants England to meddle with intrigue and jobbery? Do not let our antagonists change the premisses, and then demolish their own arguments as if they were ours. It was exactly by keeping out of intrigues and jobbery that England's influence was established and maintained so long in Constantinople; and what is there in common with intrigue and jobbery (with

the intrigues for concessions and the jobbery of railway schemes) in a policy of remonstrance and advice on the general good or bad government of the country, grounded generally on a community of interests and views, and specifically on the engagements entered into by means of a solemn instrument, which has received diplomatic and treaty recognition.

I find that I began this chapter by endeavouring to shew where are the elements of regeneration in Turkey; and, after shewing that the financial condition was not a ground for despairing of the fortunes of Turkey, considering the hidden wealth and undeveloped resources of the country, I went on to shew that the evils of Turkey were not systematic evils, but the result of bad and corrupt administration, and that anarchy in Turkey comes from above, and not from below. I then proceeded to try and shew that, unfortunately, the autocracy of Turkey was free from a single limitation—all the controlling forces having been swept away; the last limitation which disappeared being diplomatic interference and control. This led me into a disquisition into the state of the diplomatic relations at the present time at Constantinople, and I must resume the thread of my argument in the next chapter, and endeavour to shew what is the system and principle of Turkish administration which justifies me in saying that there are no systematic evils there, that the system is good, and that the administrators are alone at fault. It is a very interesting subject, and I am not sorry to reserve it for a separate chapter.

CHAPTER V.

I PURPOSE in this chapter giving some account of what the Turkish or Arabic system really is, by which it will appear what I meant when I said that there were no sys-

tematic evils in Turkey. I hope, also, an account of this system will afford an answer to the plausible objection, which one occasionally hears, to the effect that there is no use endeavouring to graft European civilization on Turkish customs, and that, in endeavouring to do so, the "Khaththy Humâïoun" aimed at the accomplishment of an impossibility. What the Khaththy Humâïoun really did, was to endeavour to revive principles which were fully acknowledged and practised in the times of Turkey's prosperity, and therefore the objection has no kind of weight. I think the account of the old Arabic system will also give some explanation of what is the most remarkable fact in history—the extent and rapidity of the success of Mussulman arms. The myth of a sensual Paradise, as the immediate reward of the faithful who fell in battle, having produced this miracle of success, is ludicrously inadequate to explain it.

Now, the Arabic system must be considered in two different aspects:—1. As it related to Mussulmans exclusively. 2. As it related to Mussulmans in their dealings with the professors of other creeds. Religion in the East has not the definite, distinct, and restricted meaning which it has with us. Everything with them is religious, and, on the other hand, they have no priesthood, no State Church, no clerical hierarchy. All those questions which with us would be termed matters of politics, are with the Mahommedans matters of religion, and invested with a religious sanction. Mahommedanism, as has often been explained, is, in fact, a religion, a code, and a civil polity—or, rather, these three things are different aspects of the same idea. It is not only the Koran which is the guide of Mahommedan faith, but also the traditions (*Soonî*) which the Arabs brought with them from the desert, and which invest their polity with the same sanction as their specifically religious dogmas. The chief ideas which this polity contained were cheap government, municipal liberty, direct taxation, and freedom of commerce. It was by seizing hold of these great

ideas, and opposing them to the monopolies, privileges, and the complicated and crushing fiscal system of the old Byzantine empire, that the Turks were enabled to overrun and conquer it with so much ease. In some respects it might almost be said, that their code and system of polity resembled those which extreme theories of progress in our own day aim at. It has been well pointed out, that in Europe we date from feudalism, and every victory of the masses in the way of doing away with privileges and establishing equality is reckoned so much progress; but equality of rights, and equal right to hold property, were the very bases of the Mahommedan code. In Europe, laws were made by one class for securing their own privileges, and to keep other classes in subjection. Nothing of the sort is known in the East. There equal laws are the heritage of all, and opinion and law are never for a moment in conflict with each other. Their code consecrating equality of rights was sanctioned by their religion, and administered by its professors. Then, as for their polity, equally enforced by the religious sanction, it may be summed up in the principles of municipal liberties, direct taxation, and freedom of commerce; and these three principles are not really three principles, but one principle, for the municipal institution is necessary to any wholesome application of the system of direct taxation; and, on the other hand, direct taxation is the very bond and *raison d'être* of the municipal institution, which has immediately decayed when the assessment and collection of taxes has been taken from it. Then, freedom of commerce is of course a corollary of direct taxation; for, as the revenue depended solely on national accumulation, any interference with the freedom of commerce was a drying-up of the sources of revenue, and made itself immediately felt. Such was the extremely simple system armed with which Mahommed and his successors carried their victorious arms from the Pillars of Hercules almost to the Wall of China.

Now this polity was peculiarly adapted to a conquering

race, securing the maximum of their liberties to the vanquished, with the minimum of superintendence on the part of the victors. Provided people "were not criminals, and had paid their tribute," they were exempt from all interference on the part of the dominant race. Their tribute, too (which was always light), was assessed and gathered by authorities freely chosen by themselves. Over a certain extent of country a political governor was placed, with an armed Mahommedan force; but he was strictly prohibited from interfering with the municipalities within the limits of their allotted functions. This system the Mahommedans established everywhere, and accordingly we find it in India as well as Turkey. India and Turkey are two countries which mutually elucidate each other. The Mahommedans did not meddle with the Hindoo village system. Over a certain number of Hindoo villages they allowed a chief to be appointed, who was responsible for the collection of the revenue, and was himself paid by a tithe. Neither did the Mahommedans enforce their code among the Hindoo population; it had only validity among themselves. After enduring for five centuries, we found this system in existence in India—a signal proof of its vitality and excellence.

In many respects, the municipal system so jealously guarded by the Mussulmans resembles that of the Romans; and in Spain the municipalities claim a double origin, and are sanctioned by a double set of traditions, the Roman and the Saracen. The municipal system—with its two corollaries, direct taxation and freedom of commerce—was the corner-stone and very essence of the Mahommedan system of polity. The civil governors were strictly prohibited from intermeddling in the collection of the revenue, and, as long as this collection was left exclusively to municipal officers, the municipalities flourished. Unfortunately, in process of time, corruptions crept in; but before I go into this, I would wish to point out some of the old Arabic maxims of finance, which seem to me so sound and wise, that it is not without

reason that many people see salvation for Turkey only in reverting to them.

1. Mahommed, in his last hours, expressed his satisfaction that he had never interfered in any way with the weights, measures, exchanges, or currency of any nation. This gives the key to the Mahommedan system of dealing with conquered nations.

2. It is a maxim of Arabic finance that the expenditure of a State ought to be adjusted to the fixed and legal revenue, not the revenue accommodated to the expenditure. If the Turks had but held fast by this economical maxim!

3. It is another maxim, that the tax on any product ought only to be gathered after the collection of that produce; which at once discountenances all indirect taxes, which anticipate production in manufactures, and all farming of the revenue, which leads indirectly to the anticipation of production. We may compare with these wise maxims—as shewing the political purity of the precepts of Mahommed—a saying of the Prophet, “that one hour profitably spent in the administration of justice was worth seventy years of prayer.”

I have said that, in process of time, corruptions crept into the Mahommedan system of polity, into the system which consecrated municipal institutions, and the collection of direct taxes by the exclusive agency of the municipal officers. In early times there was no such thing in Turkey as farming the revenues; and the governors of provinces, who were for the most part appointed for life to rule over their Livas or small provinces, were strictly prohibited from interfering in any way with the municipalities in the assessment and collection of the revenue. But after Mahommed II.'s time a double change took place. The vicious system of farming the revenues (*iltizam*) was introduced, and annually appointed governors were substituted for the pashas and beys who had before been nominated for life. In process of time these two changes produced a third corruption, for these new annual governors became themselves

the farmers of the revenue, and were thus allowed to usurp attributions which formerly devolved exclusively on the municipalities. These, in consequence, now languished and decayed. But the evil did not stop there. These new governors, being persons of small consideration (the precariousness of the tenure prevented men of reputation and weight accepting the office), were unable to give the required security at Constantinople. They were therefore obliged to have recourse to the aid of bankers and sureties (*sarafs*), who thus rose into importance, and became the virtual governors, mayors of the palace, and collectors of the revenue. One corruption soon brings others in its train. All sorts of fiscal concessions had to be made by the governors to these Armenian *sarafs*, their virtual masters, at the expense of the taxpayer and cultivator. Taxes were allowed to be collected in anticipation of production, contrary to what we have seen to be a canon of Arabic finance, and to the serious detriment of the cultivator (who had often to raise money at usurious interest—from the same bankers, too, very often—in order to pay his contributions), but to the great profit of the bankers, who soon grew rich in consequence, and eventually became a power in the State, making their influence felt even by the Central Government at Constantinople.

Such was the gradual growth of corruption in the originally sound fiscal system of the Arabs. When, therefore, the Khaththy Humâioun talks of abolishing the farming of the revenue, and prohibiting civil governors from being immixed in the matter, we thus see it is only reverting to ancient and recognised maxims of Arabic polity. Then, as a corollary of direct taxation, freedom of commerce was enjoined. This, too, was of the very essence of the Mussulman system. The Hajis and fakirs and early pilgrims were the first votaries of commerce, and the sanctity which hedged them around was extended to merchants generally. These have always en-

joyed immunities and securities which were not shared by the sister occupations, agriculture and manufactures. The foreigner, too, was invested with the sacred character of guest (*mussafir*), and allowed to pursue the avocations of commerce without let or hindrance. It is a great mistake to suppose that the immunities and privileges enjoyed by foreign merchants were extorted either from the weakness or ignorance of the Turkish Government. The first capitulations with France date from 1535, when Solyman the Magnificent was on the throne, and when the proudest nations in Europe were treated by the Sultans as inferiors. It is, on the contrary, as I have shewn, a clear deduction from Arabic principles that commerce should be free, and every protection and consideration afforded to its votaries. Thus, what it has taken us in Europe centuries to achieve, centuries of struggles with monopolists, classes, and interests, was arrived at at once by the genius of the early Arab legislators; and progress in Turkey can only aim at securing and consolidating these principles. A very small tax—never amounting to as much as one-tenth of the total revenue—was imposed on merchants on the transit of goods, called in Roman phraseology “portorium,” and was to be exclusively expended on roads and communications. No people in the world ever came up to the Mussulmans in the pains they took to keep up roads, bridges, and communications of all sorts, aqueducts, works of irrigation, and public works in general. See what they effected in this way in Spain, especially in Grenada, and in India. In this latter country they established regular posts, by which they could communicate with the most distant parts of their dominions—from the Indian Ocean to the Atlantic. Contrast what the Mussulmans did in this respect, in the days of the purity of their system, with what the Turks have done, or rather not done, since in Roumely and Anatoly.

I have already pointed out the immense advantages which England and English commerce can derive from these free-

trade principles of a nation which is essentially agricultural, and which requires chiefly the very manufactures which we can produce at a lower price than any other nation in the world, which opens up intercourse with 60,000,000 of people with the same economical requirements, and which has consecrated and surrounded with the sanction of religion the principles of free trade and a low tariff.

In the general principle of leaving absolute freedom to the municipalities, and in not interfering with people who paid taxes and kept the peace, is implicitly contained the principle of religious toleration. And, accordingly, we find this principle (with certain allowances for outbreaks of fanaticism) consecrated in Mahommedan law and practice, wherever, as generally happened, the Christians formed a community by themselves, and were not mixed up with a Musulman population. And, politically speaking, a nation can scarcely be accused of religious intolerance, that afforded, at the risk of war, a refuge to the Jews of Spain and the Protestants of Hungary, from the persecution of Christian fanaticism, just as they did to the Polish and Hungarian refugees from political persecution.

The Koran and the Sooni being the law exclusively applicable to Mahommedans, the Christians were left the safeguard of their own laws, administered by functionaries appointed by themselves. It is only when Mahommedans and Christians are mixed up as pleaders in the same suit that a difficulty arises; and, as Mahommedans and Christians cannot, by law, be mutually guardians and trustees, this difficulty arises less frequently than might be supposed. Where it does arise, mixed courts have been appointed, and the Khaththy Humâioun enters into lengthy details to secure the integrity and good-working of these mixed courts. It must be confessed that everything relating to them is, as I have shewn in the second chapter, about as unsatisfactory as it can be; but, as they were no part of the old Arabic system, I am not called upon to discuss them in this chapter.

I think I have shewn what I undertook to shew, that the Arabic system, on which the Turkish system is founded, was, if not inspired, at any rate wisely devised for securing the great ends of cheap government, equal rights, and freedom of commerce, and that the Turks have this great advantage, in the work of reforming their present corrupt administration, that they can appeal to principles which are thoroughly national, and invoke reforms which are in the great lines of the Constitution.

Before I conclude this chapter, I should like to answer an objection which is often urged against the possibility of successful reform in Turkey. It is said, "Turkey must, from the very fact of its polity, its code, and its religion being indiscriminately invested with the same sanctions, necessarily be unprogressive; for progress and reform, which mean change, in any of these subjects, must be an inroad on and a violation of their inspired teaching, and as such must meet with fanatical opposition from the body of the people, led by the expounders of their law." Now I am not going to deny that among a population like that of Turkey, so much behind Western Europe in the lights, teachings, and experiences of modern civilization, the difficulties in the way of reform are not greater than they would be in England, France, or Germany. No candid Turkish statesman would probably maintain that this is not so. But I entirely deny that the difficulty is of the insuperable dogmatic character which the objection hints at. The inspired character of the Christian sacred books has not prevented progress in religion in Europe, and for this reason, viz. that the inspired writings are sufficiently elastic in expression to admit of progressive developments and interpretations; otherwise religious thought, and with it civilization, would have been strangled in the Christian world. And so it is, and perhaps even more so, with the Koran. I will give one example which conclusively proves this. When the new mixed courts were proposed to be introduced into Turkey by the Tanzimat,

they at first raised a storm of opposition, especially on the part of the mufti, the expounders of the Mahommedan law, with whose exclusive jurisdiction they so seriously interfered. The Sultan himself was not without grave misgivings lest he should be violating religious ordinances by sanctioning the proposed reform. In order to overcome his scruples, Ali Pasha, or Fuad Pasha (I forget exactly which of them), introduced into the palace certain mufti of great learning and reputation as expounders of the law, who, in answer to the questionings of the Sultan, convinced him, by quotations from the Koran itself, that the proposed reform was not contrary to, but in accordance with, the written precepts of the Prophet. In fact, the expressions in the sacred writings are vague and general enough to admit of any gloss; and it only requires a wise and astute vizier, to make this vagueness subservient to his own beneficent ends. The objection, then, to which I have referred has little if any weight. The readiness with which Sultan Mahmood's stupendous reforms were accepted, and the popularity of the Khaththy Humâïoun in Turkey, abundantly shew that all that is wanted there is a wise and enlightened initiative on the part of the statesmen at the head of affairs.

CHAPTER VI.

I now come to the practical question, In what way should we interfere, and what is the likelihood of our interference being of any avail? I should like first to point out that, whatever may be the disadvantages of autocracy in the absence of any guarantee for the wisdom or patriotism of the autocrat, yet that—given a wise and good autocrat—reforms can undoubtedly be carried out, and abuses removed, in an incomparably shorter time under the *régime* of an autocracy than any other. Autocracy, in fact, is a sharp weapon, which cuts both ways, for good or for evil. Now,

it has been said that the condition of Turkey is hopeless, because the conjunction of two rare contingencies is necessary for its redemption—viz. the combination of a wise and patriotic Sultan and a capable and energetic Vizier; but, on consideration, these two contingencies reduce themselves to the first only, because, given a wise and patriotic Sultan, there is no lack of patriotic and capable men in the Ottoman Empire. The crying mischief in Turkey is the absence of all desire at head-quarters to employ them. After Mahmoud Pasha had, during his brief tenure of office on the death of Fuad, upset his predecessor's work and disordered the whole empire, Midhat Pasha came into office, and if he had been allowed to remain there he would very soon have set things right again, by following in the lines traced out by Ali and Fuad Pasha, and by the terms and provisions of the Khaththiy Humâioun; but, unfortunately, exactly on account of his own incorruptibility, and his determined opposition to corruption at head-quarters, he was, after less than three months' office, summarily dismissed from power, and since his time none but yielding Ministers have retained, even for a brief space, the confidence of the Sultan.

Now it was just at such a crisis as that of the dismissal of Midhat Pasha that Lord Stratford de Redcliffe would have interfered with effect. On more than one occasion he did so interfere, either to prevent the fall, or secure the return to office, of Redschid Pasha; and the story runs at Constantinople, that on one memorable occasion he declined to confer the Order of the Garter, which had been sent out by the Sovereign of England to the Sultan, until he had recalled his Grand Vizier. Sir Henry Elliott, after the fall of Midhat Pasha, did make a slight remonstrance, and, slight as it was, and notwithstanding the negative turn which he unfortunately gave to it, it was for a long time the talk of Constantinople, even in the bazaars, and excited hopes that the English Government were going to throw off their attitude of indifference, and would concern

themselves again with the welfare of Turkey. What actually took place was this: After the dismissal of Midhat, Sir H. Elliott had an interview with the Sultan, and expressed to him the disappointment and concern which the fall of the reforming Grand Vizier would cause in England. The Sultan seemed much vexed and annoyed by the remark, and Sir H. Elliott, instead of maintaining the ground he had taken up and enforcing his protest, added apologetically, that the reason why public opinion in England would be disappointed was, that it would regard the dismissal of Midhat as likely to lead to the return of Mahmoud; thus giving his remonstrance (to the great relief of the Sultan, and to the injury of the cause of reform in Turkey) a merely negative turn, apparently satisfied with the mere assurance that Mahmoud should never be recalled to power. Slight and ineffectual and inadequate as this remonstrance was, to produce any considerable effect on the direction of affairs in Turkey, it raised for the time the spirits of the whole patriotic party in the country, whose hopes of better government, now that all other checks were removed, rested exclusively on the diplomatic action and interference of England. Now what I am anxious to bring out clearly is, that Ali and Fuad Pasha were wise in their generation in invoking foreign (and especially English) interference in the affairs of their country, and that, as matters now stand in Turkey, in this diplomatic control and interference consists the only possible limitation to the autocratic power of the Sultan, and the only present hope for Turkey.

Some people will maintain, in spite of my special arguments to the contrary, the absoluteness of the rule of non-intervention in the domestic affairs of another country, and will even go so far as to say that, if Turkey is determined to follow the ways which lead to destruction, it is no business of England's. I think I have shewn in my first chapter that it is the business of England, and a very pressing business too, and I only want to protest here, and as energeti-

cally as I can, against the doctrine that we can treat Turkey, or any other Oriental or semi-Oriental Power, as we do the great Powers of Europe, and apply at Constantinople and Teheran the same maxims of policy which are suited to Paris and St. Petersburg.

Nothing but confusion and disaster can arise from such an indiscriminate application of general maxims of policy. As a distinguished Turk once said to me:—"Nous sommes nous comme tous les Orientaux, et il nous faut une pression quelconque pour nous faire marcher." The solemn recognition of the Khaththy Humâioun, by the reference to it in the 9th clause of the Treaty of Paris, gives us a diplomatic *locus standi* for interfering, and indicates the exact direction of our interference. Each clause of that instrument contains the germ and explication of a necessary reform for Turkey, and it is by keeping in the line of that reform that the regeneration of Turkey can best be brought about. There are not wanting, on the one hand, energetic and capable men in Turkey to undertake the work, and who do not despair of the fortunes of their country; nor are the resources of the country, on the other hand, however gravely compromised, so utterly ruined as to make their task hopeless. There is yet time, although by no means too much time, to save the State. The only action I wish England to take is the friendly action of a man who sees a friend rushing down a steep place, and puts out a friendly hand to save him. We cannot afford to let Turkey destroy herself; she is too necessary for us, and her salvation is identified with our own imperial interests. If we adopted a more energetic course at Constantinople, we should not be left to fight the battle single-handed. Not a friend of Turkey, nor a patriotic Turk, but would support the British ambassador, who would thus become the nucleus of a powerful opposition to the corrupt and incapable men who at present have it all their own way at Constantinople. The scales would be turned in favour of the patriotic party, and the Turks themselves would do

the rest. Moreover, from the exceptional position which we hold in Turkey, we alone of all the nations in Europe are capable of taking up this position.

It may be interesting to trace the causes of this exceptional position of England, but the fact is quite undeniable. It is no doubt in a great measure founded on the identity of our interests, and the appreciation of that identity by the Turks. They remember that the least suspicious and the most friendly of the other great Powers—I mean France—in the hour of Turkey's greatest crisis, aided and abetted Mehemet Ali; and that previous to that time the French had, without the formality of a declaration of war, piratically invaded and seized Egypt, and that it was England who, after driving the French out, handed back his dependency to the Sultan, when the title of "Father and Pasha" was decreed to Sir Ralph Abercromby. Long previous to these events, in the time of Elizabeth and the Cecils, the Turks made a distinction between the English and other Christians—a preferential feeling which the statesmen of those days took care to foster by making the Queen of England, in a letter which she addressed to the Sultan, style herself "The Defender of the Faith against other Christian idolaters." Certain is it that at all times Turkey has willingly accorded an exceptional place of confidence and favour to England, whose remonstrances and advice have a weight with the Porte to which those of no other nation can pretend. I have already referred to Sultan Selim's action with reference to Tippoo Sultan. I may refer further to the action taken by Turkey, which contributed to so large an extent to defeat the Berlin decrees, and the general support to English policy which it has always been a political maxim of the Porte to give.

If we maintain our present position of non-intervention and indifference, it is not difficult to predict the course which events will take. *Pari passu* with financial embarrassment and collapse, and internal disorganization, the re-

sult of it, a number of external complications will arise to aggravate the situation—complications which already exist in embryo with most of the vassal States, and which are only waiting for the *mot d'ordre* to be promoted to the dignity of European questions. The Eastern question is like a hidden disease, which may break out at any moment in any part of the body politic. We have lately had a whole crop of these questions of secondary importance. The Roumanian treaties of commerce, the Podgoritza affair with Montenegro—these are only samples of innumerable others always ready to rise to the surface. Servia has set her heart on the possession of Svornich, Montenegro wants a port, and a thousand other pretensions of every degree of importance will always afford pretexts for a “question,” whenever it suits the policy of the enemies of Turkey to put one on the “tapis.” When the proper moment comes, one after another of these “questions” will arise. The three military Powers, as they have hitherto done according to their settled policy, will support the vassal States against their suzerain, and the Porte, after more or less resistance, will give way. At last public opinion in Turkey will be stirred and excited by these continued surrenders, and the Government will not be allowed to recede any further; a stand will be made, and the “question” will assume menacing proportions. A joint military demonstration will then probably be made on the part of the three, or two of the three, military Powers to put pressure on the councils of the Porte. England will of course protest, and equally of course her protest will be disregarded, as it was in the Danish question; the fanaticism of the Turks will very likely at last drive their Government into war, and the beginning of the end will then be at hand. I, for one, protest—and as energetically as I can—against waiting until that day arrives. We can now interfere with effect, our interference is an unquestionable duty, demanded by the essential interests of our own country. Soon it may be too late. Cor-

ruption and decay will have prepared the work of destruction, and slight external pressure will complete it.

Nor is it doubtful what direction that interference ought to take, for it is in a return to the policy of Ali Pasha and Fuad Pasha that the safety of the Ottoman empire alone consists. Neither the English House of Commons, nor the English Cabinet, can of course "undertake the Government of Turkey;" but what the latter can do is this, to insist, with the whole weight of its friendly authority, upon a reforming Vizier being placed at the head of affairs in Turkey, and being kept there for a sufficient time to bring about the essential changes required in the administration of the country. This is all that is needed; and this assuredly is not beyond the extent of England's influence in Turkey. If we had no other leverage to work with, which is far from being the case, the threat of refusing, in the event of our remonstrances being disregarded, to help her with another lira in her annually recurring financial embarrassments, must necessarily bring the Turkish Government to its senses. Lord Stratford de Redcliffe had no such lever wherewith to act on the councils of Turkish statesmen, and yet he managed to make England's influence paramount at Constantinople.

There is only one objection of weight which I have ever heard urged against such diplomatic action of England, and it is this:—Given the supposed views and aims of the Governments hostile to Turkey, and the policy which their representatives to the Porte are pursuing with so much present success, what would be the effect produced on these Powers by seeing Turkey seriously bent on mending her ways, and pursuing the work of reform and material development in real earnest? Would they not see the necessity of precipitating matters, by raising one of the numerous "questions" which I have referred to as always simmering in Turkey, and try and pluck at once the fruit which was no longer ripening to their hands?

I think there is force in this objection, and that such would very likely be the policy which would naturally suggest itself to Powers traditionally hostile to Turkey. The whole state of Turkey is at present so bad, the work of reform would have to be so thorough, that she would undoubtedly have to pass through a *mauvais quart d'heure* before her house would be set in order. During this interval she could not expect to exercise all the rights and privileges of a well-ordered and vigorous empire; she would have to adopt a very conciliatory policy in her external relations, with the vassal States especially; to make concessions here and there very likely, and do her best to tide over difficulties which might arise, and put her trust in the future. The statesmen who would undertake to face her domestic difficulties, to right her disordered finances, and to correct her administrative abuses, would be exactly the men to recognise that they were drawing on the future, and must submit for a time to the necessity of a temporizing external policy. They would scarcely be the men to fall into the first pitfall prepared for them by the enemies of their country.

Besides, Europe cannot by any means be said to look with favour on schemes of ambition and encroachment on the Danube. It may, perhaps, reluctantly acquiesce in the view of the hopelessness, under present circumstances, of bolstering up the Ottoman Empire, and, in spite of itself as it were, listen to schemes of partition and change; but let Europe only see the glimmer of a hope of genuine reform and permanent stability in Turkey, and the integrity of the Ottoman Empire would once again take its place as an accepted object and maxim of European policy. The very same Powers who are now hostile, or quasi-hostile to Turkey, would at once strongly deprecate and thoroughly discountenance any truculent policy towards the Porte, and would insist on securing to it a fair chance of gathering the fruits of its new reforms. The *solidarité*

between the great military Powers in the present day with reference to Turkey is not an indissoluble *solidarité quand même*—it is founded on the present state of the facts in that country. Change those facts, and the *solidarité* disappears, to make room for a return to the old traditional policy of the individual States.

Report states that some short time ago, when M. Keudell was at Constantinople as German Ambassador to the Porte, he was instructed to adopt quite an opposite policy to that pursued by Baron Werther at the present day; and it was only upon the hopelessness of receiving any efficient support from England becoming apparent, that that distinguished diplomatist was removed to Rome, and M. d'Eichmann, and subsequently Baron Werther, substituted for him. Austria, too, looking at her permanent interests and her traditional policy, must be looked upon in Eastern matters as the ally of England rather than that of Russia, although she is not strong enough at present, as I have already pointed out, to pursue an independent policy of her own. It is, therefore, on the initiative of England that depends, ultimately, the policy of Europe towards Turkey. Consider for a moment, in all its ramifications, the consequences which the "masterly inactivity" of England produces on the policy and destiny of Europe and of the world!

I have in this concluding chapter endeavoured to shew that we ought to interfere diplomatically, and with the full force of friendly authoritative remonstrance, in order to bring about a new order of things in Turkey, and I have given my reasons for thinking that that remonstrance would be effectual. This is what I undertook to try and shew.

THE TURKS :

THEIR CHARACTER, MANNERS, AND INSTITUTIONS,

AS BEARING ON

THE EASTERN QUESTION.

BY

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"LETTERS ON IRELAND," "THE EASTERN QUESTION."

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TO THE SENSE OF JUSTICE OF THE

BRITISH HOUSE OF COMMONS

I DEDICATE

THIS LITTLE WORK,

AS A PLEA FOR ADHERENCE TO THE TRADITIONAL

POLICY OF ENGLAND.

PREFACE.

THE Eastern Question having taken its place as the most prominent question of the day, it seems to me that it may not be wholly superfluous to contribute my quota to its elucidation, by endeavouring to describe summarily the manners, character, and institutions of the people who are the chief actors in the Drama which is now being played on the world's stage. Everybody is in the habit of talking glibly of "the Turks,"—some with prejudice, some with prepossession,—but the amount of current misconception relative both to the character and institutions of this people, seems to me the most remarkable fact connected with the Eastern Question.

I have discharged a duty, grateful to my own mind, in helping to correct these misconceptions; and I challenge contradiction to the facts which I here lay before the public.

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THE TURKS.

CHAPTER I.

TURKISH POLITENESS.

THE most savage miso-Turks, the men who are never tired of telling us that the Turk is a "barbarian encamped in Europe," acknowledge that this barbarian has remarkably refined and dignified manners. Well, that is some concession; not a wholly unimportant one either I should say, especially in these days. But let us go a little into detail, and analyze these manners of the barbarian, comparing each point with the corresponding custom of the civilized Frank.

The first outward token by which you will recognise a Turk is the *temenas*, or salute, which is made by bringing the right hand first to the lips, and then to the forehead. This salute (common to the East) is a representative sign of respect; it represents taking the hand of the person saluted, and bringing it to your lips and forehead. Its presentative form is still to be seen in some convents in the East, where they have a puppet Madonna with the right arm loose, which the votary at the shrine takes hold of, and places reverently to his lips and forehead. And in Rome it is not very rare to see an Eastern pilgrim, before the bronze statue of St. Peter, kneeling and touching the extended toe with his lips and forehead. In these instances you have the original custom out of which the Eastern *temenas* arose. It is a form of salute not only graceful, but full of respect and deference for one's neighbour, and compatible, at the same time, with personal self-respect.

Compare with this the Frank custom of indiscriminate shaking hands—that odious form of moral corruption, hypocrisy, and inanity, from which scarcely a corner of Europe is now free—a form of inanity, because giving the hand has

a meaning, inasmuch as it is a pledge, and when no pledge exists it is practical non-sense; of hypocrisy, because if it is meant as a gauge and pledge of friendship, it is constantly given where no friendship exists, and none is required; and of corruption, because it is often practised as a condescension of one person to the other, and is therefore corrupt on the one side and degrading on the other. No words are too strong to express the moral repugnance of the Turk for this Frank custom. It is not too much to say that it renders intercourse with people who practise it almost impossible to him, and those who are inclined to treat the matter lightly will probably see fit to alter their tone on further acquaintance with Orientals. On this point I would like to call attention to a remarkable observation made by the French Jesuit missionaries in China. They attribute the entire non-success of the Protestant missionaries there, and their failure to acquire the slightest influence over the populations, to their "abominable practice of shaking hands;" and they go on further to say (what will, no doubt, sound a monstrous exaggeration to most good people in England), that if ever there should be a massacre of Christians in China, it will be chiefly owing to the introduction and practice of this custom.

Another point you will not fail to observe in the Turk, is the gravity and decorum with which he gives the *temenas*. Being a sign and token of respect, it must be given with becoming respect and reverence; and this is, in his opinion, quite incompatible with the smiling, smirking play of features which is the usual accompaniment of the Frank salute. Not that the now universal conventional smile is of primeval institution; on the contrary, the exact date of its introduction into the salons of Europe was marked by an observant French writer at the beginning of this century. It was imported, like so many other fashions, from Vienna, and was, on its first introduction, designated as "Viennoise." It has since then spread with the rapidity of the plague, and there is scarcely a European who is not now tainted with the infection.

A Turk would argue on the matter, consciously or un-

consciously, in this manner: "Your smile is supremely ridiculous, and hypocritical as well. Two people meet, each owes the other respect and the outward sign and token of respect; but, in the majority of cases, neither owes the other more, and yet you consider it almost *de rigueur* to pretend to a great deal more—for if your smile means anything, it means, 'I am so glad to see you; it is such a pleasure to me that, as you see, it lights up my countenance and my very existence;' while the chances are that you are not glad to see him, would on the whole rather not see him, and if he were on the other side of Jordan or of Styx, it would be a matter of superlative indifference to you. Does not the habitual practice of this hypocrisy tend to degrade your character, and deprive it of every vestige of self-respect?" The Turk will not himself condescend to the meanness of this hypocrisy, and the sight of it in others is loathsome and repugnant to him, as are the *sans gêne*, free-and-easy, hail-fellow well-met manners, which are popular in the West.

All habits, of course, in time become instinctive, and it is not to be supposed that an Eastern or a Western goes through a ratiocinative process each time that he salutes his neighbour. But habits are founded on reasons, and these reasons, when they are sound, tend to preserve the habits, and themselves become instinctive. The Eastern mode of salutation is founded on respect—self-respect and respect for one's neighbour (two phases of the same feeling)—and this is ingrained in the very nature of the Ottoman. He has learned it from his childhood—in the harem, it has been his first and longest lesson; then in the example of others—till it has become his second nature, and conduct incompatible with it seems to him a monstrosity. Now this respect requires a certain ceremonial, and has its outward and visible tokens, which are in his opinion quite incompatible with the conduct and manners of the Frank.

Before taking leave of this part of my subject—the more outward and physical tokens of Turkish politeness—I should like to say a few words about the manner in which the Turk regards me one of its most

admirable characteristics. You cannot fail to observe, after an interview with a Turk in your house, how rapidly he disappears. He asks leave to go, and almost before the assent is given he is no more. The rationale of this is that it is impolite to keep a host standing without a reason; and to appreciate at its full value this observance, it ought to be compared to those excruciating "last words" which too often distinguish a leave-taking among Europeans—a process resembling, as it does, the difficult and hazardous attempt of beating a retreat in the presence of superior forces of the enemy.

CHAPTER II.

THE HAREM.

I VERILY believe that the current ideas about a Turkish harem have, in the great majority of instances, no higher source than the representations of a popular burlesque, in which a Turkish Pasha is seen seated and surrounded by a score of black-eyed houris who are supposed to be Circassian slaves. Now, it would probably astonish the good people who have derived their notions from such authorities to be told that the harem is nothing more nor less than the Turkish "home," and as such is invested with quite as much sanctity and purity in the eyes of a Turk as in those of a European.

I am certainly not going to enter here into the stupendous question of the relation of the sexes, nor to defend the Mussulman in comparison with the Christian view on the subject; but I wish to make one or two observations with reference to it. The first is, that the very prevalent belief in Europe that the Mussulman system denies the possession of souls by women is, like so many other current notions, simply erroneous; secondly, that although polygamy is not prohibited by the Mahommedan any more than by the Jewish code, yet that public opinion in Turkey has set strongly in favour of monogamy, which has now become the rule, and that, as a matter of fact, the instances of

double *ménages* are even rarer in Turkey than elsewhere ; and, lastly, although I do not think that either philosophy or religion has said its last word on this subject, yet, all things considered, if the choice only lay between the inmate of the harem and the “emancipated female,” I do not think that any rational man would for a moment hesitate.

However innocent the Turkish woman may be of “women’s rights” outside the home, within the precincts of the harem she is absolutely supreme. The ceremonial and etiquette observed within its walls would, I fancy, rather astonish the flippant critics of the institution. The deference especially which is paid to the mother has no parallel in the West. The Sultan himself does not dream of sitting down without leave in the presence of the Valideh Sultan. Certain institutions sanctioned and hallowed in the West would be absolutely inconceivable to a Turk ; such, for instance, as the widow-mother quitting the home, and abdicating her position in favour of the son’s wife. This would appear to him an act of *lèse-nature*. So would other institutions and laws the glory of our age ; such as the provisions of the Code Napoleon, which enjoin the compulsory division of a man’s property among all his children ; and universal suffrage, as contradistinguished from household or domestic suffrage. For both these institutions would appear to him incompatible with parental authority, and in direct conflict with his domestic instincts, which are at the root of his whole character, and upon which reposes the whole fabric of Eastern society.

For the patriarchal character of the Turkish home is its chief characteristic. Every morning the household gather round their head and respectfully kiss his hand—no empty formality with them, but a necessary and even indispensable token, in their eyes, of respectful allegiance. In the household, too, are included not only the children, but those whom we are obliged by the poverty of our language to designate as “slaves.” Nowhere as in Turkey is the precept of St. Paul so fully realized, “Servants, be obedient to your masters ;” and, “The son shall be even as a servant.” If,

on the one hand, it be true that the unit of the State is the family and not the individual, on the other hand, it may be said that the true idea of the family only exists in the East.

Nowhere else, too, do people live so continually in the presence of each other. A Roman once said, "Build me a house where I shall be seen by every one every hour of the day." This is literally fulfilled in the East. Living, too, continually in the presence of each other, their conduct is subject to, and influenced by, the public opinion of those around them in a way that no European's can be.

Two things are to be seen in Turkey which at first sight may seem contradictory, but are in reality intimately connected—the entire absence of caste, and the instinctive deference and respect paid to every degree of rank. There is no such thing in Turkey as the separation of classes, each living shut up by itself, suspicious of each other, like antagonistic and hostile forces; there is no such thing, therefore, as class divisions, class hatreds, class interests, and the revolutionary passions they engender. Consider for a moment, when you talk so glibly of driving the barbarians out of Europe, of the strength which such a fact as this gives to a nation. I am inclined to think, deliberately, that the *only* nation—in the proper sense of the term—in Europe is the Ottoman.

Now what renders this intermixture of all classes in Turkey possible, and the absence of which would render the same thing impossible in Europe, is exactly Turkish politeness, formulated in a fixed code of manners, which regulates the intercourse of the different classes with each other, and renders impossible that familiarity to which, but for this barrier, such general intermixture would be liable, and which would quickly dissolve it into general confusion and mutual contempt.

If this view be correct, with such facts before our eyes, it would be very difficult to talk lightly of the value of politeness and etiquette. It is not too much to say that the very bond of society in Turkey is *respect*; that politeness is with them the elaborated code of respect, and that this respect and this code of politeness are the first and most

important lessons inculcated in the harem. It takes first the form of filial respect—the source and spring of all other respect—and then, in natural progression, of honour to all those to whom honour is due. And so it becomes the very basis and foundation of the Ottoman character, the secret of its military discipline, and the very bond of its society.

During all their tender years the children are brought up entirely in the harem, and their education is entrusted to the mother. A marked distinction is observable between Turkish children and European children. The boisterous, rowdy, self-asserting child is absolutely unknown in the East. He would be considered a *lusus naturæ*. In Europe, children are often told that they ought to be seen but not heard, but it is only in the East that this phenomenon is realized. Respect for his elders, and a behaviour compatible with this respect—which, in fact, is the only form in which that respect can be inculcated—are the one first great lesson which a Turkish child has to learn. He soon learns it, for everything around him is in harmony with this injunction; respect is in the very air he breathes, and, unless there are European children in the neighbourhood, there is no fear of the opposite contagion. A fear of having his children corrupted by the evil communication of Christian (but not because they are Christian, rather because they are not Christian) children, is not the least powerful motive which prompts the Mussulman to pitch his dwelling far away from their habitations.

One indirect consequence of this mode of education is, that children in the East are remarkably observant. As they are not occupied in jabbering, they observe, and their naturally remarkable gifts in this respect are allowed full play. It is for this reason that you often see little urchins in the East helping their parents in complicated domestic duties, at an age when their compeers in Europe are kicking their nurses and blowing trumpets in perambulators.

In the next chapter I will endeavour to shew how Turkish politeness translates itself in their conversation.

CHAPTER III.

CONVERSATION IN TURKEY.

CONVERSATION in Europe has been described as a duetto in an opera, in which the two persons engaged in it are talking to an imaginary third person, each recounting a tale of his own. "I say something, and you say something else, and we will agree to call it conversation." Now in Turkey there are certain forms or canons of conversation, any violation of which is considered an outrage, and the sum of which constitutes their code of politeness as applied to conversation. I will enumerate these one by one :—

1. Never to interrupt the speaker while he is talking. However long-winded or uninteresting his conversation may be to you, politeness requires that you should wait for his conclusion. You are not under any obligation to enter into conversation with him at all; but if you do, it is an understood condition of your conversational treaty that you should let him have his say.

2. Never to diverge, in the middle of a conversation, from the main thread of a discourse into a collateral issue. The breach of this rule is considered by a Turk as an unpardonable rudeness. To drive a red herring, as it were, across the scent of conversation is, in his opinion, to confound all thought, and render all profitable consecutive conversation impossible. This leads, as a corollary, to

3. To allow a short but sufficient pause between the conclusion of a discussion on one subject and the entering on a new subject.

4. Never to tell a person a thing he knows already.

5. Not to excuse oneself when convicted of being in the wrong. How very seldom you hear in Europe, "Yes, I was in the wrong; I am sorry for it." But in Turkey it is considered a violation of principle and a breach of politeness to refuse to be convicted of error. The cause of this difference lies deep in the character of the two races; in the absence on the part of the Turk of petty vanity and distracting self-esteem. The proudest race in the world, they are entirely exempt from vanity.

6. When you have nothing to say, to hold your tongue. They never talk for the sake of talking; empty, idle jabbering is a Frank, but not an Ottoman practice. In Europe it is considered *de rigueur* to "say something," whether that something is worth saying or not. Not so in Turkey; to say something when you have nothing to say worth saying, is considered there a degradation to yourself and a rudeness to your neighbour. With them, under such circumstances, if speech is silvern, silence is golden.

It may be said that these rules are of universal obligation, and ought not to be confined to the limits of Turkey. Exactly so; the only difference is, that there they are practised, and elsewhere they are not. The head of the American mission at Constantinople once said to some zealous young missionaries who had just come out to Turkey, "Gentlemen, you will see practised here the virtues you hear of elsewhere." And so it is with these canons of conversation.

In connection with the subject of conversation and discussion in Turkey, is the noteworthy fact that there are no abstract terms in the Turkish language; they are obliged to express their meaning by means of adjectives and verbs. Consider, now, the political strength of a nation, the Custom-house of whose language absolutely prohibits the introduction of such wares as Divine Right, Protection, Liberty, Equality, Civilization, "the Revolution!" Good heavens! to gauge the strength of a nation in a high state of civilization, and without an abstract term in its language! to be beyond the reach of danger from that magazine of amphibologies, abstract terms, and the explosions which result from them, seems to me to be, calculated as an element of strength, at least equivalent to the possession of an army of 300,000 men. "You have in your *temenas*," said once the profoundest European student of the East to a Turk, "a palladium of political liberty." Here, then, is another palladium in the structure of their language.

So much for the manners of the Ottoman as exemplified in his conversation, his politeness translated into speech.

CHAPTER IV.

ON CLEANLINESS.

BEFORE taking leave of the individual Turk, I must refer to a point of character which I have purposely reserved for the conclusion of my remarks on this head, because it is the most important of all, and in a certain sense includes all others. The Ottoman is not only the politest individual on earth, he is also the cleanest. Politeness without cleanliness is, in fact, a non-sense. That cleanliness is next to godliness is, indeed, a Christian dictum, but it is an Ottoman practice. It is intimately connected with his religious duties, and must be compared in this respect to the Jewish rules of purification. It is not founded on simple hygienic considerations, but is connected with the secret springs of his whole moral and religious nature.

A European will allow that that which is tainted with impurity is unclean, but a Turk will maintain that that which has been in contact with that which has been so tainted is itself impure. One consequence of this refinement is, that his ablutions, which are more frequent than those of any other people, must be performed not in stagnant water, but in running water. "That which has been in contact with impurity is itself impure." Stagnant water, therefore, on the first contact with impurity, loses its purifying virtue: rinsing is of the essence of washing.

Further, the house must be as pure and undefiled as the person. "Nil fœdum hæc limina tangat" is inscribed in the brazen letters of custom on the lintel of every Turkish house. It is therefore no light accident of manners, no fanciful mode or fashion, which makes the Turk take off his shoes at the threshold of his house: his home is a temple of cleanliness, and all impurity from without must be cast off before he ventures into the shrine within. Applying the maxim which I have quoted above, that "that which has been in contact with impurity is itself impure," a heterodox practice which has among certain "Europeanized Turks" crept into the pure religion of cleanliness, must

unhesitatingly be condemned. I refer to the practice of wearing a pump-calosh,—that is to say, a pump-shoe with a calosh over it,—the latter half of which only is dropped on entering the house. This, in a true Turk's view, is to compromise with uncleanness; and to break down the outwork of purity is the way to lead to the surrender of the citadel of godliness.

CHAPTER V.

JUSTICE, POLITICAL CHARACTER.

I now come to the second part of my subject, viz. the Institutions of the Ottoman people: but it must not of course be supposed that this is anything more than a logical division. Institutions are the political expression of national character, with a reaction of course on that character. If this is the case generally, it is especially so in that of a system like Mahomet's, in which the rules of individual conduct and the political institutions of the nation emanated from the same mind. The Ottoman character and the Ottoman institutions are together one great whole, and must be viewed together to explain the greatest fact in history—the otherwise absolutely inexplicable fact—that a mere handful of men, 400 Ottoman families, crossed the Bosphorus and soon possessed themselves, they or their sons, of the fairest and most coveted portions of the habitable globe. It was clearly not by brute force, by the force of numbers, that this handful of “barbarians” conquered the powerful Servian kingdom and the renowned Greek Empire. It was, distinctly and exclusively, by these two means:—

1. By the superiority of the political system which they brought with them, and which made the masses of the people hail them as liberators, and accept their yoke as a deliverance.

2. By the superiority of their political character, which made the subtle Greek prefer the Ottoman to the cruel Servian, and the cruel Servian prefer him to the subtle Greek.

As to the political system of the Ottoman, I will endeavour to describe it in detail in the next chapter. It seems to me an appropriate link between the two portions into which I have divided my subject, to devote this chapter to a consideration of his political character.

I have said that respect, and all that that includes, was the foundation of his individual character; equally true is it that justice was the spring of his political character: justice and respect were the corner-stones upon which the whole Ottoman edifice rested.

The great founder of the system was never tired of dwelling on the sacramental importance of this political virtue: "One hour profitably spent in the administration of justice is worth seventy years of prayer." "Justice is the glory of our faith; it constitutes the greatness of a ruler, and the strength of a nation."

Nor were these precepts the mere otiose expression of idle truths. The whole history of the early caliphs—the traditions of the nation, the mould in which their character was cast—is one long chapter of incidents turning on the importance attached to this virtue. Zaïd Ben Sâna becomes a Mussulman on witnessing a conspicuous instance of the justice of the Prophet. Ali reproves Amour for a phrase which implies a shade of departure from the strictest observance of justice. Abubeker, on being raised to the caliphate on the bucklers of the Ottomans, addresses the armed assembly thus: "You who elect me your caliph, if you see any, the slightest, deflection in my conduct from the straight line of justice, recall me to it." Omer, the conqueror of Syria, Persia, and of Egypt, when in his turn he is raised to the caliphate, says too, "If you see any departure from justice in me, *correct* me." And Selman thereupon, half drawing his scimitar, replies on behalf of the armed host around: "Yes, Omer, with our scimitars we will punish you." And Omer, instead of being offended, exclaims with tears in his eyes, "Great God! this people that can declare to their rulers that they will punish with their swords any departure from justice, assuredly can never perish!" It was this same Omer who

returned their tribute to those Greek cities who had paid it, when he found that he was unable to defend them against the superior forces of Heraclius. Protection was the implied condition of tribute, and when that could not be afforded, justice demanded that its price should be returned.

History relates that the Ottomans did not always temper their justice with mercy. It is a remarkable fact in the early history of their conquests, that the chief cause of the Servian revolt, which led to the battle of Cossova, was the severity with which the Ottomans punished large numbers of their Servian allies who had been guilty of plundering after the battle of Iconium, which had been won in a great measure by the valour of these Servian allies. Does not such a fact as this give us an insight into the character of the different races contending for supremacy, and the key to the events of those days?

Such are the traditions of the Ottoman, such the models and examples on which his character was formed. Does he retain that character in the present day? Ask those who have long been resident in the East, and their testimony is unanimous on the question. I will cite one remarkable instance, the testimony of a living man, and therefore capable of verification. Previous to the Convention of 1859, Prince John Ghika was Prince and Governor of Samos. In this nest of pirates and bandits, notwithstanding the severity which he was obliged to employ in order to reduce his principality to order, he acquired such a reputation for justice and uprightness, that suitors from the Asiatic continent flocked to Samos to have their disputes settled by him. Anyone acquainted with the East knows to what an extent this informal arbitration obtains: let any man, native or stranger, obtain a reputation for justice, and he becomes *ipso facto* invested with the functions of judging all cases within the range of his reputation. So it was with Prince Ghika. Well, he acquired the reputation not only of being a wise and upright judge, but also of being a magician. And how? In this way. Many of the disputes which he was called upon to decide were of course cases of doubtful right; but some also were cases of wilful wrong

and injustice on one side. In all these latter cases he would say, with unerring instinct, to the wrong-doer: "You are not a Turk." Sometimes the man would reply, "Yes, I am; I was born in Smyrna." "Yes; but your father was not a Turk." "No, he came from Hellas;" or, "he came from Bosnia." And the wrong-doer, confounded, would go away and say, "That man is either a prophet or a wizard—he told me all about myself." And how did Prince Ghika know that the wrong-doer was not a Turk? By this index, as he declared himself, that no true Ottoman *could* commit an act of wanton injustice. He founded his judgment on a knowledge of the Ottoman character, that character which I have described, and of which justice is one of two main pillars.

This anecdote exposes, too, one of the many common errors and confusions committed by those who place to the account of the Ottoman all the injustices and corruptions committed by the Mussulmans in Bosnia, Herzegovinia, or elsewhere. The Slave feudatories in these countries very generally adopted the religion of the conquering race, and imposed it on their vassals. They did not for this reason cease to be Slaves, and their new religion in most instances sat lightly enough on their consciences. The same facility of conversion might, likely enough, be manifested by them again, should their country become the adjunct of a great Christian power. To mistake such people for true Ottomans, and to place to the account of the latter all the faults and vices which belong to the former, is to jumble up all history and to confound all judgment. To mass all Mussulmans in the same category, and then to judge them by the standard of the least worthy and characteristic among them, is about as logical as it would be to judge the Puritans of New England by the standard of the Christians of Abyssinia. I have been describing the Ottoman character, and that of men brought up from the cradle in the traditions of their race, and in the strict observance of the precepts of their faith, not men who have accidentally adopted some of the outward observances of the Mahomedan *culte*, which they could change tomorrow as easily as their costume. It is not only Prince Ghika who has borne

testimony to the Ottoman character : ask merchants and travellers long resident in the East ; they all bear consentient testimony to the justice, truthfulness, and honesty of the true Turk. One single fact speaks whole volumes : among them it is not the custom to give or require a receipt ; the Turk's word is his bond ; repudiation and dishonesty are unknown among them. Now let me ask, can the same thing be predicated of the Frank population of the Levant ? —and ought not this difference to be a little borne in mind by those who talk so glibly about the iniquity of not admitting Mahommedan and Christian evidence on the same footing ? How can you measure by a common standard things in their nature incommensurable ?

I cannot conclude the subject of the Ottoman character without narrating an anecdote of my own personal experience. I once was engaged in a long conversation and discussion with some Turks—a discussion which lasted continuously for six hours and a-half, during the whole of which-time my interpreter, who was a Turkish admiral brought up in England, and speaking English as well as I did, only once found himself at fault, and unable to translate a word which I had used. It was the word “perfidy.” It turned out that there was no such word in the Turkish language : there was no way of expressing in the Ottoman language what had no existence in the Ottoman character.

Such, then, are the Ottoman people,—the most polite, cleanly, respectful, disciplined, and just race under the sun ; and I will only say in conclusion, “Now drive them out of Europe—if you can.”

CHAPTER VI.

THE TURKISH CONSTITUTION.

It cannot be too often repeated that in the Mussulman system, religion, politics, laws, manners, and customs are only different phases of the same idea. It may also be added that simplicity is also the characteristic of every part of this many-sided system, and is perhaps one of the secrets of its attraction. With the plainest of rituals, its

only dogma is the Unity of God ; as discipline, it inculcates charity, fasting, and prayer ; in manners, it enjoins respect and cleanliness ; in politics, justice and the welfare of the governed. Politics, then, is as much a part of religion as is the regulation of the individual conscience.

It requires a considerable mental effort on the part of those who are accustomed to a rigid separation of these provinces—who look upon religion as exclusively a matter of “saving souls,” and politics as a matter of police—to enter into and comprehend a system in which a declaration of war is as much a matter of religion as the practice of prayer or the belief in a future state ; and we shall presently see to what gross errors and confusions this mental difficulty has given rise. Herein lies one of the main distinctions between the Christian and the Mahommedan systems—a distinction springing from their different origins. The Christian religion came into the world as that of a persecuted minority, without political weight, or the prospect of political authority. Its Founder was despised and rejected of men ; His kingdom was not of this world : it was centuries before His religion became that of the powerful classes. The consequence was, that the regulation of the individual consciences of men was the exclusive aim of Christianity, and political considerations were dismissed with the summary injunction to render unto Cæsar the things that were Cæsar’s. Not so, but the contrary of all this, in the case of the Mahommedan system. Its founder, the chief of a conquering tribe, and soon the founder of an empire, was, like Moses, Menu, and Confucius, above all things a legislator and lawgiver ; and if any one part of the system which he established was more prominent than another, it was precisely the political portion of it.

Now what were the cardinal principles of this theologico-political system ? 1. The limitation of sovereign power, and the imposition of checks on arbitrariness and tyranny ; 2. The concession of complete liberty to the commune ; 3. Personal liberty and religious toleration ; 4. Fixed and direct taxation ; 5. The freedom of commerce and of trade ; 6. The legalization of war and diplomacy.

These were, as I think I can shew, the great principles of the Mahommedan political system, accompanied with which the Mussulman arms overran the greater portion of the civilized globe, subduing the peoples of the earth far more by the fascination of their political genius and the excellence of their system, than by the force of their arms or the valour of their hosts. It was not very wonderful that the inhabitants of the Lower Empire, groaning under the yoke of the most complicated and burdensome system ever devised, should have gladly exchanged it for one in which castes were unknown, and administrative simplicity and lightness of taxation cardinal maxims of policy.

Let us consider these maxims a little in detail.

1. The limitation of power.—In nothing, perhaps, were the wisdom and foresight of Mahommed more conspicuous, than in the care and pains he took to raise up safeguards among the people against arbitrariness on the part of their rulers. It was as if he had a prophetic insight into the dangers which would eventually threaten the Ottoman Empire with destruction. He abstains from naming his successor, although it is known that he wished Ali to succeed to him, because he will set an example of scrupulous respect for popular election. Resistance to illegal acts on the part of the ruler is laid down as a religious duty on the part of the ruled. We have seen in the case of Abubeker and of Selman how the early Ottomans understood this duty. As an effectual and practical check on arbitrariness, the prophet was enjoined by God to take no action without first consulting a council, in order that his successors should have no excuse for the arbitrary and capricious exercise of their authority, seeing that the prophet himself, who could not err (as he acted under the direct inspiration of God), was commanded to submit his decisions to a council. "Without counsel there is no wisdom," says the Caliph Ali; and El Ghazzeli, surnamed "the proof of Islam," narrates how all the caliphs and sovereigns of Islam observed this divine precept, and loved to have their actions discussed by the divans over which they themselves presided. No sovereign act could emanate save from "the King in Council." It is

impossible to lay too much stress on this as a primordial national axiomatic institution of the Ottomans. Rebellion, legalized rebellion, was, as I have said, the sanction of this safeguard; hence the custom, instituted by the greatest of the Sultans, of giving largesses to the janissaries at the commencement of a new reign, in order that the selfish interests of this powerful body should never be enlisted too strongly on the side of the actual occupant of the throne, but should rather incline to the opposite scale.

2. The liberty of the commune was one of the great secrets of their State-craft; it was this which rendered their government of enormous tracts of country by a few individuals possible. A feudal military chief was placed over a large district, responsible for its order and tranquillity, entitled to receive the tithe, endowed with military and political authority. But he was absolutely prohibited from intermeddling with the internal, fiscal, and administrative affairs of the commune; these were managed by freely-elected officers, and the collection of the taxes was one of their principal attributes. As long as this privilege was respected, the communes flourished; the moment it was encroached upon, they languished and decayed. The Mussulmans, too, never imposed their laws on the people they conquered, or who submitted to them; it was a universal maxim with them, that as long as people "paid their tribute and were not criminals," they were entitled to every species of liberty. We found this communal system in India, where it had been in existence for six centuries, and, by a strange perversion of the practice of the Mussulmans, we codified their law and applied it to the Hindoos, who had, during the whole of the Mussulman domination, been exempt from its operation. From this liberty of the commune flows—

3. Complete religious and political toleration, on the payment of the tribute.—Proselytism has always been foreign to the Mahomedan system. The feudal chiefs of the conquered countries, especially those in Bosnia, the Herzegovinia, and Albania, in a great measure chose to adopt the religion of their conquerors, in order to be admitted to the privileges, especially the military career

of the conquering race; but a change of religion was never exacted from any people, and a scrupulous respect even was paid to the holders of the Jewish and Christian faiths. It is related how a former Christian priest who became a Mahomedan was actually put to death by the Mussulmans for scurrilously abusing his old faith, just as he had probably been in the habit of doing in respect of the new faith to which he had recently become a convert.

4. Fixed and direct taxation.—It was an important maxim of Mahomedan finance that the expenditure of the State should be adjusted to the revenue, and not the revenue regulated on the expenditure. The revenue was a fixed quantity, and could not be arbitrarily increased at the will and caprice of the Government; it must also be raised by direct taxation. The idea of raising a revenue from indirect imposts was contrary to the fundamental principles of their fiscal ideas, which were expressed in this respect by the maxim, that a tax ought only to be gathered after the collection of the produce. As their revenue, too, depended on the accumulation of wealth, any levying of taxes on the springs of production would impair the sources of revenue. Not only, too, must the amount which the taxpayer is to be called upon to pay be a fixed amount, but the system of taxation must be simple. One single direct tax, adjusting itself in amount to the capabilities of the payer, must do duty for all the complicated fiscal extortions of other systems. This single tax is the tithe. And above all, it was to be gathered by freely elected municipal officers, and the Government which received the amount was to have neither part nor parcel in the assessment or collection of it. The idea of debt was rigidly excluded, both by their ideas respecting usury, and still more by their notions of justice, as it would be unjust to lay on posterity a burden which they should bear themselves.

5. Liberty of commerce.—A small tax amounting to 3 per cent. on the transit of goods, and answering to the Roman *portorium*, was the only indirect tax levied; and its produce was employed on roads, harbours, and canals, with the view to facilitate the transit of goods and the circulation

of trade. Commerce, which in the earliest times was in the hands of pilgrims, never lost the character of sacredness which attached to its early votaries. The foreigner who came for purposes of exchange was treated as a guest (*mussafir*), and hedged round with privileges and immunities; and it is in point of fact to this beneficent view of his status, and not to treaty rights extorted from the Ottomans, that the privileges of foreign merchants—the protections and the whole network of abuses which at present exist—owe their origin.

6. The legalization of war and diplomacy.—I do not think that anything can be cited as a greater proof, not only of the ignorance but of the perversion of the truth, which prevails on the subject of the Mahommedan system, than the popular idea respecting a *jelad* or “religious war.” It is generally supposed that this means a war of religion, a war in which the fanatical passions of the Mahommedan populations are roused. Nothing can be a greater delusion. The fact is, that this maligned institution is the very crown and glory of the whole Mahommedan system. According to it, every war is a religious war that is sanctioned by religion, and without this sanction—only given after due investigation into the causes of it and their justice—no war can be undertaken, and no blood can be shed. To the trained interpreters and recognised guardians of their law is this solemn duty of investigation committed. If to them it should appear that the causes are just, and redress cannot otherwise be obtained, their chief, the Sheik-el-Islam, issues his *fetva* or decree, legalizing the declaration of war, and without this *fetva* no Sultan, however powerful, could declare war, nor would his summons be obeyed if he did. Not only, too, in the declaration of war, but in all the subsequent acts connected with it—the making of peace, the signing of treaties, the conclusion of a truce—a similar legalization is required. For this purpose, one at the head of the hierarchy of the Ulema, called a *cadi-asker*, is selected to accompany each army in the field, and without his signature no truce is valid, no treaty can be made. It is a remarkable fact in history, that the great defeat of the Turks

before the walls of Vienna was in a chief measure owing to the depression of spirits among them caused by the fact, that they marched from Pesth in spite of the denunciations of the *cadi-asker*, who refused to sanction the breach of a truce which had been made. The Sultan who had been guilty of this unjust act was put to death, by a people outraged at the commission of this injustice.

In vain do we look in Europe for anything comparable to this legalization of war among the Ottoman people. We have to go back to the institutions of ancient Rome to find, in their *Fecial College*, a parallel to the *fetva* of the *Sheik-el-Islam*. With the Ottomans it is a natural outcome of their system, springing spontaneously from that principle of justice and legality which is the very groundwork of their polity.

It has often been made the subject of regretful reflection, that there should not be a European tribunal, charged with the settlement of international disputes, and armed with a coercive sanction. It is strange that it should not have occurred to people that, if each nation had only a municipal institution like this of the Ottoman people—charged with the examination of the justice of a *casus belli*, and without whose verdict no war could be undertaken—no international tribunal would be necessary. How many just wars have been undertaken in the history of any nation? Europe denounces the Turk for making “religious wars;” it must be acknowledged that she takes very good care that a similar accusation shall not be brought against herself.

CHAPTER VII.

THE TURKISH CONSTITUTION.

HAVING now described the Mussulman system of polity, I proceed to answer some objections which may possibly be urged against it. These objections will probably assume a double form, the one theoretical, the other practical; the first founded on the theocratic character of the institutions, and the improgressiveness which attaches to such a character; and the second, on the lamentable example mani-

fested by Mahommedan governments in the present day. I will proceed to consider both classes of objections.

1. The theoretical objection.—However wisely devised, it will be said, institutions and systems may be for any particular period of a nation's career, the very fact of their suitability at that period is itself a presumption against them for another and a different period in that nation's history. The Heptarchy was, likely enough, a wise institution for the period in English history when it flourished; but it would scarcely suit the England of the nineteenth century. The Polish Constitution, with its *Liberum Veto* even, may have suited the Polish nation at the time it was first established; but it was the guarantee of that very Constitution, by the arch-enemies of the nation, which precipitated its ruin, and caused its dismemberment. And so necessarily with all religiously-sanctioned systems, which, claiming Divine origin and possessing Divine sanction, do not admit of the progressive change and development which is the first law of endurance, and must therefore strangle the life out of the nation which adopts them.

I fancy that the fallacy of this objection, as applied to the Mahommedan system, lies in the ambiguity of one of the terms employed. By a "religiously-sanctioned system," the objection contemplates an elaborated system like the American, English, Polish, or Venetian Constitutions. Now, the principles which were detailed in my last chapter, and the sum of which, for convenience' sake, I was obliged to call the Mahommedan "system," are in this sense no system at all, but are the primary axiomatic principles of all good government. They stand in the same relation to elaborated constitutions as the axioms of Euclid do to the propositions of mathematics, or in which the Decalogue does to the Canon Law. It is true that they formed not only the groundwork, but also the very essence of the early Mahommedan system, and this astounding simplicity was the very source and secret of its strength. It was as if a people were, for all codes, and laws, and constitutions, to determine to rule themselves by the Decalogue alone. But, just as the Decalogue, although the foundation of all Christian law,

does not exclude the evolution of complicated codes and voluminous statutes, so the axioms of policy laid down by Mahomet do not exclude necessary developments, according to the varying requirements of the people and the changes of the times.

All these developments, it is true, must in the ultimate analysis be found conformant to, or at any rate must not be found in conflict with, these primary maxims; but if these maxims are sound and of universal application, this is no more an objection to the Mahomedan system than it is to the Canon Law, to say of it that it must be in accordance with the Decalogue; or to the system of Euclid, that all its propositions must be ultimately referable to its postulates and axioms.

That the Mussulman system should have fallen from its original standard, and, in point of fact, have developed itself into something quite different from its ideal, is an objection to human nature itself, not to the system of Mahomet. All that any system can do is, to lay down sound principles, and perhaps, further, to furnish sound canons of interpretation. Now the Mussulman system does both, and, as this latter point is one of considerable importance in reference to the objection I am considering, I will endeavour to prove by quotations from the highest Mussulman law authorities, that according to them "it is the letter which killeth, but the spirit which maketh alive."

In the first place, it is constantly and explicitly laid down by them, that everything that is not contrary to the maxims actually contained in their system is lawful, if its expediency can be shewn. Here is a vast field opened at once for political development. "Politics, like practical jurisprudence, must vary according to circumstances," says one of their highest authorities. The great Sheikh, Sidi Mohamed Byrem, says, "The action of government according to the law, includes all means by which good can be effected and evil avoided, even if these means have not been indicated by the Prophet, nor revealed by the Spirit of God." This is explicit enough; but in case there should be any doubt on the subject, a case is submitted to the great Doctor

Ebni Akil, to pronounce "whether that which is not sanctioned by the law is permissible in politics;" and he lays down, "If by that is meant that Government ought to avoid every opposition to the explicit declaration of the law, or its legitimate consequences, the proposition is sound; but if thereby is meant that Government can *only* act in cases where the law has spoken, and that all other action is illegitimate, it is a gross and monstrous error, and a direct censure on the practice and declarations of the companions of the Prophet." And, if any further evidence on this subject is required, Ebn-el-Kayem, another chief law authority, declares that "it is repugnant to our sense of the goodness of God to suppose that we are not to follow all paths that lead to the discovery of truth, or the application of justice and equity, whether they have been indicated by the law, or discovered by the graces with which God has endowed men."

And to clinch all this, the great Sheikh Byrem adds, that "the principal cause of all the disorders which have resulted in consequence of the pretended insufficiency of the law of Islam, have proceeded from the narrow and literal interpretation of that law by certain of the Ulema, who, instead of holding to the spirit of the law, have endeavoured to narrow what God had enlarged, and make His law of none effect by their interpretations; so that rulers have made the impracticability of the interpreters the excuse for departing from the wise spirit of the law of Islam, and emancipating themselves from its control." Here, then, we have a system which not only lays down certain wise and salutary maxims of universal obligation, but actually provides for un contemplated contingencies, by laying down sound canons of interpretation for the guidance of future generations.

I now come to the practical objection: How comes it, that with a system so perfect, Turkey should be in the pitiable condition in which she is to-day? I think I may claim to have in a measure answered this objection, implicitly, in the above. No system, however perfect, can guarantee its own continued existence. It must be worked by men, and if these men are unintelligent or corrupt, the

system will be perverted or corrupted. Now, so far from the present condition of Mahommedan affairs being chargeable to the Mahommedan system, it is the greatest possible testimony to the wisdom of that system, that it should be demonstrable that each one of the political evils from which Turkey is suffering, is directly traceable to the infidelity of its rulers to the very principles of the Mahommedan system, and to the violation of those political axioms which I enumerated in my last chapter. Let me prove this.

Turkey is suffering from arbitrariness, and the want of good counsel on the part of its rulers. Mahomet exhausted ingenuity in devising checks to the arbitrary exercise of power, and actually imposed a council on himself as an irrecusable example to his successors.

Turkey is suffering from a corrupt administration, of which the greatest grievances are those abuses connected with the collection of the revenue. Mahomet established, as an axiom of government, the liberty and self-government of the commune, and committed the collection of the revenue to the freely-elected officers of the Commune.

Turkey is suffering from a load of debt, and from heavy and oppressive taxation. Mahomet forbid usury, established a national reserve-fund, and imposed the simplest and least burdensome system of taxation ever devised by rulers.

Turkey is suffering from a complicated Customs-tariff, drying up the sources of its wealth, and striking at the very foundations of its prosperity. Mahomet enjoined absolute liberty of commerce and of trade, and anticipated by more than a thousand years the commercial policy of the most enlightened nations of modern Europe.

I think I have now answered both classes of objection to which the Mahommedan system might be thought by some persons liable, and given the grounds for the opinion which I ventured to express in a former chapter, viz., that all effectual reform in Turkey must proceed in the lines of their own Constitution, and, if I may be allowed the expression, in a return to Islam. In the next chapter, I will consider some of the external dangers to which Turkey is at the present moment liable.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE EUROPEAN CRUSADE AGAINST TURKEY.

THE dangers which threaten the Ottoman Empire at the present time—and it would be difficult to exaggerate their gravity—are twofold, those arising from within and those proceeding from without. The two, of course, are intimately connected together. It is the state of financial and administrative confusion to which Turkey has been reduced which exposes her to the aggression of her external foes. Some nations are weak from the paucity of their population, the poverty of their resources, the character of their inhabitants, or the peculiarities of their geographical situation. Such nations may be called naturally weak. In each of these particulars Turkey is strong. A nation, again, may be weak on account of the impracticable character of its constitution, and the impossibility to amend it. Poland was in this condition; and the satanic device adopted by her enemies was, as history tells us, to guarantee that Constitution, so as to render its reform impossible. In this respect, too, Turkey has nothing to fear. But a nation may also be weak from the incapacity and corruption of its rulers, and the apathy and indifference of its people; and in this case, equally as in the other cases, that nation is liable to become the victim of the aggressor and the prey of the spoiler. The independence of any nation—it may be laid down generally and absolutely—guaranteed by the “moderation” of its neighbours, and not by its own inherent strength, is certain to become the mere sport of circumstances.

Now, if a nation, weak from any of the above-mentioned causes, should happen to possess the most coveted portions of the surface of the globe, and situations of the most commanding importance, such accidents will scarcely tend to slake the thirst of acquisition on the part of its powerful neighbours.

For two centuries past, schemes for the partition of Turkey have been bandied about the world. There is not a nation bordering on Turkey which has not treasured up, in its archives or traditions, the details of a plan of

partition. One covets the littoral of the Adriatic, another the outlets of the Danube. One is moved by sympathy for co-nationalists, another by fervour for co-religionists. Every pretence which the ingenuity of covetousness or the lust of acquisition can devise is put forward. History, ethnology, geography, and religion are pressed into the service. The virtues and vices of the victim, his proud indifference, and his culpable carelessness, are alike traded on. Every agency is set in motion—ignorance, corruption, ambition. Every instrument, however venerable or however vile, from the bishop and patriarch to the stipendiary agent of fabricated disaffection, all are enlisted in the crusade.

No wonder, then, that, since recent events in Turkey, rumours and counter-rumours of partition have been especially rife. True it is that no absolute credence can be given to any of these rumours. But, unfortunately, it is also true that equally little credence can be attached to any of the contradictions of them. The wind blows one day from the direction of aggression, and another from the quarter of moderation; and if you were to set your sails to each breeze, you would box the compass of conjecture.

With reference to these rumours and contradictions, there is a suggestive passage worth referring to in the Malmesbury Correspondence. It is a letter from Lord Suffolk (the Secretary of State for the Southern Department) to Mr. Harris, the English Minister at Berlin. In it the Secretary of State refers to the rumours with which the air was then charged relative to the partition of Poland, and he tells the Minister that he has had very satisfactory assurances from the Ambassadors of the great Northern Powers that no credence is to be attached to those rumours; that if any communications at all had passed on the subject of possible eventualities, they had no official or practical character whatever, and only dealt with possible contingencies which it was sincerely hoped would never occur. This was in August, 1772. There is another letter, dated June, 1771—more than twelve months previous to the above—addressed by Frederick II. to Count Solms, in which the Prussian monarch—to whose Court Mr. Harris was all this time attached—minutely de-

tails the whole plan of partition, which he informs his correspondent has been completely decided upon !

Attaching, therefore, equal weight to the rumours and the contradictions, let us examine on their own merits some of the reports which have lately been afloat.

Austria first comes on the scene. Whether rightly or wrongly, she had the credit of setting the match to the magazine of combustibles which are always stored in Bosnia and the Herzegovinia. But those who excite an explosion ought at any rate to be able to profit by it ; and it shews the most incredible *gaucherie*, to say the least of it, to discover six months after the event that you have only been roasting chestnuts for other people. However that may be, in spite of promptings and encouragements from powerful quarters, and notwithstanding the strong feeling of the Austrian army, in which the Croatian element preponderates, and no particular disinclination at head-quarters, a change suddenly came over the spirit of the Austrian dream. Some said that it was "compensation" in Galicia (in which a Greek propaganda among the United Greek Ruthenian population had long been active) that was demanded by a powerful neighbour, who has political reasons of no mean magnitude for coveting this province, and that the price was considered excessive. Others maintained that it was the dualism which was to blame, for the political instincts of the Magyar race had interfered with the proposed acquisition, and Hungary had summarily declined to be a party to her own effacement by taking more Slavs into partnership in the Transleithan kingdom.

Then there seemed for a moment to be a chance for little Servia. What more natural than to add these Slav provinces to a little Slav State, which had established, on the whole, a very creditable specimen of government, and would have some peculiar advantages in the difficult task of governing these troublesome neighbours? It was a very natural idea, but at the same time a very *naïve* one. Big fish eat little fish, but they are not in the habit of killing little fish for the special behoof of other little fish. So far from the "Great Powers" wishing to aggrandize this "little

Power," they had no hesitation at a particular period of the present crisis in giving their consent to the Porte for the military occupation of Servia. There was nothing the least remarkable in this; it was strictly in accordance with all their policy in these matters. Indeed, if there is one thing more obnoxious than another to the Great Power which holds the banner of the Pan Slavistic idea, it is the idea of forming in Servia the nucleus of an independent and powerful Slav State. It would be equivalent to the creation of a second Poland. But for all that, Servia, like the other vassal States, has its part to play in the great Eastern drama; and a part so important, that I think it is worth while to pause a moment to consider the policy of these little vassal States.

When the hour shall have struck for the final settlement of the Eastern Question, it is absolutely necessary that Servia, Montenegro, Roumania (and the little kingdom of Greece), shall all be prepared to throw themselves, at the word of command, on the body of the Turkish Empire. To secure this disposition, different means must be adopted; Servia, Montenegro, and Greece, although they are to entertain no delusions about getting the lion's share in the spoil, are to have continually dangling before their eyes the prospect of an addition to their territories.

With reference to Servia and Montenegro, an effectual see-saw has been introduced. A phrase, too, *notre rôle national*, has been invented, which is the pivot of the saw. Does Servia for a moment hesitate to accept the pressure from without, then Montenegro will act the *rôle national*; should Montenegro hesitate, the national banner will have passed to Servia. In this way both Governments are absolutely chained down to the policy which is dictated to them. It is here the people, and their national enthusiasms, that are used against the Governments.

In Roumania it is exactly the reverse; there the Prince is used against the people. Roumania has the unenviable distinction of being probably the very worst-governed country in Europe. It was an evil hour for her people when they bethought themselves of a Hohenzollern for

their little principality; for if the tyrant is the prince who sacrifices the interests of his subjects to his own selfish and dynastic interests, then is Roumania the most flagrant instance of tyranny in the world. For the gratification of the dynastic vanity and ambition of its Prince, for the bauble of a sovereign crown, the nearest and dearest interests of the people are sacrificed, and the whole future prospects of these countries compromised. With boundless natural resources the treasury is bankrupt, and the cultivator, oppressed with taxation, is not even allowed to extract a living from the soil. With an accumulating National Debt, the Budget shews an annual deficit of one quarter of the whole revenue! and no wonder, when, with no legitimate national requirements to justify it, a huge standing army is maintained, to carry out a policy which is not the nation's. On the same principle, while Europe was discussing the right of Roumania to make commercial treaties, that right was exercised in signing away the future commercial and agricultural interests of the country, in exchange, as it is universally believed, for political support in an object which the country cares nothing about: and, what is more grave still, the adherence of another powerful neighbour to this dynastic intrigue is very generally supposed, since General Prince Suwarow's mission in this country, to have been purchased by the promise of the cession of that portion of Bessarabia added to Moldavia by the Treaty of Paris. Here, then, it is no longer popular enthusiasms, but dynastic foibles, which are used against Turkey. All roads are good that lead to Stamboul.

But lo! the storm which seemed gathering round Turkey shews in some quarters signs of abating. "Moderation" is the order of the day. Every Government is congratulating every other on its extraordinary "moderation," and I am sure that at the diplomatic receptions of the new year this must have been the universal topic of mutual felicitations.

It would be a pity to disturb such an idyllic scene with cynical observations, but if one allowed oneself to listen to political sceptics one would hear this language: All this pretended "moderation" is downright fudge and unmiti-

gated hypocrisy. It imposes on no one. If there is to be no campaign in the spring,—which is by no means certain, remember we are only in the winter now,—it is because the Eastern Question is not yet ripe, and a short interval of moderation may bring matters to maturity. All the elements of confusion which at present distract Turkey can at any time be called up at will; and others, and mightier ones, can be added. Bulgaria may then be ripe for revolt, and disaffection in that important province will be worth a dozen Herzegovinian insurrections. But, above all, and more important than all this put together, a blow, it is whispered, is being prepared for Turkey, which, if it fall on her, will bring the Eastern Question before the world in a way it has never been before, and make, for the first time in its history, a partition possible. Those who know what are the real chances of a disputed succession in Turkey will know to what I refer.

If, then, I believe that Turkey is not destined to perish, it is not because I have any confidence in “moderation” (God help us!), nor because I do not believe that evil deeds do not in the long-run prosper (the example of Poland is there to banish all such optimism); but because I cannot believe that the present occupant of the throne of the Murats and Selims and Solimans will allow himself to be made the tool of the designing men who are scheming to destroy his empire; and because I remember that Turkey, in her past history, has passed safely through other crises almost as formidable as the present: at the end of the seventeenth century, when a great man, Mustapha Kiuprili, arose and saved the State, threatened in its very existence, as in the present day, by dangers from within and from without; and again in our own century, when, without an army, with her janissaries massacred, her fleet destroyed, Greece liberated, Albania in arms, all Europe adverse, Russia at war with her, and Mehemet Ali marching on Constantinople, she emerged almost unscathed from this concurrence of perils and disasters, which seemed sufficient to wreck a dozen empires, under Sultan Mahmood and his great Vizier, Mehemet Reschid Pasha. If on these occa-

sions it only required the genius of a man and the support of a Sultan to restore and preserve the Ottoman Empire, I venture to say it was because Turkey, in the character of its inhabitants and in the nature of its Constitution, manifests the qualities and possesses the vitality which I have been endeavouring to explain in these chapters.

CHAPTER IX.

THE PRINCE OF ROUMANIA.

I HAVE described in the last chapter the lamentable condition to which the policy of Prince Charles of Hohenzollern, prompted from without, has reduced the little State of Roumania. But the exact position which that Prince holds in the country is too interesting, and indeed, at the present moment, too vital a subject, not to require all the light that is possible to be thrown upon it. Now the secret of the total disregard to national interests exhibited by the Roumanian Prince, and the sacrifice of those interests to external political objects, is, that Prince Charles is not meant to take root, or establish himself permanently in the country. *He has been placed there with a definite object, viz., that he may be enabled to dispose of his interest in this part of Europe in return for concessions elsewhere—to Germany.* Prince Bismark has, so to speak, effected a lodgment in a foreign country, on a spot of immense political importance, but where (as he is the first to proclaim himself) Germany has no direct national interests whatever; and in return for concessions here, that is to say, by disposing of his interests to the highest bidder (the feelings and interests of the populations counting, of course, for nothing), he is enabled to secure the most important advantages, and purchase the most valuable support elsewhere. Prince Charles of Hohenzollern, the intimate friend of the Prince Imperial of Germany, must be considered as the obedient instrument of Prussian policy, and as perfectly prepared to quit his little Principality the moment it becomes essential to Prussia to dispose of his interest there.

If anyone has any doubts as to the full extent to which this is the case, I must refer him to what occurred during the Franco-German war at the beginning of 1871. At that time Metz had not fallen, the army of the Loire was gathering strength, and the issue of the struggle was still doubtful. It was essential to Prussia to secure the support of Russia. The covenanted price of that armed support was to be the denunciation of the whole of the penal clauses of the Treaty of Paris, not only the Black Sea clause, but the Bessarabian frontier-clause as well. At this critical juncture, Prince Charles, with whose connivance this arrangement had to be made, was undoubtedly prepared to quit the country whose territorial interests he had betrayed. He made his preparations accordingly. A letter appeared in the "*Allgemeine Zeitung*," published by the Prince's own directions, and addressed by him to his old tutor, Professor Aurbach, telling him that he had never been able to take root, nor did he hope to do so, in Roumania, and that his heart beat for the great Fatherland, in the ranks of whose army he still hoped to serve. The sensation produced by this letter among his innocent subjects may be conceived. Suddenly, Metz fell, the army of the Loire melted away, and the final success of Germany was assured. The armed support of Russia being no longer required, the covenanted price of that support was proportionately reduced. The Black Sea clause was alone denounced, a hocus-pocus Conference settled the matter, and Prince Charles, explaining away his letter and his Fatherland as best he could, remained in his place for—another occasion.

This other occasion seems now to have arisen, and according to every indication upon which it is possible to ground a conclusion, Prince Charles of Hohenzollern has agreed to cede to Russia in the spring the Bessarabian strip of territory, with the two outlets of the Danube added to Moldavia by the Treaty of Paris. *This is the real kernel of the Eastern Question.* The insurrection in Herzegovina, the "guarantees of execution," the financial collapse, the administrative and constitutional difficulties of Turkey, are so much glamour, which is intended to cover and conceal the

real moves on the chess-board of Europe. The plan of the political campaign, as drawn up between Prince Charles and General Suwarrow, during the famous three days that they were closeted together in the little fortress of Ibraila on the Danube, is generally supposed to be as follows: The Prince is to begin by conferring decorations and coining money, prerogatives forbidden him by the Convention with the Porte; and when the relations between himself and his suzerain are sufficiently strained, the tribute is to be withheld in the spring. This means (or is intended to mean) war with Turkey, and the Russian army, already echaloned along the Bessarabian frontier to the number of 120,000 men, will, on the pretext of keeping order, or what not, march in, and Prince Charles will march out. His preparations to do so are already made. He has given notice of an intended journey in the spring on account of his wife's health, and it is not supposed that he ever intends to return. His little Principality, or at any rate a part of it, the price of Russian support to Germany, will have to be paid away.

But support for what? . . . This is a question for France, Holland, and perhaps Austria, to answer. . . . I am concerned just now with the East of Europe, although, be it well observed, East and West are only geographical divisions of a common policy, and the one part of it cannot be ever understood without mastering the other. The financial condition of Russia, as revealed the other day to the Chamber of Commerce of Odessa, and the equally desperate financial condition of North Germany, which has been suffering from a crisis which dates from the year succeeding the war, may, likely enough, afford a motive for desiring to strike a blow whilst "the instrument" is unblunted, and before disarmament becomes an absolute financial necessity. This is, perhaps, the only satisfactory explanation of Prince Bismark's extraordinary attitude towards France last summer; it may, perhaps, equally explain certain events now occurring in the south-east of Europe. Public attention is riveted at the present moment on the Andrassy note, and the guerilla warfare in Herzegovinia; whilst the real game is being played on the Danube, and perhaps the Scheld! In

Roumania, at any rate, to all appearances a plot is hatching. Everything there is abnormal; the utter indifference of the Prince to the public opinion of the country over which he has been called upon to rule, the feverish military preparations of his government, the movement of troops, the marking out of cantonments for the spring (an invariable precursor of a Russian occupation), the language held by General Suwarrow to the staff officers who accompanied him in his drive from Bouzao to Rimnik, and the warlike tone transmitted by them in consequence, as a *mot d'ordre*, to the whole Roumanian army, are only corroborative pieces of evidence of the universal sentiment entertained throughout Roumania, that their country has been made "le dindon de la farce." Farce or tragedy, it is a very pretty plot; and as the English Government has no doubt through its agents received full information on the subject, we have a right to ask what steps they have taken to maintain the public law of Europe, the faith of treaties, the balance of power, the interests of populations, and the commercial and political freedom of the world.

CHAPTER X.

THE HERZEGOVINIAN INSURRECTION.

ALTHOUGH the insurrection in Herzegovinia is only an incident, and, comparatively speaking, only an unimportant incident of the great "Eastern Question," it nevertheless holds so prominent a place in the public estimation, both on account of its own persistence, and from having been the cause of bringing the numerous other questions, directly or indirectly, in connection with it before the world, that I should like to say a few words about it.

Insurrections in highland districts, inhabited by wild mountaineers, have in all times taxed severely the resources of even the mightiest empires. Not to speak of Switzerland and the Tyrol, nor the Highlands of Scotland in the last century, the mountaineers of Asturias in the

present day have stood the shock of the whole Spanish monarchy; and a few years ago an insignificant revolt in Dalmatia defied for years the whole strength of the Austrian Empire, and was only eventually suppressed on the Emperor of Austria (on his road to Egypt) personally requesting the Sultan to take measures to prevent the Montenegrin frontier from being crossed by the rebels!

Now look for a moment on the map at the geographical position of Bosnia and Herzegovina, surrounded not on one or two, but on *four* sides, by countries the one more eager than the other to foment and encourage the insurrection, and say whether it is very remarkable that its suppression has not proved a light or easy task.

But my object is not to lay stress on what is at last pretty generally acknowledged in Europe, but rather to call attention to some permanent features which distinguish these provinces.

The fact is that, putting aside both bad administration and external incitement to revolt, these countries are among the most difficult to govern in the world, not only from the wild and turbulent character of their inhabitants, but from their containing almost every conceivable material of combustion—religious, social, national, and political.

Not only are the Greek and Mussulman arrayed in opposite camps, but there is also a large and, if you will, fanatical Catholic minority, hating the "Orthodox" with religious fervour, and seeking support against their encroachments by alliance with the Mussulmans, upon whose heads in consequence falls a full measure of the *odium theologicum* imported into their disputes.

Then as for social elements of confusion. You have face to face with an increasingly powerful democracy the remains of a turbulent aristocracy, tenacious of their privileges, and among whom the Tanzimat, or New Organization of the Turkish Empire, confirmatory of popular privileges, had to be introduced at the point of the sword.

To make matters pleasanter, a few years ago an agrarian strife was added to the boiling cauldron. It was now the "Tretina" and "Chetvertina" which distracted these pro-

vinces; the former term designating the third of the produce which the cultivator had been in the habit of paying to the proprietor of the soil, the latter the fourth of that produce which he now desired to pay instead.

Add, then, to a social feud an agrarian quarrel, conjoined with complicated religious and national distractions, aggravated by heavy taxation, and no doubt, in these latter days, faulty administration, all seething in the midst of a population the most turbulent and impetuous under the sun,—and here be elements for a roaring trade of disaffection among the professional traffickers in those wares! Whatever may be the final issue of the drama now being enacted in those countries, one thing may be very confidently predicted, and that is, that whoever become the happy possessors of these fair provinces may safely reckon, all things considered, upon having quite a pleasant time of it!

CHAPTER XI.

THE "EUROPEAN GUARANTEE."

THE question of "guarantees," specifically called "guarantees of execution," seems to be on the orders of the day. By it is generally understood some sort of European diplomatic guarantee, more or less coercive according to the temper or views of the prescribers for the evils of Turkish maladministration.

I have no doubt that the good people who are discussing the particular form of "European guarantee" have quite made up their minds as to the practicability of imposing some such thing. I am very sorry to differ radically with them, and to express my absolute conviction that no "European guarantee," in any shape or form whatever, will, in the present temper of the Ottoman people, be accepted by them. I am thoroughly convinced, from my knowledge of that temper, that they will prefer annihilation to the surrender of any particle of their sovereignty as an independent nation, and that any Vizier or Sultan putting his hand to any such surrender, would by that same act sign his own doom. If this view is correct—and let those who know

better confirm or contradict it—it seems to me slightly a work of supererogation to discuss the particular form or shape of an impossibility.

Some people, no doubt quite well aware of the impracticability of the proposal, nevertheless desire that the attempt should be made to impose this on Turkey, for the very reason that they desire a crisis to be produced. But such, I take it, is neither the policy nor the intention of England.

The arguments used by Ali Pasha, in a well-known Memorandum of May, 1855, express, in the mildest possible form, the inability of the Porte to accede to any such arrangement. “It would be,” he says, “a dismemberment of the Empire in another and far more effective sense than the mere loss of territory. It would be a blow struck at the very heart of all legitimate sovereign authority.”

It will be asked, if a “European diplomatic guarantee” is impossible, is there no other satisfaction or assurance which public opinion in Europe can receive that the new reforms and decrees of the Sultan will not remain the dead letters which all the innumerable khats and firmans for the last twenty years have proved to be? I will try and answer this question, and endeavour to point, by my answer, to the direction which friendly diplomatic representations ought to take, in opposition to the coercive measures which are at present under discussion, and which, even if they were not altogether impracticable, could only have the effect of destroying all legitimate authority in Turkey, and aggravating to an incalculable extent the very anarchy which is the actual cause of complaint.

What is the reason that recent khats and firmans (and no one expects any other fate for the last one) have remained dead letters? The solution of the difficulty lies in the answer to this question. It is perfectly appreciated in Turkey, but, notwithstanding its importance, it seems to have escaped the attention of Europe. It is that since 1856 a revolution has taken place in Turkey, and its Constitution, five centuries old, has been practically suspended.

Before that date it was an essential principle of the Otto-

man Constitution that every national act, such as a declaration of war, or the promulgation of a law—how much more a code!—should first be discussed and voted in an assembly, sanctioned by a *fetva* of the Sheikh-el-Isham, and then, and only then, promulgated in the name and executed by the authority of the Sultan. This was as much a part of the Constitution of Turkey, as that a law must be approved by Lords and Commons before it can receive the Royal Assent is a part of the Constitution of England; and the Ottomans were as much, quite as much, attached to their Constitution as the people of England are to theirs. It had lasted from the time of Osman, the founder of their empire, was embodied in the charter which he handed to his son Orcan, and had been respected and preserved intact in all the vicissitudes and crises through which the Empire had passed.

In 1856, under Ali Pasha, a revolution took place similar to that which occurred when the Vatican Council decreed the infallibility of the Pope; far greater, indeed, for this was voted by an Œcumenical Council, and was tacitly or explicitly accepted by those whom it concerned; whereas the revolution in the old Ottoman Constitution was voted by no assembly or council whatever, and, so far from being accepted, has been violently protested against by the Ottoman people ever since it occurred. From this date the Sultan has taken upon himself to issue cartloads of khats, firmans, and decrees on every possible and conceivable subject and occasion; and these khats, firmans, and decrees, have been as systematically disobeyed, neglected, and rejected. Justice and legality are of the essence, as I have repeatedly said, of the Ottoman mind; and a firman issued by arbitrary authority, and not clothed with the indispensable garments of legality, cannot be, and is not, obeyed by people or by *cadi*. This is the reason why these firmans, which never had legal validity, have afforded neither relief nor security. They have been regarded as more or less ingenious documents, food for the curious, and "concessions to European opinion," but as incapable of binding the Ottoman people as a decree of the Mikado, or a code of the Great Lama.

Complaints are made that, in spite of firmans, the testimony of Christians is rejected by the cadis. But the cadis reject overtly the authority of firmans illegally and unconstitutionally issued. They have no authority or validity in their eyes, and their view is confirmed by the legal sense of the general community. Again, a firman is issued creating a monopoly of salt: the people attack the Excise officers, and blood is spilled. The people are taxed with turbulence and lawlessness; but the law in their eyes was on *their* side. No firman issued simply by arbitrary authority could create a monopoly, and they fire on the officers as they would on a band of brigands. This is the real cause of the anarchy in the Ottoman Empire. There is anarchy, but the anarchy comes from above, and not from below.

If you wish to remedy this state of things, if you wish for "guarantees" that firmans shall be executed, begin by taking care that these firmans shall have legal, binding force. Till then your guarantees will not be worth the paper they are written on, and by them the confusion in the Empire will only be worse confounded. This is the proper, and indeed the only, guarantee which you have a right to insist on; and no man who knows Turkey and the Turkish character will for one moment doubt that such a guarantee would be ten thousand times more effective than all the European diplomatic guarantees that you could devise. Moreover, instead of being an unfriendly, hostile, injurious act towards Turkey, it would have the double advantage of enlisting the whole Ottoman nation on the side of the Power who demanded this kind of guarantee, and would help to save a great and a noble people.

SUBSTANCE OF A SPEECH

DELIVERED IN THE

HOUSE OF LORDS

ON MONDAY, THE 26TH OF FEBRUARY, 1877,

BY

EARL GREY.

LONDON:

BICKERS AND SON, LEICESTER SQUARE.

1877.

P R E F A C E.



ON the 26th of February I endeavoured to explain in the House of Lords my view of the Eastern Question, but I succeeded so imperfectly that I have determined to publish the speech, supplying some of the omissions, and correcting some of the faults, I observe in it as it was delivered.

G.

March 5th, 1877.

SUBSTANCE OF A SPEECH

DELIVERED BY

EARL GREY.

THE motion of my noble friend is not one which it seems to me possible for the House to accept, because it is open to this objection, that by voting the proposed address to Her Majesty we should imply our opinion that her advisers, if left to themselves, and without our interference, would not adopt such measures with reference to the present state of affairs in the East as we believe to be required. If the House really does entertain that opinion, and distrusts those to whose hands the conduct of these affairs is now committed, it is bound to express the judgment it has formed clearly and distinctly. If, on the contrary, this is not its opinion, I am sure your Lordships will agree with me in thinking that it would be imprudent for us to agree to a motion that would seem to imply it, and would thus be calculated to weaken the hands of the Government. For this reason I for one cannot concur in the address which has been moved by my noble friend, nor do I intend to

follow him in the observations he has addressed to the House; although upon some points I agree with him, I fear there are more on which I differ from him. My object in rising is to submit to the House some remarks upon the general question which my noble friend has brought under our notice.

When this subject was discussed last week, though I feel a deep interest in it, I abstained from taking part in the debate, because I am painfully conscious how little now remains to me of any power of addressing your Lordships which I may have formerly possessed. But now that that debate is over, and that you have had an opportunity of hearing those noble Lords whose views you were naturally most anxious to learn, I hope I may be permitted to avail myself of this opportunity of making a few remarks upon the subject, although I am aware that they will be both desultory and imperfect.

In the first place I would observe, that in the course of the late debate there appeared to me a want, in some at least of those who took part in it, of a due appreciation of the importance, in the present state of things in the East, of maintaining the Ottoman Empire. I do not dispute the truth of the statement of my noble friend behind me (the Duke of Argyll), that there has been great misgovernment in the Turkish Provinces; on the contrary, I fully concur with him upon that point, though I think he may perhaps have somewhat exaggerated the extent of the existing abuses. But bad as the present state of things may be, I believe that it is somewhat better than it was

when we entered into the Crimean War to maintain, as we were told, the independence and the integrity of the Turkish Empire. My noble friend who has just sat down has pronounced a glowing eulogium upon the policy and the conduct of that war. Though the temptation is strong, I will not allow myself to be drawn aside into stating my reasons for holding a very opposite opinion. I will content myself with saying that I think now as I thought then that it was an unnecessary and therefore an unjustifiable war, and that, looking at its results, I am convinced that after all the blood that was shed and the treasure that was expended in that memorable contest, not only all the nations that were directly concerned in it, but Europe, and the world, are in a worse state than they would have been had it never taken place. But reverting to the question immediately before us, I would state that though I believe my noble friend the noble Duke may have somewhat exaggerated the degree to which the Turkish Provinces have been misgoverned, still I do not doubt that the state of things has been so bad that we ought to hail with satisfaction a complete change if we could have ground to believe that it would prove a change for the better. But before we consent to lend any assistance towards the overthrow of the authority to which these Provinces are now subject, we ought to be satisfied that its place would be taken by something better. Now, on examining this question carefully, I am at a loss to see anything to justify an expectation that if at this moment Turkish rule were suddenly destroyed any sufficient substitute

for it could be immediately found. From the reports of our Consuls which have been laid before Parliament, and from the concurrent testimony of the best-informed and most trustworthy travellers and writers who have described the Provinces of European Turkey, it seems impossible to doubt that they are as yet absolutely incapable of governing themselves. The inhabitants are divided by the most bitter animosities arising from differences of race and religion, they are generally in a state of the grossest and darkest ignorance, there are few persons to be found possessing wealth and education, and there is scarcely any middle class. The clergy also are both ignorant and corrupt. Such a population affords no single element for good government if left to itself, and if the Turkish authority by which the passions of its various divisions are now restrained and some degree of order is maintained were suddenly withdrawn, what we should have to look for would be anarchy and civil war, probably leading to European war, and ending at last in the substitution of Russian for Turkish dominion. Now, it is scarcely possible that this change from Turkish to Russian dominion could be accomplished peacefully and without going through a time of confusion, and without much bloodshed and misery; and even if it could be arrived at without these evils, I do not believe that the change would be for the better. And I say this without reference to any English interests in the matter, which I believe to have been greatly exaggerated.

Looking at the question exclusively as it affects the Provinces themselves, I must express my conviction

that in the end it would not be found for their advantage that they should be placed under the rule of Russia instead of under that of Turkey. If we compare the effect of the government of these two Empires on the welfare of the population under their sway, I can by no means admit that, on impartially weighing all that is to be said on both sides, the conclusion we ought to arrive at would be so much in favour of Russia as seems to be commonly supposed. If we were to look only at the territory Russia has acquired by conquest, the verdict would be against her. The cruel and grinding tyranny under which Poland has groaned since its iniquitous subjugation by Russia has long been loudly condemned by Europe. And even in her own old dominions it can hardly be asserted that the government of Russia has proved favourable to the material prosperity or to the moral advancement and civilisation of her people. The concurrence of testimony is complete as to the inveterate corruption which pervades every branch of the Government, including the administration of justice. This corruption is as deep and as general as that which prevails in Turkey. The more regular and better-organised system of Russia does, no doubt, there prevent those open acts of lawless violence and oppression which are too often perpetrated in Turkey; but, on the other hand, this very organisation, and the principles on which it is worked, makes the Government press on its subjects with a crushing and deadening weight very adverse to real progress and enlightenment, and deprives them of the advantages

of freedom of industry and freedom of thought, more especially of religious thought, which are enjoyed in Turkey. This freedom makes the Turkish Government (if its worst abuses can be restrained) far more likely, in the long run, to promote the advancement and enlightenment of the people that live under it, than the intolerant and restrictive system of Russia, and I therefore think, in spite of what has been asserted to be English opinion, that it is not desirable suddenly and violently to shake down the Turkish Empire. And if not, if Turkey is to be maintained as an independent Power, it follows, as a necessary consequence, that interference between the Turkish Government and its subjects ought to be avoided.

I for one am still firmly convinced that the policy of non-intervention is that which is prescribed to nations both by justice and expediency. I do not mean non-intervention in the sense which has of late been put upon the word, by which it is understood as meaning that a great nation ought to look on with indifference while a small one is oppressed by some more powerful neighbour, unless its own interests should be directly affected. In this sense I regard the policy of non-intervention as no less unwise than cowardly, and if so understood, those who, half a century ago, most strenuously maintained the policy of non-intervention would have been the first to repudiate it. What they insisted upon under the name of non-intervention was the rule that one nation should not meddle, and above all should not meddle by force, in the domestic concerns or internal differences of

another. That every independent State ought to be left free to deal with its own internal affairs, and settle its own institutions and form of government as might seem best to itself. So understood non-intervention is the rule of justice, and if the opposite rule were to be admitted—if it were recognised that one nation might legitimately interfere in the internal affairs of another—a principle would be established capable of very wide and dangerous application. It is not impossible that it might be applied even against ourselves. And we know that, in point of fact, when intervention has been practised it has led to very great evils. It was on the plea of protecting one party in Poland from oppression by another that Russia in the last century prevented that unfortunate country from improving its anomalous and mischievous constitution, and thus prepared the way for that great political crime, the partition of Poland. The right claimed by the European coalition to forbid the French people to regulate their government as they thought fit, together with its natural consequence, the declaration of the revolutionary Assemblies of France that they would help the people of all countries to get rid of their kings, led to those terrible wars by which Europe was, for twenty years, afflicted. I might refer also to the violation of the rule of non-intervention by the Holy Alliance when free government in Spain and Italy was put down by force by France and Austria, and to the evils which flowed from these acts. I hold, therefore, that the rule that one nation ought not to interfere in the internal affairs of another,

whether it be to support kings against their subjects or subjects against their rulers, is one to which it is of high importance to adhere. British statesmen have generally acted on this principle, and much as all Englishmen have condemned and deplored the oppression of the Poles by Russia, of Lombardy and Venice by Austria, and of Naples and Sicily by their Bourbon King, our Government wisely declined attempting to redress their wrongs by force. The considerations by which the Ministers of former days were guided in these cases have not lost their weight, and those who contend that this country was bound to interfere because great oppression of its Christian subjects, and great cruelties had been perpetrated by the Turkish Government, ought to bear in mind that although the British nation has great power, which it is its duty to use on suitable occasions in the cause of humanity, this power is not sufficient to enable it to claim and to exercise a right to put down tyranny and oppression wherever they exist, and that, even if it were strong enough, it would not be justified in attempting to do so.

Holding this opinion, I am so far from joining my noble friend behind me (the Duke of Argyll) in condemning Her Majesty's Ministers for their reluctance to interfere between the Sultan and his subjects in the earlier stages of the insurrection that I think this reluctance was right, and dictated by a just and wise view of the subject. Later, when, owing to the course adopted by the three Imperial Courts, it was the wish of the Turks themselves that we should not stand aloof

from the steps these Powers were taking, with the professed object of restoring peace, the case was altered, and I see no reason to doubt that the Government were right in concurring in the Andrassy Note. But what requires explanation is, why the Government, in assenting to this Note, neglected to do that which might naturally have been considered necessary for its success, by suggesting to the other Powers, that when they called upon the Porte to make certain concessions to the insurgents, they ought also to call upon the insurgents to cease from their attempts to take by force what they might obtain peaceably by the interference of Europe. Surely it would have been only reasonable, only fair towards the Porte, when the Andrassy Note was presented, to have told the Turkish Government that if it would grant to the insurgents what the Powers recommended, they on their side would call upon the insurgents to abstain from hostilities while an arrangement for the future government of the Provinces was being settled under the mediation and the sanction of Europe. The Sultan's Government ought further to have been assured that this demand addressed to the insurgents would be enforced by compelling Servia and Montenegro to observe a real instead of a sham neutrality. It is clear from the papers that the Porte had really no power to do what it was asked by the Note, and that while the insurgents continued in arms, and were allowed to receive encouragement and assistance from their neighbours in resisting the Turkish Government, it was impossible for that Government to

take the first steps towards introducing the desired improvements in the administration of these Provinces. So long as the interference of the Powers was one-sided it could not be successful, while there was every prospect—I might almost say a moral certainty—that it would have succeeded if pressure had been brought to bear upon both parties in order to induce them to consent to a settlement under European mediation. I cannot find any trace in the papers of its having been suggested by Her Majesty's Ministers to the other Powers that this course of bringing equal pressure to bear upon both parties should be adopted, nor does it appear that anything was done to induce the insurgents to cease from hostilities while the terms of an arrangement were being settled, beyond sending the Consuls to them on that futile mission, of which the failure was certain from the first.

This, my Lords, seems to be the first mistake which was made by Her Majesty's Ministers. There is another point on which I think their course stands much in need of explanation. When Serbia, having had much the worst of the war with Turkey into which she had rushed so rashly, asked for and obtained the mediation of the Powers for the restoration of peace with her victorious enemy, why was it that the question as to the terms on which peace was to be made between Serbia and Turkey was mixed up with the entirely distinct question as to what regulations should be adopted with regard to the future government of the disturbed Provinces? I have admitted

that, under the peculiar circumstances of the case, it may have been right for the European Powers to interfere between the Porte and its subjects in this part of the Empire, though this was not in accordance with the rule which is generally and wisely observed in the relations of nations with each other. But what claim had Servia to be consulted on the subject? This principality, with no plausible pretence for it, had declared war against the Porte, to which it was tributary, and having been defeated, it certainly ought to have considered itself well off if allowed to obtain a peace by which it was not required to submit to any serious penalty for its aggression; but it was, under such circumstances, utterly unreasonable that it should ask to be consulted as to the arrangements to be made for the future government of the disturbed Provinces. It was the more unreasonable to ask this, because, as we are told by Consul Holmes in his despatch to Lord Derby of the 25th of July, “no contiguous
“ countries could possibly be more estranged and
“ have fewer relations with each other than Bosnia
“ and Servia. There is no commerce and no inter-
“ marrying, and scarcely any intercourse at all between
“ the two countries. Little or no sympathy ever
“ existed between them.” If the negotiations as to the peace between Turkey on the one hand, and Servia and Montenegro on the other, had not been complicated by the question as to the regulations to be adopted in the Provinces, it does not appear that there need have been any difficulty in very soon concluding the peace; and how much of all the incon-

venience and of the difficulties which afterwards arose would thus have been avoided! All that long and complicated negotiation as to the armistice and the time for which it should be made (a negotiation, I must say, but little creditable to any of the parties engaged in it, or to the profession of diplomacy), and the renewal of hostilities, with all the bloodshed it occasioned, would have been prevented, and, after the conclusion of the peace between the Principalities and the Porte, the Powers might have resumed their communications with the Sultan's Government as to the means to be provided for securing better government for its Christian subjects. And I am totally at a loss even to conjecture from these papers why the two questions were mixed up together. In the first instance they do not appear to have been so, and when mediation was first asked for by Servia and granted by the Powers, there is no mention of anything having been thought of but deciding the terms of the peace between the parties immediately concerned. But on the 11th of September the noble Earl (Lord Derby) wrote a despatch to Sir H. Elliot, in which he said that the Russian Ambassador had called upon him that afternoon, and that he had told him, and had authorised him to communicate to his Government, the terms which, in the opinion of Her Majesty's Government, might properly form the basis of a peace. These terms were—"The *status quo*, speaking roughly, both as regards Servia and Montenegro. Administrative reforms in the nature of local autonomy for Bosnia and the Herzegovina. Guarantees of some

“ similar kinds (the exact details of which might be reserved for later discussion) against the future mal-administration of Bulgaria.” Now, my Lords, I should like much to know why it was that, without having been asked (so far as we are told), the noble Earl of his own accord suggested that these two last questions should be considered together with that as to the terms of peace to be granted to Servia? Reasons may have existed for what was done, but they are not apparent in the papers, and, judging from the information before us, the step taken seems to have been as unnecessary as it proved to be unfortunate. We know from the despatches that the mention of “ autonomy” for the Provinces was what more than anything else alarmed the Turks, and caused the principal difficulty in the subsequent negotiations. The inconvenience of mixing up the two questions of the peace to be made with Servia and of the securities to be given by Turkey for the better government of her own Provinces, seems very soon to have been felt, for we find a telegraphic despatch from Sir H. Elliot, dated and received the 7th of October, in which he asks—“ Is it too late to separate the question of the conclusion of peace with the Principalities from that of the arrangements for the insurgent Provinces, which will cause the chief difficulty?” We are not told what answer was returned to this question, or why the suggestion it conveyed was not acted upon.

The noble Earl’s suggestion that the terms of peace should include the promise by the Turks of local autonomy to the disturbed Provinces stands the more

in need of explanation because it appears from the papers that long before it was made Consul Holmes had clearly pointed out in more than one very able despatch the unfitness of Bosnia for receiving any such system of local government. The reasons he gave for this opinion are to my mind conclusive, and I am quite at a loss to understand how in the face of them the noble Earl can have thought it expedient to make the suggestion he did. I do not doubt the great advantages of a system of local government. At the same time it is no easy matter to reconcile the maintenance of such an amount of authority in the government of the State as is necessary for its effective action with the grant of sufficient power to the local authorities of Provinces to enable them to afford any real protection to the inhabitants against oppression by the central authority. Hence where an effective system of local government has not gradually grown up and does not exist, the problem of how to introduce such a system with safety and advantage is not an easy one to solve, and the worst possible moment for attempting to solve this problem is when an insurrection is still going on, or has been but just suppressed, and men's minds are still excited. I remember a story told of President Lincoln, that when he was asked to encourage some proposed political change in the United States during the Civil War, he answered that "it is a bad time to swop horses when you are riding through a ford." There was true wisdom in this homely saying, and I wish the lesson had been borne in mind by the noble Earl when he proposed to create new institutions in the

Turkish Provinces in the midst of the agitation the disturbances had created.*

My Lords, I have troubled you with these remarks upon transactions which are gone by because I think they have a material bearing on the present state of things, on which I will now say a few words. I hope from some expressions that fell the other night from the noble Earl the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, and from what we learn from the public papers, that peace between Servia and the Porte will now be speedily concluded, and I trust that when this has been accomplished the Turkish Government will lose no time in endeavouring to make some arrangement for the future administration of the disturbed Provinces which may be satisfactory to Europe. Unless it does succeed in

* Lord Derby, in answering this argument, said that he did not think it would "apply when a people were in a state of insurrection. When you are doing what you can to induce them to lay down their arms, it seems a natural, almost an indispensable, measure to accompany that advice with a promise at least of some of the reforms which they desired so highly," and he proceeded to quote the great political concessions made to Hungary after the war, and to Canada after the insurrection. Lord Derby forgot that in both these cases the concessions to which he refers did not follow the restoration of peace till after a long interval. In Canada (and the case was still stronger in Hungary) the first consequence of the insurrection was not the grant of greater privileges to the people, but the suspension of the representative constitution the Lower Province had previously enjoyed. All power legislative and executive was for a time given to the Governor assisted by a nominee Council, and it was not till the way for it had been prepared by the exercise of that power that the Province was again allowed to enjoy representative government in an improved form.

making such an arrangement it ought not to disguise from itself that the difficulties of the subject are not got over, and that even if immediate war should be averted, the danger of it must soon recur. This cannot be too distinctly understood by the Porte; but, on the other hand, I hope that the Powers of Europe will feel that it is alike their duty and their interest to do all that they can to make it easier for the Porte to accomplish the reforms which are required, without submitting to what it considers humiliating, and dangerous to its authority. I regret, therefore, that it was said the other night, both by the noble Earl at the head of the Government and by the noble Marquis our Plenipotentiary at Constantinople, that Turkey had been guilty of extreme folly in rejecting two proposals, the refusal of which had caused the failure of the Conference.

[The Marquis of Salisbury said "he did not recollect that his noble friend (the Earl of Beaconsfield) had made such a remark, and it certainly had not fallen from him. What he had said of the unwisdom of the Turkish Government was directed to their rejection of the terms of the Conference generally, and not to the rejection of these two particular proposals."]

My Lords, I had certainly understood that it was for rejecting these two propositions that want of wisdom was imputed to the Porte, but neither my mistake nor the correction of the noble Marquis that "what was said of the unwisdom of the Turkish Government was directed to their rejection of the terms of the Conference, and not to the rejection of these two pro-

“ proposals,” is of much importance, since I believe that it was only these two proposals which were actually rejected by the Porte, and that it was probable, or at least possible, that on the other proposals of the Conference an understanding might have been arrived at if their discussion had not been broken off by the insurmountable objections of the Sultan’s Government to what was required from them on these two points. Now, my Lords, even if it were clear that the Turks were as much mistaken as it is alleged they were in refusing to listen to these two demands, still, as it is clear they will not give way with regard to them, I submit that it would be wise, instead of insisting upon them, to endeavour to find some other means for insuring the better government of these Provinces for the future. But, in point of fact, are the objections made by the Turks to these demands so unreasonable? I cannot so regard them. More especially I think that the objections were unanswerable which were urged by the Turkish Plenipotentiary at the meeting of the Conference of the 4th of January to the proposed creation of an International Commission of Control. This Commission was to have been composed of members representing the six European nations, and it was to have been armed with most extensive powers. It would have been enabled to overrule the Turkish Government on all the most essential points of administration. There was hardly an act of the Governor appointed by the Sultan, hardly a step he could have taken, that would not have been liable to be stopped and thwarted by the Commission. Was it

not natural that the Turkish Government should have fears about appointing a Commission armed with such powers? and would the authority thus created have been calculated to promote good government in the Turkish Provinces? These Provinces will require for many years to be governed with a strong and firm hand upon a consistent and steady policy. Is it likely that this would have been secured by the proposed Commission?

I am old enough to remember how Greece was governed under the influence of the Great Powers forty years ago. There was no International Commission of Control to interfere with the Greek Government in those days, but the European nations, and especially France, Russia, and England, all tried through their Ministers to influence and direct the Government of Greece in the management of its domestic concerns. I firmly believe that all three sincerely desired to promote the welfare of Greece, but unfortunately their views differed as to how its government ought to be administered for this purpose, and each contended eagerly to have its own opinion acted upon. In this manner there soon came to be formed French, Russian, and English parties, all struggling to direct the policy of the State, and for power. In this struggle party spirit was naturally developed and ran high, and, as always happens in such cases, no appointment could be made to any office, no incompetent public servant could be dismissed, no step could be taken by the Government, without provoking a party contest in which the interests of Greece were

less considered than the tendency of measures to increase or to diminish the influence of the parties by which they were supported or opposed. This was utterly inconsistent with having the government steadily and wisely administered upon any fixed and consistent system of policy. The little kingdom of Greece was literally torn to pieces by the rivalry and intrigues of the contending factions. As a member of Lord Melbourne's Administration I had an opportunity of watching the working of this system, which I greatly deplored, and I am persuaded that the meddling of the British Government in the domestic politics of Greece, with the meddling of other nations which it inevitably caused, was one of the principal reasons why Greece has failed to make the progress she ought since she was freed from the yoke of Turkey. Now the proposed International Commission I can only regard as an instrument ingeniously contrived to reproduce in an exaggerated form all the evils that I have mentioned as having arisen in Greece. It is often urged that a Board is an inefficient instrument of government, and I am inclined to think so, unless its chief is avowedly supreme; but here we were to have a Board of six Commissioners, all equal in authority, and representing six different nations having conflicting interests and jarring opinions. I am sure your Lordships will agree with me in thinking that no good could possibly have come from giving authority in the government of the Turkish Provinces to a body so constituted; and I am beyond measure astonished that Her Majesty's Ministers, with their knowledge

and experience of practical government, could ever have been induced to concur in so impracticable a scheme.* Having been most properly rejected, I trust we shall hear of it no more.

For the other proposal objected to by Turkey there was far more to be said. In what they proposed respecting the appointment of Governors of Provinces, the Conference hit the real blot of Turkish administration. There is probably no one cause that has done so much to produce the misgovernment of the Turkish Provinces as the corrupt choice of Governors, and the practice of continually changing them. This necessarily leads to the oppression of the people. A Governor who has gained his post by bribes naturally wishes to get back what it has cost him from those over whom he rules, and when he also knows that he may at any moment be displaced by some higher bidder for the office he holds, it is only what we ought to expect if a Pasha should endeavour by all possible means to screw from the unfortunate people under him the largest possible amount of money in the smallest possible time. The correction of this crying evil is of

* In reply to this argument Lord Derby observed that during the proceedings of the Conference the proposal for creating an International Commission of Control was greatly modified, and that in the form it ultimately took, the powers it would have conferred on the Commissioners were very much less than those originally suggested for them. This is true, but the establishment of any such body at all must have greatly obstructed the proper action of the Turkish Government. The Commission could only have ceased to be injurious by becoming absolutely null and useless.

urgent necessity, and if the proposal of the Conference had been accepted that Governors of Provinces should in future be appointed with the approval of the European Powers, and for a fixed time, I have no doubt that much good would have been done. At the same time it is impossible to deny that there is much weight in the objections urged by the Porte to the proposal. A Government not free to choose its own principal executive officers, or to remove them except for such misconduct as can be formally proved before a legal tribunal, would have but little means of making itself obeyed, and in binding itself to the European Powers in the manner suggested we cannot disguise from ourselves that the Porte would virtually have abdicated most of its authority over an important part of its dominion. Its resistance to the proposal cannot, therefore, be fairly condemned, and I wish that instead of insisting upon it an attempt had been made to obtain the same object by other means. Might it not have been suggested to the Porte that the difficulties of the question would be at least greatly diminished if the Sultan would at once appoint Governors to the disturbed Provinces whose characters would command the confidence of Europe, and would communicate these appointments to the assembled Ministers? In doing this he might also have been advised to cause the Conference to be informed that the Governors so appointed would not be removed unless for misconduct or failure in the efficient performance of their duty, and that if for such a cause it should become necessary to dismiss them,

this would not be done without previously making known to the Ambassadors the step intended to be taken and the reasons for it. If such a suggestion had been made to the Turkish Government, and had been adopted, the object in view would have been practically attained without impairing the legitimate authority of the Sultan. No doubt the adoption of this course might have been rendered difficult by the want in Turkey of men fit to fill the arduous posts of Provincial Governors. But the Sultan is not necessarily restricted to his own subjects in seeking for proper persons for employment. He might follow the example of the Ruler of Egypt, and apply to any of the European Powers to recommend to him men qualified for the high trust of governing the disturbed Provinces. There can be no doubt that to such a request a favourable answer would have been gladly returned. If the Porte could be induced to afford to the Powers a reasonable assurance that good Governors should be appointed and maintained in their posts, I believe most of what is immediately necessary for improving the condition of its Christian subjects would be accomplished. Experience shows that when by a rare and happy accident an able and honest Pasha has been allowed to govern a Turkish Province long enough to make the effects of his rule apparent, the Turkish system of government has not proved unfavourable to the welfare of the people.

There is another point on which I wish to offer some remarks. Your Lordships are aware that much fault has been found with Her Majesty's Ministers for

the jealousy and suspicion they are said to have manifested towards Russia, and that it has been vehemently asserted that this country ought to act cordially with Russia in compelling the Turkish Government to redress the wrongs of its Christian subjects. For my own part I can see no trace in the correspondence of any ground for these complaints against the Government. Perhaps if I were to find any fault with them in this matter, it would rather be in the opposite direction, and I am inclined to doubt whether in some instances during these long negotiations they may not have too easily followed the leading of Russia. My Lords, I heartily concur in the opinion that it would be most unwise for this country to show jealousy and suspicion of Russia. We ought to be ready cordially to co-operate with her in all measures we consider to be really calculated to promote the welfare of the Christian subjects of Turkey and their security from oppression; this we ought to do in the most friendly spirit, and with the most complete absence of any thought for selfish objects or interests of our own. But while in all this I heartily concur, I must demur to the notion that we ought to place a blind confidence in any other Power. When I am asked to do so I cannot help looking back to the past, and I am sure your Lordships cannot forget that there have been cases, not very long ago, in which the British Government has received very express promises from Russia which have not afterwards been fulfilled. And when we are asked how we can doubt the good intentions of Russia after the very friendly

declarations of the Emperor to our Ambassador, I answer that I do not doubt that on that occasion the Emperor spoke in all sincerity. Far be it from me to throw the slightest doubt or suspicion on his perfect honour and freedom from all thought of deceiving us. But, my Lords, we all know that despotic Sovereigns, unless they are men of very unusual ability and very unusual strength of will, do not always really guide the policy of the States they are supposed to govern. The opinions and passions of their Ministers, their armies, and their people, are sometimes too strong for them, and they are carried along by the current in a direction contrary to their own wishes. In the case of an absolute, even more than in that of a constitutional Government, it is unwise to place too much reliance on what is said by a Sovereign or by a Minister. The policy and intentions of all States must be judged, not by the words of their rulers, but by their acts; and if we apply this rule to Russia, and form our opinion as to her views and intentions towards Turkey by her conduct during the last two years, I am afraid it cannot be altogether favourable to her. I own I find it difficult to believe that if Russia had really had a very earnest desire to restore peace in the disturbed Provinces of Turkey she might not have found means to make Servia and Montenegro observe a real neutrality, and thus deprive the insurrection of the means by which it was kept alive. I do not even feel quite convinced that any insurrection at all would ever have taken place in Bosnia or in the Herzegovina, and still less in Bulgaria, if this had been entirely contrary to the real wishes of Russia. I am

altogether incredulous as to Russia's not having had the power, had she chosen to exert it, of restraining Servia and Montenegro from declaring war against the Porte.

Again, how are we to account for the open encouragement—perhaps something more than encouragement—given to officers and soldiers of the Russian army to join the Servian forces as volunteers against Turkey, with which Russia still professed to be at peace? Surely this conduct was not consistent with the acknowledged obligations of nations towards those with which they are not at war. It is certainly utterly inconsistent with these obligations as understood by Russia when she is herself interested in maintaining them. Some years ago, when Russia was engaged in the war of the Caucasus—an unjust war of aggression if ever there was one, when the sympathies not only of every Mahometan people, but of many Christians, were strongly excited in favour of the Circassians—during this war a few foreign officers and soldiers passed through Constantinople to join the Circassians. There was no allegation that they were assisted in going by the Turkish Government, yet a remonstrance against the conduct of that Government in not having prevented them from passing through its dominions was addressed to it by Russia. This remonstrance, written in a tone of arrogance seldom equalled in a State paper, was lately republished in the Turkish newspapers as a commentary on the Russian volunteering to Servia, and your Lordships will find it in the Blue Book. But, my Lords, the most striking indication of what is the spirit which has really guided the policy of Russia

is afforded by a despatch of Sir H. Elliot to the noble Earl, dated the 5th of September last. Your Lordships will remember that at that date communications were going on with a view to the conclusion of a peace between Turkey and Servia, and in this despatch Sir H. Elliot informed the noble Earl that the Russian Ambassador being away on leave of absence, he had had a conversation with the Chargé d'Affaires, who he said had "repelled with much warmth the notion "of the Porte being permitted to make peace with "the Principalities without the previous concurrence "of the Powers, who might not be disposed to regard "the conditions as acceptable." If the conversation had been with the Russian Ambassador himself less candid language would probably have been used, for the Chargé d'Affaires seems inadvertently to have made a very important revelation, and to have allowed it to escape from him that Russia had some further object beyond the restoration of peace. It would not be difficult, if time allowed me, to point out other suspicious circumstances in the transactions of the last two years, and the part played in them by Russia, so that I find it difficult to resist the conclusion that though she may not aim at the immediate conquest of any portion of the Turkish dominions, she does wish to keep up in these Provinces a state of things which must end in the breaking up of the Turkish Empire, with the effect of bringing some considerable part of its territories under Russian dominion.

This is a result which I for one think is most strongly to be deprecated, and if I understand correctly the views of Her Majesty's Government from

the papers they have laid before us, it is one which they too are anxious should be averted by the only means by which it can be averted, an effectual reform by Turkey of the government of its Christian Provinces. I do not believe that any great immediate change in the institutions of these Provinces is either practicable or desirable. But if the Porte can be induced to appoint really good Governors with large powers, and having a reasonably secure tenure of power, while at the same time measures are taken to correct some of the most crying evils now complained of, such as the farming of the taxes and the corrupt administration of justice, I believe the best that is possible for the present would be done for promoting the welfare of this part of Europe. This is what I believe ought to be aimed at, and to this end I venture to believe that the efforts of Her Majesty's Government have been, and are directed. But we cannot conceal from ourselves that the difficulties to be overcome before it can be arrived at are most formidable, chiefly, perhaps, from the little disposition shown by the rulers of Turkey to act with the vigour and judgment demanded by the present perilous position of the Empire. In this crisis the advice of Her Majesty's Ministers might be of the utmost value to them, and would probably be now listened to more willingly since it has been declared (in my opinion most wisely) to be the policy of the British Government neither to join in, nor to encourage, a resort to coercion in order to compel Turkey to act as she ought. At such a conjuncture, when British advice might be so beneficial to Turkey,

I cannot help regretting that we should have no Ambassador at Constantinople, nor can I understand why he has been withdrawn, since we have been told that this is not meant to imply a diplomatic rupture.

Let me add that I will not pretend that I am sanguine in my hopes for the regeneration of Turkey, or for the permanent maintenance of the Ottoman Empire; I think now, as I thought at the time of the Crimean War, that its fall at no distant period is what is to be expected, though I should rejoice at its turning out otherwise. But whatever is to be the final destiny of the Turkish Empire, I am convinced that it is much to be desired that it should at all events be maintained for a time with such arrangements as may be required for restoring order in the Christian Provinces, and giving reasonable security for life and property to their inhabitants. With such security we may safely trust that industry and trade will gradually spring up, bringing with them an advance in wealth, in education, and in fitness for a better Government. In this manner we may reasonably expect that these now half-barbarous Provinces might in a few years become civilised and prosperous communities, capable of taking their place with advantage to themselves and to the world, either as Provinces of a regenerated and powerful Turkish Empire, or as parts of one or more independent States which may rise up in what are now its European territories.

S P E E C H

ON THE

CONDUCT OF THE FOREIGN OFFICE

DURING

THE INSURRECTION IN CRETE

IN 1867.

THE EASTERN QUESTION.

SPEECH OF THE DUKE OF ARGYLL

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PREFACE.

I REPUBLISH this Speech of 1867 as a preliminary to the discussion of the Turkish question as it stands in 1876.

ARGYLL.

INVERARY CASTLE, *Sept. 14, 1876.*

S P E E C H.

THE DUKE OF ARGYLL, in rising to move for a Copy of a Note addressed to the Porte by the Three Powers, Great Britain, France, and Russia, on the 8th of April, 1830; and to call the attention of the House to the Papers (presented to Parliament by Her Majesty's command) respecting the late Insurrection in the Island of Crete, said: My Lords, having read with very close attention the Papers which have been laid upon the table of your Lordships' House, I confess I am compelled to question the propriety of the course pursued by Her Majesty's Government upon one point, but upon one point only. The advice given by Her Majesty's Government to the Government of the Porte has on all occasions been timely, just, and humane; and I think I may add that as regards the suggestion made by the noble Lord at the head of the Foreign Office for the settlement of the Cretan question—as far, at least, as the question can be settled under present circumstances—I really do not know that any better suggestion could have been made.

My objection to the course taken by Her Majesty's Government has reference, as I have already stated, to one point alone; but that point appears to me to be of so great importance, not only in itself, but also as regards the

principles connected with it, that I felt it incumbent upon me to bring it under the consideration of your Lordships; and I think I shall best do so first by giving to your Lordships a short narrative of events, not necessarily in the order in which they occurred, but in the order in which they became known to Her Majesty's Government; and secondly, by directing the attention of your Lordships to the general principles to be applied to those events. But, before doing so, there are one or two observations of a general character which I trust I may be allowed to make upon this question. We all know that the Christian provinces of Turkey are in a state of chronic disaffection and of occasional insurrection; nor need I explain to the House what the causes of that disaffection are. First of all, there is the fact which is alluded to and dwelt upon by the noble Lord at the head of the Foreign Office in those despatches—namely, that in those provinces there is a large majority of Christians, having no share whatever in the government, but ruled over by a Mussulman minority. Secondly, there is the fact that in these provinces there are generally great and real and practical grievances suffered by the people. And lastly, there is the fact of a free Greece, which, however ill-governed it may be—and I believe that next to Turkey it is perhaps the worst governed country in Europe—is in close proximity to those provinces; while such is human nature that men prefer almost any grievances to the state of subjection in which these provinces are now placed. Whenever an insurrection occurs in the Christian provinces of Turkey, we are always told by the partizans of Greece that the inhabitants are groaning under innumerable practical grievances; and, on the other hand, we are always told by the partizans of Turkey that the people had no grievances whatever to complain of, but that the insurrection has been entirely raised by the Greek nation. Now, I

believe the truth lies between these two statements. You cannot separate the exclusive dominion of a Mussulman majority, the practical grievances which the Christian inhabitants labour under, and the example of free Greece. These causes act and re-act, and you cannot separate them, because each one of them has had some share in producing the insurrections which have taken place from time to time.

Now, as to the grievances complained of, let me, in passing, make one remark. Even in those cases where the Turkish Government means to act fairly, the administration under that Government is generally so bad and corrupt as to perpetuate those grievances rather than redress them. I need not state to you in detail the nature of those grievances, because they are stated in this blue book; and the very same grievances have uniformly been complained of by the inhabitants of all the Christian provinces in Turkey. The principal are excessive taxation of farmings of the revenue of compulsory ports of export, to which there were bad roads; but, above all, there is a universal allegation that the promise made to the Christian population in 1856, in the face of all Europe, in reference to the perfect equality before the law of Christian and Mussulman, is a promise which has not been kept. Under these circumstances, I fear we must look for frequent insurrections.

And now let me say one word with regard to the spirit and temper with which we ought to regard such insurrections when they do arise. I will venture to say that every Government in this country must desire to stave off as far as it can what is called the Eastern question. But every one of these insurrections is calculated to raise the question which every statesman in this country must be desirous to postpone. This is a natural feeling on the part of every

Foreign Minister, and to a certain extent it is legitimate. All I say is that when insurrections do take place, as they will do in the Christian provinces of Turkey, we should remember the high probability that they are justified by the grievances which the Christian populations have to endure. Indeed, we know that under the Turkish Government such grievances must exist. If we had to endure even a thousandth part of those grievances we should be rising against the governing power, and therefore we ought always to look upon these insurrections as only a natural attempt on the part of the people to throw off a government which to them is certainly odious, and to a large extent really oppressive. Therefore, we ought not to regard these insurrections solely in a selfish spirit, or merely as injuries to ourselves because of their inconvenience. It must necessarily be inconvenient to have the Eastern question raised; but still, when these insurrections occur, we are bound to look that question in the face and to perform our duty, whatever it may be, after due consideration and reflection. My Lords, I do not make this remark in reference to any dispatch which has proceeded from the British Government. Indeed, the tone of those despatches has been uniformly gentle, considerate, and humane. But I regret to find in the blue book some remarks of a French diplomatist which do not appear to me to be deserving the same praise. Having said thus much, I will narrate to the House the circumstances respecting this Cretan insurrection.

The disaffection and the discontent of the people of Crete have been, as your Lordships are aware, of long standing. I think that, since the year 1830, there have been two or three insurrections, and several assemblages of people which almost amounted to insurrections, and which compelled the Turkish Government to make some conces-

sions. Very early in 1866 these feelings of discontent seemed to have reached a head, and in the month of May, I believe, the Christian inhabitants assembled, as they are accustomed to do in Crete, in large bodies, and addressed to the Sultan a petition complaining of their grievances, and, in perfectly respectful language, asking for redress. Now, as far as I can learn, the allegations contained in that petition have never been contradicted. Well, no answer was given to that petition by the Government at Constantinople for a period of between two and three months; and when at last the reply did come, it was in the shape of an order to the inhabitants to disperse and lay down their arms—for I ought to have mentioned, that the Cretans always go armed—but no promise was given that any of the grievances complained of should be redressed. On this point I will read the opinion of Lord Lyons, our Minister at Constantinople—and certainly Lord Lyons was not the man to overstate the matter. On the contrary, he would be likely to mean a little more than he said. His words were—

“The instruction contains a peremptory summons to the Christians to disperse, but they do not hold out much hope that the grievances alleged in the Memorial will be seriously examined or redressed.”
—p. 27.

Well, when that answer arrived in Crete the assembly broke up, took up arms, and betook themselves to the mountains, where a few days afterwards they expressed their determination to fight for their own independence and their annexation to the kingdom of Greece. That happened in the beginning of September.

Here, however, I wish to remark—what ought always to be borne in mind—that all these wars in the Christian provinces of Turkey assume an internecine character. They are emphatically savage wars, embittered by the

antagonism of race against race, and religion against religion, and the most terrible brutalities are committed on both sides. There is always one special circumstance which aggravates very much the horrors of war, and that on the side of the Turks. In putting down such insurrections the Turkish Government employs not only their regular troops, but also Albanians, Circassians, and other semi-savage hordes, whose brutality very far exceeds that of the regular soldiers. This aggravation of the horrors of war does not exist on the part of the native population. So far as I can see in the papers before your Lordships' House, the intentions of the Turkish Government—by that I mean of the few enlightened Turks who form the Government at Constantinople—are, on the whole, humane. In the blue book there is repeated mention of instances in which volunteers from Greece, who, having been interfering in the war and having been caught by the Turkish troops, were treated in a most humane manner by Mustapha Pacha; and I find cases too, I rejoice to say, in which Egyptian officers who had been interfering, as the Cretans had a right to think, unduly, were treated by the Christian population in the most humane and handsome manner, after the latter had captured them and thus got them into their power.

It appears that it was on the 22nd of September Her Majesty's Government first heard that the insurrection had assumed the character of a civil war. Instructions were at once issued by the Foreign Office, in which it was laid down that we should pursue a course of complete neutrality between the two parties. On the 29th of September our Government heard that the Turkish Government had landed in Crete between 5,000 and 6,000 of those mercenary troops to which I have referred. On the 2nd of October Her Majesty's Government heard from Consul Dickson at Crete that murder and rapine prevailed over the island, and that

there was a general flight from all the villages of such of the Christian families as could escape to the neighbouring country of Greece. On the 9th of October Her Majesty's Government heard that 1,200 more Albanian mercenaries were to be hired by the Turkish Government, and let loose on the Christian population of Crete. On the 12th of October they received from our Minister at Athens a despatch which I think must have opened their eyes to the spirit in which this war was too likely to be conducted. Mr. Erskine writes—

“I am informed by the French flag-captain on this station that there is so much ill-feeling towards all Christians, on the part of the Egyptian troops in Crete, that even the commander of the French gunboat *Biche* was insulted by some of these men, when on shore in Suda Bay; and that to avoid the repetition of such conduct, the Turkish Admiral has undertaken to send off water to the *Biche*, and thus prevent the necessity for the landing of her crew. If such be the conduct of the Egyptians towards the French sailors, it is quite conceivable that they may have been guilty of any of the excesses against native Christians, which have been laid to their charge.”—p. 52.

My Lords, on the 20th of October, the Government heard of another most significant fact. Your Lordships are probably aware that about one-fourth of the inhabitants of the island of Crete are Mussulmans. In consequence of what was actually going on, and of what was coming, the Mussulman authorities were taking care that the Mussulman women and children should be put out of reach of the war. Of this, the Government were informed by Lord Lyons in his despatch of that day. On the 26th, they were informed by Mr. Erskine, that Consul General Saunders had reported to the Government that mercenaries were being shipped for Albania, for the purpose of carrying on the war against Crete; and he added; that the Porte would do well to reflect before having recourse to the assistance of these reckless, sanguinary mercenaries; that even any momentary

success obtained through their agency might be dearly purchased by the additional exasperation which could not fail to be imported into the conflict by the use of such allies. On the same day, the Government heard from Lord Lyons his opinion that the conquest was being carried on with an animosity, on both sides productive of most deplorable consequences. On the same day, the Government received the first petition from the Cretans, praying that Her Majesty's ships might be allowed to remove from Crete any Christian women and children who might escape to the shore, and find refuge on board ship. Three days after that petition was received, the noble Lord the Foreign Secretary—of course, after consultation with the Government—despatched his first refusal to allow Her Majesty's ships to remove those women and children. The noble Lord's refusal was founded on the ground that to do so, would be virtually a violation of the principle of neutrality. I think it only fair to say, with reference to the course taken by Her Majesty's Government, that the request had come through a channel that was most objectionable. The Cretan people petitioned, through the King of Greece, asking His Majesty to use his influence with the protecting powers, to send ships for the purpose to which I have alluded. Again, up to that time—whatever might be the probabilities of the future—Her Majesty's Government had not heard of any fact showing that any attack had been made, or was intended to be made, on the women and children. Therefore, though I cannot agree in the conclusion at which they arrived, I can understand the principle upon which they acted. But, my Lords, whilst this direct refusal to comply with the prayer of the petition was sent to Greece, no discretion was given to our local authorities on the spot—no instructions were given to Lord Lyons, to the effect that he might exercise his own

discretion in extreme cases; no directions were given to Consul Dickson, a person of the highest character, that under circumstances of an urgent character, he might exercise his own judgment in respect of those unfortunate people. No such direction was given to our local authorities; but a simple blank refusal was returned to the petition.

On the 31st of October, Her Majesty's Government heard from Consul Dickson, that whole villages were being destroyed, and of specific acts of atrocity with which he would not trouble the House. On the 6th of November, there was an account of the wholesale burning of, I think, ten or twelve Christian villages; and on the 9th of November, Her Majesty's Government heard from Lord Lyons, that he had remonstrated with the Porte, against the employment of those sanguinary mercenaries. On the 11th of November, they received this news from Mr. Erskine—

“M. Manos, an officer in the Greek artillery, who was taken prisoner in the redoubt at Vrysses, has written to his family, to say that he has been most humanely, and even generously, treated by Mustapha Pasha, to whom he stated that, for three days before the engagement, neither he nor his companions had tasted food. Another officer, Colonel Zimbrakaki, writes that, in the mountains, the unfortunate women and children are dying by scores every night, from want and exposure, many of the poor creatures being literally without covering of any sort. Another, a German volunteer, endeavours to comfort his friends, by the assurance that there is but little danger of his being shot, as the insurgents are careful to keep at a respectful distance from the enemy. On the other hand, I have seen letters from three different persons in Candia, all foreigners, who speak of the conduct of the Turkish and Egyptian troops as simply atrocious. One gentleman describes the massacre of 200 persons, chiefly old men, women, and children, and the barbarities committed by the troops as beyond all belief. Another states that the Turks refused all quarter to the Christians, and mercilessly chopped off the heads of the unfortunate wounded as well as dead, a reward of 100 lira having been offered for each head thus brought to the camp. The writer of this letter adds, it is true, that similar barbarities are committed by the Christians. If these

statements at all resemble the truth, it may be conceived how difficult it will be ever to reconcile the Christians to the Turkish rule, or to persuade them to live harmoniously with native Mussulmans whom they accuse of such horrors.”—p. 93.

On the 14th of November, the Government heard from Consul Dickson, of the severe privations which the poor Christian families were suffering in the mountains. On the 17th of November, Consul Lloyd reported to the same effect from Syra. Now, on the same day, 17th November, the Government, in a despatch from Lord Lyons, heard what course he was disposed to take under the circumstances of the case. Lord Lyons had been informed of the nature of the petition sent to England, and he says—

“The original of Mr. Erskine’s despatch must have been in your Lordships’ hands, before the copy of it reached me; and had this been otherwise, it would have been beyond my province to decide upon the prayer of the petition, and out of my power to give effect to it. I have, however, lost no opportunity of pressing upon the Porte the importance of taking thought for the families deprived of food and shelter, and I have sent instructions to Her Majesty’s Consul in Crete, to urge the Ottoman authorities to take, *and to take himself, every feasible and proper measure to save the women and children not only from insult or injury, but also from hunger and cold.*”—p. 97.

Now, my Lords, it appears from that despatch, that on receipt of the petition at Constantinople, Lord Lyons, knowing the character of those mercenary troops who had been let loose, had not contented himself with making representations to the Porte; but had sent those instructions to the Consul at Crete, which left him a wide discretion, and gave him powers of independent action. On the 6th of December, a fortnight after the last despatch, the Government heard that Consul Dickson, acting under the orders of Lord Lyons, had placed himself in immediate communication with the commander of one of the gunboats on the station, with a view to relieve persons upon the

coast; but he had hardly done so, when the order from home arrived that perfect neutrality was to be maintained, and the interpretation put upon that was, that no such step should be taken. Consul Dickson also, on receipt of the order, and finding that there were at the moment no specific applications from families wishing to be taken off, cancelled the orders which he had given. Six days afterwards, however, the Government heard from Consul Dickson, that he had determined to disobey the orders which he had received from them. I wish to direct your Lordships' attention to the remarkable despatch in which he explains the reasons for his conduct. He says—

“During the brief stay here of the Imperial Commissioner and the Commander of the Egyptian contingent, I ventured to make a few remarks officiously to their Excellencies. I stated that the insurrection must have by this time attracted the notice of Europe, and every incident connected therewith, whether good or evil, would surely sooner or later be divulged. That although I entertained no doubt of the strict orders issued by the commanders in regard to the maintenance of discipline, and that humanity should not be outraged in any way, there might be instances in which such orders would be disregarded. I alluded more particularly to the treatment of Christians wounded on the field, and when made prisoners, including women and children. That the presence of Bashi-Bazouks with the army appeared to me to be all the more uncalled for, that their unfitness in legitimate warfare had been acknowledged, and the misdeeds they so often committed might reflect seriously on the conduct of the present war.”—p. 124.

Further on he refers to the tragedy which took place at the monastery of Arkadi—

“The refectory hall, with its tables and benches, was found intact; but the floor was strewn over with the mangled bodies of Christians, all stripped naked. It is said that the Bashi-Bazouks signally distinguished themselves in that particular act of butchery and plunder. Some women and children have also been massacred.”—p. 124.

Another paragraph says—

“All the strict orders and humane exhortations, issued by the Imperial Commissioner and his son, Salih Pasha, have been, in many

instances, unavailing to restrain the infuriated soldiery from acts of barbarism. In the church at Therisso, during the engagement, a priest and a woman were hacked to pieces, and there burnt; the murderers observing at the time that they were only roasting pigs."—p. 125.

He goes on to say—

"In my anxiety to save the lives of some at least of these misguided men, now that the Imperial troops are about to encounter them in their last strongholds at Kissamos and Selino, I have ventured to transgress the instructions conveyed to me by Captain Hillyar (as per my despatch of the 17th ult.), and have now addressed a letter to the commander of Her Majesty's ship *Assurance*. Your Lordship will perceive thereby that the circumstance is one of extreme urgency, and I therefore hope that my conduct may be pardoned."—p. 125.

I have now to direct your Lordships' attention to the report of Commander Pym, acting under orders of Consul Dickson, showing what horrors were prevented; but would have taken place had the instructions from the Home Government been rigidly adhered to. Commander Pym stated that—

"At the request of Her Majesty's Consul he proceeded on a cruise to the western and south-western coast of Crete, for the purpose of affording shelter to any person whose life might be endangered by the part he had taken in the civil war now raging in that island; that, on his anchoring at Selino Castelli, on the 10th inst., he was requested to take off a number of women and children and wounded men, who were living in caves and grottoes in the mountains, and whose lives would certainly be forfeited in the event of Mustapha Pasha defeating the body of insurgents now defending the mountain passes of Selino, only two hours off. Commander Pym felt so persuaded that these unfortunate persons would either perish from exposure or would be massacred by the Turks, that he consented to carry off as many as his vessel could contain, and he eventually embarked 25 men (all wounded or maimed), 160 women, and the rest children. Many more would have come if there had been room for them, and, in fact, about 1,000 more are now waiting at Suja, in the hope that the *Assurance* will go back and rescue them."

In consequence of the instructions given by Consul Dickson, and carried out by Commander Pym, we find that

between 300 and 400 persons were thus providentially rescued by the agency of that British vessel. In a few days afterwards the Government were informed by Mr. Erskine of their arrival at Athens in a state of extreme destitution.

It is worthy of remark that at that time the Turks spoke of the removal as a proceeding to which they had no objection. They entered no protest whatever against it, believing that Consul Dickson was simply acting on a principle of humanity, and knowing that instructions in that sense had been sent to him some time before by Lord Lyons. But as soon as they heard of the counter instructions from the Government at home to Lord Lyons and our Consuls, they of course began to express objections to the course that had been pursued.

On the 29th of December a second request to sanction the removal of some of these people reached the Government, this time from Lord John Hay, who was connected with a charitable fund for their relief. Addressing the noble Lord, the Foreign Secretary, he said—

“ If you could send a ship, or let one call round the coast, with, if necessary, a Turkish official on board, in order to carry off these people, the last difficulty would have been disposed of.”—p. 134.

The people referred to in that letter were about 1,000 women and children, who were anxiously awaiting the return of Her Majesty's ship *Assurance* at Selino. On the 2nd of January the Government again refused, and on the same grounds. On the 4th of January the Government again received from Lord Lyons the expression of his opinion as to the inhumanity with which the war was characterized. On the 7th of January, Consul Dickson's defence of his own conduct and account of the grounds upon which he had acted was received. That gentleman

referred to the attitude and language of the Turkish Government, and then proceeded to say—

“All the above-stated considerations, however serious they might be, had no weight on my conscience when I felt the cries of humanity were at stake. After the heartrending accounts that reached me of the tragic affair at Arkadi, and seeing, despite my remonstrances, and contrary to the wishes even of Mustapha Pasha, that a host of Bashi-Bazouks (with a strong sprinkling of Seliniotes burning with the desire to expel from their homes the Giaour intruders) was swelling the expeditionary force as it marched on to Selino; these appeared to me cogent reasons for despatching the *Assurance* on Her Majesty's service. The Imperial Government, and I trust your Lordship likewise, are sufficiently satisfied with the conduct I have observed hitherto, and even long before the insurrection broke out, to need any further protestations of loyalty on my part. For while I have always deemed it a duty to uphold the legitimate authority of the Sultan, I equally desire to see the general system in operation make way for a more enlightened Turkish Administration in Crete, conducted on Christian principles.”—p. 144.

I cannot, my Lords, offer these observations without expressing my sincere admiration of the conduct of Consul Dickson under these circumstances. His conduct did him the highest honour, and showed an amount of moral courage of which few men would have been capable. There were many men who would face any danger in war who would not have done what Consul Dickson has done. For myself, I admire the act of Consul Dickson more than I do the act of Nelson, when before the batteries of Copenhagen he refused to see the signal of recall. On the 8th of January Lord Stanley answered the letter of Consul Dickson, saying, as to the removal of the wounded men and women, and children, desirous of leaving the island—

“I had been under the impression that this operation took place with the entire sanction of the Turkish authority, but, from the enclosures in your letter, there seems some doubt in the matter. But, be that as it may, I am willing to make every allowance for the motives by which you were actuated; and, although the proceeding was perhaps in strictness open to objection as being not altogether consistent with the neu-

trality of the British Government in regard to the contest in Crete, yet, looking to all the circumstances of the case, and to the difficulty of your position, I will not disapprove your conduct.”—p. 150.

The circumstances of the case! But were not those circumstances precisely such as the Government knew Consul Dickson would certainly, or at least in all probability, be placed? It appears to me that if, under those circumstances, the conduct of Consul Dickson was held to be justifiable, acting, as he did, in direct opposition to the orders of the Government, it is a clear proof that those orders had been wrong—or at least too stringent. They ought at least to have vested in him all the discretionary power compatible with the circumstances of the case. Lord Stanley goes on to say—

“I will only further express my hope that you will carefully avoid being led into any course of action incompatible with the neutral character which it is incumbent on you to uphold.”—p. 150.

Now, considering that it was known that other women and children were hoping that they would be carried away as their companions had been, I maintain that some more definite instructions than these should have been sent to Consul Dickson with reference to them. No instruction whatever was sent to him; he was simply given a general order to maintain neutrality. This was placing Consul Dickson in a position hardly fair to a public servant; because, although he knew that the Government had at first deemed the removal of women and children a violation of neutrality, he also knew that when they came to know what he had done they declined to disapprove his conduct. He was therefore left in a most embarrassing position, with most ambiguous instructions, and the whole circumstances of his situation were trying in the extreme.

On the 14th January the Government heard from Lord Lyons certain information which proves that the English

Government was in the whole of this matter far more Turkish than the Government at Constantinople. In the last paragraph I read—

“Aali Pasha has not made any remonstrance to me against the proceeding of Her Majesty’s ship *Assurance*, and I have not been desirous of bringing on a discussion of the subject with him. I contented myself yesterday with observing that if, in fact, the insurrection was completely suppressed, the removal of dangerous characters and of destitute women and children must be a benefit to all parties.”—p. 152.

This is dated the 2nd of January, so that at that time the Turkish Government knew what Consul Dickson had done, and that the Russian Government was about to follow the example he had set; this knowledge, however, led to no remonstrance whatever, and it appears to me that if, instead of acting against the instructions of his Government, Consul Dickson had acted with them, the Turkish Government would have had quite as little ground to consider what actually occurred as a violation of neutrality!

Immediately afterwards the Government heard that the action of Her Majesty’s ship *Assurance* had very naturally drawn to the shore a number of women and children, scantily dressed, and half starved, in the hope they would be afforded protection in the same way as the others. In the mountains whence they had come they were able to secure a scanty maintenance; but on the shore they had absolutely nothing. Thus they were entrapped into a worse position than before, simply because no further instructions had been sent out to the Consul. These unfortunate women were left to their fate. On the 21st of January the Government received another petition, making the same prayer as its predecessors, and two days afterwards was made the final answer of the Government, which I will read. Lord Stanley writes—

“In reply, I have to acquaint you that, even if Her Majesty’s Government had seen reason to alter the decision which has already

been communicated to you in regard to the removing of refugees from Greece, the necessity for their doing so would now appear to be much less required, inasmuch as they learn from Lord Lyons that the Greek Minister at Constantinople has been informed by the United States Minister that all refugees who may present themselves will be received on board the ships of the American squadron, which has been ordered to Candia for that purpose."—p. 167.

Thus we have official record of the fact that those offices of common humanity which were refused by the British Government were willingly undertaken by the fleet and the Consul of the United States.

Having concluded my narrative of the facts, I now address myself to the principles which appear to me to be applicable to the events which I have related. I confess that when I read this account I was afraid that the noble Lord at the head of the Foreign Office had committed himself in some extraordinary manner to the purest abstract doctrines of non-intervention, which were at one time, I believe, erroneously attributed to him. I rejoice, however, to find that this reproach is wholly undeserved by the noble Lord. On reading the despatches I find that nothing can be more reasonable and more free than his correspondence from any abstract theory of non-intervention, which, in my opinion, is most unwise and unstatesmanlike. All such cases as these should be judged upon their own merits, and not upon any abstract doctrine. The noble Lord, I am glad to say, has been most reasonable as far as statements of principle are concerned. I find, at page 33 of the Blue Book, that the French Government wished their suggestion to the Porte, with a view to procure inquiry into the grievances of the Christians, to be endorsed by Her Majesty's Government. Upon this Lord Stanley wrote to Lord Cowley, giving an account of his reply to the French Minister here. He said—

“I was as yet scarcely in a position to judge satisfactorily of the sufficiency of the causes which had led to the insurrectionary movements in Crete, but that I thought the proposition of the French Government one which, in its nature, was not open to serious objection, while it indicated the interest taken by the protecting Powers in the well-being of the subjects of the Porte.”—p. 33.

I see no allusion there to the abstract doctrine of non-intervention. Lord Stanley did not meet the French Government by saying, “We have adopted a new policy in this country, and propose in future to have nothing whatever to do with the affairs of other nations.” That was not the line he took, and I rejoice that I can say so. But I find a remarkable despatch on page 39, in reference to a proposition made to him by Baron Brunow, the Russian Minister in London. Baron Brunow, in his remarks to Lord Stanley, uses the well-worn arguments of the Russian Government in reference to the East. He repeats the arguments used by the Russian Government in the case of the disturbances in the Christian provinces in Turkey; he lays down the principle that “the point of departure should be the engagements contracted in 1830;” and then he lays down the principle—which, as it appears to me, is just up to a certain extent—that in the face of the obligations which were contracted by the Turkish Government before Europe in 1857, the European Powers have a right, I will not say of intervention, but of interest, in all those questions which entitle them to be heard if they choose to speak. What, then, is the answer which Lord Stanley makes to this? He says—

“I agreed with him in principle as to the expediency of joint action among the three Powers in the event of necessity for such action arising.”

And, at the close of the despatch, he adds—

“It is far better that whatever is done should be done by the Porte itself, whose authority will be weakened rather than strengthened by foreign intervention. That intervention, however, will not be refused should circumstances appear imperatively to demand it.”—p. 39.

I rejoice to find in these despatches an emphatic though implied contradiction of a dogma which has been commonly laid down of late years—that England should pursue a policy of total abstention from the affairs of the East; and that our relations with Turkey are of such a nature as to place our obligations and our duty of neutrality towards her precisely in the same position as that in which we should stand to any of the more civilized Powers of Europe. Your Lordships will observe that Lord Stanley speaks of such intervention as the French and Russian Governments at one time contemplated as, under certain circumstances, justifiable—that is, if the necessity should arise. I accordingly asked myself what were the circumstances which, in the opinion of her Majesty's Government, would justify intervention with the internal affairs of Turkey; and I found an answer, with which I perfectly agree, in a despatch from Lord Stanley to Lord Lyons. The noble Lord says—

“I could not deny the possibility of such occurrences, but said that it did not seem to me possible to refuse to the Porte the right which every State possessed of putting down insurrection by armed force, provided the use of force did not degenerate into mere brutality, and that the recognized customs of-war were observed.”

This is precisely the point; I assent to every word of this passage:—but, I ask, when the despatches I have quoted clearly show that Bashi-Bazouks, Circassians, and Albanians were let loose upon the Christian population of Crete, and were proved by eye-witnesses to be in the habit of murdering the wounded, the women, and children, whether the war was conducted on principles of civilized warfare, and whether Her Majesty's Government were not fully justified—nay, even compelled, as a public duty—to interfere in such a case?

But now I come to another ground. I have pleaded the cause of those women and children upon the grounds of

humanity only; but I am also prepared to maintain that there are other grounds, and that there are other reasons, which ought to have induced Her Majesty's Government to have, at the very least, given a certain discretion to our authorities upon the spot. I cannot deny, nor do I see how it can be denied, that there is some force in the appeals which the Cretans made to the transactions of 1830. Your Lordships will probably remember that in 1830 the Cretan population had very nearly achieved their independence. They had obtained possession of the whole country, with the exception of a few fortresses, which were occupied by Turkish troops. It was at that time in the contemplation of the three Powers to have included Crete among the islands which were made free. Very much, however, against the opinion of Lord Palmerston, Lord Russell, and other statesmen of the time, it was determined that this course should not be adopted; and I fully admit that there were special circumstances connected with Crete, especially the fact that the population was to the extent of nearly a quarter composed of Mussulmans, which justified the course that was adopted. But that course was not determined upon without serious remonstrance on the part of the Cretans; and the three Powers agreed to address to the Porte a collective Note, for a copy of which I have moved to-night—a Motion which, as your Lordships are aware, is merely formal, inasmuch as the document is to be found in the Library. The Protocol of the 8th April, 1830, constituted a considerable claim on the part of the Cretan population to the protection of the European Powers.

THE EARL OF DERBY begged to remind the noble Duke of a passage in that Protocol, which he seemed to have overlooked.

THE DUKE OF ARGYLL: I am aware of the language referred to; but it is not upon those words I wish to dwell.

I am perfectly prepared to admit, what the noble Earl seems to imply by his interruption, that the main object of that Note was to secure to the Cretan population protection against the repetition of the occurrences which had recently taken place; but I think that the language of the Note goes beyond that, and holds out an expectation—for I will use no stronger term—to the people of Crete that their interest and welfare should in future be a matter of benevolent consideration to the Western Powers. I am not, however, going to dwell upon this point, because I put the duty of the Western Powers upon, as I think, a much stronger basis. I ask you to consider the connection between this question and the policy which was secured in Europe by the Treaty of Paris in 1856. It is now between eleven and twelve years since the termination of the Crimean War—eleven years and a half since the last grave was closed upon those melancholy hills where so many of our friends fought and fell. Twelve years form a very short period in a nation's life, still shorter in the history of Europe; but so many and so great have been the changes which have taken place, not only in the old world, but also in the new, during the time, that we seem to be separated from that period by a great length, and, indeed, almost an age of time. I have often tried to look back upon the contest and agitation of that time, and have endeavoured to judge of it as I think it will be judged in the light of history. I am not insensible to the strength of some of the arguments used by the noble Earl near me (Earl Grey); and by other eminent statesmen, against the Crimean War; but this I will say, that a very large proportion of these arguments are founded upon a total misapprehension as to what the objects of that war really were. I am bound to say, too, that the language of diplomacy and of diplomatists has only tended—in this case as in so many others—to hide and to obscure the truth.

I cannot but remember that the object for which we were always said to be fighting was the integrity and independence of the Turkish Empire. Now, my Lords, we all of us know—those at least of us who have any knowledge of the affairs of Europe—that the words “integrity” and “independence,” as applied to Turkey, have not the same meaning as the words would have if applied to any other country. Its integrity is not the same; its independence never can be the same; and yet many of us who were Members of that Government, forced into the war by circumstances over which we had no control, were held to be fanatics in the belief that there was such a thing possible in the world as the regeneration of Turkey. For myself I will say that I did not then believe, and I do not now believe, in the regeneration of Turkey. If the signs of decay and death were ever depicted upon a human countenance, if they were ever perceptible in any political society, their mark is now to be found upon the face of the Turkish Empire. But what had that to do with the Crimean War? Our object was not to preserve Turkey, except as a means to other things; our object was to resist the encroachments of Russia—to prevent Russia from serving herself heir by force and fraud to the rich and splendid inheritance of the East. And, in spite of the eloquence and logic of my noble friend near me (Earl Grey), I am still unpersuaded that it was a matter of indifference to Europe that by force and by fraud an empire should be established stretching from the Bosphorus to the Arctic Sea. But I never can forget, and do not now forget, that in conducting that contest, and, in concert with France, in leading it to a triumphant issue, we were at the same time running counter to the natural tendencies and natural rights of a portion of the Turkish people. It is not for nothing that by the providence of God so vast a proportion of the population of

the world shares in one common religious faith. And I, for one, admit that as in human affairs it is natural that certain sympathies should be established, it is still more natural that a general sympathy should always exist between persons who profess the same faith, and are members of the same church. And what have we done? The result of that war—right as I maintain it to have been for the purpose for which we entered upon it—has driven Russia from that protectorate of the Christian people in the East, to which, from the sympathies and the religion of the people, she was naturally entitled. And now, having now so driven back Russia, we, the Western Nations of Europe, occupy her place to a certain extent, and to a certain extent, too, are bound to fulfil her obligations. I must confess I think it is an intolerable thing that the Western Nations of Europe out of the jealousy which they bear to Russia, and perhaps out of the jealousy which they bear to each other, should deprive the Eastern Christians of their natural protectorate, and that they themselves should refuse to touch it with one of their fingers. I think it an intolerable thing that the Christians of the East should be left, under the pretext of neutrality, to be murdered by Bashi-Bazouks and Albanians. Every one of us must see that the dominion of Turkey has been maintained by our means, by our jealousies, by our advice, and by our determination that Russia should not exercise the protectorate which was natural under the circumstances of the case. Upon these grounds, and looking at the transactions which have taken place, and those in which we took part, supported as they were by all parties in this country—because, although there was a difference of opinion whether we should go to war or not, there was no difference of opinion, except on the part of a small minority, that we were bound to resist the aggressions of Russia. Under these circumstances, we are

bound to consider such claims as I have brought before you with more than mere humane feelings for the sufferings which on certain occasions are endured.

But, before I sit down, there is another point to which I feel bound to call your Lordships' attention. No doubt an impression prevails at the present day—not merely in respect of one particular Government or of one Foreign Minister—that the Foreign Office of this country has, during the past half century, been somewhat too active in its interference with foreign affairs. I feel no interest in opposing this current of public feeling, and, indeed, to some extent, I go along with it; but I could not help being amused by the serious air with which a very eminent foreign diplomatist informed me lately, that in the 500 or 600 pages of diplomatic matter which he had to go through in the course of the past year, the name of England had not occurred once. I confess I heard that statement with the greatest indifference. Where neither the interests nor the honour of England are concerned, I do not see why her opinion should be given, or her action required; but I trust that the Foreign Office will never shrink from defending to the utmost her honour and her interest where they are in any way imperilled. Let us not forget what we are going to do. We are about to bring the House of Commons into much closer relations with the great mass of the people. Ignorant and prejudiced men are in the habit of telling the people of this country that the past wars in which we have been engaged were the work of the aristocracy and of the upper classes. My Lords, there is not one of the wars, not even the most foolish or wicked, in which this country has been engaged, which has not been at the time thoroughly popular. We are about to bring the House of Commons into closer connection with the masses, whose feelings are quicker, whose sympathies are warmer, and, shall I add—

yes, I will add—and whose instincts sometimes are truer than those of the classes immediately above them. I shall be much mistaken, and I shall be much disappointed, if the change which we are about to undergo in the direction of democracy is to inaugurate a foreign policy founded upon pure selfishness. I believe, on the contrary, that you will find the masses of the people of this country quicker in both their anger and their sympathies than the class above them; and this I do say, that if you are to found the doctrine of non-intervention upon secure grounds, and to guard it against the reaction which is sure to come, you must take care that your conduct shall not represent that policy as sacrificing the rights of others, and doing violence to the consciences and to the hearts of men.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE letters comprised in the following collection were written from Bulgaria by Mr. J. A. MacGahan, the gentleman who visited that province on behalf of the *Daily News* in July and August last, and made a special inquiry into the atrocities alleged to have been committed there by agents of the Turkish Government. As they have already been not only published in the *Daily News*, but re-published more extensively than any letters ever were before by the daily and weekly press; as they have stirred the public mind to its depths, and as, further, they, together with the letters of the Constantinople correspondent of the *Daily News*, have been acknowledged by the Government, not only to have made it aware of important facts of which, until their publication, it was ignorant, but to have changed the conditions under which its diplomacy must henceforth be exercised, it will not be necessary to describe in this place their character or contents. Now, however, that, to meet a want that has been expressed, these are brought together and re-published as a whole, it may be useful to give a very brief account of the circumstances under which the special inquiry was undertaken. Such a statement, which may not be without its use to the future historian of the press, will also serve to correct some current misapprehensions.

The Bulgarian atrocities are no longer spoken of as a "lucky find" on the part of the conductors of the *Daily News*, but the praise of "extraordinary enterprise," which, when fairly awarded, they do not decline, has been occasionally conceded to them in terms which ignore the peculiar relation in which they stood to the facts transmitted from

Bulgaria in the month of June, and of which enough was known to awaken painful misgivings on the part of the British public. If a simple recital should show that it was a Correspondent of the *Daily News* who, in the ordinary discharge of his duties at Constantinople, and without leaving his post, but by giving due heed to the information which came within his reach, first made known the facts which, as subsequently verified on the spot, have electrified the country, then the visit of an independent inquirer to Bulgaria to investigate the grounds of the terrible allegations made against the Turkish Government will not seem that gratuitous undertaking which it has been sometimes represented to be. The institution of such an inquiry was a task which the conductors of the *Daily News* had not contemplated; it was imposed upon them, as will be seen, by circumstances—especially by the default of official persons—which they could not have foreseen; but when once their duty was made clear, they did not hesitate for a moment to accept it.

It was on the 23rd of June, barely six weeks before the publication of its Special Commissioner's telegrams from Tatar Bazardjik, which startled England like a peal of thunder, that the *Daily News* published a letter from its Own Correspondent resident at Constantinople, of which the following are the opening sentences:—

“Dark rumours have been whispered about Constantinople during the last month of horrible atrocities committed in Bulgaria. The local newspapers have given mysterious hints about correspondence from the interior which they have been obliged to suppress. I have hitherto refrained from mentioning these rumours, or from stating what I have heard, but they are now gradually assuming definiteness and consistency, and cruelties are being revealed which place those committed in Herzegovina and Bosnia altogether in the background.”

In the same letter the names were given of thirty-four villages that had been destroyed, of a party of Bulgarian girls burnt, and of a hundred more killed in a village school. During the next fortnight other letters of the same Corre-

spondent were published, amplifying details of the atrocities and extending their area. In the same correspondence were incorporated several columns of letters from towns and villages in Bulgaria, describing murders and the vilest outrages with a most impressive distinctness.

It may be affirmed without hesitation that no letters dealing with facts of a painful character were ever published which bore such evident marks of the scrupulous care of their author, and his anxiety in deciding between vague reports and ascertained facts. But while these letters arrested the attention of the public, and excited a desire for fuller information, in official quarters they met with a far different reception. That the statements contained in them should be encountered with a certain degree of scepticism is a fact creditable to humanity, and if it had been objected to them that they were such as could not be received without corroboration, there would have been nothing to complain of. But counter-statements were made professing to be based upon more accurate knowledge. The Turkish Government met the case boldly, and by its foreign ministers denounced the Constantinople correspondence of the *Daily News* as monstrous exaggerations. The English Government, which ought to have been in possession of authentic information from Constantinople, could only say that the reports of the *Daily News* were without official confirmation, while by a certain portion of the press the disclosures of Turkish atrocities were described as sensational and unworthy of notice.

It was in these circumstances that a further and wholly independent inquiry into the events in Bulgaria was deemed necessary, if the light which had been kindled by the Correspondent of the *Daily News* at Constantinople was not to be suffered to be extinguished. The special inquiry conducted by Mr. MacGahan, and of which the following letters are the result, was rendered necessary by the evident want of information on the part of the English Government. The first time that Sir Henry Elliot mentioned the atrocities in Bulgaria in his correspondence with the Foreign Office, appears to have been on the 19th of

June, three days after the letter of the Constantinople Correspondent above quoted, and in it he speaks of "the cruelties with which the suppression of the Bulgarian insurrection has been accompanied," and he adds, with reference to Consul Reade's report, "the accounts from other sources are still more distressing." For weeks the Turkish capital had been full of reports of these occurrences, and it seems extraordinary that an Ambassador, residing within twenty-four hours' journey of Bulgaria, should have taken no pains to inform himself respecting them.

Mr. MacGahan reached Philippopolis, the centre of the district in which the atrocities were perpetrated, on the 23d of July, and at once commenced his inquiries, in company with Mr. Eugene Schuyler, American Consul-General for Turkey. It will appear sufficiently, in the course of the following letters, how much the Special Commissioner of the *Daily News* was indebted to Mr. Schuyler for assistance in the course of his inquiry under circumstances the difficulty of which must be obvious. The inquiry was independent. It owed nothing either to the British Embassy at Constantinople or to the Turkish Government. That evident independence opened to the Commission sources of information which would have remained closed to persons suspected by the injured population. The people came forward, and showed the sad evidence of their wrongs, but they were not the only witnesses. Foreign consuls, Greek residents, Germans in the employ of the Turkish Government, and Americans occupied in the work of education in Bulgaria, besides Turks themselves, testified freely, and to one and the same effect. The result is before the world. It has been said by the principal organ of Ministerialist Conservatism, that the "enterprise of searching out and dwelling upon atrocities has itself become an atrocity of a most disgusting kind."* But Ministers themselves have not endorsed the opinion. On the 11th of August, Mr. Bourke, Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, said in the House of Commons—"He felt bound

* *Standard*, Aug. 31, 1876.

to admit that the Government really had no idea of the events which had been going on in Bulgaria, until attention was called to them in the House, and he gladly took that opportunity of saying that the Government and the country were very much indebted to the newspaper correspondents through whom these events had become known." The public has abundantly confirmed the judgment of Mr. Bourke on these letters; and it now only remains for the conductors of the *Daily News* to acknowledge, as they do with the utmost pleasure, the great service rendered by their Constantinople Correspondent as well as the courage and perseverance of Mr. MacGahan in the prosecution of his arduous task; and to express the hope that the publication of these letters may hasten the redemption of the Christian races of South-eastern Europe from the degrading tyranny by which they have so long been oppressed.

September 6, 1876.

BULGARIAN ATROCITIES:

"DAILY NEWS" SPECIAL INQUIRY.

PHILIPPOLIS, *July 28.*

I ARRIVED here three days ago on a mission of investigation. Philippopolis, it may be mentioned, is the principal town in that part of Bulgaria which was the scene of the exploits of the Bashi-Bazouks, and is therefore the best or rather the only point at which trustworthy information can be obtained respecting the atrocities now exciting so much indignation in Europe. I found that Mr. Baring had already arrived and commenced the work of investigation. Mr. Schuyler, the American Consul-General, likewise arrived, partly on a similar errand, partly to inquire into the advisability of establishing a vice-consulate, or taking other measures for the protection of a few American missionary families established throughout the country. The other consuls, I find, made reports to their respective Governments some time ago, and are now engaged in collecting further information relating to the insurrection.

It is a curious fact that while the Austrian, Greek, Russian, and French Governments all have consuls in this place, who give minute and detailed reports of everything that happens here, the English Government, which one would think equally interested in receiving prompt and correct information, should have no agent at all. There is an English consul at Adrianople, a very worthy gentleman, but his health is so shattered that he is utterly unfit for service of any kind. It is therefore scarcely astonishing that the English Government should know less of what is passing in Turkey than other Governments, and far less than well-informed newspapers.

When Lord Derby made the statement in the House of Lords

that the Government had received no information from the consuls at Scutari, Belgrade, and Galatz about the atrocities of the Bashi-Bazouks, was he indulging in fun at the expense of his noble auditors? If he had said that the Government had received no information from the consuls at St. Petersburg, Berlin, and Vienna respecting the Dublin riots, he would not have made a more irrelevant statement. As far as the difficulty of communication is concerned, and the time required for the transmission of a letter, Galatz and Belgrade are further away from Philippopolis and the scene of the atrocities attributed to the Bashi-Bazouks than Vienna or St. Petersburg are from Dublin. The consuls in Belgrade and Galatz know absolutely no more of what is passing here than do the consuls in Bordeaux or Lyons. It is therefore to be fairly presumed that until Mr. Baring was sent out, the Government had absolutely no means of obtaining news, except through the papers, and that they will have obtained no direct information until Mr. Baring shall have made his report.

As before stated, I also came with the mission of investigating and making a report. I think I came in a fair and impartial frame of mind. I had determined to see for myself wherever it was possible; to make inquiries, to weigh and compare statements, to carefully sift evidence and get at the plain unvarnished truth, and not allow my mind to be influenced by unsupported assertions on either side. I had looked at the question first from the Christian and then from the Turkish point of view. I had heard the violent assertions of the one party, and the soft-worded apologies of the other, with equal coolness and impartiality, and had especially made a large allowance for the "gross exaggerations of the Christians." I had, in truth, listened to both sides with such equal impartiality that I had grown somewhat sceptical, a state of mind, I take it, peculiarly adapted to the spirit of scientific inquiry. I had besides resolved to keep up this frame of mind to the end. It is generally easy enough to bear the ills of other people, and to be calm and judicial where others' woes are concerned. I am now obliged to confess that I had miscalculated the circumstances.

I have scarcely more than begun the investigation, and the frame of mind I had resolved to maintain at any hazard has already passed away. I fear I am no longer impartial, and I certainly am no longer cool. There are certain things that

cannot be investigated in a judicial frame of mind. There are facts which when perceived send the blood through the veins with an angry rush, and cause the muscles to contract in sudden anger. There are things too horrible to allow anything like calm inquiry; things, the vileness of which the eye refuses to look upon, and which the mind refuses to contemplate. There are facts which repel and revolt; facts which, when you go about among them, fly in your face. Such is the nature of the facts I came to investigate. I have already investigated enough to feel convinced that, except from a purely statistical point of view, further investigation would be unnecessary. Mr. Baring and Mr. Schuyler will probably give us enough statistics, and I shall be ready to accept their figures. The atrocities admitted on all hands by those friendly to the Turks, and by the Turks themselves, are enough, and more than enough. I do not care to go on heaping up the mournful count. When you are met in the outset of your investigation with the admission that 60 or 70 villages have been burned, that some 15,000 people have been slaughtered, of whom a large part were women and children, you begin to feel that it is useless to go any further. When, in addition to this, you have the horrid details of the vilest outrages committed upon women; the hacking to pieces of helpless children and spitting them upon bayonets; and when you have these details repeated you by the hundred, not by Bulgarians, but by the different consuls at Philippopolis and the German officials on the railway, as well as Greeks, Armenians, priests, missionaries, and even Turks themselves, you begin to feel that any further investigation is superfluous.

Mr. Baring, I am informed, will report that in the districts about Philippopolis and Tatar Bazardjik alone there have been about fifty villages burnt, without counting those that have been only pillaged, and that nearly 15,000 people have been slaughtered. This is the lowest estimate, and it does not include the districts about Sofia and those north of the Balkan. The French and Russian Consuls and the railway officials give much higher figures, and would put the number of villages burned at over a hundred, and the killed at 25,000 to 40,000. There are people who put the number of killed at 100,000. For my own part, once the enormous number of 15,000 killed in four days is admitted, I do not care to inquire further. The French Consul and the German railway officials may be right

or they may be wrong. Fifteen thousand is enough ; for no mere increase in a statement of round numbers can add to the horror of the thing. It is only in the recital of the details accompanying the butchery that the mind can grasp and understand the fearful atrocity of the business. The Greek Consul, who is not friendly to the Bulgarians, tells me of 12,000 wretched women and children marched into Tatar Bazardjik, nearly all of whom suffered the vilest outrages. He tells me of Bulgarian fathers who killed their wives and children in order to put them out of reach of the ferocity of the Bashi-Bazouks. The German officials tell me of the bodies of men cut up and flung to the dogs in villages near their own railway stations ; of little children of both sexes maltreated and brutalised until they died ; of a priest, whose wife and children were outraged and slaughtered before his eyes, and who was then put to death, after the most fearful torture, the details of which are too abominable to be re-told. I have the story of a young and beautiful girl, who having found means to obtain the rudiments of an education, opened a school in her native village, and tried to do something for the education of the poor people about her, who is now lying in prison here sick and broken-hearted, whose story is too sad for recital. The French Consul tells me of Bashi-Bazouks relating to circles of admiring listeners how they cut off the heads of little children, and how the dismembered trunks would leap and roll about like those of chickens ; and I shut my ears and say, "This is enough ; I do not want to hear any more ; I do not care to investigate any further." It does not matter to me that a few more or less have been committed. You cannot increase or diminish the horror of the thing by mere statements of round numbers. I shall leave the statistics to Mr. Schuyler and Mr. Baring, and shall be quite willing to accept their estimates.

It has been said that these acts were committed by irregular troops, over whom the Government had no control, for whom the Turkish authorities were in no way responsible, and that the latter would, on the contrary, have been very glad to restrain them. Unfortunately, there are many facts connected with the business which show that this view of the case is altogether erroneous. Had the Government really been in earnest in making these protestations, it would have seized some of the principal leaders of the Bashi-Bazouks, some of

those who had particularly distinguished themselves by their ferocity, and punished them summarily. Chefket Pacha, for instance, who burned the village of Bazardjik, and slaughtered nearly all of its inhabitants under more than usually revolting circumstances, should have been one of the first to feel the strong arm of the law. But having done all this, he has been promoted to a high position in the Palace of the Sultan at Constantinople. Again, there is the case of Achmet Aga, a captain of a company of Bashi-Bazouks, who likewise distinguished himself by his ferocity. He wished to burn Philipopolis, and was only withheld from doing so by the energetic action of the governor, who has since been removed, and who threatened to attack him with the regular troops. It was he who slaughtered 8,000 people at Batak, and burned 200 women and children alive in the school. He is a low ignorant brute, who can neither read nor write, and yet he has been promoted to the rank of Pacha, and with that exquisite mockery of European demands for justice, for which the Oriental is so distinguished, he has been named a member of the commission appointed to prosecute and punish the Bashi-Bazouks. The reason is clear and simple. These men carried out the wishes and intentions of the Government, if not the positive orders. They did their duty, and have been rewarded.

But it has been said that the Bulgarians set the example of committing atrocities, and even Lord Derby, upon the authority of Sir Henry Elliot, made the statement before the House that both sides had been equally guilty in this respect. It might be interesting to learn where Sir Henry Elliot obtained his information. As I have already explained, the English Government had no agent here capable of sending information until the arrival of Mr. Baring. He could not have obtained it from other Governments, for the reason that the various consuls here, with all of whom I have talked, never reported any atrocities on the part of the Bulgarians to their respective Governments. He could not have obtained it from the Turkish Government, for the reason that even the Turkish authorities here do not claim more than 500 Turks killed altogether, of whom the greater part, they admit, were killed in battle, with arms in their hands; and further, because while they claim some thirty women killed, they have not so far given Mr. Schuyler proof that a single woman or child was killed or outraged. Kiani Pacha told him

that the Mudir of the village of Avrat-alan had been killed with his wife and daughter. Mr. Schuyler found, upon inquiry, that the wife of the Mudir was absent in a different part of the country when the fight occurred, and that the report of her death was therefore untrue; while as to the daughter, he learned that the Mudir never had a daughter. But supposing that proof may yet be forthcoming of thirty Turkish women killed—as they may have been in the street fighting—it is very evident that at the time Lord Derby spoke, he had no proof of such a fact, nor the slightest reason for the sweeping assertion that the Bulgarians had shown themselves equal in barbarity to the Turks. The only inference is that he made a perfectly reckless statement, in support of which he had not the slightest particle of evidence; and this at the moment when Mr. Disraeli was accusing well-informed newspapers, that had taken pains to obtain correct information, of giving credence to exaggerated and unfounded rumours.

It is said that the Bulgarians had no business to rise, that they made an insurrection which was put down with a strong hand, and that they must take the consequences. The best answer to this is the manifesto published by the new Government, after the deposition of the late Sultan, in which it was shown that the misrule and oppression of the late Government had passed the limit of endurance. The extortions and mismanagement of the Government had produced such a degree of misery among the peasantry, that without a change their existence was no longer possible. This, indeed, was the reason for the revolution at Constantinople. And yet Midhat Pacha and his associates are still hanging and imprisoning these poor people for doing what they have shown the Bulgarians were perfectly justified in doing, and for what they themselves have done—revolting against the Sultan. The truth is, that no other people in the world but these Bulgarians would stand for a day the exactions, extortions, oppression, and tyranny to which they have been subjected for centuries. If it were attempted to introduce into England the system of taxation in use here, the people would rise as one man against the Government. Why, then, should we so blame these poor Bulgarians for doing that which we all would do under like circumstances; why sympathise with the strong against the weak, when the weak are so evidently in the right?

Mr. Baring went to Batak to-day, and has not yet returned. Mr. Schuyler goes to-morrow, and takes me with him.

PESTERA, August 1.

The task which has been set Mr. Baring and Mr. Schuyler is not an enviable one. They have both gone to work in the most earnest manner, and are visiting all the principal towns and villages that were burnt by the Bashi-Bazouks, in order to see with their own eyes the ruin that has been worked, and to hear with their own ears the stories of the villagers. This necessitates travelling from five to fifteen hours a day over roads the best of which are nearly impassable for carriages, beneath a burning sun, rendered almost insupportable by the close sultry atmosphere of August. Mr. Baring has already been ill twice, owing to over-exertion, hard work, and the overpowering heat; and even Mr. Schuyler, inured to the fatigue of this kind of work by his long journey through Turkestan, seemed to find it as much as he could stand.

But the hard work and the heat, and the wearisome round of investigation, of questions repeated over and over again, of listening to the same sort of stories told a hundred times over, of sifting and comparing evidence, would be nothing, and might be easily borne. It is the heart-rending cries of despair that shake you, the crowds of weeping women and children that meet and follow us everywhere—women and children, poor trembling creatures, who are homeless and starving—widows and orphans who are weeping for husbands and fathers slain, and who have not a roof to shelter them, nor bread for the morrow. It is this that makes the task that has been set Mr. Baring and Mr. Schuyler one which they will hardly care to ever undertake again.

We have just passed through the village of Raddovo on our way here, where we stop for the night before continuing to-morrow to Batak. Raddovo was apparently a very flourishing little place, and, to tell the truth, it has suffered less, perhaps, than the majority of the towns that were left to the tender care of the Bashi-Bazouks. It was a village of 160 houses, of which not one is left standing, and the inhabitants are now living under sheds of straw, constructed in nooks and corners of the black and crumbling walls. They gathered around us when we

stopped in the middle of the once flourishing place, and timidly told us their story. They had offered no resistance at all to the Bashi-Bazouks, but simply ran away when they heard the Turks were coming. Having received timely notice, they had nearly all escaped, and only twenty-two men had been killed in all. The women and children had all been saved. Of the twenty-two killed, eight had been arrested after the inhabitants returned to the village, and were brutally slaughtered in cold blood while being taken to Philippopolis to prison. We had heard that eight bodies were found one day on the road near Philippopolis long after the affair was over, and had been told by the Turks that these were bodies of people killed during the insurrection, which had been transported there by some unknown means. When the people returned to their smoking homes, they found themselves completely ruined. There was not a stick of furniture nor a cooking utensil left, and all their cattle, sheep, and horses had been driven off. Their harvests were still standing in the fields, and they are unable to gather and save them without their cattle, which the Turks refuse to restore. Each family had on an average two pairs of oxen, making about 320 pairs in the whole village. Of these only thirty-three pairs were returned, which are utterly inadequate for gathering and saving the harvest. They besides will have to rebuild their houses, and for this purpose it will be necessary to draw wood a long distance from the mountains, and it will be impossible for them to do this before winter. Unless the poor people can get back their cattle, gather their harvests, and rebuild their houses, they will be in a state of destitution by next winter fearful to think of. The Turkish authorities have informed Mr. Schuyler everywhere that the cattle were being restored to the burnt villages, and that help would be given the people to rebuild their houses, and everywhere the people tell him that the cattle are not restored, and that no help of any kind is given them. I am convinced that not the slightest reliance can be placed in the promises of the Turkish authorities, and that they have no intention of fulfilling their promises when they make them. They are simply made to throw dust in the eyes of Europe, for although they have not patriotism enough to know or care whether they themselves ruin the country or not, they have a very lively fear of a European intervention, and are ready to promise anything to avert it. As for the execution of these

promises they know that can be avoided. As though in very contempt for the promises and assurances given to Mr. Baring and Mr. Schuyler, they are everywhere sending out at this moment, and demanding the payment of taxes in the burnt and ruined villages, just as though nothing had happened. On this village of Raddovo, for instance, a tax of four hundred pounds has been levied, which it is utterly impossible for the poor people to pay. The pretext for the burning of this village was the killing of two zaptiehs, or rural policemen, here. The inhabitants flatly deny that any zaptieh was killed in or about the village, or that they ever raised a hand against the Turks. As in other villages where Turks have been killed, the people always confess it, I believe that here they tell the truth, and that there was no other cause for the attack than the desire for plunder on the part of the Turks. This is also, I believe, Mr. Schuyler's opinion. We walked through the village, which presented a sad spectacle of ruin.

Many of the people seemed to have returned, each family, to the blackened walls of their former homes, where they had constructed in the corner of the walls a sort of shelter with the aid of a few poles and a little straw. Some had a coverlet or two, others straw to sleep on, and many seemed to sleep on the bare ground. I saw one sick woman groaning with pain, lying with only a thin coverlet between her and the damp ground, while a little girl sat beside her and continually bathed her head with cold water. In some places the chimneys were still standing, and here were some cooking their meals, though God knows they had little enough to cook. Taking leave of the village, we continued our road to Pestera, where we had decided to pass the night, and after an hour's drive over a very bad road, and an upset in which one of our party narrowly escaped being killed, we arrived at the village. We were shown to the house of a Bulgarian, who offered us his hospitality, and in half an hour we received the visit of the Mudir of the village, accompanied by two officials from Tatar Bazardjik. After the interchange of various compliments, it turned out that one of these officials had been sent by the Kaimakam of Tatar Bazardjik to accompany us to Batak. To this Mr. Schuyler decidedly objected, and a long discussion ensued, at the end of which he informed them in the most peremptory manner that he would allow no official to accompany him, and this ended the matter. The

Bulgarian was delighted to entertain us and gave us an excellent supper, to which we did ample justice, but I cannot say so much for the sleeping accommodations he offered us. We all occupied the same room, and slept on divans extended around the walls, which were anything but downy; but the hospitality shown us was so hearty and cordial that we scarcely thought of beds.

The poor people were only too glad to receive our party of five, and to offer us the best they had, for they looked to us, strangers as we were, for encouragement and protection against their Mussulman rulers. As soon as the Mudir went away, what appeared to be the whole population of the town seemed to flock into the court-yard of our house, anxious to shake hands with us, or to tell us their tales of woe. The people who had these stories to tell us we soon found were not the people of the place, but of Batak, the town to which we were bound on the morrow, who had come here to beg a little assistance from their more lucky neighbours, and who now flocked around us with their complaints. They were mostly women who had lost their husbands, and in many cases their children, whose houses had been burnt, and who, from a condition of ease and independence, had been reduced to starvation and widowhood. They were of all ages, from eighteen up to eighty; young mothers with children in their arms and two or three hanging to their skirts; middle-aged women who had grown-up sons and daughters that had fallen under the sharp edge of the sword; old grandmothers with children and grandchildren all swept away at one fell swoop. They all told their stories with sobs and tears, beating their heads and wringing their hands in despair. And they were starving and houseless. We could not relieve their misery. We could only listen to their stories with saddened faces, and tell them to hope for better times, and promise to do something for them, if possible, when we should return to Constantinople. Vain hopes, and, I fear, vainer promises.

TATAR BAZARDJIK, *August 2.*

Since my letter of yesterday I have supped full of horrors. Nothing has yet been said of the Turks that I do not now believe; nothing could be said of them that I should not think probable and likely. There is, it would seem, a point in atrocity beyond which discrimination is impossible, when mere com-

parison, calculation, measurement, are out of the question, and this point the Turks have already passed. You can follow them no further. The way is blocked up by mountains of hideous facts, beyond which you cannot see and do not care to go. You feel that it is superfluous to continue measuring these mountains and deciding whether they be a few feet higher or lower, and you do not care to go seeking for molehills among them. You feel that it is time to turn back ; that you have seen enough.

But let me tell what we saw at Batak:—We had some difficulty in getting away from Pestera. The authorities were offended because Mr. Schuyler refused to take any Turkish official with him, and they ordered the inhabitants to tell us there were no horses, for we had here to leave our carriages and take to the saddle. But the people were so anxious we should go, that they furnished horses in spite of the prohibition, only bringing them first without saddles, by way of showing how reluctantly they did it. We asked them if they could not bring us some saddles also, and this they did with much alacrity, and some chuckling at the way in which the Mudir's orders were walked over. Finally we mounted and got off. We had been besieged all the morning by the same people who had blockaded us the night before, or who appeared to be the same, their stories were so much alike.

We could do nothing but listen in pity to a few of them—for it would have taken all day to hear each separate tale of misery and suffering—and gave vague promises that we would do all in our power to relieve their misery upon our return to Constantinople. But diplomatic help is, alas ! very slow. While ambassadors are exchanging notes and compliments, inviting each other to dinner, making representations to the Porte, and obtaining promises which nobody believes in, these poor people are starving and dying. Many of them decided to seize this opportunity and accompany us to Batak, to visit their ruined homes, and others caught our bridle reins, determined to make us listen to their stories before we should start. One woman caught my horse, and held it until she could show me where a bullet had traversed her arm, completely disabling her from work, and this was only the least of her woes. Husband killed, and little children depending on that broken arm for bread ; all of this told in a language so much like Russian that I could understand a great deal of it ; so like Russian that I could

easily have fancied myself amongst peasants of the Volga, or the denizens of the Gostinoidvor, Moscow. The resemblance is striking, and it is no wonder the Russians sympathise with these people.

You observe the same sort of family likeness about the eyes, that may be always seen among brothers and sisters who are utterly unlike each other in features—tricks of countenance, movements of the hands, tones of the voice, even to that curious, uncertain expression of the face, which often in the Russian peasant makes it almost impossible to tell whether he is laughing or crying. A Russian, a Bulgarian, a Servian, a Montenegrin, and a Tchek may meet and talk, each in his own language, and all understand each other. You might as well expect the English north of the Thames not to sympathise with those south of it, in case the latter were under the domination of the Turks, as to try to prevent these Slavonic races from helping each other, while groaning under a foreign despotism.

Batak is situated about thirty miles south of Tatar Bazardjik as the crow flies, high up in the spur of the Balkans that here sweeps around to the south from the main range. The road was only a steep mountain path that in places might have tried the agility of a goat. There was a better one, as we learned upon our return, but, with that perversity which distinguishes the Oriental mind, our guide took this one instead. We formed a curious but a somewhat lugubrious procession as we wound up the steep mountain side. First there were our two zaptiehs in their picturesque costumes, bristling with knives and pistols, our guide likewise armed to the teeth, then the five persons who composed our party, mounted on mules and horses decked out with nondescript saddles and trappings, followed by a procession of fifty or sixty women and children who had resolved to accompany us to Batak. Many of the women carried a small child, and a heavy burthen besides, comprising the provisions, clothing, cooking utensils, or harvesting implements, they had begged or borrowed in Pestera. Even children—little girls of nine and ten years—were trudging wearily up the steep mountain side under burthens too heavy for them; and they would be five or six hours in reaching their destination.

After three hours' climbing by paths so steep that we were obliged to dismount and walk half the time without then seeming quite safe from rolling down into some abyss, mounting

higher and higher until we seemed to have got among the clouds, we at last emerged from a thick wood into a delightful little valley that spread out a rich carpet of verdure before our eyes. A little stream came murmuring down through it, upon which there was built a miniature saw-mill. It appears that the people in Batak did a considerable trade in timber, which they worked up from the forests on the surrounding mountains, for we afterwards observed a great number of these little mills, and were even told there were over two hundred in and about the village.

The mill-wheels are silent now. This little valley, with its rich grassy slopes, ought to have been covered with herds of sheep and cattle. Not one was to be seen. The pretty little place was as lonely as a graveyard, or as though no living thing had trod its rich greensward for years. We ascended the slope to the right, and when we reached the top of the ridge which separated it from the next valley, we had a beautiful panorama spread out before us. The mountains here seemed to extend around in a circle, enclosing a tract of country some eight or ten miles in diameter, considerably lower down, which was cut up by a great number of deep hollows and ravines that traversed it in every direction, and seemed to cross and cut off each other without the slightest appearance of anything like reference to a watershed. It looked more like an enlarged photograph of the mountains of the moon than anything else I could think of.

Down in the bottom of one of these hollows we could make out a village, which our guide informed us it would still take us an hour and a half to reach, although it really seemed to be very near. This was the village of Batak, which we were in search of. The hillsides were covered with little fields of wheat and rye, that were golden with ripeness. But although the harvest was ripe, and over ripe, although in many places the well-filled ears had broken down the fast-decaying straw that could no longer hold them aloft, and were now lying flat, there was no sign of reapers trying to save them. The fields were as deserted as the little valley, and the harvest was rotting in the soil. In an hour we had neared the village.

As we approached our attention was directed to some dogs on a slope overlooking the town. We turned aside from the road, and, passing over the débris of two or three walls, and through several gardens, urged our horses up the ascent towards the

dogs. They barked at us in an angry manner, and then ran off into the adjoining fields. I observed nothing peculiar as we mounted, until my horse stumbled. When looking down I perceived he had stepped on a human skull partly hid among the grass. It was quite dry and hard, and might, to all appearances, have been there for two or three years, so well had the dogs done their work. A few steps further there was another, and beside it part of a skeleton, likewise white and dry. As we ascended, bones, skeletons, and skulls became more frequent, but here they had not been picked so clean, for there were fragments of half-dry, half-putrid flesh still clinging to them. At last we came to a kind of little plateau or shelf on the hillside, where the ground was nearly level, with the exception of a little indentation where the head of a hollow broke through. We rode towards this, with the intention of crossing it, but all suddenly drew rein with an exclamation of horror, for right before us, almost beneath our horses' feet, was a sight that made us shudder. It was a heap of skulls, intermingled with bones from all parts of the human body, skeletons, nearly entire, rotting, clothing, human hair, and putrid flesh lying there in one foul heap, around which the grass was growing luxuriantly. It emitted a sickening odour, like that of a dead horse, and it was here the dogs had been seeking a hasty repast when our untimely approach interrupted them.

In the midst of this heap I could distinguish one slight skeleton form still enclosed in a chemise, the skull wrapped about with a coloured handkerchief, and the bony ankles encased in the embroidered footless stockings worn by the Bulgarian girls. We looked about us. The ground was strewed with bones in every direction, where the dogs had carried them off to gnaw them at their leisure. At the distance of a hundred yards beneath us lay the town. As seen from our stand-point, it reminded one somewhat of the ruins of Herculaneum or Pompeii.

There was not a roof left, not a whole wall standing; all was a mass of ruins, from which arose, as we listened, a low plaintive wail, like the "keening" of the Irish over their dead, that filled the little valley and gave it voice. We had the explanation of this curious sound when we afterwards descended into the village. We looked again at the heap of skulls and skeletons before us, and we observed that they were all small, and that

the articles of clothing, intermingled with them and lying about, were all parts of women's apparel. These, then, were all women and girls. From my saddle I counted about a hundred skulls, not including those that were hidden beneath the others in the ghastly heap, nor those that were scattered far and wide through the fields. The skulls were nearly all separated from the rest of the bones, the skeletons were nearly all headless. These women had all been beheaded. We descended into the town. Within the shattered walls of the first house we came to was a woman sitting on a heap of rubbish, rocking herself to and fro, wailing a kind of monotonous chant, half sung, half sobbed, that was not without a wild discordant melody. In her lap she held a babe, and another child sat beside her patiently and silently, and looked at us as we passed with wondering eyes. She paid no attention to us; but we bent our ear to hear what she was saying, and our interpreter said it was as follows:— "My home, my home, my poor home, my sweet home; my husband, my husband, my poor husband, my dear husband; my home, my sweet home," and so on, repeating the same words over and over again a thousand times. In the next house were two, engaged in the same way; one old, the other young, repeating words nearly identical, "I had a home, and now I have none; I had a husband, and now I am a widow; I had a son, and now I have none; I had five children, and now I have one," while rocking themselves to and fro, beating their heads and wringing their hands. These were women who had escaped from the massacre, and had only just returned for the first time, having taken advantage of our visit or that of Mr. Baring to do so. They might have returned long ago, but their terror was so great that they had not dared, without the presence and protection of a foreigner, and now they would go on for hours in this way, "keening" this kind of funeral dirge over their ruined homes. This was the explanation of the curious sound we had heard when up on the hill. As we advanced there were more and more; some sitting on the heaps of stones that covered the floors of their houses; others walking up and down before their doors, wringing their hands and repeating the same despairing wail. There were few tears in this universal mourning. It was dry, hard, and despairing. The fountain of tears had been dried up weeks before, but the tide of sorrow and misery was as great as ever, and had to find vent without their aid. As we proceeded

most of them fell into line behind us, and they finally formed a procession of four or five hundred people, mostly women and children, who followed us about wherever we went with their mournful cries. Such a sound as their united voices sent up to heaven I hope never to hear again.

It may be well, before going further, to say something about Batak, so that the reader may form a better idea of what took place here. It was a place of nine hundred houses, and about 8,000 or 9,000 inhabitants. As there are no census statistics, nor, indeed, trustworthy statistics of any other kind in Turkey, it is impossible to tell exactly what the population of any place is or was. But the ordinary rule of calculating five persons to the house will not hold good in Bulgaria. The Bulgarians, like the Russian peasantry, adhere to the old patriarchal method, and fathers and married sons, with their children and children's children, live under the same roof until the grandfather dies. As each son in his turn gets married, a new room is added to the old building, until with the new generation there will often be twenty or thirty people living under the same roof, all paying obedience and respect to the head of the family. In estimating the population, therefore, by the number of houses, somewhere between eight and ten souls must be counted as the average. Edip Effendi, in his report, states that there were only about 1,400 inhabitants in the village, all told. A more impudent falsehood was never uttered, even by a Turk. Mr. Schuyler has obtained their tax-list for this year, and finds that there were 1,421 able-bodied men assessed to pay the military exemption tax. This number in any European country would indicate a population of about 15,000, but here it would not give more than from 8,000 to 10,000 souls, all told, and this is the figure at which the population of the place is estimated by the inhabitants, as well as by the people of Pestera.

I think people in England and Europe generally have a very imperfect idea of what these Bulgarians are. I have always heard them spoken of as mere savages, who were in reality not much more civilized than the American Indians; and I confess that I myself was not far from entertaining the same opinion not very long ago. I was astonished, as I believe most of my readers will be, to learn that there is scarcely a Bulgarian village without its school; that these schools are, where they

have not been burnt by the Turks, in a very flourishing condition; that they are supported by a voluntary tax levied by the Bulgarians on themselves, not only without being forced to do it by the Government, but in spite of all sorts of obstacles thrown in their way by the perversity of the Turkish authorities; that the instruction given in these schools is gratuitous, and that all profit alike by it, poor as well as rich; that there is scarcely a Bulgarian child that cannot read and write; and, finally, that the percentage of people who can read and write is as great in Bulgaria as in England and France. Do the people who speak of the Bulgarians as savages happen to be aware of these facts? Again, I had thought that the burning of a Bulgarian village meant the burning of a few mud huts that were in reality of little value, and that could be easily rebuilt. I was very much astonished to find that the majority of these villages are in reality well-built towns, with solid stone houses, and that there are in all of them a comparatively large number of people who have attained to something like comfort, and that some of the villages might stand a not very unfavourable comparison with an English or French village. The truth is that these Bulgarians, instead of the savages we have taken them for, are in reality a hardworking, industrious, honest, civilized, and peaceful people. Now, as regards the insurrection, there was a weak attempt at an insurrection in three or four villages, but none whatever in Batak, and it does not appear that a single Turk was killed here.

The Turkish authorities do not even pretend that there was any Turk killed here, or that the inhabitants offered any resistance whatever. When Achmet-Agha, who commanded the massacre, came with the Bashi-Bazouks and demanded the surrender of their arms, they at first refused, but offered to deliver them to the regular troops or to the Kaimakam at Tatar Bazardjik. This, however, Achmet-Agha refused to allow, and insisted upon their arms being delivered to him and his Bashi-Bazouks. After considerable hesitation and parleying this was done. It must not be supposed that these were arms that the inhabitants had especially prepared for an insurrection. They were simply the arms that everybody, Christians and Turks alike, carried and wore openly, as is the custom here. What followed the delivery of the arms will best be understood by the continuation of the recital of what we saw yesterday.

At the point where we descended into the principal street of the place, the people who had gathered around us pointed to a heap of ashes by the roadside, among which could be distinguished a great number of calcined bones. Here a heap of dead bodies had been burnt, and it would seem that the Turks had been making some futile and misdirected attempts at cremation.

A little further on we came to an object that filled us with pity and horror. It was the skeleton of a young girl not more than fifteen, lying by the roadside, and partly covered with the débris of a fallen wall. It was still clothed in a chemise; the ankles were enclosed in footless stockings; but the little feet, from which the shoes had been taken, were naked, and owing to the fact that the flesh had dried instead of decomposing, were nearly perfect. There was a large gash in the skull, to which a mass of rich brown hair nearly a yard long still clung, trailing in the dust. It is to be remarked that all the skeletons of women found here were dressed in a chemise only, and this poor child had evidently been stripped to her chemise, partly in the search for money and jewels, partly out of mere brutality, then outraged, and afterwards killed. We have talked with many women who had passed through all parts of the ordeal but the last, and the procedure seems to have been as follows: They would seize a woman, strip her carefully to her chemise, laying aside articles of clothing that were valuable, with any ornaments and jewels she might have about her. Then as many of them as cared would violate her, and the last man would kill her or not as the humour took him.

At the next house a man stopped us to show where a blind little brother had been burnt alive, and the spot where he had found his calcined bones, and the rough, hard-visaged man sat down and sobbed like a child. The foolish fellow did not seem to understand that the poor blind boy was better off now, and that he ought really to have thanked the Turks instead of crying about it.

On the other side of the way were the skeletons of two children lying side by side, partly covered with stones, and with frightful sabre cuts in their little skulls. The number of children killed in these massacres is something enormous. They were often spitted on bayonets, and we have several stories from eye-witnesses who saw little babes carried about the streets, both

here and at Otluk-kui, on the point of bayonets. The reason is simple. When a Mahometan has killed a certain number of infidels, he is sure of Paradise, no matter what his sins may be. Mahomet probably intended that only armed men should count, but the ordinary Mussulman takes the precept in broader acceptation, and counts women and children as well. Here in Batak the Bashi-Bazouks, in order to swell the count, ripped open pregnant women, and killed the unborn infants. As we approached the middle of the town, bones, skeletons, and skulls became more numerous. There was not a house beneath the ruins of which we did not perceive human remains, and the street besides was strewn with them. Before many of the doorways women were walking up and down wailing their funeral chant. One of them caught me by the arm and led me inside of the walls, and there in one corner, half covered with stones and mortar, were the remains of another young girl, with her long hair flowing wildly about among the stones and dust. And the mother fairly shrieked with agony, and beat her head madly against the wall. I could only turn round and walk out sick at heart, leaving her alone with her skeleton. A few steps further on sat a woman on a doorstep, rocking herself to and fro, and uttering moans heartrending beyond anything I could have imagined. Her head was buried in her hands, while her fingers were unconsciously twisting and tearing her hair as she gazed into her lap, where lay three little skulls with the hair still clinging to them. How did the mother come to be saved, while the children were slaughtered? Who knows? Perhaps she was away from the village when the massacre occurred. Perhaps she had escaped with a babe in her arms, leaving these to be saved by the father; or perhaps, most fearful, most pitiful of all, she had been so terror-stricken that she had abandoned the three poor little ones to their fate and saved her own life by flight. If this be so, no wonder she is tearing her hair in that terribly unconscious way as she gazes at the three little heads lying in her lap.

And now we begin to approach the church and the schoolhouse. The ground is covered here with skeletons, to which are clinging articles of clothing and bits of putrid flesh; the air is heavy with a faint sickening odour, that grows stronger as we advance. It is beginning to be horrible. The school is on one side of the road, the church on the other. The schoolhouse, to

judge by the walls that are in part standing, was a fine large building, capable of accommodating two or three hundred children. Beneath the stones and rubbish that cover the floor to the height of several feet, are the bones and ashes of 200 women and children burnt alive between those four walls. Just beside the schoolhouse is a broad shallow pit. Here were buried a hundred bodies two weeks after the massacre. But the dogs uncovered them in part. The water flowed in, and now it lies there a horrid cesspool, with human remains floating about or lying half exposed in the mud. Near by, on the banks of the little stream that runs through the village, is a sawmill. The wheel-pit beneath is full of dead bodies floating in the water. The banks of this stream were at one time literally covered with corpses of men and women, young girls and children, that lay there festering in the sun, and eaten by dogs. But the pitiful sky rained down a torrent upon them, and the little stream swelled and rose up and carried the bodies away, and strewed them far down its grassy banks, through its narrow gorges and dark defiles beneath the thick underbrush and the shady woods as far as Pestera, and even Tatar Bazardjik, forty miles distant. We entered the churchyard, but the odour here became so bad that it was almost impossible to proceed. We took a handful of tobacco, and held it to our noses while we continued our investigations.

The church was not a very large one, and it was surrounded by a low stone wall, enclosing a small churchyard about fifty yards wide by seventy-five long. At first we perceive nothing in particular, and the stench is so great that we scarcely care to look about us, but we see that the place is heaped up with stones and rubbish to the height of five or six feet above the level of the street, and upon inspection we discover that what appeared to be a mass of stones and rubbish is in reality an immense heap of human bodies covered over with a thin layer of stones. The whole of the little churchyard is heaped up with them to the depth of three or four feet, and it is from here that the fearful odour comes. Some weeks after the massacre, orders were sent to bury the dead. But the stench at that time had become so deadly that it was impossible to execute the order, or even to remain in the neighbourhood of the village. The men sent to perform the work contented themselves with burying a few bodies, throwing a little earth over others as

they lay, and here in the churchyard they had tried to cover this immense heap of festering humanity by throwing in stones and rubbish over the walls, without daring to enter. They had only partially succeeded. The dogs had been at work there since, and now could be seen projecting from this monster grave, heads, arms, legs, feet, and hands, in horrid confusion. We were told there were three thousand people lying here in this little churchyard alone, and we could well believe it. It was a fearful sight—a sight to haunt one through life. There were little curly heads there in that festering mass, crushed down by heavy stones; little feet not as long as your finger on which the flesh was dried hard, by the ardent heat before it had time to decompose; little baby hands stretched out as if for help; babes that had died wondering at the bright gleam of sabres and the red hands of the fierce-eyed men who wielded them; children who had died shrinking with fright and terror; young girls who had died weeping and sobbing and begging for mercy; mothers who died trying to shield their little ones with their own weak bodies, all lying there together, festering in one horrid mass. They are silent enough now. There are no tears nor cries, no weeping, no shrieks of terror, nor prayers for mercy. The harvests are rotting in the fields, and the reapers are rotting here in the churchyard.

We looked into the church which had been blackened by the burning of the woodwork, but not destroyed, nor even much injured. It was a low building with a low roof, supported by heavy irregular arches, that as we looked in seemed scarcely high enough for a tall man to stand under. What we saw there was too frightful for more than a hasty glance. An immense number of bodies had been partly burnt there and the charred and blackened remains, that seemed to fill it half way up to the low dark arches and make them lower and darker still, were lying in a state of putrefaction too frightful to look upon. I had never imagined anything so horrible. We all turned away sick and faint, and staggered out of the fearful pest house glad to get into the street again. We walked about the place and saw the same things repeated over and over a hundred times. Skeletons of men with the clothing and flesh still hanging to and rotting together; skulls of women, with the hair dragging in the dust, bones of children and of infants everywhere. Here they show us a house where twenty people were

burned alive ; there another where a dozen girls had taken refuge, and been slaughtered to the last one, as their bones amply testified. Everywhere horrors upon horrors.

There were no dogs in the place, as they had all been driven away when the inhabitants began to return, and only hung around the outskirts of the village ; but I saw one or two cats, fat and sleek, that sat complacently upon the walls and watched us with sleepy eyes. It may be asked why the people who are in the village now do not bury these skeletons and these bones, instead of allowing them to be gnawed by the dogs and cats. Some of those who have been able to identify the bones of friends have made weak attempts at burying them. But they have no spades to dig graves with, and they are weak and starving. Besides, many of the survivors are women, who have made fruitless efforts to keep the bodies of loved ones covered with a little earth. We had ample proof that wherever bones could be identified, they were tenderly cared for. We saw many well-kept graves decorated with flowers. We saw others that had been uncovered by the rain or the dogs, leaving parts of the skeleton exposed, that were still decorated with flowers. We even saw skulls lying on the ground, within a doorway or a garden wall, with a bouquet of flowers lying upon them, as though some one was caring for them, and was yet loth to bury them away out of sight. I saw one half buried, with the face upward, and its hollow eyes gazing reproachfully up at the sunny sky, with a bouquet carefully placed in its mouth ; but most of these skeletons and bones have nobody to look after them. Of the eight or nine thousand people who made up the population of the place, there are only twelve or fifteen hundred left, and they have neither tools to dig graves with nor strength to use spades if they had them. But why have the Turkish authorities not buried them out of sight? The Turkish authorities will tell you they have buried them, and that there were very few to bury.

Of all the cruel, brutal, ferocious things the Turks ever did, the massacre of Batak is among the worst ! Of all the mad, foolish things they ever did, leaving these bodies to lie here rotting for three months unburied is probably the maddest and most foolish ! But this village was in an isolated, out-of-the-way place, difficult of access, and they never thought Europeans would go poking their noses here, so they cynically said,

"These Christians are not even worth burial, let the dogs eat them."

We talked to many of the people, but we had not the heart to listen to many of their stories in detail, and we restricted ourselves to simply asking them the number lost in each family. No other method would probably give a better idea of the fearful character of the massacre, and the way in which whole families were swept out of existence. "How many were in your family?" we would ask. "Ten," the answer would be, perhaps. "How many remain?" "Two." "How many in yours?" "Eight." "How many remain?" "Three." "How many in yours?" "Fifteen." "How many remain?" "Five." And so on in families numbering from five to twenty, in which only remained from one to five persons. One old woman came to us, wringing her hands, and crying in that hard tearless manner of which I have already spoken, and when we could get her sufficiently calmed to tell us her story, she said she had three tall handsome sons, Ghiorghy, Ivantchu, and Stoyan, and they were all married to good and dutiful wives, Reika, Stoyanka, and Anka, and they had between them twelve beautiful children, Anghel and Tragan and Ghiorghy and Ivantchu, Letko, Assen, Boydan, Stoyan, Tonka, Gingka, Marika, and Reika, so that the family counted, all told, nineteen persons living under the same roof. Of all this large flourishing family, the tall handsome sons, the dutiful wives, and the twelve beautiful children, there remained only this poor old grandmother. They were all brutally slaughtered to the last one. Of this flourishing family tree there remained only this lifeless withered trunk, and the poor old woman sat down and beat her head, and fairly screamed out her despair. There was an old man who told us of his uncle, Blagoi Christostoff, a venerable patriarch of the grand old type. He had five sons married, who had among them twenty-seven children, thus making a family that with the wives counted up a sum total of thirty-nine persons living under the same roof. Of this enormous family there are only eight left.

We might have gone on for hours listening to these stories had we but time. There was another family of twenty-five, of whom seven were left; one of twenty, of whom eight were left; numbers of them of ten to fifteen, of whom one to five were left; and we heard besides of many families that had been completely annihilated, not one remaining. The people who committed

this wholesale slaughter were not Circassians, as has been supposed, but the Turks of the neighbouring villages, led by the Achmet-Agha already spoken of. The village of Batak was comparatively rich and prosperous ; it had excited the envy and jealousy of its Turkish neighbours, and the opportunities of plunder offered a temptation to the Turks which, combined with their religious fanaticism and the pretext of an insurrection in another part of the country, was more than they could resist. The man Achmet-Agha, who commanded the slaughter, has not been punished, and will not be, but, on the contrary, he has been promoted to the rank of Yuz-bashi, and decorated.

We are told that any number of children and young girls had been carried off ; that it was known in what Turkish villages they were kept, and that the Turks simply refused to restore them to their parents. Mr. Schuyler afterwards obtained a list, with the names and ages of eighty-seven girls and boys that had been carried off with the name of the village in which each was kept.

As to the present condition of the people who are here, it is simply fearful to think of. The Turkish authorities have built a few wooden sheds in the outskirts of the village in which they sleep, but they have nothing to live upon but what they can beg or borrow from their neighbours. And in addition to this the Turkish authorities, with that cool cynicism and utter disregard of European demands for which they are so distinguished, have ordered these people to pay their regular taxes and war contributions just as though nothing had happened. Ask the Porte about this at Constantinople, and it will be denied, with the most plausible protestations and the most reassuring promises that everything will be done to help the sufferers. But everywhere the people of the burnt villages come to Mr. Schuyler with the same story—that unless they pay their taxes and war contributions they are threatened with expulsion from the nooks and corners of the crumbling walls where they have found a temporary shelter. It is simply impossible for them to pay, and what will be the result of these demands it is not easy to foretell. But the Government needs money badly, and must have it. Each village must make up its ordinary quota of taxes, and the living must pay for the dead.

We asked about the skulls and bones we had seen up on the

hill upon first arriving in the village where the dogs had barked at us. These, we were told, were the bones of about 200 young girls, who had first been captured and particularly reserved for a worse fate than death. They had been kept till the last; they had been in the hands of their captors for several days—for the burning and the pillaging had not all been accomplished in a single day—and during this time they had suffered all it was possible that poor weak trembling girls could suffer at the hands of brutal savages. Then, when the town had been pillaged and burnt, when all their friends had been slaughtered, these poor young things, whose very wrongs should have insured them safety, whose very outrages should have insured them protection, were taken, in the broad light of day, beneath the smiling canopy of heaven, coolly beheaded, then thrown in a heap there, and left to rot.

Mr. Disraeli was right when he wittily remarked that the Turks usually terminated their connection with people who fell into their hands in a more expeditious manner than by imprisoning them. And so they do. Mr. Disraeli was right. At the time he made that very witty remark, these young girls had been lying there many days.

PHILIPPOLIS, *August 10.*

I had not been here a day when I heard of a personage whom the Turks jeeringly spoke of as the "Queen of the Bulgarians." This Queen, it appeared, was in prison, and was, I was given to understand, a very contemptible sort of person indeed. I learned that she had headed the insurrection, had been crowned Queen, had promenaded the streets of her native village on horseback, bearing a flag like another Jeanne d'Arc, besides committing a variety of other follies which seemed to form the subject of much merriment among the Turks here. Naturally I conceived a great desire to make the acquaintance of this fallen Queen, and see what sort of person it was who aspired to be the leader of a new Slavonic Empire. I had no difficulty in accomplishing this, as Mr. Schuyler had no sooner heard of her than he demanded and obtained permission to see her, and kindly allowed me to accompany him. She was confined in the house of an Imam, or priest, with another Bulgarian woman from the same village, and these were the only two

women we found in prison upon our arrival here. We were conducted to the Imam's house by Dr. Vlados, a Greek physician, who has been charged with the task of looking after the health of the prisoners. After a long walk through the crooked, narrow, stony streets, we brought up before a low, rickety building, partly of wood, partly of rough unhewn stones, and found ourselves before a pair of low, double wooden doors opening outwards into the street. The doctor knocked, and after a prolonged colloquy with a voice inside, the door was opened about half an inch, and we caught sight of a harsh-looking, partly-veiled female face, that seemed to be regarding us with some suspicion. Apparently, this preliminary survey was satisfactory, for the door was thrown open a little wider, and a slight girlish figure stepped forward and stood in the doorway, followed by an elderly matron, tall and stalwart almost as a man, who stood behind and gazed at us over the girl's head with tearful eyes.

I was at first inclined to think it was the tall woman who must be the Queen, as she more nearly filled my ideas of what an Amazon should be, and I was surprised to learn that it was not she but the young girl who had been playing at "Kings and Queens" with such disastrous effect to herself. A slight, graceful form, only too plainly seen through her scanty, miserable clothing, large hazel eyes, an oval face, slightly browned by the sun, straight nose, and a veritable little rosebud of a mouth. She was thin and weak, and seemed scarcely able to stand, and the young girlish face wore a dejected, broken-hearted look that was sad to see. A handkerchief was thrown over her head, and she wore a coarse brown linsey-woolsey jacket, and a short petticoat of the same material that scarcely reached below her knees, exposing a white delicate foot. She had no shoes and stockings, and this costume she afterwards told me was not her own, but was given her after she had been stripped of her own clothing. She told us her story in a few words, from which it appeared she had taken some part in the insurrection indirectly, but that the report of her having been crowned Queen of the Bulgarians was a pure fiction. The name "Queen of the Bulgarians" had been given her by the Turks in mockery, coupled with the vilest epithets and insults that a cowardly brutal soldiery could think of. She had been in prison two months, and during all this time had been given

nothing to eat but bread and water. It was no wonder she looked weak and ill. As she was evidently too weak to stand talking there long, Mr. Schuyler told her he would try to have her set at liberty as soon as possible, and then we took our leave.

This visit of Mr. Schuyler's and the interest he showed in her, resulted in her being released next day on bail, to be definitely set at liberty a few days later. I paid her a visit the day after in the khan or caravansary where she with her companion had found a temporary shelter, and obtained her story in detail. As it is intimately connected with these Bulgarian massacres, and will at the same time give an idea of the condition of the Bulgarian people, I may as well give it in full, as she gave it to me. Her name is "Raika," and she is the daughter of a priest in the village of Otluk-kui, or Panagurishti, about twenty miles from Tatar-Bazardjik. At the age of twelve she had been already remarked for her intelligence and beauty, and a kind of village literary club, which exists in the place, decided to send her to school and educate her. For this purpose a subscription was set afoot, and the requisite funds were soon raised. They decided to send her to Eski-Zara, where the American missionaries had established a school for girls, which they afterwards turned over to the Bulgarians, by whom it is now conducted.

It may not be amiss to remark here that the American and English missionaries have done an immense deal of good in Bulgaria by establishing schools throughout the country, educating teachers, and showing the Bulgarians how to organise and establish schools for themselves. In this they have succeeded so well that there is scarcely a village in Bulgaria without its school. Raika remained at this school four years, and acquired seemingly a very fair education; better, perhaps, than many an English girl gets in a better school. She had a particular fondness for needlework, and she acquired so much skill in all sorts of curious and tasteful embroidery that she became famous throughout all the country. When she returned to her native place, after four years' study in a boarding-school, she was looked upon as a veritable marvel by all the people around her. It was particularly the wonders she worked with her needle that astonished and pleased them, and this, with her wonderful education and her sweetness of character, made them begin to

look up to her as a being of a superior order. She was now sixteen, and there was a career already marked out for her—that of a teacher; and she entered upon it gladly. The schools in Otluk-kui, or Panagurishti, as it is called by the Bulgarians, were at that time in a very flourishing condition. Since hearing Raika's story I have been there, and I took pains to inquire into the matter. There were three schools in the place—one for girls and two for boys; and, to judge by the ruins which I saw, they were fine large buildings that no village of the same size, even in the civilised part of Europe, need have been ashamed of. There were six teachers in all—three male and three female; and the number of children that attended the schools was 680, of whom 500 were boys, and 180 girls. The teachers were well paid—better, I think, everything considered, than they are in England, France, and Germany. The three male teachers and Raika received each sixty pounds a year, a sum which, in this country, where living is cheap, where no great expenditure is required in the way of dress, and in a mountain village far away from railways and telegraphs, was really a very comfortable income. For a young girl like Raika especially, who had her home, it was a great deal of money. She applied half of it, however, to paying back to the literary society the money spent on her education. She soon became the head mistress of the girls' school, and as she was the only one of the teachers who was a native of the village, she was a great favourite of the people.

It should be remembered that the schools in Bulgaria are supported by a kind of tax which the Bulgarians voluntarily levy upon themselves; and the flourishing condition of the schools in one little place like this, and the way in which they were supported, will enable us to form an idea of what they are all over the country, and of the efforts these poor people are making to rise from the grovelling condition in which they have been held for so long. Raika's position as schoolmistress in a place like Panagurishti was by no means an unenviable one. A schoolmistress in a place like this is a different sort of personage, it should be remembered, from a schoolmistress in London. With her cleverness, her education, her good looks, the esteem and respect in which she was held by everybody, her position was a very pleasant one, and she was in reality a sort of village queen. I asked some of the people there if she had no sweet-

heart all this time, and what had become of him. They said there seemed to be nobody who aspired to her hand, for the reason that she was so far superior to the young men of the place, that they did not dare to hope for such a prize as she would have been. Poor girl; not one of the young men who then thought her so far above them would marry her now. Things went on pleasantly enough until the breaking out of the insurrection in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Raika was eighteen, she had been a teacher for two years, and had nearly paid her debt. Then there were signs of approaching trouble. Fresh upon the news of the war in Herzegovina came the tax-gatherer with demands for the year's taxes and those of the previous year, which had been remitted owing to the failure of the crops. Many were unable to meet these unlooked-for demands. Their property was instantly seized and sold at any price it would bring. The cattle, the agricultural implements of the peasants, were seized and sold without the slightest regard to future consequences. Some were even thrown into prison, when nobody offered to buy the poor effects that were offered for sale. Naturally these acts resulted in a great deal of misery and dissatisfaction.

The taxes upon the agricultural population are heavy enough, often amounting, as they do, to twenty and thirty per cent., according to the tax farmer's capacity for extortion, without being suddenly doubled at a moment's notice. Hard upon this followed the demand for the taxes of 1876 in advance, which resulted in still more forced sales, extortions, quarrels with the tax-collectors, misery, and discontent. The young men of the place began to hold secret meetings and to talk of throwing off the yoke of the Turks, and asserting their independence, like their brothers of Bosnia, Herzegovina, Montenegro, and Servia. I may as well state here that it was in this place that the insurrection, if such a puny outbreak as occurred here may be dignified by that name, broke out. There was, it seems, an Insurrectional Committee at Bucharest, composed of young Bulgarians, in the schools or in business there. They were natives of the villages in this part of the country, and not Russians, as stated by the Turks as well as our diplomatists, who see a Russian in every bush. "The insurrection was fomented from without," in the sense only that these young Bulgarians had their head-quarters at Bucharest, and there does not seem

to be the slightest evidence to show that there were any Russians or Servians in this part of the country, as is stated by the Turks, and believed by Sir Henry Elliot.

It does not appear that Raika had anything to do with fomenting the insurrection. She says that the first positive knowledge she had of anything brewing was in the spring, about Easter time. She was summoned one day to the house where the school committee were in the habit of meeting. She went, supposing it was for some business relating to the school, but was greatly surprised to find, not the school committee, but a number of young men of the village, who were listening to a fiery speech by a man named Bankovsky, urging them to revolt. We have not been able to find out who this Bankovsky was, nor what has become of him. It is supposed that he was killed near Sophia, but this is by no means certain. We have only been able to ascertain that his real name was not Bankovsky, and that he was a Bulgarian. I believe that many of the people know who he was and where he was from, but that they pretend to know little about him in order not to be forced to tell what they do know, and compromise his friends. Raika describes him as a tall, handsome man, with a blonde moustache, blue eyes, and a very fiery, eloquent manner of speaking. His words so worked upon them that they decided unanimously to rise as soon as Servia should declare war, which eventuality was looked upon as certain. They immediately commenced taking measures for carrying this resolution into effect, and it appeared that one of the first things they needed was a flag.

With a flag everything was possible, and this was why the young school-mistress had been summoned to the council. Her skill with the needle was famed throughout the country far and wide, and they had fixed upon her to embroider the standard of rebellion. Understanding the danger, she at first refused, and tried to dissuade them from their project, but they were resolved upon their line of action, and insisted upon her embroidering the flag for them. Urged partly by threats, partly by persuasion, and perhaps in the generous hope that the revolt might after all be successful, she finally consented; and it is sad to think that her skill in needlework, that most womanly of accomplishments, should have been the cause of so fearful a misfortune to her. In order to not compromise her

father and mother, however, she decided to do the work in the house of one of the insurgents. A vain precaution. It did not prevent her father from being slaughtered, with hundreds of others, in the church where he was officiating. We have seen the flag as it fell into the hands of the Turks, and is now used in evidence on the trials that are going on here. The poor rag, bespattered and torn, was prettily worked with a naïve design showing a huge yellow lion, with his paw on a crescent, with which he seemed greatly displeased, and the inscription, "Liberty or death," in Bulgarian.

By the first of May, the day fixed upon for the rising to take place, the banner was ready. But Servia had not declared war, and they had received almost certain information that they were betrayed to the Turkish authorities. They determined to go on, as they considered it now too late either to abandon the attempt or to postpone it. So having taken their arms, they formed in a body and marched to the church, sent for two priests, one of whom was Raika's father, declared their intention of rising, and asked them to bless the undertaking. This the priests did. Although several priests were killed at the time of the massacres, and several more hanged afterwards, it does not appear that any priest took a more active part in the insurrection than that of giving his blessing in one or two instances to the insurgents. Having obtained the blessing of the Church, the insurgents next called for Raika, and informed her that as she had made the flag she must carry it through the village at the head of a procession. She refused; but they seized her, put her upon a horse, put the flag in her hand, and marched through the streets shouting and singing in the most approved French manner. Having thus declared war, they proceeded to act. There was no *Mudir*, or Turkish governor, in the village at this time, so they had matters all to themselves, and nobody to interfere with them. They immediately proceeded to fortify the place, and they do not seem to have had any other plan for the insurrection than that of waiting quietly in the village, and defending it against all comers.

This seems to have been the plan adopted in the three or four villages where a rising really took place; and a more foolish one could hardly have been imagined. Instead of young men in each village forming themselves into flying bands, and traversing the country in every direction, destroying the railways,

cutting the telegraphs, surprising small posts of Turkish soldiers, and avoiding contact with large bodies of troops, each of these villages having thrown off the Turkish authority in the manner above described, adopted the mad plan of defending itself separately and singly against the regular troops. This, together with the fact that the rising only occurred in three or four places, and not simultaneously in these, would seem to indicate that the members of the Bucharest Committee were very raw hands at organizing an insurrection, and that their organization was very imperfect, if indeed there were anything like organization at all. They seem to have persuaded these three or four villages to rise, hoping that the rest of the country would follow the example, and that there would be a general insurrection as a matter of course. But the rest of the population, without leaders and without organization, remained inactive, and allowed themselves to be quietly slaughtered. There is little doubt, in my mind, that if the rising had been general, properly organized and provided with leaders, the Turks would have been obliged to abandon the whole country north of the Balkans, and withdraw to Adrianople. They would never have been able to fight Servia and Montenegro, and at the same time to keep up their communications through a hostile country that was up in arms against them. This is, in my mind, the best evidence that there was no organized insurrection throughout the country; for if there had been, it would have succeeded.

All the people of Panagurishti seem to have finally engaged in the revolt, for Raika informed me that even the women had gone out and worked on the fortifications, so great was the enthusiasm, and that they worked at them nine or ten days. I afterwards had occasion to inspect those amateur fortifications when I went there with Mr. Schuyler. They consisted simply of slight embankments thrown up across two of the roads leading to the village on hills between one and two miles away. The ditch was about a foot or eighteen inches deep, and five or six feet wide, and the embankment, or loose earth, three or four feet high, and not more than four or five feet wide at the bottom, would not have stopped a three-pound shell. It would have afforded convenient cover for pickets or a skirmish line, but was utterly useless for anything else. It would have been equally useless had it been a well-constructed fort; for the village was so accessible from all sides, that infantry would not

be obliged to advance by the road, and the works would be turned.

The ten days during which they were throwing up this puny earthwork did not pass without some incidents. In the first place, two tax-collectors, who approached the place, were ordered to deliver up their arms, and upon their refusal to do so were fired upon and killed. These tax-collectors were not, properly speaking, officers of the Government, but rather agents of the tax farmer, who had excited the hatred of the people by their extortions. Shortly afterwards seven more Turks, who approached the village, were ordered to surrender, and did so at once. These were two zaptiehs, two tax-collectors, one clerk, and two pomaks or Mohammedan Bulgarians. They were all lodged in a Bulgarian house and well treated, except one of the zaptiehs or mounted police of the country, who had committed such acts of cruelty and barbarity that they decided he had merited death, and therefore sentenced and shot him. A day or two later some people in a closed carriage, approaching along the road towards the fortifications, were hailed and likewise ordered to surrender, and upon their attempting to escape were fired upon. The carriage was captured, and it was found there were two men and three women in it. The two men and one of the women had been killed by the fire; one of the remaining women seized a sabre and struck at one of the insurgents, whereupon she was killed. The other woman was captured and sent into the village, and well treated until the arrival of the Turks, when she was set at liberty. As far as we have been able to learn up to the present, those two women are the only ones that have been killed by the insurgents, and one of them, as I have just related, was shot accidentally. The Turkish authorities in Philippopolis state that there were twelve killed in all; but they have been unable to give Mr. Schuyler either the names of these women, or the names of the villages in which they were said to have been killed, and he therefore will not accept the statement until he finds further proof.

Kiani Pacha, who was sent here to inquire into the atrocities committed by the Bashi-Bazouks, told Mr. Schuyler, with the coolest assurance, that the wife and daughter of the Mudir of Avrat-alan had been killed. Mr. Schuyler found, upon investigation, that the wife of the Mudir had not been killed, and that he never had a daughter. It was said that the wife of the

Mudir here in Otluk-kui had likewise been killed. As I have already stated, there was no Mudir in this village at the time of the outbreak, and his wife could not therefore have been killed. Of the twelve cases of Turkish women killed, we have therefore investigated five, and found that three of them were without the slightest foundation. As we cannot learn the names of the villages where the seven other women were killed, we cannot investigate, and we therefore take the liberty of doubting. The story told by Edib Effendi, of a Turkish girl who was killed and then mutilated in so disgusting a manner, is a pure fiction. We have not been able to discover the least trace of it. Nobody, Turk or Christian, in Tatar-Bazardjik, near where it is said to have occurred, ever heard of it; nor did the different Consuls in Philippopolis, who received daily reports of every thing that was going on throughout the whole district from the beginning of the troubles, ever hear of it until they saw the report of Edib Effendi. The truth is that the story is an impudent falsehood, invented by Edib Effendi, which has not even the semblance of probability. This state of things continued in Panagurishti, or Otluk-kui, for nine or ten days, during which time nine Turks and two Turkish women were killed. All of these but the two women and the one zaptieh were killed with arms in their hands. Altogether during this time some twenty prisoners were taken, and these were well treated and cared for until the Turkish army came on and released them. It should be remembered that I am not giving the story of one person alone in making these statements, for since my conversation with the schoolmistress we have been to Panagurishti, have compared her story with the accounts received from other people, and find it corroborated in every particular. To tell the truth, it scarcely needed corroboration, for the Turks themselves, neither here nor at Philippopolis, do not claim more killed than the number above stated.

The rising occurred on the 2nd of May. On the 12th Hafiz Pacha arrived before the place with a regiment of regular troops, two or three pieces of artillery, and a great number of Bashi-Bazouks. It would seem that the insurgents only had about 250 men armed with muskets or rifles. The rest had only knives or pistols, such as before these troubles were worn by everybody. One hundred and fifty of the best armed men had gone out on one road towards Tatar-Bazardjik, to dispute the

way, and 100 on the other road, for it seems they did not send spies out to see by which way the army would come. When Hafiz Pacha arrived he found only 100 men to oppose him, and these, frightened at the great superiority of the force brought against them, ran away at the first fire. It does not even appear that they fired off their guns, for there was not a single Turk killed or wounded. The inhabitants, panic-stricken, had in the meantime attempted to fly, but the town had already been surrounded, and they were either driven back or cut down in the fields. I had forgotten to state that at the approach of the Bashi-Bazouks the inhabitants of eight or nine neighbouring villages, fear-stricken, had abandoned their homes and taken refuge here, to the number of five or six thousand, and they now filled the streets, crying and screaming with fright. As all resistance had now ceased, or rather, as none had really been offered, Hafiz Pacha had nothing to do but march into the town, arrest the leaders of the insurrection, and restore order. Instead of this, however, he brought up his artillery, and, without summoning the place to surrender, commenced a bombardment, ruthlessly throwing the bursting shells into these crowds of shrieking women and children. Until midnight the din of the bombardment resounded through the streets. Then the loud-mouthed dogs of war ceased their clamour; they had done their work; it was now the turn of the sabre.

During the night and the next morning the troops and the Bashi-Bazouks entered the place, and then began a scene of pillage, violence, and massacre, only equalled by that of Batak. Neither age nor sex was spared. The town was pillaged, then fired; about one-fourth of the houses were burnt, people were cut down in the streets, on their own doorsteps, on their own hearthstones. Old men and women begging for mercy, and children and infants screaming in terror, perished alike beneath the swift and certain sabre. It is thought that 3,000 people were killed in this place alone, of whom about 400 were inhabitants of the town, and the rest from the neighbouring villages who had taken refuge here. But we were not greeted here with the scenes of horror that awaited us at Batak. Hafiz Pacha, unlike Achmet Aga, had sense enough to have the bodies buried within the following three days, and thus to cover up his tracks.

It has been repeated again and again that these acts were

perpetrated by the Bashi-Bazouks only, and not by the regular troops; and a great deal is made of the statement as showing the massacres were committed without the consent of the authorities. If the statement were worth anything, the converse ought to be true—that if the massacres were committed by the regular troops then the authorities are responsible. Now, as it happens, wherever there were any regular troops to commit massacres, they rivalled the Bashi-Bazouks in atrocity. Here, as Mr. Schuyler will show in his report, regular and irregular troops were equally cruel, pitiless, and ferocious, and Hafiz Pacha is no less guilty than Achmet Aga. The reason is simple. They are all Turks alike, and there is nothing to choose between them. These massacres were committed by the order of the authorities, and that is why the men who committed them have been rewarded with decorations and promotions.

When we were in Panagurishti we were shown in the ruins of the church, before the place where the altar had stood, a black spot specked with calcined bones, on which lay a bouquet of flowers. This was the remains of a priest, Theodor Peoff, 85 years of age, who had been seized and tortured in the hopes of obtaining money, mutilated and maltreated in ways which only the foul imagination of a Turk could invent, then killed, and burnt here before the altar. In another place we were shown a black spot where an old blind man, Dondje Stregleyoff, was beaten half to death, and then thrown senseless on a heap of wood and burnt alive.

There was an old man here, Zwatko Boyadjieff by name, a public benefactor, a liberal contributor to the school fund, who in winter supported half the widows and orphans of the place, who was renowned for his charities to Christian and Turk alike. He was likewise seized, tortured, and maltreated. His eyes were put out, and, after undergoing the most fearful torments, he was thrown on a heap of wood fainting or dead, the people do not know which, and burnt. They seized the priest Nestor, and cut off his fingers one by one to extort money, and as the poor man had none to give them they continued by cutting off his hands, and finally his head. We were shown in the yard of a neat little cottage, embowered in trees, a grave, beside which a woman was kneeling as we passed. It was the grave of a young man of eighteen, who had just returned home from school when the troubles began, after an absence of two years,

and who had taken no part in the outbreak. They had seized him, and in mere sport cut off his hands one by one in the presence of his mother, then killed him.

What made these acts more terrible was, that many of them were committed in the presence of the weeping relatives—wife, mother, brothers, sisters of the victims. And they were repeated by the hundred. It would take a volume to tell all the stories that were related to us. But it was not only old and young men who suffered; women, young girls, children, infants, were ruthlessly slaughtered. These Turks have no pity, no compassion, no bowels. They have not even the pity of wild beasts. Even the tiger will not slay the young of its own species. But these Turks, these strong bearded men, picked infants up out of their cradles with their bayonets, tossed them in the air, caught them again, and flung them at the heads of the shrieking mothers. They carried little babes about the streets on the points of their bayonets, with the poor little heads and arms drooping around the barrels of their guns, and the blood streaming down over their hands. They cut off the heads of children, and compelled other children to carry the still bleeding heads about in their arms.

I would have the reader remember that I am relating facts that have been coldly and concisely noted down in my presence by Mr. Schuyler; facts that will appear in his report; facts that were told him by people who wept and moaned and wrung their hands, and fairly tore their hair at the bare remembrance of the scenes they were relating.

Hundreds of women came to us recounting what they had seen and what they had suffered. Not a woman in the place seemed to have escaped outrage. They all confessed it openly. In other places where these things occurred, the women have shown a hesitation to speak. In some cases they denied they had been outraged, and we afterwards learned they confessed to others that they had been. At Avrat-Alan a deputation of ladies called upon Mr. Schuyler to make their complaints, and he was somewhat astonished to find they had very little to say. Upon going away, however, they left him a letter, signed by them all, saying that scarcely a woman in the place had escaped outrage. They could not bring themselves to tell him *viva voce*; but thinking that as he was investigating here in an official capacity he ought to know, they had decided to write to

him. Here, however, they did not hesitate to speak out. Outrages were committed so publicly, so generally, that they feel it would be useless to try to hide their shame, and they avow it openly. These acts were committed not only in the houses, but in the streets, in the yards, in the courts, for the Turks have not even the decency which may accompany vice. They have not even the modesty of vileness; they have not even the shame of nature. Mothers were outraged in the presence of their daughters; young girls in the presence of their mothers, of their sisters and brothers. One woman told us, wringing her hands and crying, that she and her daughter, a girl of fifteen, had been violated in the same room, another that she was violated in the presence of her children. A girl of eighteen avowed, shuddering and bowing her face in her hands, that she had been outraged by ten soldiers. A woman, who came to us on crutches with a bullet still in her ankle, said she had been violated by three soldiers while lying wounded on the ground groaning in agony. Young, delicate, fragile little creatures, ten and twelve years old, were treated in the same brutal manner. A woman told us that her daughter, a tender, delicate little thing of twelve, had been seized and outraged by a *Bashi-Bazouk*, although she had offered all the money she had in the world—although she offered herself—if he would spare the child. Another told us of a poor little thing of ten violated in her presence, with a number of other girls. Still another told us how a dozen young girls, twelve or fifteen years old, had taken refuge in her house, hoping to escape detection; how they had been discovered; how two of them had been outraged, and killed, because they had resisted, and how the others then submitted to their fate, white, shivering, their teeth chattering with fright.

And yet Sir Henry Elliot and Mr. Disraeli will keep prating to us about exaggeration, forsooth! The crimes that were committed here are beyond the reach of exaggeration. There were stories related to us that are maddening in their atrocity, that cause the heart to swell in a burst of impotent rage that can only find vent in pitying, useless tears. We were told of a young girl of sixteen, outraged by three or four *Bashi-Bazouks* in the presence of her father, who was old and blind. Suddenly she saw one of them preparing in mere sport to kill the poor old man, and she sprang forward with a shriek, threw her arms around his neck,

weeping, and trying to shield him with her own delicate body. It was all in vain; the bullet sped on its course, and the father and daughter—the sweet young girl and the blind old man—fell dead in each other's arms. I should, perhaps, beg pardon of my readers for dwelling on these harrowing details. But I am not writing for children and young girls, but for men and women; and everywhere here I see the Turks looking upon the English as their friends and allies, counting upon us for help against their enemies, looking to us for aid and comfort, and believing—most exasperating thing of all—that they have our approval in everything they do.

If I tell what I have seen and heard it is because I want the people of England to understand what these Turks are, and if we are to go on bolstering up this tottering despotism; if we are to go on carrying this loathsome vice-stricken leper about on our shoulders, let us do it with open eyes and a knowledge of the facts; let us see the hideous thing we are carrying. Mr. Schuyler obtained ample evidence of other crimes too foul to be even named. I believe that Mr. Baring has obtained no information on this point, and does not believe in it. I scarcely wonder at this. There are crimes that repel investigation, that avoid the light; that, like those vile creeping loathsome things found under carrion or in the lowest depths of sewers, cling to the dark holes and corners and escape inspection. Mr. Schuyler has explored these dark depths to the bottom with the coolness of a surgeon probing a foul and festering ulcer. But I do not think he will be able to state the facts in his report. They are without the pale of the English language, and for my part I shall not again refer to them.

And the "Queen of the Bulgarians," the young school-mistress, what became of her? Alas! her fate was only that of hundreds of others. I could not ask her to relate all the story of her misfortunes. It was too plainly written in the pale, dejected, though still gentle and sympathetic face. But we saw a woman in Otluk-kui who was present when she fell into the hands of three or four Bashi-Bazouks. Yes, this educated, intelligent, sensitive young girl was seized and outraged, in the presence of half-a-dozen of her comrades and neighbours, by three or four brutes who still pollute the earth with their vile existence. Exaggerated, Sir Henry, indeed! And if your own daughter had been treated in the same way, would you still go on prating

about exaggeration? But this was not enough. Her father was shot down in his own house, and she and her mother dug his grave in their garden and buried him; and still the poor girl had not suffered enough. The Turkish authorities heard that she had embroidered the flag, and two weeks after the insurrection was completely crushed they ordered her arrest. A Mudir had been sent to the village in the meantime, and he seized and took her to his house at ten o'clock at night, with the woman at whose house the flag had been worked—the tall, stalwart woman of whom I have spoken in the beginning of this letter. She told us what occurred in the Mudir's house that night. The poor girl, in spite of tears and prayers, that might have moved a tiger to pity, was stripped naked, beaten, spat upon, and again outraged. It was then that she was nick-named "Queen of the Bulgarians," and the next day she and another woman, who had been likewise maltreated in even a more horrible way, were sent to Tatar-Bazardjik. Here she was surrounded by the Turkish population, hooted, jeered, pelted with mud, spat upon, and insulted with the foulest epithets that a Turkish mob could find. It mattered not that she was one poor weeping girl all alone among a crowd of enemies—fiends rather than men. There is no pity in the breasts of these savages. Then, fainting, insensible, she was thrown into a cart and sent off to Philippopolis, thrown into prison there, and kept on bread and water until the arrival of Mr. Schuyler. Then she was set at liberty, ill, shattered in health, and broken-hearted.

We saw this same Mudir of Otluk-kui when we were there. Mr. Baring spoke of him as the most filthy brute he ever saw. The very night Mr. Baring was there, the Mudir, as if in very contempt for his presence in the place, sent for two young married women, whose husbands had been killed in the massacre, to come to his house. They refused. The next night, when Mr. Schuyler was there, he again sent for them, and they again refused; but they came to Mr. Schuyler next day in despair, saying they felt sure that as soon as we left the village he would send his zaptiehs for them. When Mr. Schuyler spoke to the Governor of Philippopolis about this Mudir, he simply replied that he knew he was a bad man, but he had no better man to put in his place. This man will not be punished, nor will Achmet Aga, the destroyer of Batak, nor another Achmet Aga,

equally infamous, who destroyed Perustitza ; nor Tossum Bey, who burnt Klissura ; nor Chefket Pacha, who, beaten as a general in Bosnia and Herzegovina, wreaked his vengeance on the unresisting people of Bazardjik, where his generalship had full scope. These men have, on the contrary, been rewarded, decorated, and promoted. And we can do nothing ; I am sure nothing will be done. Diplomacy is impotent. If Sir Henry Elliot remains in Constantinople he will make a few mild representations to the Porte, which the latter will receive with the best possible grace, and—that is all. How could it be otherwise ? Sir Henry does not believe in the atrocities. How can he be expected to make strong representations on the subject ? Or a strong man may be sent in Sir Henry's place, who will go so far as to make urgent representations to the Porte, or who may even go the length of making strong representations. The Porte will promise everything. It will give assurance of the most benevolent intentions, it will utter the most philanthropic protestations, the Government will issue more paper reforms, the diplomatists will be satisfied, and that will be the end of it.

It cannot be otherwise. There are not a dozen Turks in the empire who see the necessity of reform. There is nobody to carry out the reforms. The Mutlé-serif of Philippopolis told the simple truth when he said he had no better Mudir to send to Otluk-kui instead of the drunken beast who is there now. But they would not carry out reforms if they could. The Mutlé-serif of Philippopolis has the reputation of being too favourable to the Bulgarians, and when we were there the Turks were loudly demanding his recall. He seemed like a very honest, conscientious man, desirous of doing what was right. He entered into the question of the misery of the burnt-out people with Mr. Schuyler and Mr. Baring in an earnest serious way, that carried with it the conviction that he was really working hard to relieve their sufferings. He said money was to be given them, their cattle to be restored, their houses rebuilt, and every possible thing done for them. He was so earnest, so serious, so thoroughly convinced of the necessity of these measures, that you could not doubt his good intentions. And yet, not only are the cattle not restored, not only are the houses not rebuilt, but Mr. Schuyler has found that this same plausible, earnest, conscientious governor, at the very moment that he was making

these promises to him and Mr. Baring, was issuing the strict orders that the people of Batak, as well as of the other burnt villages, be forced to pay their regular taxes as though nothing had happened. And this is one of the good men—one who is so friendly to the Bulgarians that the Turks demand his recall.

Here is an example of Turkish ideas of reform. Until the last year the whole male Christian population, from infants one day old up to the age of a hundred, had to pay the military exemption tax. Last year, however, a great reform was ushered in with a loud flourish of trumpets. In future, only those capable of military service were to pay the exemption tax, and there were great rejoicings among the people. But when the tax came to be levied, what was the astonishment of everybody to find that each village was ordered to pay exactly the same sum as before. The tax was only redistributed. The round sum before paid on the whole population of the village now falls on the shoulders of those only capable of military duty. But the whole amount must be made up. This is the Turkish idea of reform, and the Turkish way of throwing dust in the eyes of Europe. And these are the people from whom we expect reforms! There will be no reforms. The thousands of helpless women and children, of babes and sucklings slaughtered in cold blood, whose bones and flesh are fattening the soil of Bulgaria, cry out against the hollow mockery, and give it the lie. And you say, oh statesmen of Europe, that the *status quo* must be maintained; that this must last. I tell you it will not last. You must find another solution for the Eastern question, or another solution will find you. It will not last, or civilization is a delusion, justice a mockery, and Christianity a farce and a failure.

The following letter reached the *Daily News* office without date.

PHILIPPOLIS.

A two hours' drive from Philippopolis over a very fair road that led through the rich and fertile valley of the Maritza, brought us to what had formerly been the village of Perustitza. This village was attacked and burnt by the Bashi-Bazouks, led by one Achmet-Aga, who must not be confounded with another

Achmet-Aga, still more infamous, who destroyed Batak. It was a prettily-situated little place, built, as it was, on a low hill that dominated the valley of the Maritza, and enabled its inhabitants to command a view over the rich and luxuriant valley, miles in extent. It was, however, like so many other places that we have seen, in ruins, not one house remaining standing. We found about a thousand people, of whom the greater part were women and children, who were living in the nooks and corners of the walls, where they had constructed temporary sheds of straw capable of sheltering them from the sun, but not from the rain. Their present means of existence were principally the new harvest, which they were gathering slowly and painfully, without the aid of their cattle, which had been driven off by their Turkish neighbours, and partly some assistance that was given them by the Governor of Philippopolis. This is the only case we have heard of where the Turkish authorities have given any assistance whatever to the burnt villages. The cattle of the people here were all in the village of Ustuna, not more than three miles distant. They had been there in the possession of the Turks ever since the middle of May. Not a single head had been restored to the owners, and yet the kind, plausible, earnest, conscientious Mutlé-Serif of Philippopolis, with whom we were to dine that night, had assured us only the day before that the cattle had been restored to their proper owners; that the houses were being rebuilt, and help distributed to the needy.

Nobody can understand the cool, plausible, conscientious way in which a Turk can lie until he has seen what I have seen during this trip through Bulgaria. I have travelled a good deal; and seen something of the world; but I am willing to confess that until I came here I had no idea of the extent to which human duplicity could be carried. The honest, straight-forward way in which these people will lie to you is simply past belief, and will impose upon the most incredulous and sceptical mind. There is an honesty, an earnestness, a seriousness in the tones of the voice, an evident knowledge of the necessities of the situation, which carries conviction with it, and convinces you that they see and know and feel about it exactly as you do. The right is so evident to their mind as well as yours, that it is impossible they should go wrong; and it is not until you see with your own eyes that they

have been coolly, deliberately, and with premeditation, lying to you in the most shameless manner, that you begin to fathom the depths of their duplicity. There are cases like the present, in which one finds out the truth; but generally you have no means of verifying what has been said to you, and of necessity you are obliged to believe. It requires a special habit and training of mind to be able to disbelieve every word which is said to you; a habit of mind which Europeans as a rule have not got, which they cannot get, unless brought up in it from infancy, and which is rarely obtained in Europe. This is why Europeans are continually deceived and overreached in their dealings with Orientals. The reader will say, perhaps, that I, the writer of these lines, seem to have learnt it pretty well already. Not at all. I know that the Mutlé-Serif of Philippopolis, or any other Turk, can make me believe any number of lies, unless I have ready to hand the means of disproving them. I feel I am a perfect child in their hands. I could no more have doubted Kiana Pacha and Edib Effendi when they said there was nobody killed at Batak than I could have doubted that the sun would rise to-morrow, had I not been to Batak and seen 6,000 or 7,000 bodies lying there. So far from returning the cattle to the destitute villagers, the Turks of Ustuna, hearing that we had been to Perustitza, and fearing we might make urgent representations on the subject, drove them all off to another part of the country, and sold them.

The troubles seem to have arisen here as follows; and I will only preface the relation of what occurred with the remark that the same atrocities and horrors, the same scenes of pillage, violence, and massacre occurred here as elsewhere. If I do not dwell upon them more in detail it is because I think I have already given the reader a sufficiently clear idea of what the pillage of a village and the massacre of its inhabitants really means, and it is useless to go on repeating these harrowing stories to infinitude. Perustitza was a place of 350 houses and from 2,000 to 2,500 inhabitants. It was nearly the only village where any real resistance was offered, the Bashi-Bazouks, and the people here defended themselves with far more vigour, unprepared as they were, than did the inhabitants of Otluk-kui, who had gone to the trouble of making fortifications. But, in spite of the assertions of the Turks, I do not think that Mr. Schuyler has obtained any evidence to show that there was

anything like a real insurrection here. All that can be made of the mass of conflicting evidence is that the country was in a state of great agitation and excitement owing to the circulation of rumours about the intended declaration of war by Servia; that the Christians and Mussulmans were about equally afraid of each other, and that the former especially were in a state of panic, only too well justified by subsequent events. The inhabitants of Perustitza deny that there was any insurgent committee in the village, or that any insurrection was organized here. The only proof the Turks offer of the contrary, was that many of the people had buried their valuable effects early in the spring, and had planted their crops over them so as to effectually hide them, thus giving evidence that they knew an insurrection was preparing weeks before it actually broke out. This is simply no proof at all. These Bulgarians are so accustomed to lawless acts of violence, to spoliation and robbery by Turkish officials, as by thieves and brigands, that they always keep whatever little money they may have put by buried in the ground, and upon the slightest alarm they bury everything valuable that they have no immediate use for and that will not spoil by being put in the earth. This fact is rather an evidence of Turkish misrule than of anything else, and only shows the general state of insecurity in which people live here. The people who live north of the Balkans, and who cross the mountains every year, and go south to help to get in the harvest, always bury their valuables before starting; and when the war broke out last year in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the whole population of Bulgaria buried their money, jewels, and other valuables immediately, to be ready for the worst. A custom which is really an evidence of Turkish misrule, and nothing more, is impudently offered by the Turks as an exceptional thing, and as evidence of a regularly organized revolt.

The people assert, and I have no reason to doubt their word, that until they heard of the massacres in other places, and saw from the hills above the town, the fires of other burning villages, there was no thought of insurrection or even of defence. When however, they saw these sinister tokens they immediately sent one of their head men to Philippopolis to the Governor, Aziz Pacha, to ask that some regular troops might be sent to protect them. To the first application they received no answer; and the next day they sent the same man back again to demand

protection. This is not denied even by the Turks. The only difference in the story as told by the Turks and Bulgarians is, that the former say that Aziz Pacha promised them protection, while the Bulgarians assert, in the most emphatic manner, that he wrote them a letter which was read to all the men of the village assembled together, telling them that he had no troops to send them, and that if they were attacked they must defend themselves. But he advised them to remain quietly at home, not leave the village for a few days, and allow nobody from any other village to come there. They all maintain so stoutly that such a letter was written them by Aziz Pacha that I cannot doubt it. We could not find the letter, because the man who had brought it—the same who had gone to ask for protection—had been arrested upon returning to Philippopolis a third time upon the same mission, and thrown into prison. He told us one of the head men of the place had possession of the letter when arrested, and the Turks had of course seized it. In the meantime, between the second and third appeals for help, Aziz Pacha sent two *zaptiehs*, or rural policemen. These *zaptiehs*, however, only remained a few hours, at the end of which time they said they would go to Ustuna and see what was going on there, borrowed two horses, went off, and never came back. Then there arrived two *Bashi-Bazouks*, with a message from Achmet-Aga, the chief of the *Bashi-Bazouks*, saying he was coming with 200 or 300 *Bashi-Bazouks* to protect them, as he had heard they had asked for protection. They, however, did not relish the protection of the *Bashi-Bazouks*, and told the two emissaries that they did not want to be protected, and that they were going to protect themselves. The two *Bashi-Bazouks* insisted, however, that Achmet-Aga should come and protect them and refused to take back the message. Whereupon there was an altercation, in the course of which the two Turks were seized and killed. These facts were related to me by an Armenian woman, whose husband kept a kind of *café* in the place, and in whose house the interview with the Turks took place. The Armenians and Jews, I may remark, are the only people here who may be considered really impartial, as they are neither Turk nor Bulgarian in language or religion, and both parties treat them as friends. She said there was evidently no ill-feeling towards the two Turks when they arrived, as the Bulgarians had given them coffee in her house

As Mr. Baring talked to this woman, I presume he will have obtained the facts from her very much as I give them.

There was not, so far as we can learn, any sufficient reason for killing these two Turks. It is true that they were Bashi-Bazouks, and that several villages had already been burnt by the Bashi-Bazouks, that they had come with what could only be regarded as a threatening message, but this was no excuse for killing them. It has been impossible to learn under exactly what circumstances they were killed, as it was not done in the village, and we do not know whether it occurred in a fight, or whether it was done in cold blood. What seems probable, however, is that they were asked to deliver up their arms, that they refused, and that they were then fired upon and killed. The villagers appeared to think they were simply carrying out the instructions of Aziz Pacha, who told them to allow nobody to come to their village ; for it was after killing these two Bashi-Bazouks that they sent the third message to him asking for his protection, and informing him what they had done. But the Turks say that, the messenger only delivered a part of the message, and said nothing about the killing of the two Bashi-Bazouks, and this is why he was arrested a day or two later, when the truth was known, for he had remained in Philippopolis and never returned to the village. Be that as it may, there is no doubt that the villagers sent the message, for they made no secret of killing the two Bashi-Bazouks, and do not now. In the meantime the villagers, having received no answer to their third appeal for protection, and justly fearing the vengeance of the Bashi-Bazouks, of whose ravages in other villages they were receiving daily reports, began to prepare for defence. Some of them, however, decided to fly to Philippopolis and the other villages, and did so, leaving all their property behind. The rest determined to defend themselves to the last. They collected provisions for several days in one of the churches on a little eminence overlooking the town, a place very well suited for defence, as it was in a commanding position and surrounded by a good heavy stone wall. They made loopholes in this wall, put several barrels of water in the church, and made ready for a siege. It will be observed that they never went out of their own village, nor made the slightest attempt to molest their Mussulman neighbours. Finally, on Tuesday morning, the 29th of April (old style), corresponding to our May 11th, the

day before the massacre of Batak, the Bashi-Bazouks were reported to be coming from the direction of Ustuna. Everybody—women and children as well as men—immediately abandoned their houses and took refuge in the church. But some, whose courage failed them at the last moment, determined to go out and surrender. They did so, and after having given up their arms, were massacred. This did not, however, encourage the others to follow their example, and they resolved all the more sternly to resist to the last.

Among those who went out of the village at this time was a Frenchman, engaged in some commercial enterprise in Philippopolis, who, hearing of the troubles, had come home the day before in search of another Frenchman, a comrade who had been absent some days, and to whom he was afraid something had happened. He went with a number of the villagers to meet the Bashi-Bazouks, was received by Achmet-Aga, to whom he explained his business, as he spoke Turkish very well, at the same time telling him he was a Frenchman. There was in fact no need of an explanation, as he was well known all over the country. He was retained a prisoner for a while, and then killed, probably because they thought he had money about him. The comrade he was in search of had been already seized and killed before. The French Consul, having established the facts, has made a complaint, and the French Government has probably by this time made a demand for the payment of an indemnity to the families of the two men. This is an important fact bearing upon the affair of Perustitza, which cannot be overlooked, for it shows the murderous spirit which actuated the Bashi-Bazouks. Many of the people who had not sufficient confidence in the goodness of the Turks to go and surrender, and who nevertheless were not disposed to take their chances in the church, fled to the fields, and were pursued by the Bashi-Bazouks and killed wherever overtaken. Having thus terminated their connection with the people who fell into their hands, they proceeded to pillage the abandoned houses, to which they afterwards applied the match. They did not make any direct attack upon the church, further than firing upon it from a safe distance. They were brave enough when it was a question of fighting women and children, but as soon as they found armed men before them they were by no means so anxious to try their sabres.

During Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday they amused and enriched themselves by pillaging and burning the villages, occasionally firing at the people in the church at long range, while the poor villagers remained in the churchyard all this time and watched their burning houses with despairing eyes. They could do nothing. There does not seem to have been more than two hundred of them armed, while the Bashi-Bazouks numbered a thousand. I have talked with an Armenian girl, the daughter of the woman above referred to, who remained in the church throughout the siege. The story she tells is a most curious and interesting one. Her father and mother being Armenians thought they could risk leaving the village, and went to meet the Bashi-Bazouks with the others who went out to surrender. Their nationality and their poverty saved them, for they were not harmed. But they had not chosen to take their daughter with them, because, as she said, they feared she would be outraged if she fell into the hands of the Bashi-Bazouks, and they preferred to leave her behind with the people in the church, to take her chance of life and death in the impending fight. She says the women and children were all put in the church, which was as full as it would hold, and that the men remained outside the churchyard, sheltered behind the wall, watching the movements of the enemy, and occasionally firing through the loopholes when the occasion offered. She said the men showed themselves very cool and brave at this time, and did not seem to be in the least afraid of being able to make good their defence against the Bashi-Bazouks. There was nobody in particular who seemed to command them, or who appeared to direct the operations, but they gave out rations, posted sentries at night, and kept up a very bold front from Tuesday until Thursday. She relates a most curious fact with regard to the girls of the village. It was decided as soon as the people had assembled in the church, that all the girls over ten should be dressed in boys' clothes, so that in case the worst came to the worst they might have a better chance of escaping the brutality of the Bashi-Bazouks. Nearly all the young girls put on a suit of their brothers' clothing, cut off their long hair, and did their best to make-up as boys. She says they offered her a suit, but she was ashamed to put it on, and had gone through the siege in her own apparel. She says that these girls showed themselves very brave, and that many of them would have been

glad to handle a gun had there been any for them. But even the men were not all armed, and there were, of course, no weapons to spare for the women.

The reader will have much satisfaction in learning that such of these brave girls as escaped death during the siege likewise escaped outrage. Many of them were killed, as wherever they showed themselves they were taken for men and ruthlessly fired upon, but those who remained alive escaped dishonour, and among the crowd of three or four hundred people who gathered around us when we arrived in the village I saw many a bright pair of eyes that met our gaze as proudly and saucily as ever, in spite of the missing tresses. Many women were outraged here as elsewhere, but they were principally those who had given themselves up in the beginning, or had tried to escape into the fields on the approach of the Bashi-Bazouks. The Armenian girl describes the nights passed in the church here as something fearful. The continued alarm, the apprehensions of a night attack, the crying of children, the weeping and mourning of the women watching their burning homes and dreading what was yet to come, the firing and shouting, the crackling flames that lit up the night and rolled off great volumes of smoke which hung over them, and threw back the glare from on high, so that the people in the church could see to read their prayers, made up a scene of terror which, told in the energetic, interjectional, excited language of this peasant girl, was full of a thrilling interest. They were so closely packed that it was impossible for them to lie down, and those who slept did so sitting or standing. Indeed there was little inclination to sleep except among the children, the excitement and terror were too great. This continued until Thursday afternoon. Then there came a change; Achmet-Aga, who commanded the Bashi-Bazouks, had sent to Philippopolis to say that the village had risen in revolt, and that he was attacking it. These people would not come quietly out, deliver up their arms and be slaughtered as they had done at Batak. They were therefore insurgents, and must be dealt with accordingly. The fact is that this was a revolt of the Bashi-Bazouks, and not of the Christians, and in any other country in the world but Turkey it would have been regarded as such. Aziz Pacha, who was so friendly to the Bulgarians that he has since been removed, and who had paid no heed to the repeated demands of the people for protection, now that

they were attacked as they had foreseen they would be, instead of going to protect them, marched against them at the head of regular troops and a battery of artillery.

He arrived at the village on Thursday afternoon, and without summoning the place to surrender, opened a bombardment. The first intimation the people had of his presence was the roar of his cannon. I know the Turks assert that he sent a summons to them to surrender before opening fire. This, however, the villagers deny stoutly; and as the Turks themselves admit that the village had sent to Aziz Pacha three times demanding his protection, it does not seem probable; it is altogether past belief to suppose that they would have refused to surrender when he arrived at the head of regular troops. I know that Mr. Guarracino tried hard to get evidence to show that Aziz Pacha sent them a summons to surrender, and to show that they refused. I am convinced that he will have obtained no trustworthy evidence to confirm these assertions, because the facts that are acknowledged by the Turks themselves are against it. These facts are—first, that as soon as the artillery opened upon them the men, who up to that time had maintained a bold front, became panic-stricken and did not offer afterwards the slightest resistance. They immediately abandoned this church, which they had stored with provisions and prepared for defence, which was in an excellent position for defence, and all—men, women, and children—fled.

This one would think sufficient evidence for Mr. Guarracino that there was no resistance offered to the regular troops; but he tried hard to obtain proof that they resisted even after this. They took refuge in another church which was down in a little hollow on the other side of the village. No defence was possible in this church. We all went together—for it happened that Mr. Baring and Mr. Schuyler went to Perustitza the same day—and examined this church; indeed, the investigation was carried on for the most part in the churchyard. It was dominated on all sides by the rising ground around it at easy musket range. The churchyard was surrounded by a wall ten feet high, which indeed offered a shelter, but over which it was impossible for anybody inside to fire. No loopholes had been made in this wall; no scaffolding had been erected inside to enable the people to fire over it. The church was equally incapable of defence. There were only two windows from which shots might

have been fired. These were two round windows high up on the gable ends of the building, which was like all the Bulgarian churches, very low, with the floor sunk below the ground. We could not learn that any scaffolding had been constructed up to these windows to enable people to fire from them. It does not appear that there was a single shot fired from this church. The very fact that the people left a place like the other, capable of defence, and came and took refuge in a slaughter-pen like this, is sufficient evidence to show that they had abandoned the idea of resistance. Mr. Guarracino did not think so. He tried to get the people to say that Aziz Pacha had sent them a summons to surrender; that they had fired on the bearer of the summons, and continued the fight; and when they refused to admit this, he bullied and browbeat them, called them insurgents, and told them they had brought it on themselves. In addition to this, there was the evidence of the Armenian girl, who said that the majority of the men escaped over the walls the next night after coming here, and fled into the country, leaving only about fifty or sixty men in the place, with the women and children—very good proof that no defence was intended against the regular troops, and none really offered.

Now, what did Aziz Pacha do when the people fled here for shelter from his artillery? There is no evidence to show that he sent them a summons to surrender even then, for if he had done so they would have surrendered. He simply changed the position of his artillery, and on Friday morning opened upon this church as he had done on the other. When we were there the ground of the churchyard was ploughed up with shells, and there were marks where the shells had struck all over the walls of the church. The Armenian girl said that here, as before, the women and children were put in the church, and that it was packed so full that they could not lie down nor even sit. She said that three shells came into the church through the round windows in the gable ends and exploded among this packed mass of women and children. We ourselves saw the marks of two shells within a foot of one of these windows, showing that it had been the target aimed at. The people of the village said that five had come in, two at one end and three at the other. It may be that this girl was fainting when the two others came in, and that she did not know it, or it may be that only three really came in. But three are enough. Those who have seen

it know the effect of a shell exploding in the open air among armed, stern-faced men, who, carried away by the excitement of battle, scarcely heed it. But the effect of a shell coming in through one of these high gable windows, with its terrific thunder, and exploding among this mass of shrieking women and children—there were only women and children in the church—is beyond the power of imagination to conceive.

It is difficult to find out how the siege ended, or to get anything like a clear account of what took place on Saturday morning. The villagers say that all day Friday the Turks were around the place, and that everybody who showed himself at the gate was immediately cut down by the Bashi-Bazouks, who were waiting and watching outside, without daring to enter—for they are not brave, these Bashi-Bazouks. They do not care to attack people until they have, by fair promises, obtained their arms, and they simply stayed outside and waited for the people to come out one by one. On Saturday morning, however, it seems they were withdrawn, and replaced by regular troops.

The Armenian girl says that on Saturday morning she looked out of the church and saw the gate of the churchyard slightly open, with a soldier standing before it. She immediately ran out to him and begged him not to kill her. He told her not to be afraid, and to call to the others to come out, and that they would not be harmed. This she did, and they all followed her out, altogether about two hundred and fifty or three hundred people, principally women and children. They were conducted before Aziz Pacha, who was really only waiting to receive them with open arms. He praised the Armenian girl for having taken the lead and induced the others to follow, and he told them it was all their own perversity that they had not come out and surrendered sooner. He had only been waiting for this step on their part to raise the siege and stop the bombardment. He was astonished at the stubbornness of these women and children, who would insist upon being bombarded and shelled in this way, when all they had to do was to come out and throw themselves upon his merey. Really, the perversity of some people is beyond all calculation. It does not appear that anybody was killed after this surrender, and the Armenian girl says that none of the women who surrendered at this time were maltreated or violated. This is probably the reason why the

Turks demanded the removal of Aziz Pacha, as being too friendly to the Bulgarians, and made such efforts against him that they finally obtained his recall. As to the number of people killed here it is very difficult to form an estimate. There are no trustworthy census statistics. Each village makes up its own returns; they always understate the population, the number of houses, and families, in order to avoid increasing taxes, so that it is almost impossible to ascertain the exact population of any place before the massacres. The returns for this village, as I have already stated, showed the number of houses to have been three hundred and fifty, which at the very moderate calculation of six to the house would give a population of over two thousand. It would probably be found to have been somewhere between that and twenty-five hundred. The people estimate the number of those remaining at one thousand, which would show that between one thousand and fifteen hundred people had been killed here. Mr. Baring and Mr. Schuyler both, I believe, put it at a thousand.

BUCHAREST, *August 22.*

I have just arrived here after a few weeks' trip through Bulgaria, in company a part of the time with Mr. Schuyler, whom I left pursuing his investigations in the Balkans. Before continuing the recital of what we saw and heard, I wish to exchange a few remarks with Mr. Disraeli on the subject of "exaggerations;" to offer a few observations on the conduct of Sir Henry Elliot, and to give a short account of the present condition of the country.

I see that in Mr. Disraeli's last speech he still reiterates his assertion, that the accounts of these atrocities here have been grossly exaggerated, because Mr. Baring had not found any evidence that human heads had been carted through the streets of Philippopolis, nor any to show that forty young girls had been burnt alive at Novi-Selo. With regard to the first point, it strikes me as somewhat immaterial whether the heads were carted through the streets or not, once you admit, as Mr. Baring does, that the people who owned them had been killed. But at the time that Mr. Baring sent that telegram which Mr. Disraeli read with such a triumphant air, he had not yet been

to Tamboli. Had he been, and had he talked to the Italian Consul at Burgas, who has a commercial establishment at Tamboli, he would probably not have sent that telegram. For the Italian Consul would have told him, and probably has told him ere this, that sackfuls of heads were emptied in the street before his door. There was a steep descent there, leading down to the little river that runs through the town, and the heads rolled down this little hill, tumbling over each other in horrid confusion; as though trying to escapè from the dogs that immediately pounced upon them. Exaggeration, indeed, Mr. Disraeli! It is very true that forty young girls were not burnt alive at Novi-Selo. This occurred at Batak, and there were not 40, but 200 girls, women, and children burnt alive.

The people who appear to be principally to blame in this business, are the newspaper correspondents. The great crime in the eyes of Mr. Disraeli and Sir Henry Elliot was not to have killed many thousands of innocent people, but to have said there were 30,000 killed when there were only 25,000. The grievous fault was not the slaughter of a thousand little children, but to have written there were a thousand killed, when in reality there were only nine hundred and ninety-nine. It was not much matter to have cut off the heads of a great many people; but to have said that these heads were carried through the streets of Philippopolis, when, in reality, they were carried in bags and rolled down a street before the house of the Italian Consul in a very different place, is a kind of crime that Mr Disraeli and Sir Henry Elliot cannot easily forgive.

It was on Friday that these shells were thrown, after the greater part of the men had run away. Many of these men who escaped on Thursday night were caught next day in the country and killed. The people still left in the church and churchyard were in despair. There were less than a hundred men, and there were four or five hundred women and children. They had already sent three or four old men and women to Aziz Pacha to ask for peace, and these had never returned. They had probably been killed by the Bashi-Bazouks before reaching the Pacha, for I am willing to give him the credit, if any credit there be in the supposition, that these messengers never reached him. It is enough that he should, after these people had appealed to him three times for protection, without asking them to submit, without waiting to hear what they had

to say in their defence, have bombarded the place and shelled this churchful of women and children. It is enough that he should have done this, that he should have gone on shelling these miserable beings after they had fled to this slaughter-pen and ceased the slightest effort at resistance, and it is scarcely worth our while to try to prove, as we might do, that he did refuse to listen, or would have refused to listen, to any prayers for mercy that might have reached him through the lines of Bashi-Bazouks. Mr. Guarracino made a great point of this fact, and he and his Turkish *protégés* are welcome to all the credit that may be derived from it. They take to themselves as much praise for the fact that these messengers never arrived as though they had never been sent, and as though the Turkish commander were not directly responsible for their non-arrival. We shall see presently how he protected the messengers who did reach him.

But the poor people determined to make one more effort to obtain a cessation of the firing before completely abandoning themselves to despair, and two of the richest women of the village volunteered to go and try to reach the Turkish general. The Armenian girl tells how they tried to arrange their dresses to look their best, and how they put on whatever poor articles of jewellery they had about them in order to look as rich and imposing as possible. The poor women actually hoped to overawe the Bashi-Bazouks by their magnificence. Perhaps their calculations were not altogether wrong, for they really succeeded in reaching the Turkish general. He instantly promised them that if the people would come out of the church and surrender they should not be harmed, and he sent back an old man who had been made prisoner to accompany them. But he does not seem to have given them a guard or escort of any kind. On the way back the two women were seized by the Bashi-Bazouks, stripped of their jewels and clothing, violated, and then killed. The old man continued his way, and delivered his message; but as he at the same time told them what had happened to the two women, the people in the church did not feel encouraged to come out, and they remained there all Friday night. Aziz Pacha threw several more shells at the church; the Bashi-Bazouks from the surrounding slopes kept up a fire of small arms, to which no answer was made. The condition of the people in the church was now fearful in the extreme. They

had been besieged for four days. The dead bodies of those who had been killed were still lying around them unburied; the wounded were groaning in the agony of undressed or improperly dressed wounds, for there was of course no doctor among them, and they were all besmeared with blood of their own or their slaughtered companions that had clotted and grown hard, and they were filthy, loathsome, and haggard as spectres. And still the small arms of the Bashi-Bazouks played upon the church from the low hills around, and the shells continued ploughing up the churchyard, or crashing against the walls.

The story of the Armenian girl regarding the events of Friday and Saturday is strangely incoherent and wild, and what she relates is simply incredible. I can only account for this part of her story on the supposition that she had by this time gone partially or quite mad. She relates that on Friday after the murder of the two women above related, the men remaining in the churchyard determined, upon the failure of this last attempt at negotiation, to kill themselves. She says that some of them were on the point of putting this resolution into effect when their wives interposed and begged to be killed likewise, whereupon ensued a scene of horror that we might well believe the coinage of this girl's own mad brain were a part of the story not corroborated by all the villagers. It seems that two of these men actually carried their resolution into effect. Two of them, after weeping, moaning, tearing their hair, beating their heads against the wall, actually killed their wives and children, and then killed themselves. This girl relates that these women asked to be killed, that they knelt down, gathered their little ones to their arms, weeping, sobbing, praying, while the husband and father shot or stabbed them one after the other. The girl's story with regard to these two is corroborated by the rest of the villagers, but she goes much further. She asserted, and persisted in the assertion, throughout a series of sharp cross-questions, that there were many more who killed themselves, or who were killed in this way; that fifty or sixty men killed their wives and children; that many young girls and married women, whose husbands had been killed or who had escaped on Thursday night, came forward and asked to be killed likewise, to avoid falling into the hands of the Bashi-Bazouks; and that their request was complied with. She thinks there were

fully two hundred people killed in this way. She says that they even asked her if she wished to be killed likewise, and that she declined.

The story is so thoroughly in keeping with the sad despondent character of the Slaves that I should be inclined to believe it, were it not that it lacks confirmation. The truth seems to be that there were only these two, one of whom had two children, and the other, three. I can only account for this girl's story on the supposition that after four nights passed in this manner, nearly without sleep, surrounded by horrors, she had gone quite mad, and was subject to hallucinations. Awaking probably from a fainting fit, or a long state of insensibility, she beheld these two men, her near neighbours, killing their wives and little ones. She looked about her and saw the ground strewn with dead bodies lying in their blood. She says the floor of the church was ankle deep with blood, and she instantly jumped to the conclusion that all these people had been killed in the same way. But two are enough. That even two men should have decided to kill their wives and little ones, to plunge a knife, to fire a bullet, into the weak tender little beings that looked to them for love and protection, shows to what a state of despair the people were reduced by the senseless conduct of the Turkish commander. And Mr. Guarracino insisted that this all happened to them because they refused to surrender! The perversity of these people was such that he could not account for it. The Armenian girl says that at one time she wanted to be killed, and tried to go where the bullets could reach her, but the other women held her back. There was no romance about this girl. She was a mere peasant girl, with a dull, heavy, phlegmatic face, that was as far removed from the poetic and romantic as it is possible to imagine. I should have thought that nothing short of physical torture would have driven her to think of death as a relief.

Sir Henry Elliot is greatly to blame for his conduct throughout this whole business. His system of dealing with the Turks has been from the beginning radically foolish and wrong, considered even from his own point of view. If the English Ambassador at Constantinople is to be the friend and champion of the Turk, he should, one would think, give friendly advice, reprove, restrain, reprimand, and prevent the Sublime Porte from committing sublime acts of folly. It is only in this

way that the Turkish power can be maintained for even a short time longer in Europe. Sir Henry's policy has been diametrically opposed to this. He has always acted upon the absurd principle that, as Turkey is a free and independent Power, the Turkish Government must never be interfered with or restrained, no matter what mad project it may have in view. It must be encouraged, on the contrary, to carry out any act of folly, simply to show that it is free and independent. Owing to this absurd desire always to support the Turks, to aid and abet them in everything, to shut his eyes to their faults, and to consider everything said against them as mere Russian slanders, he is in a measure responsible for the Bulgarian massacres. He is to blame for not preventing the calling out of the Bashi-Bazouks, as a friend to Turkey should have done if necessary.

He is to blame for pretending not to believe the reports of the massacres, when they were pouring in upon him from all sides, and for not reporting to his Government. He had the most trustworthy evidence that these massacres were occurring daily. The Rev. Dr. Long, of Robert College, showed him a mass of letters he had received from the burnt districts, and he returned them, saying he could not act upon such information, because it was not official. By official information he meant, I presume, information received from the Turkish authorities. It is generally supposed that ambassadors and diplomatists prefer unofficial and private information when it is trustworthy to that received from official or officious sources. It is popularly believed that it is part of the business of an ambassador to keep his Government supplied with important information and facts, no matter from what source obtained; but Sir Henry Elliot understands his duties in a different way.

His duty was to defend the Turks through thick and thin, and to shut his eyes to their atrocities; and that is what he did. But there were still other sources of information. The French, German, Austrian, Greek, and Russian Consuls made accurate weekly reports of everything that happened, which Sir Henry might have seen—which, for anything I know to the contrary, he did see. There were the reports of the German railway officials living in the country in sight of the burning villages, near enough to smell the rotting bodies, whose reports he might likewise have seen. But Sir Henry believes the Greek, Austrian, German, and Russian Consuls, and the German

railway officials, and the American missionaries are all in the pay of Russia. Their reports were, therefore, utterly worthless. He even had a report or two from Mr. Dupuis, Consul at Adrianople, which, for unexplained reasons, he looks upon as exaggerated; and still he did not inform his Government. He did not even offer to investigate to see whether there might not be after all some grains of truth in all these reports. He sent his dragoman to the Porte, to inquire into the matter, and the dragoman came back with the assurance that the Turks were as gentle as sucking doves in their dealings with the Bulgarians, and that the latter were everywhere slaughtering the unresisting Mohammedans. And Sir Henry Elliot smiled benignantly, and said, "I knew it," and made no report. Sir Henry is to blame for asserting in the face of the mass of evidence that he had before him, that the reports of the newspapers were exaggerated. He is much to blame for making, without the slightest evidence, without a shadow of proof, the reckless, the shameless assertion that the Bulgarians had committed atrocities equal in number and heinousness to those of the Turks. And now, if Sir Henry Elliot, instead of expressing his indignation at these acts of atrocity in the severest terms he can command, can still go on talking about exaggerations with the bones of thousands of helpless women, of poor hapless little children, whitening the fields of Bulgaria, and crying aloud to Heaven for pity, he is much, very much, to blame. He is unworthy to be the Ambassador of a Christian Queen, the representative at the Porte, or anywhere else, of a great-hearted and generous people.

I see that Mr. Disraeli read in Parliament a telegram from Mr. Baring stating that he thought the number of villages burnt in the whole of Bulgaria was about sixty, and the number of people killed 12,000. I do not know, of course, how Mr. Baring made this statement, nor whether he gave it as a whole or a partial statement. But as he, at the time of making this report, had only visited the district of Philippopolis, and could have had very little information regarding what had happened north of the Balkans, I am inclined to think that what he gave as a partial statement for the district of Philippopolis alone, Mr. Disraeli gave the world as a complete statement for the whole of Bulgaria. This may not have been done intentionally, but I am of the opinion that it will be found to have been so.

Mr. Schuyler, when pursuing his investigations in the district of Philippopolis, estimated the number of people killed in that district alone at from twelve to fifteen thousand, and the number of villages burnt at from sixty to seventy. Since then, during his investigations north of the Balkans, he has obtained information that at least forty more villages have been burnt there, accompanied by the same acts of atrocity as south of the Balkans. I do not know what will be his estimate of the number of people killed there, and for my own part shall not hazard the statement of my own opinion, but I think I am safe in saying that Mr. Disraeli, unintentionally of course, gave to the world a partial statement as a complete one, and then, as usual, made assertions founded on this incomplete statement about the exaggerations of correspondents.

The past is past and beyond recall. The dead are dead, and without the pale of human aid and succour, as they are beyond the reach of sorrow and suffering. Turkish ferocity has done its worst for them, and they are perhaps not the most unfortunate to have escaped even at this cost. It is of the living we have now to think, and their condition is lamentable. There is no security for life or property in Bulgaria. The Turkish population is armed; the Christians have been disarmed, and the former do as they please. There is nothing, absolutely nothing, to restrain them, but their own consciences, and what a restraining power that is can be inferred from the horrors of Batak. The Bulgarians are unresistingly robbed and plundered daily by their Mussulman neighbours. They are forced to work for them without pay. They are in some places obliged to pay for the permission to gather their own harvests. Their cattle and horses are taken from them. If they complain, or make the slightest show of resistance, they are beaten and sabred. In addition to this, their women are seized and outraged in the most flagrant and open way. When we were at Kritchina we saw a number of people from the neighbouring village of Tchanaktchi, who had come there to beg or borrow money to enable them to rebuy their cattle from the Turks, who offered to restore them if they would pay a certain sum on each head. The poor people had not obtained any money then, and there did not seem to be much likelihood of their doing so. In another village near there, whose name I have forgotten, but which is known to Mr. Schuyler and Mr. Baring, the people

were only allowed to get in their harvests upon condition that half of the whole crop should be given to their Turkish neighbours. This was within ten miles of Philippopolis. At Perus-titsa, which is still closer, the people who escaped the massacre and the pillage, after the burning of their houses, had still some cattle left in the fields. These were seized by the Turks of the neighbouring village of Ustuna, who still refused to restore them when we were there. After we left, fearing we might go to the governor and insist upon justice being done, they drove the cattle off into a distant part of the country and sold them. While Mr. Schuyler was at Avrat-Alan some Turks from a neighbouring village seized six horses at work in the fields not more than a mile away, and took them off. We spoke to the Mudir of Avrat-Alan about this, but he said he could do nothing. He had no authority over the Turks of the village where the horses had been taken, and if he sent his zaptiehs there they would be beaten and sent back. At Otluk-kui a man presented himself to us with a fresh sabre cut in his head. He had discovered where his cattle were, and had gone with an order from the Mudir authorising him to take them, and this was the result of his attempt. On the way from Klissura to Avrat-Alan we met three Turks driving about thirty head of cattle, which they offered to one of our servants for less than half price, and which had evidently been stolen. At Otluk-kui a woman among many others came to us, and said that only two days before she had been working in the fields near the village with a man and a boy, her neighbours, when the Turks came, seized and bound the man, and then all three violated her. They were Turks from the next village, and the neighbour who was working with her at the time knew them very well. At Philippopolis even two men and a boy came to Mr. Schuyler with fresh sabre cuts received only a few days before. One of these had eight gashes in his head and different parts of his body. At Slievena more people came to us with fresh sabre cuts, and at Turnova even the boy who brought us our dinner was seized and beaten by the zaptiehs, who of course did not know he was in our employ.

The night we were in Tamboli a boy was killed by some Turks under circumstances which we had no time to investigate. People came to us from Streletia, a burnt village, where the people had nothing left, and said not a day passed but some

women were violated by the Turks. Two men came to us from Mishka with the same story, that there was not a day that some act of violence was not committed, especially towards the women. Near Tatar Bazardjik we met a dozen men tied together in twos, under the guard of three or four zaptiehs, who were conducting them to Tatar Bazardjik, and at the latter place Mr. Schuyler obtained convincing proof that one Ali Bey, who had some sort of unrecognised occult authority in the place, arrests men of the well-to-do class upon a charge of having belonged to the Insurrectionary Committee, puts them in prison, and maltreats them in various ways until they are glad to ransom themselves at the rate of from fifteen to fifty pounds apiece. There were three beys in and about Tatar Bazardjik who were engaged in this profitable occupation, one of whom was Tassun Bey, the person who destroyed Klissura and who accompanied Mr. Baring when he went to that place. The same thing occurs at Sofia on a much larger scale. There the business is taken in hand by the Kaimakam, who often exacts as much as £500 ransom. At Tamboli the people are completely in the power of three or four beys, or Turkish notables, who virtually govern the place, and in whose presence the Kaimakam does not pretend to any authority. In our presence they gave orders which it was the business of the Kaimakam to give without even consulting him, and he stood by, silent and obsequious, without offering an observation. The people there were held in such a state of terrorism by these beys that very few dared to come to us, and those only after night, in the most secret manner.

If you speak to the authorities about the acts of lawlessness that are committed every day within their own jurisdiction, they will either deny that they have occurred at all, and tell you that the victims are liars, or they will avow flatly and openly that they are as powerless to redress these grievances as to prevent their recurrence. Or they will ask why these people come to us and complain instead of going to the proper authorities. The answer is simple. They do go and complain where they dare, but in most cases they are afraid. They know it would be not only useless but dangerous. What would be the good, for instance, of making a complaint against Galib Bey, of Tamboli, before the above-mentioned Kaimakam? The Kaimakam seems to be nearly as much afraid of Galib Bey as

the people are. In addition to all this, the people are kept in a state of terror by threats of more massacres, which are freely made by the Turks. Everywhere all over the country the people are in constant dread of the recurrence of the scenes that took place at Batak, Otluk-kui, and Bazardjik—a dread which is only too well justified by the conduct of the Turks. Then, besides this state of terrorism, which is kept up by continual acts of violence, there are thousands of people who have escaped from the massacres with their lives only, who have been pillaged and robbed, whose houses have been burnt, and who have not a roof to shelter them, nor bread for the morrow. The Turkish authorities, in spite of reiterated assurances that help was to be distributed, that the cattle were to be restored to their owners, and the burnt villages to be rebuilt, have done absolutely nothing, are doing nothing, and will do nothing. Take the village of Klissura, for instance, which was destroyed by Tassun Bey, and which was a very flourishing little place. There were 700 houses here, not one of which was left standing. The Mudir told us that there were not more than fifty families in a condition to rebuild their houses, or any substitutes for houses even, as they had absolutely no means to work with. They did not know what the people would do when winter came. The people here were principally engaged in the cultivation of the rose and the manufacture of attar of roses. There were from 130 to 150 small manufactories, with about 500 retorts, or copper boilers, for distilling the rose leaves. These retorts, worth each about £10, represented an aggregate capital of £5,000, all of which, together with everything of the least value, were carried off by their Turkish neighbours, under the command of the ubiquitous Tassun Bey. Not only did they carry off the furniture, and drive away their cattle, but they even carted off the tiles from the roofs; and after the village was reduced to ashes, they raked among the cinders for iron and nails, so thoroughly and systematically was the work of pillaging conducted.

In spite of repeated promises, neither the retorts nor the cattle have been restored. The Mutle-Serif, of Philippopolis, told Mr. Schuyler and Mr. Baring that a great many of the lost cattle from all over the country had been assembled at Philippopolis, and that the orders had been sent for the people to come in to identify their own and take them. A very just and

equitable arrangement. You had only to come—perhaps fifty, perhaps a hundred miles, and identify your cattle, prove they were yours to the satisfaction of the Turks, and then you could have them. Mr. Schuyler and Mr. Baring were delighted with the arrangement, it seemed so simple and so easy. I do not know but what Mr. Baring is still convinced of its beauty and efficacy. Mr. Schuyler, who has a faculty for finding out hidden things, found, however, that strict orders had been issued that nobody be allowed to leave his village without a special passport. The people were quite free to come to Philippopolis and claim their cattle—nobody could be freer—only they must do it without leaving their own villages! Nothing could better illustrate Turkish methods of meeting European demands for justice and reform. At Klissura the people were not allowed to leave the crumbling ruins of their houses. They were not allowed to go and work for the people of other villages, to beg, to ask for help. They were not even allowed to pay a visit to a friend or neighbour in the next village. The Mudir found this a most oppressive and absurd regulation. Many of the people here, besides being occupied with the manufacture of attar of roses, engaged in trade in a small way, and travelled during the winter as far as Constantinople, and even into Asia Minor. Had they been allowed to leave the village they might have begun with their credit, and their aptitude for trading, to rebuild their ruined fortunes and homes. Instead of which they were obliged to remain doing nothing—rapidly consuming what they had gathered of the harvest before it was spoiled, with the prospect of starvation and cold staring them in the face with the incoming winter. The Mudir told us he had written three times for permission to allow those of the people who found it advantageous to leave the village to do so. He had received no answer. He had written thrice for authority to seize a number of cattle belonging to the village, that he knew to be in a neighbouring Turkish village, and he had received no answer. When Mr. Schuyler asked the Mutle-Serif, of Philippopolis, about this, he impudently asserted that there was no order forbidding the people to leave the village, and that the Mudir had full powers to seize cattle wherever he found them. Here in Klissura, as at Batak, several children and young girls had been carried off to the neighbouring Turkish villages and “converted,” as the term is, to Mohammedanism. The parents of these children and

girls had up to this time, that is after three months, been unable to get them back, and were in despair. There were many cases of the same kind at Tatar Bazardjik and Philippopolis. I can now, I think, form a very good idea of the kind of "conversion" that was worked on the young girl at Salonica, which resulted in the death of the German and French Consuls.

When we left Klissura two or three hundred miserable, haggard women, mostly with children in their arms, ran after us for a mile, crying and wailing in very despair at our having come and gone without bringing them any relief, or wrought any change in their miserable condition. It was the same at Otluk-kui. When we left, three or four hundred people set up a perfect wail of despair, saying that after we were gone they would be worse maltreated than ever. The state of things which I have described as existing in Otluk-kui, Batak, and Klissura is the same in more than a hundred Bulgarian villages. The misery is too fearful to think of with calmness. I am still under the impression of what I saw there. The cries and heart-broken sobs and lamentations of these miserable women and children are still ringing in my ears; their wretched, haggard, despairing faces are still before my eyes; they follow me day and night wherever I go, sleeping or waking, haunting me like so many spectres. Alas! they will soon be spectres indeed, unless something is done for them. Disease, hunger, famine, and cold will soon do for them what the sabre left undone.

To sum up. The country is in a state of complete anarchy. The Turkish authorities fail in the two great functions of government—the administration of justice and the maintenance of order. They flatly refuse to protect the Christian population against the Mohammedans, or frankly avow their inability to do so. The Kaimakams and Mudirs say their zaptiehs cannot execute their behests because the Turks everywhere resist them. The Mutle-Serif of Philippopolis says he can do nothing without cavalry to quell the Mussulman population. This may be only a pretext or it may be the truth; but I do not believe he would use cavalry, if he had it, to protect the Christians. The Turkish authorities will do nothing. They will, if possible, prevent anything from being done. At Philippopolis the people wished to get up a subscription for the sufferers. The Mutle-Serif refused permission, saying the Government was giving them all the help that was required. That is none at all. There is no counting,

no calculating with Turkish perversity; no foreseeing what it will or will not do. Why he should refuse to allow a subscription for these starving women and children nobody but a Turk could tell. Unless Europe takes the matter in hand, nothing will be done for these poor people. Unless the Christian Powers that hypocritically took these people under their protection, in order to turn them over bound hand and foot to the tender mercies of these barbarian Turks, now come forward and do something, these wretched women and children must die of disease, cold, and famine. Mr. Schuyler, who when he left Paris some three months ago was strongly Turkophile in his leanings, has been so deeply impressed by what he has witnessed here, the wide-spread ruin and desolation, the misery which is augmenting day by day, that he has determined, as I have already telegraphed you, to make an effort to bring about a foreign intervention, and the appointment of a Commission for the protection of the people. He will propose that this Commission see that the following measures are carried out:—First, the hanging of Achmet-Aga, the destroyer of Batak; of another Achmet-Aga, equally infamous, who distinguished himself at Perustitza; of Chefket Pacha, who has been promoted to a position in the palace of the Sultan; and of Tassum Bey, to whom I have had occasion to refer several times; second, the disarming of the Mussulman population; third, the rebuilding of the burned villages, and the indemnification of the people for their losses, at the expense of the Government.

There is no doubt that if these measures be not executed without delay there is imminent danger of another Mussulman rising any day that will far surpass anything that has yet happened. In case the Turkish arms should meet with a reverse in Servia, nobody doubts but there would be a general rising of the Mussulman population against the Christians, who are now without arms. I heard Mr. Guaraccino and Mr. Baring both remark that the Bulgarians ought to pray with heart and soul for the success of the Turkish arms, for that in case of defeat the whole Bulgarian population would be swept out of existence. Such an avowal from Mr. Guaraccino speaks volumes as to the present condition of the Bulgarians. Will Mr. Schuyler succeed in having these measures carried out? I do not think it. The comfortable old gentlemen who are directing the destinies of Europe are too well fed to care for these wretched women and

children, who are starving to death ; they are too well housed themselves to think of weak, sickly little babes sleeping on the ground, with no roof to shelter them from the dews and the rains of Heaven. There is no danger of their houses being burnt over their heads ; there is no danger of their wives and daughters being violated by bands of ruffians ; there is no danger of their little ones dying of starvation. They can take an elevated and statesmanlike view of these miserable starving women and children, and they will not oppose the appointment of a Commission to protect them.

PHILIPPOLIS, *August 16.*

We arrived in Otluk-kui late at night, and had some difficulty in finding a house to put up at, as everybody had gone to bed. Finally, however, we met a man who conducted us to the house where Mr. Baring had stopped only the night before, and here we received a very hearty welcome. The people of the house had, however, very little to offer us in the way of sleeping accommodation, as they had been pillaged, and everything of the slightest value taken, even to the cooking utensils. I have already described what occurred at Otluk-kui, and need only add a few details here that were left out of my previous letter. There were about four hundred houses burnt out of the two thousand in the place, and, from a material point of view, the town suffered less in comparison than the other villages that were, for the most part, completely destroyed. The two churches and the bazaar were burnt, as were the two boys' schools. The girls' school escaped destruction only because it had not been pointed out to the incendiaries.

But the burning of schools and churches, and even of private dwellings, are acts which sink into comparative insignificance, and seem hardly worth mentioning in the presence of the fearful atrocities against humanity that were committed here. The story of the insurrection, in spite of its mournful character, is not without an amusing episode or two. There was a Jew pedler here when the affair broke out, who came to us and gave us an account of what had befallen him. The insurgents, suspecting he might go away from the village and relate what was going on, arrested him in order to prevent any such move-

ment, and they finally decided to ensure his silence and secrecy by forcing him to renounce Judaism. He says they put a Bulgarian cap on his head, and gave him the Christian name of "Ghiorghy," or George. It does not appear that they went so far as to baptise him, however; nor does it seem that they placed much confidence in his conversion, for they kept him in prison in a private house, and would not let him leave the village. This fear was not altogether unfounded, as it turned out; for when the Turks arrived and set him at liberty, he went about the town with the Bashi-Bazouks, and pointed out to them the rich people, and the fine houses where they would find the most booty. Apart from the violence they did his feelings in converting him, and giving him the name of "Ghiorghy," he acknowledges that the people were very kind, and gave him plenty to eat and drink during the week he was in their power. He was quite impartial in his relation of what he saw and heard, not seeming to care a fig which side won, and recounting what occurred in the most indifferent and cynical manner. He was a backslider, too, having gone back to Judaism, and he even expressed his willingness to change his religion again in case he found any advantage in doing so, thereby disclosing a want of principle that was shocking to contemplate.

There was nothing wanting to complete the horror of this affair of Otluk-kui. An old woman came to Mr. Schuyler, prostrating herself on the ground, and walking towards him on her knees, saying, "Oh, forgive me, most noble Sir, I am unworthy to appear before you; I am a very great sinner, a very great sinner, a very great sinner, a very great sinner, a very great sinner." There is no telling how long she would have gone on repeating this assertion had we not stopped her and compelled her to rise and tell her story. It was simply fiendish in its grotesqueness. She was a withered old woman, past sixty, with shrivelled face and limbs, with grey hair, and all the marks of age that claim respect and veneration. Well, this old woman was violated in the same room with a number of girls. We could not have believed it had we not heard of many other cases just as bad. It would seem that the devil had taken human form in order to mock, scoff, degrade poor humanity, and drag it through the mud and filth. There was displayed here a diabolical kind of impishness or demoniac mockery of

everything that man holds venerable and holy that was simply superhuman in its devilry.

It should be remembered that this old woman's was no exceptional case, for there does not appear to be a woman in the place, old or young, who escaped outrage. The most curious, and at the same time the most poignant, circumstance connected with these outrages is that these women and girls all, like this old woman, look upon themselves as very great sinners. The chastity of the Bulgarian women is well known, and it is the sin as well as the dishonour which crushes them, a sin for which they will do life-long penance and then not think themselves forgiven. Not one of these young girls ever expects to find a husband: not one but thinks herself unworthy of marriage. Nor do the young men of the place think differently. They will in future go to villages that have not been visited by Bashi-Bazouks to seek their wives.

The Mudir of the place called on us the next morning after our arrival: the same Mudir who so horribly maltreated the young schoolmistress. He was decidedly the most repulsive and filthy-looking brute I ever set eyes upon. Apparently Mr. Schuyler thought the same, for after the exchange of a few words in which there were no compliments, he retired to his room and left the Mudir to be entertained by the rest of us. But he had not done with him by any means, as we soon discovered, for the interview was prolonged though in a somewhat extraordinary manner.

Mr. Schuyler had with him two interpreters. One was a young Bulgarian from Robert College, who spoke the Turkish language in a very polite and distinguished manner, and whom he always employed when he had anything agreeable to say or any compliments to pass with the Turkish authorities; the other was a Greek, by the name of Antonio, employed in the legation, who spoke Turkish in a very harsh and emphatic manner, whom he usually called up when he had anything the reverse of agreeable to say. I was considerably amused now to see Antonio come out from Mr. Schuyler's room, and inform the Mudir, in a severe tone of voice, that the Consul Bashi was very much displeased at the state in which he had found the roads in this Mudirlik, and required to know why they were allowed to remain in that condition. The Mudir was considerably taken aback by this question and the way in which it was

put, but he replied with some trepidation that he had only been Mudir here for two or three months, and must not be held responsible for the condition of the roads. This answer was carried back by Antonio, who a moment later returned with the information that the Consul Bashi had observed that there was much misery existing among the people here, and he could not hear that the Mudir was trying to do anything to relieve it. To this the Mudir replied that they had brought the misery upon themselves and must endure it. Antonio carried this answer back, and returned with the information that the Consul considered it very wicked on the part of these women and little children to have brought it upon themselves, but that he believed his Majesty the Sultan, in his sublime goodness, thought these people had been sufficiently punished for their wickedness already, and wished the misery of the people to be relieved as rapidly as possible, further expressing his belief that the Sultan would now turn his attention to punishing bad Mudirs, of whom there were a great many. The conversation was carried on in this style by means of Antonio for half an hour, at the end of which time the Mudir was informed that the interview was at an end, and he withdrew, considerably overawed by this method of exchanging compliments. We never saw him again, as we did not return his call.

This is the worst Mudir we have seen or heard of. He is in the habit of getting drunk every night, in company with the zaptiehs, and he maltreats and persecutes the inhabitants in every possible way. I have already related how he sent for two women, whose husbands had been killed, to come to his house the nights that Mr. Baring and Mr. Schuyler were in the place. And this is the kind of man to whom is given almost unlimited power over a town of nearly 1,000 inhabitants, with no hope, as the Governor of Philippopolis told us of a better man being found to replace him. This village of Otluk-kui must have been a charming little place before its partial destruction. It is situated in a pretty little valley which is surrounded on all sides by mountains that seem to isolate it from the outside world. The houses, which are very comfortable and solidly constructed, are generally partly surrounded by gardens and fruit trees, whose luxuriant foliage hangs over the walls, and half-hiding the houses themselves give the place a charming freshness, on which the eye would rest with pleasure were it not for the

blackened ruins that greet you on every side, and continually remind you of the horrors that were enacted here. We took horses here to continue our journey to Avrat-Alan, or Kuprishstizza in Bulgarian, situated a few miles to the north, still higher up in the mountains. The horses were brought to us about one o'clock, and we mounted amongst the crowd of people that had gathered around the door, and rode away, actually putting our fingers to our ears to shut out their mournful cries.

The horseback ride to Avrat-Alan proved to be a delightful change from the jerking and jolting of a Turkish carriage over a Turkish road. As we got up in the mountains the air became delightfully cool and fresh, and the woods which covered a great part of these mountains offered with their thick-set foliage a cool and inviting shade nearly the whole distance, under which we lazily loitered, glad to escape from human sound and suffering, and in no hurry to reach our destination. There was many a sparkling little stream that came leaping out from among the bushes and rocks like a laughing child flying into the arms of its mother; many a grassy little glade where our horses would stop and eat the rich green grass in spite of us, because we had not the moral courage necessary to take the food out of their mouths by spurring them on; and when we finally reached the summit of these mountains—really only the foothills of the Balkans—we looked back, and had such a view over the country below us as is rarely seen. For we had before us all that immense and beautiful plain, the valley of the Maritza, in which is situated Tatar Bazardjik, Philippopolis, and Adrianople, extending miles and miles away to the south, where it was bounded by that spur of the Balkans that sweeps around from the west in a grand and noble curve, and forms the watershed between the Maritza and the *Ægean* Sea.

A little further on we stopped to lunch in the middle of the forest, by the side of a spring called the "Brigands' Spring." I had observed a while after starting that our party had been augmented by the addition of a young man, riding a very lean horse, which he mounted on a pack-saddle. Upon inquiry, we found that this young man was from Otluk-kui, and was likewise on his way to Avrat-Alan, having joined our party for safety. Antonio, in a long and intimate conversation, drew from him an avowal of the object of his trip, which was no other than to see his sweetheart, who lived at Avrat-Alan,

whom he had not seen for three months—that is, since the troubles began. The poor fellow was extremely grateful for the permission to accompany us, and willingly took upon himself the office of guide, as neither of our two Zaptiehs seemed to be very certain of the way. He told us that at this spring only the year before he had been seized by the brigands, and robbed of the little money he had about him, and nearly all the clothing he had on. Going to see one's sweetheart any distance in this country is evidently a risky business. We counted up the shots our party could command in a fight at six shots to the revolver, and finding it was somewhere in the neighbourhood of a hundred, ate our cold chicken and mutton, slaked our thirst at the Brigands' Spring, smoked our cigarettes, and laughed the brigands to scorn. These brigands, by the way, complain greatly, it seems, of the present condition of the country, which scarcely furnishes them a living. Since the war all traffic is suspended, there are no travellers, and no merchandise passing backwards and forwards, and the result is that these people are deprived of their ordinary means of existence, the bread is taken out of their mouths, and they are gradually falling into a state of indigence pitiful to contemplate. These brigands are all Turks. Let our diplomacy look to it. Towards six o'clock in the evening we arrived at the brow of the mountain overlooking a very deep, narrow valley, or rather a hollow, in the bottom of which lay Avrat-Alan, seemingly almost beneath our feet.

Avrat-Alan was one of the three or four places south of the Balkans in which there was an attempt at insurrection. It may, in fact, be considered the principal offender, for although they made no fortifications here, the young men who took up arms committed the only really inexcusable acts that can be charged against the insurrection. This was the killing of forty Mohammedan gipsies who fell into their hands. These gipsies had been arming secretly, and it was suspected, but only suspected, that they were preparing to join the Bashi-Bazouks when seized, and on this suspicion they were killed. But neither here nor anywhere else were there any women or children killed or violated by the insurgents. This one fact gives the measure of difference between the Bulgarian and the Turk. The killing of armed men who have armed themselves, as you believe, with the intention of killing you, who you know

are quite capable of killing you if they get the chance, is a very different sort of thing from the killing of weak, helpless women and innocent little children, whom you have not the slightest reason to fear. The one may be a mistaken or even an unjustifiable act of self-defence, but it is nevertheless self-defence; the other is an act of pure ferocity, of which not even the wild beast—not even the tiger, is capable. These places—Otluk-kui, Avrat-Alan, and Klissura, with Strelcha and Kurlovo—were the only places in which there was any insurrection south of the Balkans. For the fault of these five villages, seventy innocent villages that had no hand nor part whatever in the rising were pillaged and burnt, and the inhabitants for the most part massacred.

Let us now see what the rebellion was here at its fountain head; let us see how much vigour it showed here where it was organised and where it took its rise, and we can then form a better idea of its real strength, and the kind of repression that was used to put it down.

Here, in Avrat-Alan, there was even less show of resistance than at Otluk-kui. The elder and more prudent part of the population had not taken part in the rising at all, nor had they encouraged it. It was only the young men, and they had engaged in it contrary to the advice of their elders, who do not appear to have had any confidence in the success of the attempt. When, at the approach of Hafiz Pacha towards Otluk-kui, a great part of the insurgents had gone out to reconnoitre, the rest of the people, fearing the vengeance of the Turks, and hoping by this means to appease them, rose and seized the insurgents who had remained in the village, confined them in the konak, and sent word to Hafiz Pacha, informing him what they had done. I will not go so far as to say that they would really have kept these young men until Hafiz arrived, and have delivered them over to be shot. They would probably have allowed them to escape before the arrival of the Turkish commander, even had their companions not returned and released them. But this fact shows that the majority of the people even here took no part in it, and hoped nothing from it. This is why, at the approach of the troops, the whole thing collapsed like a bubble. No defence was made, and no resistance offered. There was not a single Turk killed in suppressing the revolt south of the Balkans. This one fact alone gives the lie to all

the assertions about the dangerous character of the rebellion and the necessity the Turks were under, in the impossibility of bringing up regular troops, of calling out the Mussulman population. This one fact refutes all the assertions of the apologists and defenders of the Turk, and shows how weak and childish an affair the insurrection really was, how cruel, brutal, stupid, senseless, was this organised pillage and destruction of a whole province, this indiscriminate butchery of innocent people, this wholesale slaughter of weak, helpless women and children.

The history of the affair at Avrat-Alan seems to be as follows: Upon the day fixed for the outbreak the insurgents assembled in a body about two hundred strong, marched quietly to the konak, or house of the Mudir, surrounded it, and summoned the Mudir to surrender. There were at the konak at this time, besides the Mudir, five or six Zaptiehs and an officer, all well armed. They barricaded the doors and windows of the konak, and determined to stand a siege. They defended themselves very courageously for twenty-four hours, though it does not appear that up to this time anybody had been killed on either side, notwithstanding the considerable amount of firing. The besieged, perceiving, however, that they would probably be overpowered in the end, determined to make a sortie and endeavour to escape from the place. This resolution they carried out with great courage and spirit, and all succeeded in breaking through the insurgents, who were not looking for this sudden onslaught, and who were altogether taken by surprise. But in the running fight which ensued, the Mudir and one of the Zaptiehs were killed, while the others succeeded in effecting their escape. These were the only Turks who lost their lives here, except the gipsies already spoken of, who were killed afterwards. The insurgents now had complete possession of the village, and had everything their own way for the next few days. It does not appear, however, that they did anything but march through the streets in procession, singing and declaring themselves free and independent. They did not molest any of the Mussulman villages in the neighbourhood; they were quite satisfied with what they had done, and did not seem to perceive that anything more was required of them. They appeared to be quite ignorant of the fact that there were 5,000 regular troops in Philippopolis who would inevitably be down on them in a few days, and they gave themselves over unrestrainedly to

the enjoyment of their freedom. These enjoyments seem to consist principally in marching up and down the streets and singing the national Bulgarian airs. Only in one instance did they show themselves alive to the necessities of the situation. The Christians of the neighbouring village of Strelcha, finding that insurrection was such an easy and pleasant thing, likewise determined to rise. But as half the population of this village were Turks, who would probably object to this step, they sent to Otluk-kui and Avrat-Alan for aid. A number of the insurgents accordingly went to their assistance; a fight ensued between them and the Turkish population, during which the whole of the village was burnt. The Christians say it was the Turks who did it. And the Turks say it was the Christians. The probability is, that both parties have had a hand in the burning, and that the Turks burned the Christian quarter and the Christians the Turkish quarter. This is the only case we heard of where the Turks were molested by the Christians, and being a mixed village, once a rising had been determined upon, a fight was of course inevitable. But even here the Turks do not complain that there was a single Turkish woman or child killed or violated. The women and children on both sides ran away into the fields and remained away until the fight was over. But as the Turks finally gained the upper hand, they wreaked a fearful vengeance on their Christian neighbours and upon their wives and children. I will not dwell upon this fact, however. The Turks of this village had at least a pretext for their acts of cruelty, and I am willing to make all allowance for their exasperation at the sight of their burning homes. It is the one case in which the Turkish population was molested by their Christian neighbours, and although they took a terrible vengeance, it was nevertheless a vengeance, and not like those cold-blooded, unprovoked, inexcusable acts of cruelty and ferocity that were committed everywhere else. After the massacre of Batak, and the unprovoked atrocities at Otluk-kui a mere act of vengeance, however cruel and however unjustifiable, seems to sink into a venial offence. It is the one case in which the Turks had a shadow of a pretext for what they did, and I am willing to allow them all the credit to be derived from it. But the Turks of this village have been repaid their losses by the Turkish authorities; their houses are being rebuilt for them at the public expense; their cattle were never driven

away; there were not half-a-dozen of them killed in the fight, for the fighting in this country is not deadly—it is only when the Christians surrender their arms that there is any great loss of life. They have besides seized all the cattle and live stock of their Christian neighbours. They are better off from a worldly point of view than they were before. So we may spare any compassion we might otherwise have felt for them. They have in reality turned their Christian neighbours into slaves, forcing them to work for nothing, refusing them permission to gather their own harvests, except upon condition of sharing it half and half, and finally violating their women with impunity. This state of things exists at Strelcha at this moment, and there is no remedy for it.

To return to the story of events that occurred at Avrat-Alan. The young men here soon began to discover that an insurrection required, to make it a success, something more than marching up and down the streets singing Bulgarian airs. Hafiz Pacha marched upon Otluk-kui, took it without losing a man, and then marched upon Avrat-Alan. They immediately fled to the mountains, and left the village to take care of itself. Hafiz Pacha approached upon one side, and the Bashi-Bazouks upon the other. The people who had taken no part in the outbreak decided to send to Hafiz Pacha and tender their submission. They sent two priests, one to the Bashi-Bazouks, who was immediately killed, and the other to Hafiz himself. Hafiz had apparently satisfied his thirst for blood and his desire for amusement at Otluk-kui; he was now disposed to do a little stroke of business, and he consented to treat with the inhabitants. He ordered that all the men of the place should come outside of the town to his camp, in order to discuss the terms on which he would accept their submission. They were detained in the camp two days, and during this time the Bashi-Bazouks and many of the troops entered the town. They did not, however, commit the same excesses as at Otluk-kui. They did not burn the town, nor did they kill any women and children. Hafiz Pacha had probably given orders that this should not be done, and his orders were obeyed, just as they were at Otluk-kui. They besides had also, perhaps, glutted their thirst for blood at the latter place, and were now satiated. But they pillaged every house, and they violated nearly every woman and girl in the town.

There were many well-to-do and comparatively rich people here. They have all more or less education and refinement; the houses were well and solidly built, with many appliances of comfort, and even what might in this country be considered luxury. The women we observed were generally comely, and even pretty. They dressed well, and made some pretensions to elegance in their poor way, giving many evidences of refinement and culture. And these gentle, sensitive, modest women were seized and violated by brutes whose hands were still red from the slaughter of Otluk-kui, whose clothes were still reeking with the blood of young girls and children whom they had outraged and slain. The women were stripped naked, and in the presence of each other submitted to every species of degradation and infamy that the foul and debased imagination of a savage could invent. Nay, more. A simple savage, with all the untamed ferocity of a savage state, still keeps within the bounds of Nature. He has not yet learned to overstep the limits which Nature has fixed. These Turks, on the contrary, seem to combine all the degrading vices of an artificial state with the unbridled lust of a barbarous race. And these gentle, virtuous women and girls were left in the hands of these beasts for two days, subjected to revolting, brutal, debasing treatment, that must leave its blot and its stain through life. Many of these women came to Mr. Schuyler to relate their woes. They would generally begin talking very quietly, and you could see that they had schooled themselves to calmness beforehand. They had a great idea of the dignity and importance of a Secretary of Legation, and it was touching to see their efforts to conduct themselves with proper decorum and to maintain a becoming composure. But the merest glance sufficed to show that this calmness was all assumed, that they were trembling with emotion. There was a paleness in the face, a nervous twitching of the features, and a tremor in the voice, threatening at every moment to break into a sob that showed only too well the feelings with which they were struggling. Then, as the story went on, they would suddenly stop, break down in the middle of it, bury their faces in their hands, and with a storm of sobs and tears that were strangely contagious avow that they could go no further.

God knows, they had generally gone far enough before this breakdown would come. They had bravely confessed dishonour

with only a tremor of the voice, but there was worse yet. A woman, it seems, can suffer more than mere dishonour at the hands of a Turk. She can be stained, defiled, degraded, until she looks upon herself with horror and loathing. And many of these women were not weeping for themselves alone, but for their daughters as well—young, innocent, tender girls of twelve and fifteen; nay, even children, often maltreated in the same brutal manner. It may be asked why these women should thus come forward and avow their shame and their dishonour? Who can tell? A burden of injustice too great for endurance; wrongs too foul, too dreadful to be borne in silence; the poor wounded spirit impelled by some invisible power to shriek them out, that Heaven may hear if it cannot see, and the feeble, the forlorn hope, perhaps, that some time they may yet be avenged, and justice yet be done. It would be useless for me to go on repeating the stories that were told us. I do not wish to be accused of dwelling needlessly upon these revolting details. Some of these stories are enough to drive one mad. You cannot listen to them without a feeling of almost ungovernable rage, all the more intense because it is utterly impotent and powerless, for you can do nothing. There is no justice for these people; there is no redress for the wrongs of these young girls. They must carry this stain and this dishonour through life; they must carry these wrongs to the grave. There is no punishment for the perpetrators of these crimes, absolutely none. As far as all human probabilities go, these men will die in their beds in the odour of sanctity, calling upon the God of Islam, and not even conscious of their crimes. Besides those who came singly to tell their woes, a delegation of ladies called upon Mr. Schuyler, but they had comparatively little to say. They seemingly could not bring themselves to speak in each other's presence of what they had suffered, and it was not until they went away that we perceived the real object of their visit. For, upon going, they handed Mr. Schuyler a letter signed by them all, in which they gave a short but comprehensive account of what had happened. If Mr. Schuyler is at liberty to give this curious document to the world, he will probably do so in his report, but I am under the impression that they requested him not to publish it.

While these things were occurring, Hafiz Pacha was secretly negotiating with the men whom he retained prisoners in the

camp the terms of the ransom of the village. They were agreed upon, the money, after much difficulty, was finally raised, and the men were set at liberty and allowed to return to their ravaged homes. Mr. Schuyler has, I believe, obtained all the facts of this transaction, though with much difficulty. The people are yet fearful of the vengeance of Hafiz, and should he ever discover the persons who told about him he would probably soon find means to pay them out; for this money was not levied upon behalf of the Government, but for Hafiz Pacha's own private exchequer, and the Government, needing money as badly as it does, may even yet ask him to pay it into the treasury. The number of people killed here was, I believe, between 200 and 300, among whom there were comparatively very few women and children. They were principally those who attempted to fly from the village, and were overtaken by the Bashi-Bazouks and killed in the country.

MR. SCHUYLER'S PRELIMINARY REPORT

ON THE

MOSLEM ATROCITIES.

THE following is the *preliminary* report of Mr. Schuyler, the American Consul-General, to the Hon. Horace Maynard, the American Minister, resident in Constantinople. At the date of its appearance, Mr. Schuyler was still in the ravaged district pursuing his inquiries.

PHILIPPOLIS, August 10, 1876.

SIR,—In reference to the atrocities and massacres committed by the Turks in Bulgaria, I have the honour to inform you that I have visited the towns of Adrianople, Philippopolis, and Tatar-Bazardjik, and the villages of Stenimakho, Kadi-Keni, Kritshma, Perustitsa, Peshtera, Radulovo, Batak, Kalaglari, Panagurishta (Otluk-kui), Koprishitsa (Avrat-Alan), and Klissura (Persiden or Dervent), in the districts of Philippopolis and Bazardjik.

From what I have personally seen, and from the inquiries I have made and the information I have received, I have ascertained the following facts.

During the last winter and spring, agents of the Bulgarian Committee at Bucharest made an agitation in Bulgaria for an insurrection against the Turkish Government, and met with considerable encouragement among the younger part of the population. Owing to the betrayal of the plot, the insurrection broke out prematurely on the 1st and 2nd of May in the villages of Klissura, Koprishitsa, Panagurishta, Novo Selo, Bellova, and, perhaps, one or two others. There was great alarm, and even a panic, at Tatar-Bazardjik and Philippopolis; numerous telegrams were sent to the Porte for regular troops, which after some delay were refused. The Beys of Philippopolis and Adrianople practically seized on the government, and armed the Mussulman inhabitants of the town and of the country, arms being sent for that purpose from Adrianople and Constantinople. These armed Mussulmans, called irregular troops or Bashi-Bazouks, were then, together with the few regular troops at hand, sent into a campaign against the Bulgarian villages, for the purpose of putting down the insurrection, and of disarming the Christian population. But few Circassians seem to have been employed at this time. Their settlements are east of Adrianople. It was a *levée en masse* of the Mussulman villages against their Christian neighbours.

The insurgent villages made little or no resistance. In many instances they surrendered their arms upon the first demand. Nearly all the villages which were attacked by the Bashi-Bazouks were burned and pillaged, as were also all those which had been abandoned by the terrified inhabitants. The inhabitants of some villages were massacred after exhibitions of the most ferocious cruelty, and the violation not only of women and girls, but even of persons of the other sex. These crimes were committed by the regular troops as well as by the Bashi-Bazouks.

The number of villages which were burned in whole or in part in the districts of Philippopolis, Roptchus, and Tatar-Bazardjik is at least sixty-five, of which the names are as follow :

DISTRICT OF PHILIPPOPOLIS.

Names of Villages.	Houses.	Churches.	Schools.
Sindjerli	200	1	1
Staro Novo-Selo	300	1	1
Yuleshintsa	90	1	1
Krastovo	100	1	1
Uzun-geren	70	—	—
Ereli	200	1	1
Sary-Gul	45	—	—
Aivadjik	50	—	—
Pashtusha	20	1	—
Zdrebrtchka	90	1	1
Yasy-Koria	140	1	1
Kozarsko	110	1	1
Tsaratsovo	—	—	—
Perustitsa	400	2	2
Uzunjak-Kiresh	—	—	—
Leshka	—	—	—
Savadja	—	—	—
Stubnitsa	—	—	—
Rega	—	—	—
Yünjular	—	—	—
Kavak-tiré	—	—	—
Narisa-Keui	—	—	—

DISTRICT OF ROPTCHUS.

Boikovo	60	1	1
Dudovo	20 houses burned.		
Sitovo	plundered, but not burned.		

DISTRICT OF TATAR BAZARDJIK.

Klissura (Persiden or Dervent)	700	1	2
Koprishitsa (Avrat-Alan)	plundered, not burned.		
Batak	900	1	3
Vietrona	600	1	1
Strelcha (mixed)	440	1	1
Popintsa	—	1	1
Radulovo	160	1	1
Kara-musab	—	1	1
Slavovitsa	—	1	1
Akandjeivo	—	1	1
Tchanaktcheieivo	—	1	1
Doganovo	—	—	—

DISTRICT OF TATAR BAZARDJIK—(continued).

Names of Villages.	Houses.	Churches.	Schools.
Ishitsa	—	1	1
Kalaglari (mixed)	160	1	1
Jumaya	—	1	1
Keneli	—	—	—
Galaka	—	—	—
Dere-orman	—	—	—
Syrt-orman	—	1	1
Tskyra	—	—	—
Novo-Selo	—	—	—
Bega	60	1	1
Oldjulan	—	1	1
Ellidere	—	1	1
Eshi-Kashli	80	—	—
Liamovo	—	—	—
Shiakhlare	—	1	1
Kulata	—	1	1
Kasapli	—	—	—
Tserovo	150	1	1
Hadjili	—	—	—
Dinkata	—	1	1
Karesli	—	—	—
Zlakatchen	—	1	1
Sichukovo	—	1	1
Kaloyerovo	—	1	1
Lusitchovo	—	1	1
Metchka	—	1	1
Petritch	—	—	—
Leshnitso	—	—	—
Panagurishta (Otluk-kui)	3000	2	3

This list may not be entirely correct, as many towns have both Turkish and Bulgarian names, and they may be repeated in one or two instances. Some villages, too, are probably omitted. Owing to the absence of statistics, it is impossible exactly to ascertain the population of each village, and in many cases I have not been able to learn the number of houses. In general, as long as the patriarch or father of a family is alive, his married sons live with him, so that there are frequently families of 15, 20, and even of 30 persons. The population of a village would be therefore larger than for the same number of houses in other countries. In the larger villages the lower stories of the houses are of stone, the roofs are tiled, the streets are paved, and there is a general air of comfort and well-being. Particular attention was given by the troops to the churches and schools, which in some cases were destroyed with petroleum and gunpowder. The altars were overturned, the pictures painted on the walls scratched and pierced, and the holy places defiled and desecrated.

Besides the villages, four monasteries were burned—St. Teodor, near Perusstitsa; the Panagia and the Bezsrabrinitza, near Kritshma; and St. Nicolas, near Kaloyerovo.

The Turks allege that many of these villages were burned by the insurgents for the purpose of compelling the Bulgarian inhabitants to join them. I am unable to find that such was the case in more than two or three instances, and even here the proof is very weak. At Bellova the insurgents burned the railway station, in which some Zaptiehs had taken refuge.

It is very difficult to estimate the number of Bulgarians who were killed during the few days that the disturbances lasted, but I am inclined to put 15,000 as the lowest for the districts I have named.

The manner in which the troops did their work will be seen from a few details gathered on the spot from persons who escaped from the massacre.

PERUSTITSA, a town of 400 houses, and between 3,000 and 4,000 inhabitants, took no active part in the insurrection. Becoming alarmed at the attitude of the Turks in the neighbouring villages, the inhabitants sent a deputation to Aziz Pacha, the Mutcssarif of Philippopolis, for regular troops to defend them. He returned them a written message that he had no troops to send, and that they must defend themselves. When the Bashi-Bazouks appeared before the town they therefore refused to surrender, entrenched themselves in a church, retreating finally to another, and held out for five days, until they saw the regular troops under Rashid Pacha, when the remainder gave themselves up. Many of the inhabitants escaped at the beginning of the struggle; but many were shot down. The church was bombarded, and about 1,000 in all were killed—many of them women and children. The town was pillaged and completely burned; not a single house being now standing. Many women were violated. The floor of the church, the churchyard, and many of the gardens were dug up afterwards in search for buried treasure. The Bashi-Bazouks here were commanded by Ahmed Aga. of Tamrysh, who was subsequently rewarded with a silver medal.

KLISSURA was nearly twice the size of Perustitsa and proportionately richer, as many of the inhabitants were engaged in the manufacture of attar of roses, and many were merchants travelling through the country. The insurrectionary movement began here on the 2nd of May, but it was not until the 12th that the Bashi-Bazouks, under the command of Tussum Bey of Karlovo, attacked the place. A few shots were fired, when the villagers surrendered and fled to Koprishititsa, and to the mountains. More than 250 Bulgarians were killed, chiefly women and children. The Turks claim that fourteen Mussulmans (in part gipsies) were killed before and during the fight. As soon as the Bashi-Bazouks entered the town they pillaged it and burned it. Among other things, 450 copper stills used in making attar of roses were carried away to the Turkish villages. Subsequent parties carried off all that was left, even to the nails from the doors, and the tiles from the roofs. The church was desecrated and blown up. Tussum Bey for this exploit was decorated with the Medjidié.

KOPRISHITITSA (Avrat-Alan), although one of the first villages to rebel, was one of the last to be attacked. Warned by the fate of Klissura and Panagurishta, the leading inhabitants themselves arrested the ringleaders of the insurrection, and sent to Philippopolis for regular troops. In spite of this the bearers of submission were fired on, and one, the priest Dontcho, was killed, the town was several times pillaged, many of the women were violated, and about thirty persons were killed. The town was not burned, and a general massacre was avoided by large presents of money paid by the leading inhabitants to the Turkish commanders. Three shots were, however, fired at the church, but did little damage. The villagers admit having killed ten Turks and forty gipsies, the latter being suspected of an intention to plunder the town. The Turks claim a total loss of seventy-one.

PANAGURISHTA (Otluk-kui) was attacked by a force of regular troops, together with Bashi-Bazouks, on the 11th of May. Apparently no message to surrender was sent. After a slight opposition on the part of the insurgents the town was taken. Many of the inhabitants fled, but about 3,000 were massacred, the most of them being women and children. Of these about 400 belonged to the town of Panagurishta, and the others to nine neighbouring villages, the inha-

bitants of which had taken refuge there. Four hundred buildings, including the bazaar and the largest and best houses, were burned. Both churches were completely destroyed, and almost levelled to the ground. In one an old man was violated on the altar, and afterwards burned alive. Two of the schools were burned, the third—looking like a private house—escaped. From the numerous statements made to me, hardly a woman in the town escaped violation and brutal treatment. The ruffians attacked children of eight and old women of eighty, sparing neither age nor sex. Old men had their eyes torn out and their limbs cut off, and were then left to die, unless some more charitably disposed man gave them the final thrust. Pregnant women were ripped open and the unborn babes carried triumphantly on the points of bayonets and sabres, while little children were made to bear the dripping heads of their comrades. This scene of rapine, lust, and murder was continued for three days, when the survivors were made to bury the bodies of the dead. The perpetrators of these atrocities were chiefly regular troops commanded by Hafiz Pacha. The Turks claim and the villagers admit the death of fourteen Mussulmans, two of whom were women who were killed with arms in their hands during a conflict with a party that refused to surrender to the insurgents.

While pillage reigned supreme at Koprishitsa, and lust at Panagurishta, at Batak the Turks seemed to have no stronger passion than the thirst for blood. This village surrendered without firing a shot, after a promise of safety, to the Bashi-Bazouks, under the command of Ahmed Aga, of Burutina, a chief of the rural police. Despite his promise, the few arms once surrendered, Ahmed Aga ordered the destruction of the village and the indiscriminate slaughter of the inhabitants, about a hundred young girls being reserved to satisfy the lust of the conqueror before they too should be killed. I saw their bones, some with the flesh still clinging to them, in the hollow on the hill side, where the dogs were gnawing them. Not a house is now standing in the midst of this lovely valley. The saw mills—for the town had a large trade in timber and sawn boards—which lined the rapid little river, are all burned, and of the 8,000 inhabitants not 2,000 are known to survive. Fully 5,000 persons, a very large proportion of them women and children, perished here, and their bones whiten the ruins, or their putrid bodies infect the air. The sight of Batak is enough to verify all that has been said about the acts of the Turks in repressing the Bulgarian insurrection. And yet I saw it three months after the massacre. On every side were human bones, skulls, ribs, and even complete skeletons, heads of girls still adorned with braids of long hair, bones of children, skeletons still encased in clothing. Here was a house the floor of which was white with the ashes and charred bones of thirty persons burned alive there. Here was the spot where the village notable Trandafil was spitted on a pike and then roasted, and where he is now buried; there was a foul hole full of decomposing bodies, here a mill dam filled with swollen corpses; here the school house, where 200 women and children who had taken refuge there were burned alive, and here the church and churchyard, where fully a thousand half-decayed forms were still to be seen, filling the enclosure in a heap several feet high, arms, feet, and heads protruding from the stones which had vainly been thrown there to hide them, and poisoning all the air.

Since my visit, by orders of the Mntessarif, the Kaimakam of Tatar Bazardjik was sent to Batak, with some lime to aid in the decomposition of the bodies, and to prevent a pestilence.

Ahmed Aga, who commanded at the massacre, has been decorated and promoted to the rank of Yuz-bashi.

These atrocities were clearly unnecessary for the suppression of the insurrec-

tion, for it was an insignificant rebellion at the best, and the villagers generally surrendered at the first summons. Nor can they be justified by the state of panic, which was over before the troops set out on the campaign. An attempt, however has been made—and not by Turks alone—to defend and to palliate them on the ground of the previous atrocities which, it is alleged, were committed by the Bulgarians. I have carefully investigated this point, and am unable to find that the Bulgarians committed any outrages or atrocities, or any acts which deserve that name. I have vainly tried to obtain from the Turkish officials a list of such outrages, but have heard nothing but vague statements. I was told by Kiani Pacha that the insurgents killed the wife and daughter of the Mudir of Koprishitsa; but this Mudir had recently gone there, and had left his wife at Eski Saara, where she still resides, and had no daughter. I was also told of the slaughter of the wife of the Mudir of Panagurishta, but at the time mentioned that village had no Mudir. I was referred for information to Hafiz Nuri Effendi, a leading Turk of Philippopolis. In a very careful statement made by him, he sets the number of Mussulmans (including gipsies) killed during the troubles at 155, of whom twelve are women and children—the word children taken to mean any one under twenty years of age. I have been able to obtain proof of the death of only two of these women—at Panagurishta—who certainly were not intentionally killed. No Turkish women or children were killed in cold blood. No Mussulman women were violated. No Mussulmans were tortured. No purely Turkish village was attacked or burned. No Mussulman house was pillaged. No mosque was desecrated or destroyed. The report of the special Turkish Commissioner, Edib Effendi, contains statements on this point, as on every other, which are utterly unfounded in fact, and the whole report may be characterised as a tissue of falsehoods.

I am, Sir,

Yours very truly,

EUGENE SCHUYLER.

THE HONOURABLE HORACE MAYNARD, &c.

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MDCCCLXXVI.

WHAT THE TURKS ARE,

*AND HOW WE HAVE BEEN
HELPING THEM.*

SPEECH OF THE DUKE OF ARGYLL
=

IN THE CITY HALL, GLASGOW,

SEPTEMBER 19, 1876.

WITH A PREFACE.

GLASGOW :
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P R E F A C E.

It can be very rarely right to bring popular agitation to bear upon the Foreign policy of the Government. Nothing, in my opinion, could justify any member of either House of Parliament in joining in such an agitation except a conviction that the attitude of the Ministry has been fundamentally wrong on some matter of justice and of the national honour.

Such has been my conviction of the attitude of the present Government towards the Christian subjects of the Porte.

The same attitude—in my opinion, not only ungenerous, but unjust—appeared in the conduct of the Foreign Office under the same Minister, during the

Cretan Insurrection in 1867. I then brought it under the notice of the House of Lords in a speech which has been now republished.* It proves that in the following speech, delivered at Glasgow, I have only reiterated opinions which I have long entertained, and which I expressed at a time when they could not possibly have any party significance whatever.

The Bulgarian massacre—although only a horrible incident in a long series of transactions—has at last awakened the conscience of the country to truths which ought to have been seen and felt before; and I deem it not only a legitimate thing but a duty to take advantage of so favourable an opportunity of deepening and directing the new convictions of the people.

Those who keep silence on such a question for fear of being accused of party motives are as blameable as

* "Conduct of the Foreign Office during the Insurrection in Crete in 1867." MacLohose, Glasgow.

those who, sharing the same convictions, yet hold their peace because their own party is in power.

This speech has been called an indictment of the Government. And so it is. The first step to amendment is to see clearly what has been wrong before. In this case everything was wrong before—except, indeed, the ingenuous advice to Turks to be wise and good. There was from the first an unjust desire to see the Christian insurrection suppressed at any price. Then everything done subsequently was either wrong, or done in a wrong way. There was no foresight—no timely action. The one thing done heartily has been to help the Turks. The Government were dragged into the “Consular Mission.” They were dragged into the “Andrassy Note.” They were impelled to refuse the “Berlin Memorandum” mainly from fear of that which was above all things to be desired—European intervention in the internal affairs of Turkey. This they confessed in writing to Sir H. Elliot on the very same day on

which, in writing to Lord Odo Russell, they founded their objections to the Berlin Note mainly on difficulties of detail. They were perhaps right in sending the fleet to save life. But when it was sent they traded on a false interpretation of their object in doing so. A confession of Turkish incompetence, and a precaution against Turkish fanaticism—they allowed it to pass for a support to Turkey and a threat to Europe. They postponed further action after the Berlin Memorandum, to see whether the “Eastern Question” would settle itself by the substitution on the Turkish throne of one idiot for another.

These are the main counts of an indictment which seemed to me to justify and to call for the most active public agitation.

Lord Beaconsfield says that the Government has had to deal not only with other Cabinets, but with populations and secret societies. But could not this have been foreseen? Is it not one of the necessary

and notorious conditions which arise out of the rottenness of Turkey, and which must become aggravated in direct proportion as the Cabinets of Europe fail in their solemn duty of intervention? At the moment at which I write it seems not improbable that events may have passed out of the hands of the Cabinets of Europe, mainly because our Government for months and months together "depreciated" and thwarted their united action. Even Austria, selfish and reluctant as she has been, told Lord Derby in January that she did not intend the Andrassy Note "to be regarded as mere good advice." But Lord Derby's reply was that England was not prepared to do more than simply advise the Turks!

On the other hand, the present Government are as capable as any other men of carrying into effect that new policy which is in accordance with the new convictions of the country. Nor do I think it would be wise to impose on them conditions which it might

not be possible to obtain. The whole "Eastern Question" is certainly not yet ripe for settlement. Enough if the steps now taken be firm steps, and in the right direction.

It is sad to think that if the same steps, or even some of them, had been taken in January, which (it is reported) are being taken now, the rising in Bulgaria would probably have been prevented altogether, and Europe would have been spared the greatest horror of modern times.

ARGYLL.

INVERARAY, *September 30, 1876.*

S P E E C H .

THE DUKE OF ARGYLL said—My Lord Provost, fellow-countrymen, and friends of the West of Scotland, I have so much to say to you to-night, and such is the importance of the subject we are met to consider, that I am very anxious not to waste your time and my own strength, which is not very great to-night, with any unnecessary prefatory matter. But there are two things which I wish to say in the first place, in order to avoid possible misunderstanding. I have come here to-night to make a political, but I have not come to make a party speech. I am sorry to say, that there is no political party in this country which has a right or is in a position to make capital of these Turkish horrors. Lord Derby has said, in a recent speech to a deputation of working men, that he has been acting on the policy of his predecessors. I do not accept that statement, but I am not here to-night to dispute it. There is a time and a place for everything. This is to be said in favour of Lord Derby, that the blue-books containing the whole account of his policy were laid before Parliament before it rose, and no leader of any party got up in his place to propose a vote of censure. To be sure, those papers were presented at the fag-end of the session—in the

middle of the dog-days, when Parliament was exhausted; but still, I say, the Liberal party had an opportunity, and they missed it, of standing forth before the country and saying that this policy ought to be condemned. I come here to-night, therefore, following no political leader and, I am happy to say, too, following a standard which has not been raised by any particular class. There is one man—and he is here to-night—who has raised this standard of indignation in the country—my noble friend, Lord Shaftesbury—and he is a man whose long and beneficent life has been given to no party and to no class, but to humanity itself—a man who has never held office under any Government, unless it be under that Government which will endure throughout all generations, and which will some day—may it come soon!—bring to a final close the follies and the cruelties of mankind.

And now, gentlemen, there is one other thing which I wish to say to you preliminary to the main argument of my speech. There are many persons in this country who object to these great public meetings. They say that there is no argument in them—that those who address them appeal to the passions, and not to the intellect of the people; and they object to a foreign policy which they call a policy of sentiment. Now, gentlemen, there are many answers to be given to this argument. In the first place, I have never observed that those who silence the heart are very quick or wise in head. On the contrary, it has always appeared to me that those who have no heart in politics, or who, having excellent hearts of their own, think it their duty to silence them, are very often in matters of policy no better than fools. But there is one answer which I wish to make, and which will perhaps be appreciated more by many of these persons, and that is this—that those who object to this outburst of public sentiment are themselves guided by sentiment,

and by nothing else. But there is this difference—the sentiment by which they are guided is a bad and a selfish sentiment; the sentiment by which this great public meeting is moved is a generous and a just sentiment. And I will tell you what the sentiment is which I venture thus severely to condemn. The sentiment is this—that because the Eastern question presents many difficulties, and perhaps some dangers, to Europe—because we are afraid of facing those difficulties and those dangers—therefore we are to do our best to keep the Christians in the provinces of Turkey under the odious tyranny of the Turks. But, gentlemen, I am come here to argue, and not simply to declaim. I admit that declamation, sentiment, and feeling ought to follow argument, and not to precede it. And if you, my friends, being Scotchmen, and (as I know), as a nation, fond of argument—if you will listen to me for a few minutes to-night, I will place before you arguments such as I would address in my place in Parliament in the House of Lords if there was any chance of Parliament meeting during the autumn.

Well, then, my Lord Provost, I begin with this proposition, that the Turkish Government is so bad, so execrably bad, that every rebellion against it on the part of its Christian subjects is presumably just and righteous. Allow me to say a few words to you about what this Government of Turkey is. And let me tell you that what I shall say to you is taken mainly out of the papers which have been presented during these last few weeks by the Government to Parliament. I shall go very little indeed out of the records of the blue-book. I wish to give you an idea of what sort of Government it is that thousands of our fellow-politicians are willing to keep in power over the Christian provinces of Turkey.

In the first place, my Lord Provost and gentlemen, the

revenue of Turkey is farmed. Now, do you know what that means—do you know what it implies? The revenues of Turkey are in the main derived from direct and not from indirect taxation, and these direct taxes are farmed to the highest bidder. Now, gentlemen, there is not a man in this room who knows really what that means—all the oppression and iniquity which it involves. I will tell you the *modus operandi*. I had it the other day from one who had it from an eye-witness. I will illustrate it by a case which is well known to all of you. We know there is a good deal of wincing and pinching, and sometimes a little screaming, about the income-tax in this country. Now suppose that every man in this country, from the richest to the poorest, were subject to an income-tax of a great deal more than 10 per cent of his whole income, and suppose that the levying of that tax were not done by the Government, but handed over to the highest bidder, to whom practically the power is given, under the stimulus of personal interest, of saying what each man's income is, and taking whatever he chooses to call 10 per cent out of it,—fancy what the state of industry would be in this country if that were the case. Now, let me tell you a story which was told me the other day by an eminent American missionary who has long lived in the Turkish empire. He said the *modus operandi* was this:—Suppose that the estimated revenue of a particular province is £100,000; the highest bidder may bid perhaps £120,000, and then the whole power and strength of the Government is given to the contractor to go amongst the people and to exact as much profit as he can for himself over and above the revenue which finds its way into the hands of the Government. Let me tell you how the thing is done, as I have been told by one who heard it from an eye-witness. A Turkish pasha who has contracted for the

direct taxation of a province sends his agent round. The agent goes into a peasant farmer's house where the owner is thrashing his grain, which may be forty or fifty bushels of wheat, and he says, "You must give me a tenth of all your produce." Well, the peasant says, "There is my produce, forty or fifty bushels." On which the agent shrugs his shoulders, and says, "You horrid scoundrel, you infamous scamp, I know very well that these fifty bushels are only one half of what you have got; you have hidden the rest. I will take a half, or three-fourths, or perhaps the whole of it, because I know you have hid away the rest." And that poor man has no recourse. The contractor is armed with the whole powers of the Government, and the whole of its armed police and soldiers are at his back. I do not know whether things are quite as bad in European Turkey. They are very nearly as bad. This anecdote was told me of Asiatic Turkey, but they are very nearly as bad in European Turkey. And I ask you, gentlemen, whether it would be possible to feel secure in the fruits of your industry if you lived under a Government which adopted such an infamous system of gathering its revenues.

Now, let me tell you of another part of the badness of the Turkish Government—the corruption of its justice. Its judges are all bribable. There is hardly such thing, I believe, as an incorrupt judge in Turkey. In case you may think I am exaggerating, let me quote to you from the papers laid before Parliament the other day. Here is a letter despatched from Sir Henry Elliot, whose conduct has been lately so much under discussion. (Hisses.) Gentlemen, do not anticipate. I shall, before I conclude my observations, have a few words to say in regard to Sir Henry Elliot. In the meantime do listen to the testimony which he gives as to the corruption of the Government

of Turkey. He wrote on April, the 7th of this present year, to Lord Derby. He says—

“Men of integrity and character will not accept the posts, which consequently fall into the hands of those who know that it would be easy for them to cover the insufficiency of their salaries by illicit gains. That this is a common practice is so notorious that it is with regret I have to inform your Lordship *that while the professions of the Government have been of a determination to raise the administration of justice, its measures seem calculated further to debase it.*”—(Parl. Pap., No. 3, p. 60.)

So here we have the evidence of our Minister at Constantinople that up to the most recent date this Government of Turkey has been spreading over the land judges who notoriously are corrupt, who will take bribes from the rich Mohammedans, and who will oppress the poor Christians under them. Now, I ask, is not that another item—a most damning item—against the Government of Turkey? But, gentlemen, we are not left to the evidence of others. When this insurrection broke out, Turkey was, as usual, very profuse in her promises—“Oh, we will mend our ways; we confess that we have been very naughty boys for a long time, but we will mend our ways, and make all sorts of promises to the Christians.” And in these promises, which are recorded in the blue-books, you have the virtual confessions of the Turkish Government that there is not one of the primary rights of mankind under every civilized government which has not been notoriously violated under their existing administration. They confess that persons have been sent into exile without having been convicted of any crime (Parl. Pap., No. 2, p. 14); they confess that the people have been harassed by exactions of revenue by “farmers greedy of gain” (Ibid., p. 15); that is to say, they confess that the Government has been little better than one vast system of organized brigandage. Again, it is notorious the evidence of Christians is of little or no avail

in their courts of justice. No Christian has a chance before the Mohammedan courts of justice.

And now let me mention another item which I find in the confessions of this Government. What do you think one of their promises was? That for the future they will respect the testamentary deeds of their Christian subjects! That is to say, that up to the present moment it has been notoriously the case that the Government of Turkey robbed the Christians, interfering with the administration of guardians over the property of minors—in short, that the testaments or wills of the Christians were not respected under the existing system of Turkish administration. (Parl. Pap., No. 2, p. 65.)

Once more, hear what Vice-Consul Dupuis says, so late as the 9th July last, writing to Sir H. Elliot:—

“Judicial torture, as Your Excellency is aware, is a common practice in connection with judicial proceedings now going on against Bulgarian political prisoners. I am told that a victim from whom certain revelations are desired is either chained by the neck to the window of the prison and beaten by all comers, Zaptiehs or common criminals, or is confined in a dark narrow cell, rendering sleep or rest impossible, and where human nature seldom withstands the temptation of making confessions or disclosures.” (Parl. Pap., No. 5, p. 17.)

Now, gentlemen, before I pass from this subject, I must only allude in addition to the notorious fact, that in many of the provinces of Turkey the honour of Christian families is not safe from the degraded and degrading habits of the officers of the Turkish Government.

Well then, gentlemen, I think I have proved my point when I say that the Government of Turkey is so detestably bad—it fails so utterly in all the objects for which human government has been instituted—that every rebellion against it on the part of its Christian subjects is presumably just and righteous.

And now I ask you what inference is to be drawn from this fact? What is the attitude that we ought to stand in towards the insurgents and rebels against this detestable Government? Lord Derby says that his course has been to give fair-play—fair-play between this great Asiatic Government, for whose very existence Europe is now practically responsible, supported by an army and by an armed population, against the poor unarmed Christians of European Turkey. Well, gentlemen, I say this: If we are not in a position to interfere, if we cannot give our active sympathy to the Christians of European Turkey justly rebelling against intolerable grievances, at least let us not interfere on the other side—at least let us not give our diplomatic help to the oppressors against the oppressed.

And here I cannot help reading to you this statement which was made by the insurgents of Herzegovina as to what their demands really are and really were as regards the foreign Governments of Europe. They said—

“The Christians are resolved to die rather than suffer such slavery, and therefore they should be left to seek their own liberation by arms; and if they were not assisted they have at least a right to have no obstacle put in the way of their enterprise, and to expect that no aid be given to the oppressor.”

They add as alternatives—

“Or we are forced to beg some Christian Power to grant us a corner of land so that we may emigrate to it and abandon this unhappy country so cursed with misfortune. Or the Powers should prevail on the Sultan to let an autonomous State be formed out of Bosnia and Herzegovina”—

the very demand now put forward by Mr. Gladstone—

“tributary to the Sultan, with some Christian Prince from elsewhere, but never from here.” (Parl. Pap., No. 2, p. 40.)

Now, that was the demand of Herzegovina, and I echo it from my heart. If we could not give them our

sympathy, at least, gentlemen, you will agree with me that it ought to have been a benevolent neutrality towards them, and not a benevolent neutrality towards their oppressors.

Well, then, I proceed another step, and I hope our opponents will not say that this at least is not fair argument. I say if that was the attitude which we should have presented what has been our actual attitude? What has been the course taken by the Government? (A Voice—"No politics.") A gentleman says "No politics." I have not come here to be tongue-tied (Prolonged cheers.) I will and I must speak the truth. (Cheers.) I would much rather speak it in the presence of Lord Derby. I once did it before in the presence of his illustrious father; and if I am preserved in health and strength till Parliament meets I will repeat it, if it is necessary, in his presence. I want to take you through this blue-book, because as far as I have seen no man but Mr. Gladstone has read the blue-book. The public have no idea of what has been done and said in their name and in the name of the Queen of England. We have only thirteen months to account for, and I will take you through the stages, and on the evidence of the blue-book I will tell you what our Government has done.

The first news of the insurrection was heard by the Government of England on the 17th July, 1875. Now, what happened? Within three week of the breaking out of the insurrection, the Minister of Turkey came to Lord Derby and said, Here is a great insurrection of the Christians in the Herzegovina; they are actually getting help from their brother Christians across the Austrian frontier. This is really too bad, will you help us to prevent this? Oh, with all my heart, Lord Derby said—said, I mean, in the form of immediate acquiescence. That application was made by the Minister of Turkey on the 11th of August, and on the

very next day, without the delay of twenty-four hours, Lord Derby indited two despatches—one to Vienna urging Austria not to give any help to these Christians, and another to Constantinople. Gentlemen, I will read both to you. Here is the despatch to our Minister in Vienna:—

“The Porte considers it evident that a friendly representation from Her Majesty’s Government tending to induce the Cabinet of Vienna to take serious and efficient measures on the frontier would assist the Turkish Government in quelling the insurrection. I told the Turkish Ambassador that Her Majesty’s Government would be glad to learn that the Government of Austria had taken steps to secure the peace of the frontier, and to prevent the disturbances in Herzegovina from receiving support or encouragement from Austrian territory. I added that Her Majesty’s Government would instruct you to speak in this sense to Count Andrassy, and I have to request that you will do so accordingly.” (Parl. Pap., No. 2, pp. 5, 6.)

Now, gentlemen, let me read the other despatch—that was the despatch to Vienna; there was a corresponding despatch, dated the same day, to Constantinople. Lord Derby writes to Sir Henry Elliot to tell him what he had done, and adds—

“At the same time, Her Majesty’s Government are of opinion that the Turkish Government should rely *on her own resources to suppress the insurrection*, and should deal with it as a local outbreak rather than *give it international importance by appealing for support to other Powers.*” (Ibid, p. 6.)

Now, observe, gentlemen, here you have the key-note struck of the whole subsequent policy of the Government. You have, first of all, a direct exhortation to Turkey to suppress the insurrection as fast as possible; secondly, you have an exhortation to Turkey not to allow the interference of any other State; and, thirdly, you have the active diplomatic intervention of the British Government at other Courts to prevent the Christians getting the sympathy and help of their neighbouring populations.

Now, gentlemen, I must take you one step farther. What was the next step? The next step was what was called the Consular Mission. I daresay none of you have heard of it. So far as I have seen, it has been hardly noticed at all by speakers or in the press. But I will tell you what it was. The Foreign Offices of the three great Northern Powers—Russia, Austria, and Germany—nearly quite as selfish in their policy as our own—were terribly annoyed at this breaking out of the insurrection in Turkey, and they laid their heads together, and they said—Let us have a joint message to these insurgents, and tell them that they will get no help from us, the three Northern Powers; tell them to lay down their arms, and trust the renewed Turkish promises. Well, these three Northern Powers came to Lord Derby, and they said—Will you join in this representation to the insurgents? Lord Derby hesitated, and well he might. But what was the ground of his hesitation? That it was a cruel and unjust message to the insurgents? That they had no security for the promises of Turkey being fulfilled? No; but that the message was a dangerous interference with the power of the Turkish Government! That was the only objection which Lord Derby made, and in this he was more Turk than the Turkish Government,—for that government wished us to join. But at last he said—Since you—the Turkish Government—wish me to join these Powers in this recommendation, I am willing to do it; I do it reluctantly, but since you—the Turkish Government, implore me to join with the others, I will do it.* But in principle he condemned it. And on what principle? Here are his words: “Such an intervention is scarcely compatible with the independent authority of the Porte over its own territory, offers an inducement to insurrection as a means of appealing to

* Parl. Pap., No. 2, p. 8.

foreign sympathy against Turkish rule, *and may not improbably open the way to further diplomatic interference in the internal affairs of the Empire.*"

And now, gentlemen, what do you think was the message actually sent to the insurgents? I will read it. The Consuls were sent to these unfortunate insurgents who were in arms for all that is dear to men, against this odious Government—and they were instructed not to inquire into the grievances of these people, not even if they could help it, to listen to their grievances; but to tell them that the contest was a hopeless one, that they must lay down their arms, and submit to the government of the Turks. Here are the words (Parl. Pap., No. 2, p. 11):—

"It may be impossible for you to prevent the Christians from making known to you the nature and extent of their grievances; but without refusing to listen to what may be necessary to enable you to report to Her Majesty's Government, in order that the insurgents may not delude themselves into supposing that the Powers guarantee the realization of the wishes which they submit to the Imperial Commissioners, you will avoid provoking any discussion of their grievances." . . . "An impression has prevailed among the Christians that they enjoy foreign sympathy in the present movement, and that, if sustained, it will receive material support. The task which you and your colleagues have before you is to put an end to this delusion, and to convince the insurgents that the Powers are unanimous in withholding all countenance from them. Make the insurgents understand the hopelessness of engaging in a contest with the Imperial troops."

I ask you as Scotchmen—I ask you as descendants of men who, by rebellion heaped upon rebellion, have secured your own liberties—until you established a throne which was founded upon the liberties of the people—I ask you is this a message worthy of the British or of any other civilized Government? (Unanimous shout of "No, no.") I knew the response which I should have to such a question.

Well, gentlemen, perhaps some people will say, after all this was no harm. Was it no harm? Do you think the Turks had no object in asking us to join in so base and so craven a representation? They had an object. Whenever they got the European Powers to agree to this message they could turn round upon their own subjects and say, "See here, the European Powers believe in our promises; they are satisfied with our assurances; you have no hope from them, and we shall go forward to crush and overwhelm you." That was the object of the Turkish Government, and here it is confessed in their despatch. The Turkish Government says (Parl. Pap., No. 2, p. 13):—

"With regard to the missions of the Consuls of the Great Powers, we consider that they are likely to contribute to the pacification of the revolt. If this—"

now mark these words—

"If this be not the result, *we shall have relieved ourselves of all responsibility.*"

There you have the object of the Turkish Government, and there you have that confessed object given in to by the Powers of Europe, and, though I must say reluctantly, assented to by Lord Derby. (A Voice—"What would you have done?" received with cries of "Turn him out.") A gentleman in the middle of the hall asks what I would have done. I will come to that before I close.

Now, gentlemen, I take you another step forward. What did our Government do next? In January last the same Great Northern Powers saw that the thing was becoming really serious—that these insurgents were braving the whole power of the Turkish Empire—that the whole Eastern question was likely to be raised. They began to get seriously alarmed, and they put their heads together, and they concocted what was called the Andrassy Note. Now, I will tell you what that Note was. It was a powerful

indictment against the Government of Turkey for the bad government of their Christian subjects. It reminded them of their unfulfilled promises to Europe; and it ended by saying, You really must record the new promises which you have now made. You must record the new promises which you have now made to us as a European court; you must record them all afresh to us, otherwise the consequences may be serious. Well, they came to Lord Derby and said, Will you join in this Note Lord Derby did not at all appear to like this. It was obviously a great interference by the rest of Europe in the internal affairs of Turkey, and therefore it was not agreeable to him. But what did Turkey do? Turkey came forward, and said again to Lord Derby, Oh, for heaven's sake, do join these other Powers in asking this. So Lord Derby said, Oh, very well; if you Turks ask me to do it, why, I will do it. Now, I am not speaking without book. Here is what the Andrassy Note said: (Of course it is a long document, but I give you the principal paragraph—the conclusion of a long argument to Turkey that it had disgracefully failed in the fulfilment of its promises). It closes thus, and this is the pithy sentence, the gist of the whole matter—

“The Cabinets think it therefore absolutely necessary to obtain from the Sultan's Government, by means of an official Commission, the confirmation of its intentions with regard to the whole Empire, set forth in the firman of October 2, and the firman of December 12, and his notification to the Powers of his acceptance of the points specified above, the special object of which is the pacification of the revolted provinces.” (Par. Pap., No. 2, p. 83.)

Very well, says Lord Derby, since you Turks ask me to agree to join the other Powers, unless they ask something very objectionable (Parl. Pap., No. 2, p. 85), I will do so; and it is the more easy to do so, because what, after all, does this Andrassy Note amount to—it simply amounts to a repeti-

tion of the promises you have already made. You may just as well make them over again; there is no harm whatever in that. And then, as Austria astutely suggested, "if the Porte accepted the note, it would be advantageous on the one hand to the Porte, inasmuch as the Powers engaged themselves not to make fresh demands, and to give their support to the Turkish Government, in the event of its acceptance" (Ibid, p. 87); and so, on the whole, Lord Derby was willing to agree to this Andrassy Note, especially if it could be turned to the disadvantage of the Christian insurgents. Accordingly we find the following paragraph in a despatch dated the 25th of January of the present year, and addressed to the Austrian Minister in London:—

"They (H.M. Government) rely on the assurances contained in Count Andrassy's despatch and upon those which your Excellency has conveyed to me, that if these suggestions are carried into effect the Austro-Hungarian Government will, in concert with the other Powers, whose united action Count Andrassy has invited, use their best exertions to prevent the spread of the movement and *to induce the insurgents to submit, or effectually preclude them from receiving assistance from beyond the frontier should they persist in continuing the struggle.*" (Parl. Pap., No. 2, p. 96.)

So here we have Lord Derby's explanation of this famous act of diplomacy, his joining in the Andrassy Note. In his corresponding despatch of January 25, to Sir H. Elliot, he expressly recapitulates his former advice on the Consular Mission, that it would have been better for Turkey to avoid all appeals to the other Powers of Europe; and as expressly puts his assent to the Andrassy Note mainly on the request of the Porte itself that England should not hold aloof from the concerted action of the Powers, and on the further consideration that, after all, Turkey was asked to do little more than again record promises repeatedly given in former years from 1839 to 1856. (Parl. Pap., No. 2, p. 97.)

Now, gentlemen, I need not tell you that, when Lord Derby said all this, the Turks jumped at his proposition with the greatest gratitude. Sir Henry Elliot said on the 28th of January —

“Raschid Pasha [that is the Prime Minister of Turkey] has expressed the most lively satisfaction at the tenour of the instructions that your Lordship is forwarding to me, of which I communicated to him the summary.” (Par. Pap., No. 2, p. 105.)

Well, no wonder the Turks were satisfied; it was exactly what they wanted. It was another discouragement to the insurgents and another great act of moral support given to the oppressor.

Now, gentlemen, before I go farther into the history of these transactions, let me mention to you some things that had been taking place in the meantime. I am now going to quote two despatches from our representatives abroad, and I take this opportunity of saying, with regard to all these gentlemen, that I hold it as an absolute principle in politics, that you are not to visit upon subordinates the faults of their principals; and, especially, you are not to visit upon diplomatic agents the consequences of holding the language which they are ordered to hold by their principals at home. That is their duty; if you disapprove of their language, you must go to the Minister who does approve it. Now, I want to read to you a passage from the despatch from Sir Andrew Buchanan dated the 8th March, 1876. I only wish in passing to say that Sir Andrew Buchanan is one of my oldest and earliest friends. I know him to be a most upright, amiable, and excellent man, and I believe him to be one of the ablest members of the diplomatic body. In writing this despatch, he was writing in the tone of his chief, and no blame is to be placed on him. Speaking of the insurgent refugees in Austrian territories, who were receiving some small aid from the Austrian

Government, and of the difficulties in the way of removing them, he says :—

“ It is hoped here, however, that when the conciliatory measures to be taken by the Turkish authorities are more advanced, these objections will be got over, and the refugees who refuse to return will receive no assistance from the Government after the end of the month.” (Par. Pap., No. 3, p. 19.)

And on the 2nd March, in connection with the same matter, we have the following from Consul Freeman, writing from Bosna-Serai :—

“ The Austrian Consul-General here informs me that stringent measures are being taken to ensure the strict observance of neutrality on the Bosnian and Herzegovinian frontiers, and that the refugees in these provinces have been informed that after the expiry of fifteen days they will no longer receive any assistance either in food or money from the Austrian Government. *Small as the sum hitherto given has been, the withdrawal of such aid will doubtless be the cause of great misery*, but yet, I fear, it will not influence the return of the refugees to their homes. *In every direction the insurgents seem to be animated by the same sentiment—a determination to fight to the last rather than again submit to the Turkish authority.*” (Parl. Pap., No. 3, p. 18.)

Now, I ask, is it true, is it possible, that the diplomacy of England was helping at Vienna to have the miserable pittance which was allowed to these poor refugees withdrawn from them by the Austrian Government? Is it possible that that was the language of our Minister at Vienna, and of our other agents abroad, under instructions from the Government at home? Is this neutrality? Is this fair play?

Well then, gentlemen, I have only two other stages of this melancholy history to bring before you. I come now to the point of which Lord Derby had made so much—it is called the Berlin Memorandum. Well, the three Great Northern Powers found that the Consular Mission had done no good; they found that the Andrassy Note had done no good; and they again consulted together and said—Really we must go a step farther—and so they drew up what is called the Berlin Memorandum.

I will tell you in a single word what was the Berlin Note. The other Note (the Andrassy Note) had upbraided the Government of Turkey for not fulfilling its promises, and had said to Turkey, You must renew those promises in the face of Europe. The Berlin Note went a decided step farther, and indicated a determination on the part of Europe that those promises once recorded must be fulfilled. I need not tell you this was a very strong pill for Lord Derby. He had reluctantly agreed to the two previous documents because they were worthless; because they could do nothing; and above all, because Turkey wished us to acquiesce in them. But now that Europe was to step in and interfere with Turkey in some more definite and practical form, he objected to the Berlin Note. Well now, gentlemen, I do not say—I am not here to argue—that Lord Derby ought to have accepted the Berlin Note as it stood; there were details of the scheme which may have been ill-advised, and it is very likely that the particular scheme for the redress of those grievances put forward by the Berlin Note would not have been successful. All that I blame Lord Derby for is this, that when he did refuse the Berlin Note, as possibly he may have been right in doing, he did not say, We admit the principle of European intervention—we admit the principle that the European Powers, put off so long by the broken promises of Turkey—we admit that Europe as a whole is now entitled to enforce these promises. If he had said that, and if he had said, Let us consult together as to a better way of doing it, I for one should have had no fault to find with the answer he gave to the Berlin Note. But not a word of suggestion fell from Lord Derby as to any concert of the European Powers with regard to the government of Turkey.

Now, gentlemen, I come to a very delicate matter—I come to the Bulgarian horrors. I shall be very careful to be just to absent men in what I say upon this matter. It

is an entire mistake in the public mind that the sending of the fleet to Besika Bay had anything to do with the Bulgarian horrors. Lord Derby is quite right when he says that that is a mistake in the public mind—a mistake which a moment's attention to dates would be sufficient to rectify. The Bulgarian horrors took place in, I believe, the first and second weeks of May, and the British fleet was not sent to Besika Bay till the end of the month. There is no connection between these two events, so far as I know. But, then, I ask this question—Was there no other connection between the general conduct and the language of the English Government, and the reckless proceedings of the Turkish Government? I am sorry to say that I have become convinced that there was some connection between the two. Well, a gentleman says “No,” but let me just read you three documents, which emanate from three public servants of the English Government, and, I ask you, was it wise or prudent language to use to such a Government as that of Turkey? Sir Henry Elliot, on 7th May, addressed these words to Lord Derby (Par. Pap., No. 3, p. 144)—

“About 5,000 troops have been despatched from here, and I believe that no exertion should be spared for securing the immediate suppression of a movement which, if allowed to extend, will become extremely serious.” (A voice—“Right.”)

Well, it may be right in the interest of Turks. All I say is this, it was advice to the Turkish Government, seconding, and in the spirit of the advice of Lord Derby, given long before—Suppress these insurgents as fast as you can; do it immediately, at once, and don't let foreign Powers interfere. That was the language of Lord Derby, and it was faithfully seconded by Sir Henry Elliot. Well, then, here is another extract from Consul Reade. He writes, on the 16th May, at the very moment, I believe, that these horrors were being perpetrated—

“From all I see and hear, I am persuaded that there is nothing serious to fear for the moment, nor will there be if the Government acts with promptitude on the occurrence of any disorder. The Porte, however, I think, would do well were it to grant the Pasha more power so as to enable him to make examples of some of the chiefs of the insurgents; for I am persuaded if this is not done the natives will think that the Government is weak, and the disturbances, which at present are comparatively insignificant, are sure to increase; whereas, if a few examples were made of the chiefs, they would serve as salutary, and I think successful, lessons to the rest.” (Parl. Pap., No. 3, p. 199.)

Another vice consul writes in these words—with regard to these Bashi-Bazouks—on May 13 (Parl. Pap., No. 3, p. 181)—

“Hadji Achmet Aga, Rasin Bey, and other Turks of note here (Adrianople) are showing patriotism by arming and maintaining at their own expense a corps of 200 Bashi-Bazouks, each for operations in the Balkan.”

This is another consul telling us, as an act of patriotism, of the raising of these troops by private men, no doubt to be paid and repaid out of the plunder of the Christians. Well, it is only just to Sir Henry Elliot to say, that on the 12th of May, the moment he became aware that these Bashi-Bazouks were being spread over the provinces, he wrote to Lord Derby and said—

“As soon as a Government is formed here, to which I can make representations, I shall not fail to communicate to it N. Kynatzi's report, and to point out the danger of allowing the local authorities to act as those of Eski Tagra have apparently been doing.”

This, however, refers rather to the universal arming of the Mussulman population than to the employment of irregular troops; and on the 15th May he reported to Lord Derby the active enrolment of Bashi-Bazouks without any expression of opinion in regard to it. (Parl. Pap., No. 3, p. 180.) At a later period I believe that Sir H. Elliott did make remonstrances, but I fear he made them when the remains of the Bulgarian women and children were already festering and rotting

in the sun. Now, gentlemen, all I have to say is this—no English gentleman, no European statesman, can feel anything but unmitigated horror at these transactions in Bulgaria. I am sure if Sir Henry Elliot had foreseen them—I am sure these consuls whose words I have quoted, if they had foreseen them—would have been the first men to go to the Porte and say, “For heaven’s sake hold your hand, and don’t attempt to put down this insurrection by these hellish bands.” But they used most dangerous and incautious language, knowing as they did the nature of the Turkish Government and the instruments by which it habitually works. And yet in using that language, in urging the Turkish Government to put down the insurrection as speedily as possible, I say here, and I say it in the face of the British public, they did but re-echo the language of their chief—the language which has been held over and over again by the Foreign Office in London.

Now, gentlemen, I have very little more to say to you in regard to this matter. I am very sorry I have detained you so long. I will now, for a moment, refer to a speech which has been lately made by Lord Derby in defence of his policy to a deputation of working men. I want to read the words to you, because there is nothing like having the authority before you. He said that there was a great confusion in the public mind between the territorial integrity of Turkey and its independence; and he seemed to argue that although the Government have always been for upholding its integrity, that is to say, its internal *status quo*, the extent of its dominion, and so on,—yet as regards its internal government, it is quite a mistake to suppose that we have been acting in favour of the Turks as against the insurgents. Here are his own words:—

“But, gentlemen, as to the relations of the various races within the Turkish Empire to the Government, that is an entirely different ques-

tion. They have been repeatedly modified within the last few years, and they may be modified again. . . . If any one says that, as between the Christian races of Turkey and the governing powers of Turkey, our policy has been one of hostility to Christian races, I say that is a charge which I defy him to prove from any word uttered by me, or by any of my colleagues."

Now, I take up that defiance of Lord Derby's, and say this: If he means merely to deny that the English Government has been hostile to the Christians in the sense of not wishing them to have good government, I entirely admit the truth of his denial. No man in his senses will accuse Lord Derby or any other Minister of this Government or of any other Government of not desiring in the abstract to see the Christians under a better government. This blue-book is full of good advice. They say a certain place is paved with good intentions, and it may be said that the same place is paved with good advice. The Government of England has been perpetually saying to the Turkish Government—"Oh, do be good! oh, do treat your Christian subjects justly!" and urging and exhorting them to adopt a better form of government. They have been always saying—"O Ethiop, do change your skin!—O leopard, do put off your spots!" But I say this, that as against the Christians in arms for their own liberty—as regards the Christians considered as insurgents—the policy of Lord Derby and his colleagues has been one of continuous, bitter, fatal hostility—urging the Turkish Government to put them down—telling the Turkish Government to be quick about it—blaming them for apathy, hounding them on to put down these insurgents, and saying to the Powers of Europe—"You are not to interfere between the subjects of the Turk and the Turkish Government." If you think I have misrepresented Lord Derby, listen to his own words, written on the 19th of May to Sir H. Elliott—

“I have to point out to your excellency that Her Majesty’s Government have since the outbreak of the insurrection in Bosnia and Herzegovina, deprecated the diplomatic intervention of other Powers in the affairs of the Ottoman empire.” (Parl. Pap., No. 3, pp. 173, 174.)

Such is Lord Derby’s own summary of the policy of the British Government. That is to say, they have resisted and thwarted as far as in them lay, the concert of Europe in a matter which nothing but that concert can settle. Moreover, they have been urging all over Europe that the neighbouring Christians—having better hearts than we have, from their being brought nearer, and necessarily more in sympathy with their co-religionists—that these fellow-Christians should not be allowed to help their neighbours.

Well, gentlemen, before I close this painful narrative, I can only say that in the thirty years during which I have been in public life I have never read any documents which shocked me as deeply as these papers, brought before Parliament at the close of the last session; and I say, on looking back at the language which has been held by the Ministry of this country, that I regard it, and I shall never cease to regard it, both with sorrow and with shame.

Now, gentlemen, somebody in the middle of the hall—somebody asked—“What would you have done?” Now, this is a very fair question, one of these pertinent questions that Scotchmen are so well apt to put. But there are other nations that are still farther north than the Scotch, quite as longheaded and quite as eager to put questions of the kind. Now, gentlemen, this very question, which was put to me by my friend, has been more recently put to Lord Derby himself by the Russian Minister on the 12th June. The Russian Minister and the Russian Government seemed to be

extremely puzzled by Lord Derby's eccentric course. They never could get him to agree to anything except those things which he himself confessed were perfectly useless and perfectly nugatory. So at last they said—Now, really, pray do tell us what is your policy? What do you want? What will you do? “What was the drift and object of British policy? Until that was known united action was impossible, however much other Powers might desire it.” (Parl. Pap., No. 3, p. 260.) Lord Derby answers—Well, I think I will do nothing. Then, gentlemen, I look through these blue-books, and I ask myself what was Lord Derby's object? He has often said, I don't commit myself to the policy of non-intervention; I don't say the Turks are to have all their own way and that they are to do anything they please; I do not admit the abstract principle of non-intervention. And in one place he gives a definition of the circumstances under which he thinks it might perhaps be lawful to interfere. These are his own words reporting a conversation with the Russian Minister, in which that minister defined what he understood to be the position of the British Foreign Office. He says (Parl. Pap., No. 3, p. 313)—

“His Highness understands that I consider European action is admissible to prevent”---

What?—

“the extermination of the Christians.”

In the event of the Christians being exterminated, Lord Derby says he might perhaps interfere.

Perhaps, gentlemen, you will think that I am exaggerating the language of Lord Derby, as regarded his determination to do nothing. But here are his own words. In answer to the Russian Minister, he says—

“Nothing, I thought, remained, except to allow the renewal of the struggle, until success should have declared itself more or less decisive on one side or the other.” (Parl. Pap., No. 3, p. 261.)

That is to say, We should do nothing but let them fight it out. And then he made this profound observation to the Russian Minister—and I cannot help wondering what the Russian Minister’s feelings must have been—he said—Why, you see this will happen. If the insurgents get their own way, why, they will get their own way. If they win the day, they will probably set up an autonomous state, and I shall be very glad if they do. On the other hand, if they are beaten by the Turkish Government—and standing alone, I do not pretend to deny that that is the probable result—why then, perhaps, we may be called on to make peace; but, in the meantime, we stand and do nothing, and let them fight it out.

Now, gentlemen, I will answer the question which my friend has put to me from the body of the hall. I will tell you what I would have done. I would have done what, I hope and believe, the Government is now doing, taught by public opinion, schooled into its duties by this great demonstration of public feeling. In the first place, I would have said from the beginning, “I will not help you, the Government of Turkey, to put down those Christian insurgents, until I know that you have established over them a just government. I will not say a single word in the name of the Queen of England at the other Courts of Europe to suppress the just and legitimate sympathy of other Christians in support of these men; I will not lift my little finger in your aid, until you have fulfilled your promises to Europe.” That is the first thing I would have said. But I will tell you another thing I would have said. When the Berlin Note was presented, I would have said, as all England, and Scotland, and Ireland are now

saying, " We join heart and hand with you, the other Great Powers of Europe. We think the time has come when some security must be taken for the good government of these Christian subjects of the Porte. We don't think the particular scheme you have put forward is quite the best, but let us meet together, let us consult together, and let us be agreed upon this—that Turkey shall not be allowed ever again to have direct and uncontrolled dominion over those populations that she has so grossly and so cruelly misruled." Now, gentlemen, I venture to hope that that is the course Lord Derby is now taking. Of course, I know nothing of the secrets of diplomacy; but I read his speech to the working men, and I find this passage in it—

" As for these unfortunate Bulgarians, who have suffered so much, they have a right, no doubt, to such reparation as it is now possible to make, and they have a right also—an undoubted right—to the general, conspicuous, and exemplary punishment of those who have been the offenders, and I think they have also a claim"—

now mark these words—

" and I think they have also a claim and a right that in one manner or another *we should take steps* such as may secure them from a recurrence of similar abuse in the future."

In this passage what is meant by " We," I presume it means not England only, but all the Great Powers of Europe. Well, this is the intervention so long deprecated, and resisted when it ought to have been welcomed and invited. I say, gentlemen, that is an entire abandonment—and I rejoice in it—an entire abandonment of the ground which he had stood on before—that we were to discourage the interference of the other Powers of Europe; that we were not to allow interference with the internal affairs of Turkey; that Turkey was to put down these insurgents by herself. I rejoice in this abandonment, but don't let Lord Derby retreat from the position he once held, and

then tell us that he is now pursuing, under the pressure of public opinion, the very policy which from the beginning he had adopted.

Now, gentlemen, I have very little more to say to you, but there is one point on which I feel it a special duty to say a few words to this great assembly of my countrymen. Gentlemen, when this night has passed away, when tomorrow's dawn arises, it will be the dawn of the twenty-second anniversary of the battle of the Alma. It was fought on the 20th September, 1854. It seems to me strange, gentlemen, when I look back over that interval of time; when I remember that infants then unborn have now attained to the age of manhood; that those who were young men in their prime are now already in the decline of life; and that thousands and tens of thousands who took an active part in that great contest have been gathered to their fathers. I am one of five survivors of the Cabinet which waged the Crimean War. I was the youngest member of it, but there was no difference in that tremendous responsibility. There was no member of that Cabinet, be he the youngest or be he oldest, who had not to search his own heart whether the course which we were then taking was wise and just. And this I will tell you, gentlemen, that if I thought—if I could imagine—that this policy of Lord Derby had been the legitimate result of that Crimean War, I should sit in sackcloth and ashes over the part which I then took, as one of the greatest of the sins of my youth. But I rejoice to tell you, gentlemen, that I labour under no such feeling. On the contrary, it was the Crimean War which specially lifted us above the level of such a cold, and heartless and selfish policy as this. For what was the object of the Crimean War? To support the Turks? No. To put the fate of Turkey in the hands of united Europe and to take it out of the solitary hands of the Russian

Empire. That was why we fought the Crimean war. It did so happen that in that particular quarrel Turkey was right and Russia was wrong. But we fought that war not because we believed in the regeneration of Turkey. I, for one, never believed in it—but because we thought we were entitled to say to Russia, “You have no right to make—or to take steps to make—the fate of Turkey a peculiarly Russian question. You must consult the other Powers of Europe; and we will not allow you to establish between yourselves and Turkey exclusive treaties which will practically put it out of the hands of the rest of Europe to interfere with your proceedings.” We succeeded in that war, and we placed Turkey in the hands of united Europe; and I say that, having done so, it is all the more our bounden duty to take council with the other States of Europe, to go hand in hand with them, and say, ‘We will join you in taking any measures which may be possible to restrain the cruelties of this irreclaimable Government of Turkey.’”

And now, gentlemen, before I sit down allow me to say this. I don't quite agree with some observations which fell from my right honourable friend, Mr. Robert Lowe. In a speech delivered a few days ago, he threw great ridicule on what has been called the doctrine of the balance of power, and he said it was an old antiquated doctrine, in the name of which the greatest crimes had been committed by mankind. Well, I don't for a moment deny that there has been a great deal of nonsense talked about “the balance of power,” and that very wicked wars and very needless wars have been waged about it. But if Mr. Lowe or any other statesman tells me that it is a matter of perfect indifference to the rest of Europe whether Russia or any other power shall establish an empire reaching from the Arctic to the Mediterranean Sea, then I respectfully demur to the pro-

position. As regards the European provinces of Turkey, I say that Europe ought to act as a family of nations, that they ought to see to the better government of those provinces, that they should meet together and tell the Turks, The time of your direct rule and your direct dominion over these provinces has ended. We can no longer trust to your promises. We know that even if you intended to fulfil them, your agents are so corrupt, your population so fanatical and violent, your whole system of government so rotten, that we know, whatever may be your intentions, you cannot fulfil your promises. And can there be, after all, any insuperable difficulty in the matter? Why, gentlemen, look what happened but a very few years ago in the case of the Lebanon. There were horrible massacres in the Turkish dominions there; the conscience of Europe was wounded; France was particularly excited. France sent 6,000 men, and the result is that by force of foreign intervention a better government was established in the Lebanon; and I am told that at this moment there is no better governed province in the whole civilized world than the Lebanon, because the European Powers interfered, and said—You Turks shall not rule there in future as you have ruled hitherto; it shall be ruled by a Christian Pacha. Now, what is the difficulty of coming to some arrangement of this kind? It would be quite as beneficial to Turkey, so long as it survives, as it would be for Europe. I am not going to advise you or the public to take on yourselves to dictate to the Government the details of any plan. I should desire heartily to leave it in the hands of Lord Derby and of the Foreign Offices of Europe, now that public opinion has told them what their course ought to be.

Gentlemen, I will repeat again that I have never read any documents with such shame and indignation as the

documents which record our course of policy during the last thirteen months. But there is one comfort—this uprising of the people of this country rejoices one's heart to see. I feel that this policy has ended for ever. No British Government will dare in the future to exhort the Turkish Government—unreformed, and with its promises unfulfilled—to put down the Christian insurgents. No Government will dare to do this again in the name of the Sovereign and in the name of the people of this country. I read that determination in your faces—I hear it in your ringing cheers. And that being so, I feel, and thank God for it, that the blood of those poor Bulgarian women and children will not have been shed in vain.

The resolution I have to propose is as follows:—

“That this meeting of citizens of Glasgow regards with horror and indignation the atrocities perpetrated by the Turks on the inhabitants of Bulgaria and the other provinces, and denounces the Ottoman Government for allowing such outrages on humanity, and for not punishing the responsible agents.”

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LE DROIT COUTUMIER

DES

SLAVES MÉRIDIONAUX

D'APRÈS

LES RECHERCHES DE M. V. BOGIŠIĆ

Extrait de la *Revue de Législation ancienne et moderne ,
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TOULOUSE , IMP. A. CHAUVIN ET FILS , RUE DES SALENQUES , 28.

LE DROIT COUTUMIER

DES

SLAVES MÉRIDIONAUX

D'APRÈS

LES RECHERCHES DE M. V. BOGIŠIĆ

PAR

FEDOR DEMELIĆ

I



PARIS

ERNEST THORIN, ÉDITEUR

LIBRAIRE DU COLLÈGE DE FRANCE

ET DE L'ÉCOLE NORMALE SUPÉRIEURE

7, RUE DE MÉDICIS, 7

—
1876

LE DROIT COUTUMIER

DES

SLAVES MÉRIDIONAUX

L'étude des peuples slaves occupe, depuis le commencement du siècle, les savants de toute l'Europe. Des écrivains renommés de France, d'Allemagne et de plusieurs autres pays, ont publié des études approfondies sur l'état politique, social et religieux de ces peuples; et on se rappelle encore divers travaux fort remarquables, qui ont paru dans la *Revue des Deux-Mondes*, sur les Serbes, les Tchèques et autres branches de la même nationalité. C'est que la connaissance de cette grande nation, qui occupe une place si importante dans plusieurs royaumes ou empires de l'Europe, devient chaque jour comme un besoin indispensable pour le savant aussi bien que pour l'homme d'Etat.

La politique moderne, entraînée par le courant de notre siècle, doit, en effet, pénétrer et bien connaître le génie particulier des peuples, si elle veut avoir une notion exacte de leur force et de leurs tendances, si elle veut donner à ses créations historiques ou scientifiques une base solide et durable et ne pas rendre illusoire, éphémère, le succès qu'elle pourrait obtenir. Sans vouloir parler de la Russie, qui, depuis deux siècles, fait sentir son influence de grande puissance en Europe et dans presque toute l'Asie, la nombreuse famille slave habite en majeure partie des

contrées où se décidera peut-être prochainement non-seulement l'avenir des peuples qui les occupent, mais très-vraisemblablement aussi l'avenir de toute l'Europe. Il est donc naturel qu'on cherche depuis longtemps à bien connaître ce monde slavé, qui semble destiné à jouer un rôle si important dans l'une des plus graves questions que le dix-neuvième siècle soit appelé à résoudre, et dans laquelle se trouvent également intéressés l'Orient et l'Occident.

Quant aux recherches scientifiques, les Slaves possèdent de nombreux trésors qu'il est utile d'explorer, avec un patient labeur pour y découvrir les richesses qu'elles recèlent. Mais la science moderne doit franchir ses anciennes limites trop bornées, si elle veut parvenir à son but et réaliser dans son domaine un véritable progrès. Pour embrasser l'ensemble de tant de parties diverses et en avoir une idée vraie, elle a besoin de la comparaison. Et comme le disait avec tant de justesse, dans son discours d'ouverture, l'illustre président du dernier congrès des orientalistes, à Londres, M. Müller : « L'esprit de comparaison est » le véritable esprit scientifique de notre époque, » comme il fut celui de tous les siècles précédents. » Les beaux résultats de la méthode comparée, appliquée aux sciences naturelles, la firent adopter pour d'autres sciences par de savants et habiles investigateurs. Tout le monde connaît les étonnants résultats qu'elle a donnés dans la linguistique, la mythologie et surtout dans l'ethnographie, devenue une véritable science grâce à elle. On voit également employer cette méthode en jurisprudence ; et quoiqu'on n'ait fait encore que des essais fort modestes dans ce sens, on peut compter sur des résultats sérieux ; car la com-

paraison entre les diverses législations des peuples étendra nécessairement l'horizon de l'esprit humain, et jettera une plus grande lumière sur bien des faits qui sont restés pendant fort longtemps obscurs et embrouillés. Combien de vieux préjugés n'a-t-elle pas déjà détruits ! Et combien d'illusions trompeuses n'a-t-elle pas dissipées !

Maintenant, si l'on veut appliquer cette méthode à la grande famille slave, il sera facile de se rendre compte des beaux résultats qu'on pourrait en obtenir. Quelle diversité et quelle multiplicité dans le développement de la vie nationale des Slaves ! L'esprit de comparaison trouve ici une foule d'objets qui ne peuvent se rencontrer que chez un peuple ou plutôt chez une race occupant des territoires d'une pareille diversité et d'une pareille étendue. Aussi voyons-nous quelques savants s'emparer de ce vaste domaine. L'étude des langues slaves s'est beaucoup répandue en Europe, et la philologie générale en a retiré un très-grand profit. L'ethnographie s'est peut-être plus enrichie encore que la linguistique. En tout cas l'archéologie des Slaves, leur poésie, leurs charmants contes populaires sont devenus pour ainsi dire des lieux communs dans le monde civilisé, depuis les savants travaux de Safarik, de Vuk, et des frères Grimm. Et combien ne reste-t-il pas à faire ? Il y a là comme un monde scientifique, dont quelques contrées fort importantes nous semblent tout à fait inconnues. La jurisprudence, la législation, par exemple, sont presque entièrement négligées par les écrivains slaves eux-mêmes, aussi bien que par ceux de l'étranger.

Et pourtant la connaissance du droit et des lois

d'un peuple, qui a conservé en grande partie ses anciennes coutumes, n'est pas seulement nécessaire au jurisconsulte, elle est indispensable à l'historien, à l'ethnographe, à l'économiste ! Jusqu'à présent il n'existait sur le droit coutumier des Slaves méridionaux, que quelques monographies traitant diverses parties de ce droit, et une étude fort remarquable de M. Utješenić, parue à Vienne en 1859, sur l'organisation de la famille dans les confins militaires croates et hongrois. Ce qui nous manquait sur un pareil sujet, c'était un ouvrage embrassant pour ainsi dire d'un coup d'œil tout l'ensemble du droit coutumier des Slaves méridionaux.

Un savant de Raguse, en Dalmatie, a entrepris avec courage cette tâche difficile, et il s'en est acquitté avec beaucoup de talent (1). Son livre remplit une grande lacune dans la science; et malgré les difficultés presque insurmontables de l'entreprise, l'auteur a pu rassembler par sa méthode originale et fort claire de riches matériaux qu'on ne trouverait bien certainement nulle part ailleurs. Il est vrai de dire que M. Bogišić n'est pas un écrivain nouveau dans les questions de jurisprudence. Il a déjà publié, en 1866, sur le droit coutumier des Slaves un livre, qui eut un grand succès, non-seulement dans son pays, mais même en Allemagne, et qu'il fallut réimprimer en 1867. Sa

(1) « Zbornik sadašnjih pravnih običajâ u južnih Slovenâ (*Recueil des coutumes actuelles chez les Slaves méridionaux*). Agram, 1874, in-8°, 710 pages + LXXIV.

Note pour la prononciation des mots serbes : c = tz même avant a, o, u ; ě = tsch ; đ = tch un peu plus doux que le précédent ; ge, gi = gue, gui ; j = y ; lj = ille ; nje = gne ; š = ch ; ž = ge ou je ; de sorte que : Bogišić se prononce Boguichitch ; sadašnjih = sadachgnieh ; običajâ = obitschaya ; južnih = youjenih.

réputation pénétra en Russie, où il fut nommé professeur à l'université d'Odessa. Plus tard il fut chargé de la codification des lois du Monténégro (1).

Toutefois, M. Bogišić ne vit dans son ouvrage qu'un premier essai; il avait de suite compris qu'il ne pouvait s'arrêter à mi-chemin. Comme il était alors employé à la bibliothèque impériale de Vienne, la base de son travail se composait naturellement de sources écrites; il ne lui avait été possible de consulter que les livres et les documents qui se trouvaient sous sa main, et qui ne remplaçaient que très-imparfaitement les sources multiples et variées de la vie politique, sociale et religieuse du peuple dont il voulait reconstruire le droit sur de solides fondements. Mais l'idée conçue, M. Bogišić se mit à l'œuvre avec une persévérante énergie. Le résultat de son travail fut le livre, publié en 1874 par l'académie des sciences et des belles-lettres d'Agram et dont nous allons donner une analyse détaillée.

Ce livre contient le droit des Slaves méridionaux, tel qu'il existe dans leurs anciennes coutumes, restées toujours en vigueur. C'est un nouveau côté de ce peuple et comme un nouveau monde que l'auteur nous a révélé; voilà pourquoi nous voulons faire connaître un travail si important, qui pourra compléter les nombreuses études faites en France, sur les Slaves du Sud, sur leurs chansons et leurs contes populaires.

Mais, avant de commencer l'analyse de ce livre, il

(1) Sur cette importante mission, voyez le *Bulletin de législation comparée* d'avril 1875, page 225. On peut lire aussi une esquisse biographique de M. Bogišić dans la *Revue politique et littéraire* du 5 juin 1875, par M. L. Leger.

nous a semblé utile de donner un extrait de la préface, où l'auteur développe le plan de son ouvrage et touche à diverses questions scientifiques non encore résolues. Sa remarquable argumentation ne manquera certainement pas d'attirer l'attention des jurisconsultes. L'auteur nous dépeint aussi dans cette préface l'état déplorable de la jurisprudence et de la législation parmi les Slaves méridionaux ; il nous fait toucher les véritables causes de cette triste situation et nous indique les moyens de l'améliorer. Mais écoutons M. Bogišić. Notre analyse s'efforcera de rendre fidèlement sa pensée.

I

L'histoire nous montre bien souvent le développement naturel d'un peuple interrompu par un événement qui, sans détruire sa vie nationale, le jette dans une sorte d'engourdissement. On pourrait alors croire qu'il reste stationnaire, quoique son génie national ne cesse pas de vivre et de se fortifier. Celui-ci se renferme dans les chansons et les contes populaires, dans les mœurs et les exploits aventureux, qui continuent l'existence et l'héroïsme traditionnel des ancêtres. Lorsque la délivrance arrive par un de ces brusques changements de politique si fréquents dans l'histoire, ce peuple ressuscité à la vie des nations se trouve au milieu d'un monde nouveau qui l'a devancé ; et, pour ne pas rester en arrière des autres peuples, il veut atteindre en un jour cette perfection qui ne sera jamais que le travail des siècles. Saisi comme d'une fièvre de progrès, il remplace ses vieilles institutions nationales par des insti-

tutions étrangères, et il détruit bien souvent les plus nobles germes de sa vie par des importations maladroitement, sans racine dans son sol national. Le génie du peuple se réfugie patriotiquement dans ses couches inférieures, où il semble attendre l'heure d'un nouveau réveil. Mais il s'établit partout des rapports factices; une civilisation purement artificielle et extérieure engendre des institutions fragiles, qui n'ont aucune force morale ni aucune vitalité.

Tel est le spectacle que nous offrent presque tous les peuples slaves; et M. Bogišić constate ce fait déplorable dans la jurisprudence des Slaves méridionaux. Il fait voir qu'on ne retrouve chez aucun peuple une plus grande discordance entre la législation et le droit coutumier en vigueur. Lorsque la législation est simplement un produit d'abstractions doctrinales, elle néglige entièrement les coutumes que le peuple conserve avec ténacité; mais une telle législation, qui a pris naissance en dehors de tout développement historique et qui n'a pas eu égard au caractère particulier de la nation, n'existe réellement que sur le papier. Cette discordance entre les lois écrites et la coutume offre de graves inconvénients, surtout chez un peuple qui, comme les Slaves méridionaux, a tant de divisions politiques, religieuses et administratives dans un espace relativement étroit. Et, de plus, quelle étrange diversité! M. Bogišić nous cite à ce sujet un phénomène curieux, qui prouve assez bien l'anomalie de la situation.

L'introduction des lois écrites produit ordinairement chez tous les peuples une certaine uniformité entre les divers éléments de la nation; tandis que la coutume, expression multiple des différences locales,

représente par elle-même la diversité de ces éléments. Chez les Slaves méridionaux, nous voyons justement le contraire. La multiplicité se trouve dans les lois écrites, tandis que, dans une certaine mesure, les coutumes sont, dans leurs principes, tout à fait uniformes. Aussi dans ces contrées, particulièrement dans les provinces turques habitées par les Slaves, l'administration de la justice est mieux placée entre les mains de magistrats qui n'ont jamais fréquenté l'école, mais sont au courant de la coutume et de sa pratique, qu'elle ne pourrait l'être entre les mains de légistes de profession. Personne ne se plaindrait de la justice rendue par les cadis, si elle ne se laissait pas corrompre par la vénalité. Au contraire, dans les provinces ayant une magistrature organisée sur le modèle des Etats occidentaux, on impose souvent au peuple des lois qui ne répondent nullement à ses mœurs et à ses vrais besoins. Personne ne contestera qu'une pareille anomalie ne doive finir tôt ou tard par démoraliser un peuple.

M. Bogišić demande avec juste raison que le législateur recherche les véritables causes de ce triste état des choses. Mais, hélas ! ni les jurisconsultes ni les savants ne se sont jamais occupés de cette importante question, et l'on continue à faire des lois sur des théories étrangères, sans trop s'inquiéter si le peuple les accepte, ni même s'il les comprend. On a vu, dans bien des Etats de l'Europe, les coutumes remplacées par une législation nouvelle. Les jurisconsultes slaves, épris de ces innovations, ont adopté la loi écrite ; mais le peuple est resté fidèle à ses vieilles coutumes. Voilà comment le droit coutumier est encore en pleine vigueur chez les Slaves méridionaux.

L'auteur fait ici remarquer avec beaucoup de justesse que le droit, comme tout organisme, est soumis à des lois naturelles. Quand on serre fortement la branche d'un arbre, il en pousse d'autres plus vigoureuses; et si l'on taille l'arbre, ce qu'il perd en largeur, il le gagne en hauteur. Un sens humain cesse-t-il de fonctionner, aussitôt un autre acquiert une finesse qu'il n'avait pas. Cette loi naturelle régit également le droit. Si on empêche le développement de l'une de ses branches, l'autre se développe avec plus de vigueur. On s'est principalement occupé en Europe du droit écrit, et c'est là précisément ce qui a rendu stationnaire le droit coutumier. Chez les Slaves, au contraire, où le droit écrit avait été considéré comme lettre morte jusqu'à nos jours, tout le développement du droit s'est concentré dans la coutume.

Les jurisconsultes slaves n'ont pas voulu tenir compte non plus de la marche différente suivie par l'histoire des Slaves méridionaux et par celle des autres peuples européens. Pendant que les villes se développaient en Occident, c'était la campagne qui se développait chez les Slaves du Sud. Il est donc naturel que la coutume, réfugiée en Occident dans les campagnes, n'y ait eu qu'une importance fort secondaire, tandis qu'elle conservait toute sa force parmi les peuples slaves où les villes n'ont pas encore atteint la haute prépondérance qu'elles ont en Occident. Cette négligence des juristes à bien observer la marche de l'histoire a eu nécessairement des conséquences funestes qui n'ont pas tardé à se manifester.

M. Bogišić démontre comment il est impossible qu'un peuple respecte des lois qui ne répondent pas à ses besoins, et il prouve qu'une semblable législa-

tion doit nécessairement inspirer la plus grande méfiance, parce qu'elle est en contradiction avec les mœurs et les coutumes du pays. Une loi qui est imposée de force à un peuple, aurait-elle été faite avec les meilleures intentions, n'est jamais acceptée sans une vive répugnance; on lui obéit machinalement, et c'est là ce qui lui donne presque toujours un effet désastreux. Ne pouvant rien s'assimiler, elle finit par détruire les anciennes idées du droit; et comme la force ne peut parvenir à briser les oppositions tenaces, son abrogation devient une nécessité. Or, l'autorité même des lois se perd par des changements trop fréquents dans la législation. C'est ce qui s'est produit chez les Slaves méridionaux. Les juges, par exemple, voulant éviter une fâcheuse collision entre les lois écrites et le droit coutumier, cherchent presque toujours à en éluder l'application. De son côté, le peuple emploie tous les moyens pour se soustraire à l'application des lois qu'il déteste. M. Bogišić indique comme remède l'étude sérieuse de la coutume slave, qui, seule, peut donner une solide base au développement du droit et faire cesser une si déplorable situation.

L'auteur nous fait ensuite voir, en quelques traits rapides, le développement du droit chez les autres peuples de l'Europe. Il relève surtout les travaux importants de la France dans cette branche scientifique; car la nation française pénètre mieux dans l'esprit des lois qu'aucun autre peuple. Il signale aussi les grands mérites de l'école historique allemande dans l'étude du droit coutumier. Parmi les diverses questions scientifiques qu'il examine ensuite, celle de la collision entre la coutume et la loi nous semble trai-

tée avec autant d'esprit que d'originalité. D'abord, M. Bogišić nous montre l'importance heureuse que la solution de cette difficulté aurait pour la science et pour la pratique; mais il lui semble qu'on en est encore fort loin, même dans les diverses législations, qui reconnaissent aux coutumes autant d'autorité qu'aux lois écrites.

En Russie, par exemple, on fait le plus grand cas de la coutume, surtout depuis ces dernières années. Le gouvernement nomme des commissaires pour étudier, recueillir et publier les coutumes. Les sociétés savantes, surtout la section ethnographique de la Société géographique de Saint-Petersbourg, favorisent avec zèle l'œuvre du gouvernement; et même la loi du 20 novembre 1864, qui a introduit la nouvelle organisation judiciaire, enjoint aux juges de paix de tenir partout compte des coutumes en vigueur. Bien plus, le commentaire officiel de ce règlement relève leur grande importance. Eh bien! malgré ce respect scrupuleux pour les coutumes, la législation n'ayant pas pourvu au cas de collision, le juge ne tient aucun compte des coutumes, et applique la loi comme auparavant. Donc, en Russie même, où sont adoptées si chaleureusement les nouvelles doctrines sur le droit coutumier, on admet la coutume seulement lorsque la loi l'ordonne expressément, ou bien en l'absence de toute loi écrite. D'où vient cette contradiction? M. Bogišić croit en avoir trouvé la cause dans le manque de précision de la théorie soutenue par l'illustre jurisconsulte M. F.-G. Puchta.

D'après cette théorie, les mêmes règles d'interprétation, qui servent à résoudre certains points de collision entre des lois écrites, doivent être également

appliquées dans les cas de collision entre les coutumes et les lois écrites, comme si elles dérivait de la même source. Une pareille théorie semble trop générale et trop vague à M. Bogišić pour pouvoir être adoptée dans la pratique. Elle ne tient pas assez compte de ce que les coutumes peuvent aussi avoir des bases différentes, et qu'on doit les considérer, comme les lois écrites, sous des points de vue différents. Cette imperfection d'une théorie, qui a pourtant provoqué en Russie l'étude des coutumes, empêche bien souvent leur sérieuse application. Pour sortir de ce dilemme très-embarrassant, l'auteur pense qu'il faudrait avoir d'abord un grand nombre de coutumes à étudier et à comparer. On les diviserait ensuite en plusieurs catégories comme les lois écrites, selon leur origine, leur vitalité, leur importance, l'étendue de leur application ou selon d'autres qualités.

Quant aux collisions entre les coutumes et les lois écrites, il faudrait s'attacher à la distinction suivante: 1° ou le législateur connaissait la coutume, et il savait dès lors qu'il se mettait en contradiction avec elle en promulguant sa loi; 2° ou bien il résulte de l'ensemble de la loi que bien certainement le législateur n'avait pas à ce moment connaissance de la coutume. Dans le premier cas, le doute ne peut pas exister; il est certain que le législateur a voulu abolir la coutume, et comme il peut abroger la loi, de même il a le droit d'abroger une coutume; dans le second; on aurait recours aux règles générales de l'interprétation des lois, comme s'il s'agissait d'une collision entre des lois ayant une même origine. La théorie de Puchta ne peut s'appliquer que dans le second cas et non pas dans le premier.

En effet, si le législateur ne connaissait pas la coutume, qui est toujours par sa nature même l'expression d'une certaine institution du droit national, il ne pouvait pas non plus connaître cette institution elle-même; et dans cette hypothèse, il aurait promulgué une loi pour des cas qu'il ignorait. N'est-il pas vrai que, pour le juge, la connaissance de la coutume est aussi nécessaire et obligatoire que celle de la loi; s'il ignore la coutume, il commet une *ignorantia juris*, comme lorsqu'il ne connaît pas la loi écrite. Si celui qui applique le droit doit connaître la coutume, à plus forte raison celui qui fait les lois. Le législateur doit donc nécessairement connaître le droit sous quelque forme qu'il se présente, droit écrit ou droit coutumier, chaque fois qu'il veut le modifier et même s'il veut l'abolir.

Si, dans les contrats, la volonté doit être exempte d'erreur, d'autant plus faut-il qu'elle soit réfléchie et certaine de la part du législateur. Celui-ci promulgue-t-il une loi fondée sur l'erreur ou l'ignorance, ce qu'il fait ne correspond pas à ce qu'il veut, et il ne fait pas une loi dans le sens vrai de ce mot.

Déjà, au moyen âge, les glossateurs, qui certes n'étaient pas de fervents adeptes du droit coutumier, enseignaient que « *tantum consuetudo valet ubi lex non est scripta, quantum ipsa lex, ubi est scripta.* » Cette maxime est évidemment fondée sur cette idée que si le législateur avait connu la coutume, il en aurait consacré les dispositions, parce qu'elles répondent le mieux à l'institution. Dès lors, si le législateur a promulgué une loi contraire à la nature d'une institution qu'il ne connaissait pas, rien n'empêche d'admettre que si cette ignorance n'avait pas existé, il

aurait agi différemment et aurait édicté une loi conforme à l'esprit de la coutume.

L'auteur ne prétend pas avoir trouvé la solution définitive de cette importante controverse ; et à vrai dire, il ne la croit guère possible en ce moment, faute de recherches suffisantes. Aussi n'a-t-il voulu soulever cette question que pour attirer l'attention et provoquer des travaux qui pourront aider à la résoudre.

Après cette rapide digression, l'auteur insiste sur la nécessité de l'étude du droit coutumier pour le juge, le jurisconsulte, le législateur. Il indique le grave préjudice que la négligence d'une étude aussi importante porte à l'étude même de l'histoire du droit, et il dit avec raison qu'elle est une des premières causes du peu de développement de cette branche de la science. En effet, on ne peut acquérir une véritable notion du droit d'une époque, si on n'étudie pas en même temps les relations qui existaient alors entre la coutume et les lois. Aussi les travaux des historiens juristes slaves ne sont en général que des reproductions serviles de diverses méthodes étrangères inapplicables au droit de leur pays. En outre, en négligeant les coutumes, ils abusent des présomptions juridiques, et spécialement de l'importante présomption que la loi, après avoir été publiée, entre irrévocablement en vigueur. Il s'ensuit qu'à la place des vérités historiques, nous ne trouvons que de simples fictions. Un exemple va prouver la justesse de ce raisonnement.

Supposons, dit M. Bogišić, qu'on veuille écrire l'histoire du droit de la Dalmatie, où le code civil autrichien est publié depuis l'année 1816. Ce code, qui n'a nullement tenu compte des diverses particularités nationales, et qui était fait pour d'autres peu-

ples, n'a jamais été appliqué à la population agricole de cette province en ce qui concerne le droit de famille et de succession. Donc, si un jurisconsulte voulait exposer l'histoire du droit de la Dalmatie pendant le demi-siècle qui vient de s'écouler, en concentrant toutes ses recherches sur la législation écrite seulement, il donnerait une notion bien fautive sur le droit actuel de ce pays.

Nous ne suivrons pas plus longtemps M. Bogišić dans cette partie intéressante de son ouvrage; cela nous mènerait trop loin. Nous dirons seulement que le savant auteur du droit coutumier des Slaves méridionaux se propose de publier prochainement sur ce sujet un travail spécial; et, pour terminer cette analyse, nous ajouterons quelques mots sur l'origine de son livre.

Nous avons raconté plus haut que M. Bogišić, lors de la publication de son premier travail, reconnut bien facilement l'insuffisance des sources écrites. Il prit aussitôt la résolution de recueillir chez le peuple même la matière d'un grand ouvrage; et le plan de son recueil étant dressé, il publia un questionnaire renfermant l'ensemble des objets du droit coutumier slave. L'académie d'Agram en envoya quatre mille exemplaires aux divers diocèses de la Croatie, de la Dalmatie et des confins militaires. Chaque diocèse distribua le questionnaire dans toutes les paroisses. D'autres exemplaires furent envoyés par l'auteur en Hongrie, en Serbie, dans la Bosnie, le Monténégro, l'Herzégovine et la Bulgarie. C'était l'unique moyen de connaître rapidement et sûrement toutes les coutumes des Slaves méridionaux. Les réponses recueillies forment, avec les recherches particulières de

l'auteur, le grand ouvrage dont nous allons parler, et qui, malgré l'immense richesse de ses matériaux, est encore bien loin d'être complet. M. Bogišić lui-même fait remarquer que les questions choisies par lui n'embrassent pas de beaucoup toutes les relations sociales et juridiques. Mais, depuis cette publication, ses études, ses voyages ont singulièrement étendu ses connaissances et beaucoup élargi ses vues. En 1872, M. Bogišić entreprit un grand voyage dans diverses contrées du Caucase, qui lui fournirent des faits très-curieux et d'abondantes notes pour son livre. Il parcourut l'Abkhasie, la Samurzakan, la Grusie et la Svanetie. Son principal but était de mettre en parallèle les coutumes de ces contrées avec les coutumes slaves; car il espérait trouver ainsi la clé de certaines énigmes du droit coutumier de sa nation. Son questionnaire lui servit de base pour cette longue et patiente étude. Accueilli partout avec beaucoup de prévenances, recommandé par de hauts personnages et même très-gracieusement reçu par S. A. I. le grand-duc Michel, M. Bogišić commença son travail à Sukhum-Kalé, dans le Caucase. Il entra comme dans un monde nouveau. De nouvelles et nombreuses questions se présentèrent à son esprit. Son ancien questionnaire ne lui suffisait plus. Il dut l'élargir. Sur la base de ce nouveau questionnaire, M. Bogišić parvint à recueillir un nombre considérable de coutumes, qui formeront la matière d'une autre publication. L'auteur voulut ensuite visiter le Monténégro et les pays limitrophes, où son questionnaire s'enrichit de nouveau. Les découvertes qu'il fit dans cette dernière excursion formeront le second volume de son ouvrage.

Quant à la forme du premier volume, le but de l'auteur était de rendre, aussi fidèlement que possible, tout ce qu'il avait recueilli à l'aide de son questionnaire. Il a donc placé les réponses sous chaque question et dans leur forme primitive; car ce livre n'est pas une codification du droit coutumier des Slaves méridionaux, c'est un simple recueil de matériaux. M. Bogišić craignait, avec juste raison, que la généralisation ne nuisît à la science. Il ne croit pas que le moment soit venu de tenter un pareil essai, et il a agi fort sagement en n'exposant pas la synthèse avant l'analyse. Si le livre veut atteindre son but, il doit surtout faire ressortir toutes les particularités des coutumes de chaque province. Ces détails sont très-importants pour la science, car on peut ainsi apercevoir d'un coup d'œil les véritables causes de certains rapports et formes du droit. La méthode adoptée par l'auteur facilite aussi les comparaisons entre le droit de diverses époques et de différentes contrées, ce qui peut jeter une grande lumière sur bien des faits intéressants. Il arrive souvent que le droit varie de peuple à peuple, quoique leurs rapports sociaux soient les mêmes, tandis que d'autres fois les institutions se trouvent en parfaite harmonie au milieu de conditions sociales toutes différentes.

Ainsi, par exemple, d'après l'ancien droit romain, les fils, qui étaient en puissance, ne pouvaient pas avoir un pécule spécial. Ce fut beaucoup plus tard que le *peculium castrense* ou *quasi castrense* fut adopté par la jurisprudence romaine. De même, le droit coutumier du Monténégro n'admet pas le pécule pour les membres mâles appartenant à des communautés de famille. Mais, tandis que l'absence de pécule

dans l'ancienne Rome se fondait sur la toute-puissance du père, le jeune homme en est privé dans le Monténégro par sa participation à une communauté de famille. En effet, la famille seule est responsable de tous les dommages causés par l'un de ses membres; par contre, le gain de tous ses membres lui appartient.

D'ailleurs, la généralisation ne convient pas à un semblable ouvrage. Il faut faire connaître les coutumes dans leur forme caractéristique et jusque dans leurs nuances les plus délicates. Ces nuances disparaîtraient dans un travail de généralisation prématuré, et cependant, elles sont indispensables, car elles doivent servir de base à toute étude qui n'est pas de pure spéculation. Cependant les observations critiques ne doivent pas manquer dans un tel travail, et M. Bogišić en use largement dans les notes de son livre. Il relève très-habilement les contradictions qui se trouvent dans les réponses, tout en engageant ses correspondants à les rectifier; de sorte que nous possédons, sur cette matière, un livre vraiment scientifique, et non un simple abrégé de législation à l'usage des jurisconsultes. Mais, pour rendre son ouvrage plus complet, M. Bogišić a ajouté, à son premier volume, une liste indiquant le nom et le domicile de ceux qui ont répondu aux diverses questions renfermées dans son questionnaire. On peut donc voir, d'un coup d'œil, l'origine de chaque coutume. Dans le corps de l'ouvrage on rencontre, çà et là, un grand nombre de proverbes juridiques, la plupart inconnus jusqu'à ce jour. Enfin, un index contient les termes techniques de différentes provinces des Slaves méridionaux.

Quant à la division de son ouvrage, M. Bogišić suit

le système adopté par la science. Le droit privé et le droit public ont leurs subdivisions ordinaires : droit de famille et droit de succession, droit des choses, des obligations, etc. Nous suivrons dans notre analyse la même division, sans conserver, toutefois, la forme particulière du livre. Nous ne voulons pas, en effet, donner une simple traduction des sources, mais une notion fidèle des coutumes qui sont en vigueur parmi les Slaves méridionaux, du moins autant que nous le permettront les documents recueillis par l'auteur, dont le livre nous servira de guide.

II

La base du droit de famille des Slaves méridionaux est la communauté, c'est-à-dire la réunion de plusieurs individus sous un seul et même chef pour tout ce qui concerne l'administration et la culture des biens mis en commun. La parenté, ainsi que nous le montrerons plus tard, n'est pas l'unique lien de ces associations. M. Emile de Laveleye, dans son remarquable travail sur les *Formes primitives de la propriété*, a fait récemment connaître cette organisation de la famille au point de vue économique. Mais les divers ouvrages publiés sur la matière sont encore bien loin de l'avoir épuisée. Ce qu'il importe surtout de connaître, si l'on veut étudier à fond le droit coutumier, ce sont les nuances qui se rencontrent dans les diverses branches des Slaves méridionaux. Les notions actuelles sur les communautés de famille ne sont prises que dans les contrées où des influences étrangères ont beaucoup modifié cette institution nationale. C'est pourquoi nous n'avons encore que des connaissances très-

superficielles sur son organisation dans le Monténégro et l'Herzégovine, par exemple, ainsi que dans quelques provinces turques de la presqu'île des Balkans. Or, c'est précisément dans ces contrées que les associations de famille se sont maintenues dans leur forme primitive. Au point de vue juridique surtout, cette institution cherche son historien, et le premier, M. Bogišić, a fait connaître les riches matériaux qu'elle peut offrir (1).

A l'origine, la communauté de famille se voit chez tous les Slaves. On en trouve même des vestiges dans quelques branches où elle a cessé d'exister depuis longtemps. Cette institution est, en effet, l'expression la plus fidèle de l'esprit des peuples slaves qui tend partout à l'association, et qui nous semble aussi éloigné du rigoureux principe autoritaire des anciens Romains que contraire à l'individualisme particulier aux Germains. La communauté de famille, telle que nous la voyons chez les peuples slaves, est une libre association, où l'individu, sans renoncer à ses propres intérêts, les subordonne aux intérêts généraux. M. Utješević a parfaitement raison de combattre la dénomination de *patriarcale* comme ne convenant nullement aux communautés serbes; car, dans

(1) Une note de la préface du premier volume indique que depuis l'impression du corps de l'ouvrage, M. Bogišić a recueilli dans le Monténégro, l'Herzégovine et l'Albanie de nouveaux et nombreux matériaux, qui non-seulement comblent les lacunes dont on ne pouvait pas se rendre compte avant ces nouvelles recherches, mais qui modifient sensiblement les idées que l'on s'était faites sur l'organisation de la famille et sur les autres institutions juridiques et sociales d'après les données que l'on possédait jusque-là. Il est donc à désirer que le second volume de l'ouvrage, où les nouveaux matériaux se trouveront utilisés, soit publié aussitôt que possible.

l'état patriarcal, c'est le père qui fait la loi, et les enfants obéissent. Dans les communautés slaves, au contraire, cette obéissance absolue n'existe nulle part.

Cette institution comprend en Russie même la commune, tandis qu'elle est limitée à la famille chez les Slaves du Sud. Dans les provinces turques, elle est devenue comme le refuge et le sanctuaire de la nationalité serbe, qui, repoussée de la vie publique, s'est retirée dans la famille, où elle a trouvé des mœurs pures pour consolation. Et c'est précisément cette vie de famille en commun qui a conservé chez ce peuple l'espérance d'un avenir plus heureux. On sait, par l'histoire, que les musulmans, dans leurs conquêtes, ne touchèrent nulle part aux institutions religieuses et nationales des raïas, et qu'ils laissèrent surtout intactes les communautés serbes, parce qu'elles leur garantissaient beaucoup mieux le paiement des impôts que la famille isolée. Les mêmes raisons firent également maintenir cette institution en Hongrie et en Croatie, où les intérêts féodaux s'opposaient au partage des biens du paysan. La corvée se payait aussi plus exactement et plus sûrement par l'association. Quand on créa l'organisation militaire dans les confins de ces deux royaumes, l'autorité reconnut bien vite les avantages que lui procurait cette coutume, de sorte qu'au lieu de l'abolir, il la fit régler par des lois.

En 1807, les lois fondamentales du pays, renouvelées en 1850, sanctionnèrent solennellement la communauté serbe; et comme tout partage fut rigoureusement défendu, les communautés purent se maintenir plus longtemps dans ces contrées que dans les « co-

mitats » (1) hongrois, où l'abolition de la féodalité frappa cette ancienne coutume.

Dès 1839 et 1840, la diète hongroise avait accordé aux paysans le droit de disposer librement des biens acquis, meubles ou immeubles, et décrété même que les paysans pourraient partager les propres de succession entre leurs enfants et en parts égales. Les orages politiques de 1848 achevèrent de détruire les derniers restes des institutions féodales, ce qui contribua beaucoup à ébranler toutes les communautés slaves. Mais en Croatie, où l'on se préparait à la guerre contre la Hongrie, on interdit la publication des lois votées par la diète de Presbourg. Les communautés de famille purent y rester intactes de même que dans les confins militaires. Cependant l'administration allemande, qui s'établit dans ce royaume après la révolution et les guerres de 1849, introduisit les lois autrichiennes; et, dès ce moment, les institutions nationales furent ébranlées par des influences de toutes sortes. Les doctrines des économistes modernes y pénétrèrent également et modifièrent beaucoup les opinions des Croates sur leur politique agraire. Il n'est donc pas étonnant que la loi, interdisant la formation de nouvelles communautés, ait été votée par la dernière diète d'Agram, où le parti national avait cependant la majorité. Cette loi, qui frappait une vieille coutume, tout en maintenant le *statu quo* dans les confins militaires, fut sanctionnée par le souverain le 3 mars 1874.

Mais était-ce bien la nécessité qui faisait un devoir

(1) Division administrative en Hongrie et Croatie, correspondant à un département en France, mais avec plus d'autonomie.

à la diète d'Agram de voter une pareille loi? Ne se laissait-on pas entraîner plutôt par cet esprit d'imitation qu'on reproche toujours aux Slaves, et qui en a fait des doctrinaires, cause des erreurs de leurs publicistes et de leurs hommes politiques? Quoi qu'il en soit, le peuple croate ne paraît pas vouloir suivre ses législateurs dans cette voie. Il est vrai que, depuis 1848, il y a plus de partages de communautés en Hongrie et en Croatie qu'il n'y en avait auparavant; mais, d'après nos renseignements, ces partages ne sont pas absolus; car les familles qui se sont divisées ne regardent nullement la communauté comme entièrement dissoute. Elles ont encore leur chef commun; elles labourent ensemble et portent au compte de la communauté les dépenses de l'association. On ne partage que les fruits du travail. Il y a même des contrées, en Croatie, où les familles séparées font toujours ensemble la prière; dans quelques endroits le bétail est en communauté; on travaille également en commun, et on ne se partage que la récolte.

M. Bogišić regrette avec raison que ses propres renseignements ne déterminent pas avec plus d'exactitude les objets qui, après les partages partiels, restent en communauté, et qu'ils n'indiquent pas non plus les choses qui sont de droit soumises à la division. En effet, les sources où ils ont été pris ne mentionnent ni les fruits dont les familles continuent de jouir en commun, ni les dépenses qui doivent rester communes, et elles ne désignent pas non plus la personne qui, après le partage, devient le représentant de la famille vis-à-vis des autorités pour les affaires restées en commun. Sur tout le littoral croate, les partages se font ordinairement de la manière sui-

vante : Lorsqu'un jeune homme se marie, il quitte la maison paternelle, et le fils cadet reste seul auprès du père. Toutefois, il y a des contrées où la communauté n'existe plus. Ces cas sont pourtant fort rares, et, d'après nos sources, ils ont toujours pour conséquence l'appauvrissement complet de tout le district.

Les partages sont moins fréquents encore dans la Slavonie, et là même où ils ont lieu, la séparation ne dure pas longtemps. Dès qu'une famille s'agrandit, elle forme une nouvelle communauté. Mais si le partage est rare dans la Slavonie, il est assez fréquent dans les confins militaires, où il s'opère clandestinement pour éluder les lois rigoureuses qui forcent les familles à rester en commun, même lorsque la concorde ne règne plus depuis longtemps. Il n'est pourtant pas général ; car la coutume a jeté de trop profondes racines dans le peuple serbe pour qu'elle disparaisse facilement. Les communautés persistent de même en Hongrie, où on leur a cependant enlevé toute base et où les Serbes sont comme dispersés parmi des races étrangères.

On rencontre encore cette communauté de famille en Dalmatie, malgré la longue domination des Vénitiens et malgré la législation autrichienne faite dans des circonstances et pour des besoins si différents. Partout, dans les campagnes, le peuple est resté fidèle à ses anciennes coutumes. Les sources où nous puisons nous apprennent qu'à Konavlje, contrée située dans le cercle de Raguse, les trois quarts des familles vivent en communauté.

Cette vieille coutume a donc résisté partout aux influences hostiles à son développement ; mais elle a subi des modifications, et on ne peut nier qu'elle

n'ait été ébranlée dans ses fondements, quoiqu'elle soit loin d'avoir été abolie. Exposée à l'inconsciente réglementation des législateurs, elle a fléchi presque partout; mais elle s'est maintenue dans sa forme et dans sa force primitives là où la vie nationale du peuple serbe n'a pas eu à subir d'influences étrangères. C'est pourquoi nous la trouvons intacte dans le Monténégro, l'Herzégovine et la Bosnie. Plus la famille est nombreuse dans ces pays, plus on la regarde comme bénie de Dieu. Pour l'Herzégovinien, la misère ne vient que lorsque les communautés se partagent; et, d'après un dicton, « la famille isolée a beaucoup plus » de peines que de joies. » L'individu, hors d'une association, est considéré comme un homme sans bras. Les beys mahométans eux-mêmes vivent en communauté dans ces provinces, lorsqu'ils appartiennent à une même famille et qu'ils portent le même nom. A Serajevo, capitale de la Bosnie, on trouve aussi des communautés; en Serbie, au contraire, les partages sont plus fréquents.

C'est la législation codifiée qui a porté en Serbie les plus funestes coups à cette institution; car, au lieu de la régler, elle y a jeté la confusion. Le code serbe, calqué pour ainsi dire sur le code autrichien, aurait lui-même besoin d'une sage réforme. Il renferme beaucoup d'étranges contradictions en cette matière. Aussi parle-t-on d'un projet de loi touchant les communautés qui serait présenté prochainement à la Skupština. En général, les partages affligent beaucoup les vieilles générations de la principauté serbe, car elles voient s'écrouler une institution qui était pour leurs ancêtres l'unique refuge contre la domination des mahométans, et dont la disparition leur

paraît le précurseur fatal de la misère en Serbie. « Plus la ruche est pleine d'abeilles, plus elle est » lourde. » C'est chez eux un dicton populaire.

Comme tous les Slaves méridionaux, les Bulgares vivent en communauté. On rencontre aussi cette institution chez les Sopljiens, les Poljanceviens, à Pljevno, et surtout parmi les ouvriers qui résident entre Ternova et Ruščuk. A Ljeskovac, au contraire, les fils mariés quittent la communauté avec toute leur famille, mais après la mort du père seulement. Cependant, lorsqu'il y a des mineurs, la communauté ne se dissout pas avant que les enfants mineurs ne soient adultes et mariés.

Le nom très-répandu qu'on donne à ces communautés, c'est le mot serbe *zadruga*, qui veut dire *association*. Toutefois, cette dénomination n'est pas en usage chez tous les Slaves méridionaux. On dit presque toujours : « maison associée, » ou *zadružna kuća*, au lieu de *zadruga*. Dans les provinces civiles de la Croatie, on emploie le mot *skupčina*, c'est-à-dire *assemblée*, et très-souvent celui de *fraternité*, *maison* ou *société*. La communauté est connue dans l'Herzégovine sous le nom de *foyer*, *cheminée* ou *fumée*. En Dalmatie, on l'appelle aussi quelquefois la communauté des *frères unis*. Dans l'Herzégovine, les filles, avant leur mariage, appellent la communauté *dom* (*maison*); et dès qu'une fille se marie, la demeure de son époux devient pour elle sa *maison*, tandis que la famille d'où elle sort par son mariage est nommée par elle *rod* (*parenté*).

Quant au nombre des associés ou membres de ces familles, il varie beaucoup suivant les provinces. Les plus nombreuses communautés se trouvent na-

turellement dans les plaines fertiles ; mais elles sont fort restreintes dans les pays montagneux et sur le littoral étroit de l'Adriatique. Ainsi on rencontre les plus grandes associations dans la Slavonie, et les moins importantes sur le littoral de la Croatie et Dalmatie. M. Utješenić fixe la moyenne des membres d'une communauté en Croatie de dix à quinze individus, dont trois ou quatre sont presque toujours mariés. Mais nos sources donnent, au contraire, une moyenne de vingt à vingt-cinq individus. Dans la Slavonie, les plus grandes communautés comptent jusqu'à soixante membres, tandis que les plus petites en ont presque toujours six, sept ou huit, seulement. Dans la haute Herzégovine, la majeure partie des familles se compose de vingt à vingt-cinq individus ; à Gačko on compte même soixante et dix individus dans certaines familles. Cependant les communautés ne sont jamais assez nombreuses pour former un village ou une commune. Avant d'atteindre ce prodigieux accroissement, une communauté se serait divisée plusieurs fois. Il y a, il est vrai, des villages qui portent le nom d'une seule famille ; mais ils se composent toujours de plusieurs communautés.

Les communautés serbes, en général, ont ajouté à l'ancien nom de famille le nom du chef de la communauté ; et les Serbes, aussi bien que les Russes, ont l'usage de joindre au nom de baptême du père la particule *ević*, *ović* ou *ić* (prononcez : *evitsch*, *ovitsch*, *itsch*), comme dans les noms *Petrović*, *Stefanović*, etc., et de composer, en outre, les noms de famille avec les titres, ou les dignités du père, en y ajoutant une des particules sus-indiquées. Ainsi, *Kraljević* veut dire fils de roi (*kralj*) ; *Pisarević*, fils

de scribe (*pisar*). On emprunte aussi les noms propres à la profession qu'on exerce ou à certains événements, etc. Le plus souvent ce sont des sobriquets vulgaires que le peuple aime à se donner, et qui restent dans la famille. Lorsqu'on veut désigner toute une communauté par le nom du père, on en fait un pluriel. Mais il se rencontre souvent plusieurs communautés ayant le même nom de famille; cela vient de ce qu'elles ont formé à l'origine une seule association, qui s'est divisée pour en former de nouvelles. Celles-ci portent ordinairement un surnom quelconque avec leur nom primitif de famille.

En général, les membres d'une communauté sont tous parents; et cette parenté s'étend parfois jusqu'à un degré très-éloigné. Mais, comme nous l'avons déjà fait remarquer, des étrangers peuvent devenir membres d'une communauté. Le mariage et l'adoption sont les formes les plus ordinaires sous lesquelles on les reçoit. Il arrive, en outre, que des vieillards entrent dans une association, lorsqu'ils ont perdu tous leurs enfants et qu'ils se trouvent pour ainsi dire seuls au monde, n'ayant plus la force d'administrer leurs biens ou n'étant plus en état de vivre par leur travail. Ces vieillards sans ressources ou malades, sont accueillis à bras ouverts par les associations serbes, et on leur donne tous les droits d'un associé; mais s'ils possèdent une petite fortune, ils doivent la céder à la communauté, soit pendant leur vie, soit à titre de legs après leur mort.

Lorsque tous les membres d'une communauté viennent à mourir et qu'il n'y a d'autre héritier qu'une fille, c'est toujours son mari qui devient le chef de la communauté, en acceptant pour lui et ses

descendants l'ancien nom de l'association. Il peut arriver aussi qu'une femme avec ses enfants quitte la maison de son mari défunt, pour rentrer dans la communauté de ses frères. Les enfants deviennent alors, en Bulgarie, les associés de leur oncle. Les enfants nés d'une mère commune, mais de pères différents, restent dans la communauté du dernier mari de leur mère.

Il est très-rare que des étrangers forment entre eux une communauté. Cependant on dit que de pareils cas se présentent en Bosnie, où deux amis unissent parfois leur ménage. Mais une pareille communauté ne dure pas longtemps; elle cesse presque toujours par le mariage de l'un des deux amis. On en trouve de semblables dans la principauté serbe.

Des communautés très-peûtes et très-pauvres reçoivent également les domestiques comme membres. En Hongrie, lorsqu'il ne reste que le mari et la femme avancés en âge, dans une communauté, ils acceptent comme membre un artisan qui prend l'obligation de les soigner et de les entretenir dans leur vieillesse.

Maintenant, avant de dire quels sont les devoirs et les droits de chaque membre d'une communauté, nous allons indiquer ce qui est mis en commun, ce qui forme le bien inaliénable de toute la maison. Nous verrons également si la fortune de la communauté se compose des biens immeubles seulement, ou si les biens meubles en font aussi partie.

Les Slaves, en général, sont un peuple éminemment agriculteur. D'autre part, les communautés de famille se trouvent presque exclusivement à la campagne. Il est donc naturel que les champs, les prairies et les jardins, avec tous les instruments de labou-

rage, forment le bien commun et inaliénable de la famille. Nous avons déjà montré ce trait caractéristique des Slaves qui les porte presque naturellement à l'association. Nous avons dit également que le Serbe regarde le partage des communautés comme un précurseur fatal de la misère ; car, pour lui, c'est par le groupement des diverses forces qu'il peut atteindre un résultat satisfaisant. « Il ne voudrait pas même, » suivant un dicton, « être seul au paradis. » — « Le » solitaire, » dit un autre de ses proverbes, « est » comme un chêne coupé. » *Væ soli!* dit, en effet, l'Écriture sainte elle-même. Le Serbe doit donc avoir en horreur la division du sol. Aussi ne connaît-il pas le partage périodique, tel qu'il se pratique dans les communes russes. Il veut, au contraire, garder ce qu'il possède ; et s'il ne peut pas augmenter sa fortune, il désire au moins la léguer intacte à ses enfants. Son champ, sa maison, ses plantations, sont pour lui comme des objets sacrés, qui doivent passer de génération en génération.

Les immeubles sont par conséquent regardés parmi les Slaves comme des biens inaliénables. Les outils et le bétail, dont une exploitation agricole ne peut se passer, appartiennent également à la communauté, ainsi que la maison ou les bâtiments servant à cette exploitation. On considère même comme biens communs les bâtiments industriels élevés par le fondateur d'une association. Cependant il est permis aux membres de la communauté d'acquérir de semblables constructions et même d'exercer des industries variées. Nous parlerons plus loin du pécule qui appartient aux membres de la communauté ; il nous suffit de remarquer ici que les associés peuvent acquérir des biens en travaillant

pour leur propre compte hors de la maison. Dans les cas de détresse ou de misère, on est souvent forcé de vendre les biens de toute la communauté, ce qui est regardé comme une très-grande honte par le peuple; aussi trouve-t-on rarement des acheteurs. Mais la vente doit être approuvée ou consentie par tous les associés, et le peuple condamne sévèrement celui qui chercherait à s'enrichir par le malheur d'autrui. « Sou- » venez-vous, » dirait-on aux acheteurs, « de ces » pauvres enfants qui restent sans fortune et sans res- » sources! Prenez garde que leur malédiction ne re- » tombe un jour sur vous et sur les vôtres! » Les Bulgares considéreraient comme un fou celui qui vendrait l'héritage de ses ancêtres.

Quant aux biens meubles, il y en a dont on ne peut pas disposer sans nécessité absolue. Ainsi, les outils servant à une exploitation ne se vendent presque nulle part. Pour ce qui est du bétail, chaque maison conserve ordinairement deux bœufs et quelques couples d'autres animaux; le reste peut se vendre. Les ustensiles de ménage, les ruches, les moulins, les divers produits des champs et des animaux sont aliénables pour la plupart. Dans bien des contrées, la vente des produits seule est admise; et, en d'autres endroits, où la récolte n'est pas assez abondante pour subvenir aux besoins de la maison, il est interdit de vendre les produits eux-même sans nécessité.

En Bulgarie, on échange des vignes contre des vignes, des prairies ou des champs contre des champs et des prairies; mais on ne les vend presque jamais. Dans cette province, les tonneaux, les chaudières servant à la distillation de l'eau-de-vie, les charrettes et

divers instruments aratoires sont considérés comme attachés au fonds. On ne vend pas ordinairement non plus les chevaux ni le bétail, à l'exception des vieux animaux.

Dans les cas de détresse, comme nous l'avons dit, les biens communs peuvent être vendus, mais avec l'assentiment de tous les membres de la communauté, y compris les femmes, les jeunes gens et les filles. Dans diverses contrées cependant, le chef de la communauté peut, sans consulter l'association, disposer librement des biens communs; mais le caractère démocratique du peuple serbe et l'esprit même de l'institution s'opposeraient à cette espèce d'autocratie, qui, du reste, n'est qu'exceptionnelle. M. Bogišić nous paraît l'attribuer avec raison à l'influence étrangère, et elle se manifeste en effet presque exclusivement dans les contrées situées au bord de la mer ou à la frontière ethnographique.

Parlons maintenant des devoirs et des droits de chaque membre de la communauté, et précisons d'abord la position de son chef, appelé par le peuple serbe *domaćin*, chef ou directeur de la maison. Nous évitons à dessein le mot *paterfamilias*, qui correspond à une idée différente.

Le chef est ordinairement élu par la communauté. On le choisit parmi les membres âgés et mariés. Cette règle a pourtant beaucoup d'exceptions. Malgré la haute estime du Serbe pour l'âge mûr, on nomme souvent des hommes jeunes, dont le caractère énergique et honnête, les talents et la volonté ferme sont connus et éprouvés. Il arrive parfois que le *domaćin* lui-même, sentant diminuer ses forces sous le poids des années, renonce à ses pouvoirs en faveur du plus

vaillant et du plus digne de ses fils. Les autres membres de la communauté doivent consentir à ce changement. Dans le Monténégro et l'Herzégovine il arrive souvent que le frère aîné du chef de la famille lui succède après sa mort. A défaut de frère, le fils aîné remplace son père dans cette dignité. Lorsque ce frère ou fils aîné est lui-même trop vieux ou incapable de gérer les affaires par suite d'infirmités, son frère cadet peut devenir chef de famille. Mais, outre le consentement des autres associés, il doit obtenir la bénédiction solennelle de son frère aîné.

Les Serbes ont une grande estime pour l'âge, comme nous l'avons dit. « Sans l'obéissance aux vieillards, » point de salut. » C'est là une de leurs maximes ; mais elle ajoute que « si l'âge est la tête, la jeunesse » est la force ; » raison incontestable pour laisser aux jeunes hommes vaillants l'administration d'une communauté, lorsque les vieillards, brisés par l'âge, ne peuvent plus répondre à tous les besoins de la famille. Il résulte de là que si l'administration se trouve dans les mains du plus jeune pendant la vie d'un père vieux ou d'un frère aîné infirme, la représentation extérieure de la maison reste toujours à celui qui possède encore la dignité de chef et qui garde la présidence dans tous les actes solennels et religieux (1).

(1) L'âge joue un grand rôle dans les communautés serbes et modifie beaucoup les droits des associés. On respecte surtout chez les hommes âgés leur expérience. « Le diable, dit-on, en sait beaucoup, parce qu'il est vieux. » Une grande obéissance est due aux hommes ainsi qu'aux femmes d'un âge avancé. Les vieillards ont droit à la préséance dans les conseils de famille, et ils sont assis pendant les repas, tandis que les jeunes associés restent debout. On ne les tutoie jamais ; on les appelle *petit oncle*, *petit père* ou *petite mère*, *petite tante*. Les sœurs ne tutoient pas leurs frères aînés. Les jeunes gens ôtent leur

Ce sont donc surtout les qualités personnelles qui décident de l'élection du chef. Voilà pourquoi on peut élire une femme à cette dignité ; et même il ne serait pas absolument impossible qu'une fille eût la présidence de la maison, à condition qu'il n'y eût pas d'hommes adultes dans la communauté. La veuve du dernier chef de famille s'empare de l'administration, si ses enfants sont encore trop jeunes et que son mari n'ait point laissé de frères après sa mort. Mais, dès que le fils aîné atteint l'âge où il peut disposer de sa fortune, sa mère lui cède la place. Dans l'Herzégovine, la femme n'est jamais appelée *domaćin* ; elle ne prend pas ce titre, mais elle le donne à son fils aîné, fut-il encore au berceau.

Nous avons dit qu'une fille se met quelquefois à la tête de la communauté. Ce cas est extrêmement rare ; car, lorsqu'une fille est la seule héritière, son mari entre dans la maison pour continuer l'ancienne communauté. Le recueil de M. Bogišić mentionne un cas qui nous paraît trop caractéristique pour n'être point cité, quoique ce ne soit qu'une simple exception. Il y a actuellement, dans la ville de Sérajévo, une communauté placée sous la présidence d'une fille. Sa mère et ses frères se sont volontairement soumis à son autorité. Elle dirige un pensionnat de jeunes filles et soutient par son travail toute la maison. Comme elle a beaucoup voyagé, ses compatriotes la regar-

chapeau devant les vieillards, et ils baisent les mains à ceux qui ont acquis une grande vénération dans la famille. Jamais un jeune homme ne se permettrait de quereller quelqu'un en présence d'un vieillard, et on se garderait bien aussi de rester assis lorsqu'il passe. Les jeux, les plaisanteries frivoles ne se font pas non plus en présence d'hommes ou de femmes avancées en âge.

dent très-respectueusement comme un être extraordinaire ; aussi n'a-t-on pas hésité à lui confier l'administration de la famille. Cet exemple seul prouve que l'individualisme se développe aussi dans la communauté, et qu'on sait estimer la valeur d'une forte personnalité.

L'âge où les femmes renoncent à la dignité de chef de famille en faveur de leur fils n'est pas tout à fait précisé. Dans l'intérieur de la principauté serbe, il paraîtrait que les fils aînés entrent en possession de leurs droits lorsqu'ils ont atteint leur vingtième année. Toutefois, M. Bogišić ne croit pas que ce terme ait été vraiment fixé par la coutume ; il pense plutôt que l'enfant devient le chef de la famille dès qu'il s'est montré capable de gérer les affaires.

En Serbie, on fait subir un véritable noviciat aux membres les plus âgés, à ceux qu'on croit les plus capables, et celui qui se montre le plus intelligent est nommé chef définitif de la maison. La communauté accorde souvent au dernier chef le droit de désigner son successeur. Mais ce privilège ne se donne qu'à ceux qui ont acquis beaucoup de considération dans la maison. Si les associés ne peuvent pas s'entendre sur le choix de la personne qui doit devenir leur chef, on fait décider la question par la commune, ou bien on tire les noms au sort. Comme toutes les actions importantes de la vie chez les Serbes ne se font qu'avec la consécration religieuse, la nomination d'un chef a toujours lieu solennellement. C'est ordinairement à la fête de Noël, le repas fini, qu'on apporte le pain appelé *česnica*. Dans ce pain, on a mis une petite pièce de monnaie en argent, un grain de froment, du maïs et des pois. Un cierge est

allumé ; tous les convives se lèvent, font le signe de la croix et récitent une prière composée pour la circonstance. Le plus âgé rompt ensuite le pain en autant de morceaux qu'il y a de candidats, et celui qui a le morceau où se trouve la pièce de monnaie devient le *domaïn*.

Il y a des contrées où cette dignité s'acquiert par héritage. Dans l'Herzégovine, par exemple, l'élection d'un chef n'a lieu que lorsque le défunt est mort sans désigner son successeur. Il arrive également qu'on ne devient chef, ni par élection, ni par succession, mais qu'un des membres s'empare peu à peu de cette dignité. Si le ménage prospère sous son administration, et que tout marche à la satisfaction de la communauté, il finit par être admis de droit comme le chef de la maison. Mais les abus se glissent partout, et on voit des hommes se mettre quelquefois à la tête d'une association, soit par la force brutale, soit par une ruse criminelle. La paix cesse alors de régner dans la famille où cette usurpation de pouvoir a lieu, et le partage devient inévitable, si les associés ne s'entendent pas pour chasser l'usurpateur. De pareils cas heureusement sont rares.

Quant aux droits du chef de la communauté, voici en quoi ils consistent d'ordinaire. Il a d'abord toutes les prérogatives que lui donne son âge ; il préside les assemblées de famille et représente la communauté dans toutes les affaires extérieures et vis-à-vis des autorités publiques. Autrefois, quand la corvée existait, il en était exempté. Il administre les biens de la famille qui s'est mise sous sa garde, de sorte que nul ne peut disposer des objets ayant une certaine valeur sans sa permission. Toutefois il n'a pas le droit de comman-

der aux membres de l'association : ceux-ci sont ses égaux, et ont tous le même droit de voter dans les conseils de famille : le *domaćin* n'est que *primus inter pares* : mais il peut les surveiller dans l'accomplissement de leur devoir et leur désigner les travaux qu'ils ont à faire. C'est lui qui a la gestion de l'argent commun, et qui doit pourvoir au nécessaire de la maison. Dans certaines contrées, il doit même fournir le vêtement et la chaussure à tous les associés. Il est responsable de toutes les dépenses, et ne peut toucher à l'argent commun ni pour ses propres besoins ni pour ceux de ses enfants.

Un des plus grands et des plus saints devoirs du chef de la communauté, est de défendre l'honneur de la maison. Voilà pourquoi on exige de lui qu'il soit brave et vaillant. En général, il doit se consacrer entièrement à son office de chef, qui est de veiller soigneusement à la prospérité commune, de maintenir la paix à l'intérieur, d'arranger les différends entre associés, de protéger les veuves et les enfants, comme le ferait un père naturel. La communauté a beaucoup de vénération pour son chef, qu'elle nomme souvent le maître de la maison, *gospodar*. A table, on lui donne la place d'honneur; on le sert toujours le premier, et c'est lui-même qui distribue à chaque membre sa portion des mets. On se lève, lorsqu'il entre. La danse, la musique ne commencent jamais en sa présence sans une expresse autorisation de sa part. C'est lui qui fait les honneurs aux convives, et on ne fume pas devant lui.

Le *domaćin* n'a pas de juridiction criminelle; il peut admonester ceux qui désobéissent, mais non leur infliger des punitions corporelles, à moins qu'il

ne s'agisse d'enfants ou de jeunes filles. Il doit même se garder de réprimander les hommes devant les femmes, les jeunes garçons et les enfants. En Bulgarie, c'est le mari qui est chargé de punir sa femme coupable. Le conseil de famille s'assemble le soir, après le souper, devant l'église, et là se jugent les crimes et les délits. Dans les cas de condamnation, le coupable est ordinairement exclu de la communauté. Il n'y a jamais d'appel devant les tribunaux dans les provinces turques; mais, en Bulgarie, l'appel se fait très-souvent devant le conseil municipal, le curé ou l'évêque. En Autriche, on invoque le secours des autorités publiques contre le récalcitrant, et l'exclusion de la communauté est notifiée presque toujours aux tribunaux; on leur livre même le coupable pour qu'il soit jugé d'après les lois.

Le maître de la maison, comme nous l'avons déjà dit, représente la communauté dans toutes les affaires extérieures. C'est lui qui se met en rapport avec les autorités religieuses, politiques et communales. Il est responsable du paiement des impôts, et il doit en outre veiller à ce que les ordres des autorités ecclésiastiques soient ponctuellement exécutés, surtout en ce qui regarde l'éducation des enfants. Mais il n'est point responsable des actions de chaque membre. On lui impose seulement le devoir de désigner aux autorités publiques ceux qui refusent d'obéir aux lois et aux ordonnances de l'Etat. Il représente aussi la famille dans le conseil municipal et vote pour elle à l'élection des anciens.

Quant à ses droits sur la fortune de la communauté, il peut vendre ou acheter certaines choses de petite valeur; mais la vente et l'achat doivent être faits dans

l'intérêt de la maison. Pour des opérations plus importante, il lui faut le consentement de la communauté. Il peut en outre acheter ce qui est absolument nécessaire, mais il doit en rendre compte au conseil de famille. Dans les confins militaires, le chef a le droit de vendre les biens meubles, mais jamais les biens immeubles. Son pouvoir d'aliéner dépend, en général, de l'autorité morale dont il jouit. S'il est aimé et estimé, ses pouvoirs sont plus étendus que ceux d'un autre chef ne possédant pas toute la confiance de ses associés.

Quand le chef agit contre les intentions de la communauté, ses associés peuvent le destituer; mais, le consentement de tous est nécessaire. En Autriche, lorsque le chef ne veut pas renoncer volontairement à ses pouvoirs, on le fait destituer par les tribunaux. Dans les provinces turques, où le sentiment de l'indépendance et l'esprit national ont encore toute leur force primitive, on se garde bien, au contraire, d'invoquer l'assistance du pouvoir judiciaire; c'est le conseil de famille qui destitue le chef indigne, et s'il oppose de la résistance à la décision du conseil, on l'exclut tout simplement de la communauté. Les destitutions ont ordinairement lieu, lorsque le maître de la maison est incapable de gérer les affaires, et que la famille, au lieu de prospérer, court le risque d'être ruinée. Si le chef est trop vieux, faible ou malade, et qu'il consente à abdiquer ses pouvoirs, on le laisse toujours figurer devant les autorités comme le maître de la maison. Mais on le destitue lorsqu'il devient aveugle ou fou, ou s'il est unanimement détesté par tous les membres de la famille; s'il est enclin à l'ivrognerie, ou que sa conduite soit immorale; s'il vient à subir des peines

infamantes ; s'il est dissipateur ou seulement injuste envers ses associés, et même s'il est trop égoïste dans la gestion de la fortune. La destitution d'un tel chef se fait ordinairement le soir, après le souper. L'ainé de la famille lui énumère tous ses défauts ; il lui fait voir la ruine qui menace la maison, et lui déclare qu'il est incapable d'être plus longtemps le chef de la communauté, et que toute la famille a décidé de lui donner un remplaçant. Il convient de dire ici que ce n'est presque jamais un des frères du chef qui proclame cette destitution ; car, dans un pareil cas, la communauté devrait procéder au partage des biens.

Lorsqu'une destitution a lieu ou que le chef vient à mourir sans avoir désigné son successeur, c'est ordinairement le membre le plus âgé, celui qui avait souvent aidé l'ancien chef dans sa charge qui est nommé pour le remplacer. Cette manière de procéder est en usage dans les confins militaires croates, où l'élection est faite par l'autorité locale, lorsque les associés ne peuvent pas s'entendre sur le choix de leur nouveau chef. Quelquefois même l'élection n'a pas lieu, et c'est le membre le plus âgé qui occupe immédiatement la place du maître destitué ou défunt, pourvu qu'il n'ait pas soixante ans. En Dalmatie, le frère du chef de famille passe généralement avant son fils ; dans quelques contrées seulement de cette province, ce dernier succède à son père. Il arrive parfois qu'on ne procède pas immédiatement à l'élection d'un nouveau chef. A Konavlje, dans le cercle de Raguse, par exemple, on nomme parfois un simple gérant ; et s'il justifie sa réputation, on l'établit chef définitif de la communauté. Il existe même une coutume en Bulgarie, qui fixe à quarante jours le

terme de la gestion provisoire. En Serbie, les chefs de famille sont nommés par élection, ou bien les associés les plus âgés se succèdent tour à tour. Toutefois, lorsque des frères ou des fils adultes survivent à l'ancien chef, le plus sage d'entre eux est nommé *domaćin*. Mais si le défunt ne laisse après lui qu'une veuve avec des enfants mineurs, un des voisins ou le cousin est appelé à gérer les biens de la maison jusqu'à ce que l'un des enfants ait atteint l'âge qui lui permettra d'être chef.

Après le chef de famille, c'est la *domaćica*, la maîtresse de la maison, qui reçoit les plus grands honneurs dans la communauté. La *domaćica* est ordinairement la femme du *domaćin*. Elle conserve cette dignité, même après la mort de son mari. Cependant si la femme du chef de famille est trop âgée ou qu'elle ne possède pas les qualités que cette dignité exige, on nomme à sa place la plus capable d'entre les femmes les plus âgées. On ne choisit une veuve que lorsqu'il n'y a pas d'autre femme à élire, et dans quelques contrées, on n'hésite même pas à préférer une fille, ce qui n'a jamais lieu dans l'Herzégovine ni dans le Monténégro.

Nous avons déjà dit que le cadet de deux frères devient souvent chef de famille par suite de l'incapacité physique ou morale de l'aîné. Quand ce cas se présente, ce n'est pas la femme du cadet qui devient maîtresse de maison, mais la femme de celui qui a été destitué ou qui aurait dû être choisi. En Bosnie, si le cadet est marié, les deux belles-sœurs exercent alternativement cet emploi. Toutefois quand la mère du chef de famille vit encore, c'est elle seule qui est ordinairement reconnue comme la maîtresse de la maison.

Dans plusieurs contrées, les femmes ont le droit de nommer elles-mêmes la *domaïca*; mais l'élection doit être confirmée par le conseil de famille. La source où nous puisons nos renseignements fait mention d'un usage isolé qui se rencontre dans un district du territoire de Raguse. Là on ne nomme jamais pour maîtresse de maison la femme du chef de famille. On craint d'augmenter ainsi l'influence du *domaïcin*, et on croit pouvoir mieux contrôler sa gestion avec une femme moins attachée à lui que sa propre épouse.

Les droits et devoirs de la *domaïca* se concentrent dans l'intérieur de la maison. D'abord, elle est tout naturellement à la tête du ménage. La laiterie et le poulailler sont placés sous sa garde. Le produit des ventes du lait et de la volaille lui est remis, et c'est elle qui le donne au chef de la maison. Elle distribue le travail aux femmes placées sous sa surveillance, mais elle leur doit l'exemple d'une bonne ménagère et surtout d'une femme sage et vertueuse. Son devoir est d'interposer dans leurs querelles et d'y mettre fin. En général, elle répond de l'ordre intérieur. Lorsque tous les travailleurs sont aux champs, dans les vignes ou les bois, la *domaïca* s'occupe des enfants, fait la cuisine et veille sur toute la maison. A table, elle a sa place à côté du chef de famille, avec qui elle fait aux convives les honneurs du repas, et qu'elle remplace en cas d'absence. On la consulte pour le mariage des filles, dont elle prépare le trousseau; elle a même quelquefois voix décisive dans cette question.

La *domaïca* ne veille pas seulement à l'ordre matériel de la famille: elle a aussi des devoirs spirituels à remplir. Elle dirige l'éducation religieuse des jeunes filles, leur enseigne les prières quotidiennes, les

conduit à l'église les jours de fêtes et les initie à tous les travaux de la maison. Pendant les longues soirées d'hiver, quand les travaux des champs sont suspendus, que le vent souffle au dehors et que le feu pétille dans l'âtre, la *domaćica* rassemble les jeunes filles autour d'elle pour leur faire de charmants contes ou des récits populaires qu'elles écoutent pieusement ; histoires morales que se transmettent les générations, et qui sont la consolation des peuples dans le malheur, les gardiens fidèles de leur nationalité contre le despotisme d'un conquérant. C'est de la bouche même de la *domaćica* que les jeunes filles reçoivent ce trésor populaire qu'elles légueront plus tard à leurs enfants. Durant ces veillées brumeuses, les jeunes filles ne restent pas inactives : elles tiennent presque toutes la quenouille, et la bonne vieille mère fait bourdonner son rouet en leur chantant une poétique chanson nationale, qui est, pour ainsi dire, l'histoire du pays mise en musique. Le Serbe est un peuple essentiellement musicien. Le chant accompagne presque tous les instants de sa vie. Dans la joie comme dans la tristesse, la musique ne le quitte jamais. Et qui pourrait mieux enseigner ces chants patriotiques, si beaux et si naïfs, que la bonne mère, cette compagne inséparable de ses enfants à la maison comme à l'église, à la danse comme à la prière ?

Les devoirs de la *domaćica* ne sont pas borués aux vivants : elle s'occupe aussi de ceux qui ne sont plus. Le culte des morts est un des plus sacrés chez le peuple serbe. Les messes pour les défunts se célèbrent le samedi chez les orthodoxes. La maîtresse de la maison ne manque jamais d'y assister. Elle ho-

nore ainsi de ses prières la mémoire des anciens appelés dans une autre vie, et le culte des morts se perpétue de la sorte à travers les générations.

La charge d'une maîtresse de maison est donc fort belle et même très-digne d'envie. La femme qui la remplit avec dignité est nécessairement aimée et estimée de toute la famille. On se fait un plaisir de lui faciliter sa charge. On lui rend tous les honneurs possible. Elle reste néanmoins soumise au chef, le consulte dans toutes les questions importantes, et devient ainsi l'intermédiaire naturel entre le *domaïin* et les autres associés.

On connaît maintenant tous les droits et les devoirs du chef de la famille et de la maîtresse de la maison. Nous allons exposer ceux des autres associés. Ils sont au fond les mêmes dans toute association libre : tous les membres participent également aux biens communs, et tous doivent réunir leurs forces et leurs travaux pour le salut et la prospérité de la communauté. Chaque membre a sa quote-part des bénéfices, et il a le droit d'être nourri, logé et habillé par l'association. Le droit de vote est le même pour tous dans le conseil de famille, et chacun a le droit d'introduire des convives aux repas de la maison. Un associé peut sortir de la communauté ; il peut même aller s'établir en pays étranger, mais il doit obtenir le consentement du chef, ainsi que nous le dirons plus tard, même pour sortir temporairement de la communauté. Parmi les Serbes orthodoxes, tout membre a le droit d'aller au moins une fois en pèlerinage au mont Athos en Grèce, où les anciens princes de la Serbie firent construire des monastères qui ont toujours été regardés par les Serbes comme des sanctuaires dignes

de la plus grande vénération. L'histoire nationale a jeté de profondes racines dans ce peuple.

Ce qui modifie beaucoup ces divers droits des associés, c'est l'âge et le sexe. Les enfants et les jeunes filles ne jouissent pas de tous les droits accordés aux adultes. L'âge de l'enfance est fixé différemment par la coutume, suivant la contrée. Dans les confins militaires, l'enfance finit à dix ans, et à vingt-quatre ans on acquiert tous les droits; mais ce n'est qu'à la trentième année que commence l'âge viril. La coutume serbe, au contraire, attache moins d'importance à l'âge. « Qui est sage est assez vieux, » dit un proverbe; et nous avons déjà relevé ce principe à propos de l'élection du chef. Celui qui est capable d'accomplir les travaux et de remplir les devoirs d'un homme adulte peut donc en exercer aussi tous les droits. L'homme marié est, du reste, plus estimé dans la famille que le célibataire.

Dans l'Herzégovine et le Monténégro, l'enfant commence à exercer ses droits dès qu'il est en état de porter les armes, c'est-à-dire au plus tard à dix-huit ans; il acquiert alors le droit de voter dans le conseil de famille. Mais les femmes ne jouissent pas du droit de vote dans toutes les contrées. Au Monténégro, elles ne sont admises dans les délibérations que lorsqu'on y traite des questions très-importantes. Dans d'autres contrées serbes, les conseils des femmes, surtout des femmes âgées, sont toujours respectés et recherchés quoiqu'on leur accorde rarement le droit de voter. En Dalmatie il paraît qu'elles l'obtiennent presque toujours. On cite pourtant diverses contrées où ce privilège n'est exercé que par la maîtresse de la maison. Dans les confins militaires, les femmes

peuvent voter, si elles n'ont pas un homme pour représentant. Ce droit n'appartiendrait donc qu'aux veuves dont le fils n'a pas encore atteint l'âge adulte. En Bulgarie, tous les hommes mariés peuvent voter dans le conseil de famille. On ne donne cependant une véritable valeur qu'à la voix d'un associé ayant accompli ses vingt-cinq ans.

Le conseil de famille s'assemble ordinairement après le repas du soir, lorsque le travail de la journée est fini et que tous les membres peuvent se réunir autour du foyer domestique; car c'est là, en hiver, que se tiennent presque toujours les conseils. Ils s'assemblent aussi parfois après la messe, les jours de grandes fêtes. En été, on s'assied à l'ombre d'un arbre, et là on s'occupe des questions importantes qui intéressent la communauté. Le chef parle le premier sur les affaires de la maison. Il rend compte de ce qu'il a fait, il développe ses projets pour l'avenir, et il énumère tout ce qu'il convient d'entreprendre. La discussion s'ouvre ensuite; et quand tout le monde est d'accord, les ventes et les achats faits par le *domaïn* sont ratifiés et l'on adopte le programme exposé par le maître de la maison.

Dans une famille où règne la concorde, où le chef jouit de la confiance générale, les discussions ne sont jamais longues ni passionnées. On accepte presque toujours les propositions du *domaïn*, et on se soumet à la décision des membres les plus âgés, quoique les opinions varient bien souvent; mais les plus jeunes déclarent ne pas vouloir faire de l'opposition à une sage expérience tant de fois éprouvée, car ils estiment trop l'âge mûr pour chercher à imposer leur propre décision. Le parti qui adopte les

projets du chef décide l'affaire en litige, et l'autre se soumet presque toujours.

Dans quelques contrées des confins militaires, c'est, au contraire, la majorité qui tranche les questions. S'il y a partage, la voix du chef l'emporte. On lui laisse également la liberté d'agir selon sa volonté, lorsque, après une longue discussion, on ne parvient pas à s'entendre. En Bulgarie, il faut l'unanimité des voix dans toutes les affaires importantes, et le *veto* d'un seul membre peut empêcher les plus sages résolutions du conseil de famille. On entoure alors l'opposant; on emploie tous les moyens persuasifs pour qu'il retire son *veto*; on le supplie de ne pas compromettre l'harmonie intérieure; on lui fait voir la honte qui retomberait sur la maison, si les voisins connaissaient un pareil désaccord; la famille deviendrait la risée de tout le village. Il est rare que l'opposant ne se rende pas aux instances et aux prières de tous les associés, et la paix revient presque toujours.

On voit par là que le conseil de famille a pour objet principal les intérêts vitaux de la communauté. Il restreint considérablement la sphère d'action du *domačín*, qui ne peut, en général, décider seul que les affaires courantes. Lorsqu'il s'agit d'une question importante, acheter ou vendre un immeuble, par exemple, ou simplement du bétail, il doit toujours convoquer le conseil. Il lui est défendu de faire des emprunts à des étrangers ou de contracter des dettes considérables pour la maison, sans un consentement exprès. Le conseil règle, en outre, tout ce qui a rapport aux relations extérieures de la famille, et seul il peut décider le partage de la communauté. Le chef doit également convoquer ses associés, lorsqu'il se

présente une question d'honneur ou de moralité qui intéresse tous les membres, en un mot dans les circonstances exceptionnelles réclamant des moyens extraordinaires. Ce que le conseil décide encore, ce sont les mariages ; car le *domaċin* doit veiller à ce qu'il n'y ait pas trop de couples mariés dans la maison, ce qui pourrait nuire au bien-être de la communauté. Il convient aussi quelquefois d'empêcher ou de retarder l'union des membres qui n'ont pas encore l'âge du mariage ni les qualités nécessaires pour le contracter. La coutume serbe prescrit un certain ordre pour les mariages, et il appartient au chef d'en surveiller rigoureusement l'exécution.

La coutume serbe exige que l'aîné se marie avant les cadets. Une seule exception est admise pour le cas où celui-là renonce au mariage, soit volontairement, soit forcé par quelque infirmité corporelle ; mais il doit donner expressément à son frère la permission de se marier. Les filles précèdent toujours leurs frères dans le mariage. Cependant, lorsqu'une des sœurs est mariée, et l'autre encore enfant, le frère peut ne pas attendre que celle-ci soit nubile. Le même ordre est rigoureusement observé en Bulgarie. On exclurait sévèrement de la communauté celui qui le violerait.

Une question très-importante est de savoir si la coutume serbe reconnaît un pécule aux membres de la communauté. On sait combien le peuple slave, en général, tient au principe de l'association. Pour lui, le partage c'est l'isolement de la famille ou la misère, l'état le plus déplorable qui puisse exister. Il est donc permis de croire que la communauté serbe n'accorde pas à ses membres un droit

au produit de leur travail et ne leur permette pas d'enlever ainsi une part quelconque du bien commun. Un proverbe dit : « En quelque lieu que soit conduite » la vache, c'est toujours à la maison qu'elle vèle. » De quelque manière donc que l'associé s'enrichisse, il doit partager son gain avec la communauté. Celui qui garderait pour lui seul le produit de son travail serait détesté et chassé de la famille. Le bien commun est une espèce de talisman pour le Serbe ; en dérober une portion, ce serait comme « si on se coupait » la main. » Le pécule est donc regardé d'un mauvais œil par le peuple ; il est pour ainsi dire synonyme de désordre, car il engendre fatalement le partage des communautés.

La coutume serbe, néanmoins, reconnaît un certain pécule ; mais cela vient de quelque influence étrangère. On le trouve aussi en diverses contrées, où les effets d'une pareille influence ne se découvriraient pas facilement. Dans l'Herzégovine et le Monténégro, par exemple, il y a bien moins d'objets appartenant au pécule qu'en Autriche-Hongrie. Au Monténégro, les immeubles ne peuvent jamais en constituer un pour les associés ; on permet seulement de garder le butin fait à la suite d'un combat. Les armes de l'ennemi appartiennent au vainqueur. On permet aussi aux prêtres de retenir les dons casuels qui leur sont faits pour un mariage, un baptême ou un enterrement ; mais ils doivent donner à l'association les taxes annuelles qu'ils perçoivent sur les habitants à titre de traitement. Ce qu'un associé gagne à l'époque où les travaux chôment lui appartient en propre, ainsi que les objets qu'il trouve et les dons qu'on lui fait. Les associés, marchands ou

artisans, peuvent regarder comme leur propriété particulière tout ce qu'ils gagnent par leur commerce ou leur métier. Les jeunes gens qui se consacrent à la marine ont également le droit de garder pour eux tous les bénéfices de leurs voyages sur mer ou de leurs expéditions. La dot de la femme est considérée comme son pécule propre. Elle consiste ordinairement en bétail, vêtement, parure, etc.; très-rarement en immeubles. Dans quelque partie de la Serbie, le bétail et les immeubles de la dot sont parfois placés hors de la communauté et entre les mains d'un paysan du village, qui partage avec la femme les récoltes ou les produits.

Chez les Bulgares, les femmes seules ont droit à un pécule. Elles gardent comme leur propriété particulière les cadeaux reçus de leur mari le jour du mariage, ainsi que l'héritage de leurs parents. Quant à la dot, quelle qu'en soit la nature, bétail, immeubles ou argent, elle entre dans la communauté; la femme ne peut la reprendre qu'au moment du partage de l'association, et sans pouvoir exiger les fruits déjà perçus.

Un usage très-répandu parmi les Serbes est d'envoyer un ou plusieurs membres de la communauté chez une nation voisine pour y chercher fortune. Si la demande est faite par l'associé au chef de la famille, il doit, avant de partir, nommer un remplaçant; mais s'il est envoyé par la communauté elle-même, ou qu'il ne se réserve pas le profit de son travail à l'étranger, celui qui part se trouve exempté de cette obligation. On entreprend aussi des voyages en pays étranger, lorsqu'il n'y a plus aucun travail dans la maison, ou que la misère force quelques membres

à s'expatrier temporairement. Dans ce cas, le profit appartient toujours à la communauté. Les familles bulgares suivent à peu près le même usage. Lorsqu'il y a deux frères, le cadet s'en va d'habitude chercher du travail hors de la maison.

Il arrive assez souvent que des associés restent absents pendant des années entières. Ils se livrent au négoce et amassent presque toujours une petite fortune. Doivent-ils céder leur gain à la communauté, lorsqu'ils retournent dans leur famille? ou peuvent-ils le considérer comme leur pécule personnel? Il ne paraît pas qu'il y ait d'usage général sur ce point. Cependant si l'associé a quitté sa famille par ordre du chef, ce qu'il a gagné appartient à la caisse commune. Mais s'il est parti de sa propre volonté, il ne doit rien à l'association, il peut garder son gain. Les communautés passent quelquefois des conventions avec ceux qui partent pour un temps indéterminé. Ces sortes de contrats tranchent alors la question du gain; mais l'associé donne presque toujours une partie de son pécule à la communauté, surtout si elle est plus pauvre que l'heureux émigrant. Par contre, si la communauté est riche, elle soutient son associé, lorsqu'il se trouve dans une situation malheureuse.

L'associé absent ne perd jamais ses droits sur les biens de la communauté, quand même il passerait plusieurs années hors de la maison. En cas de partage, il retire sa quote-part, mais non sur les biens acquis pendant son absence; car il n'a pas contribué à leur acquisition. Les Serbes de Hongrie refusent même quelquefois à l'associé sa quote-part, s'il est revenu dans la famille sans y apporter quelque chose de son gain. Dans l'Herzégovine on le reçoit toujours à

bras ouverts, quand même il aurait tout perdu et qu'il serait malheureux; car, dit-on : « Dieu l'a voulu ainsi. » En Bulgarie, celui qui rentre à la maison ne peut demander aucun compte touchant l'administration des biens communs, s'il ne donne pas au chef l'argent qu'il a gagné. Pendant les années de détresse, l'associé riche et absent ne manque jamais de fournir à la communauté ce qui lui est nécessaire pour vivre; il ne la laisse pas dans la misère quoiqu'il ne paraisse pas que la communauté puisse réclamer cette assistance comme un droit. L'associé n'est obligé que moralement à soutenir sa famille et à l'aider de sa fortune. Aussi le jour où la situation de la communauté s'améliore et où la prospérité revient, on rend à l'associé tout ce qu'il a fourni, quelquefois même avec les intérêts. A Konavlje, l'associé qui se refuserait à secourir sa famille dans le malheur serait immédiatement exclu de la communauté. De pareils cas sont rares.

La charité est un des traits caractéristiques du peuple serbe. On ne refuse jamais l'aumône à un mendiant. Les aumônes se font pour le salut de l'âme, et souvent en mémoire d'un cher défunt ou pour la prospérité des parents, des frères, des sœurs ou des enfants qui vivent encore. Celui qui fait l'aumône, dit en lui-même : « Que Dieu assiste mon cher A. ! » ou bien « qu'il pardonne à l'âme de X. ! » Partant de là, l'aumône n'est jamais refusée à celui qui l'implore. « Qui mendie, porterait-il même une couronne, doit » recevoir. » C'est une maxime du peuple serbe. La misère est considérée par lui comme un fléau de Dieu. Jamais il ne lui viendrait à la pensée de l'imputer à l'homme. « Le bâton du mendiant et sa be-

sace, » dit un proverbe, « viennent de Dieu. » Ces idées font que, dans le Monténégro, la communauté ne rend jamais les avances d'argent qui lui ont été faites par un de ses associés durant une grande détresse.

Parmi les droits de l'associé, nous avons cité celui d'être nourri et habillé par elle; mais on ne doit point lui fournir tous les vêtements. En général, la communauté ne donne que la coiffure, la chaussure et un vêtement chaud pour l'hiver. Les gardiens des bestiaux ont seuls droit à un vêtement complet. Dans quelques contrées de la Serbie, la communauté ne doit à ses membres que les habits de fêtes. Les associés achètent donc eux-mêmes leur habillement; car tout ce qui leur est nécessaire se confectionne dans la maison. Les femmes font tous les travaux à l'aiguille pour elles comme pour leur mari, leurs enfants et leurs frères, pour ceux, du moins, qui ne sont pas mariés. C'est dans ce but que la communauté assigne aux femmes quelques arpents de terre près de la maison pour la culture du chanvre et du lin. Dans le « *comitat* » de Sriem (Syrmiium), des communautés riches ont la coutume de partager entre les associés le profit net de chaque année, ce qui leur permet d'acheter eux-mêmes les vêtements nécessaires. Chez les Bulgares, la communauté procure à ses membres tout ce qui peut être confectionné dans la maison.

Nous n'avons parlé jusqu'à présent que des devoirs et des droits de la communauté et des hommes, ses associés. Il nous reste à dire maintenant quels sont les droits et les devoirs des femmes et des filles. Cette étude intéressante montrera quelle est, en général, la

position de la femme chez les Serbes. Mais, pour bien élucider cette question, il nous faudrait faire connaître la vie intime de la famille naturelle. Nos recherches suffiront du moins pour démontrer que le Serbe sait estimer la véritable dignité de la femme, et qu'il est toujours prêt à la défendre dans toutes les circonstances où elle peut être menacée. Le peuple serbe est sans doute encore fort loin de l'émancipation des femmes, telle que la rêvent certains philosophes et politiques de l'Occident; mais si la femme est soumise à l'homme chez les Serbes, elle ne descend jamais au rang d'esclaves. « La maison repose sur la femme, et » non sur la terre, » dit un proverbe. Elle doit obéissance à son mari parce qu'il est la force et que « la maison menace ruine là où commande la queue » nouille et où le glaive obéit. » Il n'y a rien de plus touchant que les rapports entre frère et sœur. La riche poésie serbe lui doit ses plus belles créations.

La femme serbe, il est vrai, travaille rudement; mais on allège son lourd fardeau toutes les fois qu'on peut le faire. Ce qui dépasse ses forces est toujours exécuté par l'homme. Lui seul laboure, fauche et bat le blé : elle l'assiste seulement dans les travaux champêtres.

Le terrain véritable de son activité, c'est l'intérieur de la maison. Chez les Serbes, l'industrie domestique produit des fichus, des broderies en or et en argent, des tapis, etc. Quelque primitifs que soient ces ouvrages, on les trouve dans bien des grandes villes de l'Autriche-Hongrie, et on voit, dans des salons élégants, ces beaux tapis de table nommés *čilim*, qui sont fabriqués par des paysannes serbes et ven-

des quelquefois très-cher. Les femmes préparent également tout ce qui est nécessaire à l'économie intérieure de la famille. Elles fabriquent le savon, les chandelles, et pourvoient même la maison des remèdes les plus usuels. Ces divers travaux sont faits à tour de rôle. Les unes restent à la maison, les autres vont aux champs. C'est le sort qui décide.

Quant à la division des travaux manuels, chaque femme travaille pour sa famille dans le sens restreint de ce mot, c'est-à-dire pour son mari et ses enfants, et, en outre, à son tour de rôle, pour les membres non mariés de l'association et les orphelins. Dans une communauté qui sème et fournit elle-même le lin, le travail est distribué entre les femmes, sinon chacune file pour sa propre famille. Les vieilles femmes et les jeunes filles sont exemptées des travaux trop rudes. On laisse aux jeunes filles le temps de préparer leur trousseau ou de gagner un petit pécule pour acheter une vache, si elles sont orphelines. Toute fille doit apporter quelque chose à son futur. Aussi ne s'occupe-t-elle jamais du ménage.

Sauf le pécule, qui est la propriété de la femme, celle-ci ne peut aliéner que certains objets d'une petite valeur, par exemple vendre du lait. Le produit des ouvrages manuels des femmes leur appartient, ainsi qu'une partie de la volaille, des œufs, quelquefois des fruits et du lin qu'elles récoltent sur les terres de la communauté. Mais, dans l'Herzégovine, elles doivent rendre compte de tout le gain qu'elles font sur ces ventes. Les filles qui cueillent les olives en Dalmatie peuvent garder le profit de leur travail; car on est très-indulgent pour elles, et on tolère même que la maîtresse de la maison leur

achète en secret divers objets de toilette. La femme, au contraire, ne peut rien vendre à l'insu de son mari et du chef de la maison.

Les femmes forment souvent entre elles de petites communautés sous la présidence de la *domaéica*. De pareilles associations se composent surtout des sœurs. Elles administrent les biens qui leur ont été accordés par le conseil de famille. La vente de certains objets, dont la maîtresse de la maison peut disposer, est confiée à une des associées de cette petite communauté, qui fréquente les foires et rend compte à la *domaéica* de son gain.

Quant aux vêtements, l'association leur fournit, ainsi qu'aux hommes, la coiffure, la chaussure et le manteau, que la plupart d'entre elles reçoivent de leur mari. Les autres objets de la toilette d'une femme sont faits par elle ; et la parure, elle l'achète de son argent.

La femme peut posséder, comme nous l'avons dit, un pécule aussi bien que les autres associés. Tout ce que les invités de la noce lui donnent à l'occasion de son mariage, lui appartient, ainsi que l'héritage de ses parents. Tout ce qu'elle gagne par son travail hors de la communauté, devient de même un pécule sur lequel l'association n'a aucun droit ; mais elle doit auparavant demander au chef la permission d'aller chercher fortune hors de la communauté, quand les travaux viennent à chômer. Ce n'est que dans les communautés pauvres que la femme et la jeune fille quittent le toit paternel, et ce sont alors plutôt les filles, surtout les orphelines, qui s'en vont à l'étranger. Mais il arrive très-souvent que les femmes d'une autre communauté vont aider leurs voisines, lorsqu'il

Il y a chômage dans les travaux de leur propre maison. Cette assistance ne se fait que par amitié et dans aucun esprit de lucre. C'est à charge de revanche, comme on dit vulgairement.

Le pécule des filles ne consiste que dans la dot.

Le mariage des filles se fait ordinairement d'après leur rang d'âge comme celui des garçons ; mais, dans certaines contrées, cet usage cède toutes les fois que l'intérêt des filles l'exige.

La fille devient, par son mariage, membre de la communauté de son mari. Lorsqu'elle est veuve, elle peut continuer à faire partie de l'association ; mais si elle préfère rentrer chez ses parents, ce qui est rare, elle en a le droit. Lorsqu'elle retourne chez ses parents, elle peut emmener avec elle ses enfants, à la condition qu'ils rentreront dans la communauté de leur père dès qu'ils auront atteint l'âge adulte. Si une veuve quitte la communauté de son mari, elle perd tous ses droits sur les biens de l'association. Il en est de même, lorsqu'elle se remarie. Une veuve quitte rarement la communauté et la demeure de son mari, car elle serait accablée de reproches. Cependant, si elle est encore très-jeune et sans enfants, et qu'elle n'ait plus ni beau-père, ni beau-frère pour l'aider dans ses pénibles travaux ou défendre au besoin son honneur, elle rentre chez ses parents. Le deuil de la maison qu'elle quitte est grand, et le départ est aussi douloureux pour la communauté que la mort de son mari.

Les veuves contractent très-rarement une nouvelle union ; car la fidélité de l'épouse va presque toujours au delà du tombeau, et les Serbes regardent un second mariage comme une espèce d'outrage fait au mari dé-

funt. Cependant, on excuse quelquefois une nouvelle union, et la communauté supporte même alors dans beaucoup de cas les dépenses des fiançailles. Mais les secondes noces ne sont d'habitude ni pompeuses, ni bruyantes. Un simple repas se donne, auquel très-peu de monde assiste, et on ne fait aucun cadeau. La mariée n'emporte avec elle que ce qui lui appartient, ou bien on lui donne les choses les plus nécessaires, si elle n'a rien; car il n'arrive jamais qu'une veuve épouse un ancien associé de son mari. D'abord, l'Eglise catholique ou orthodoxe défend une pareille union, à cause de la parenté, et, dans une très-grande communauté, où cet empêchement de mariage n'existerait pas, les époux ne seraient plus tolérés dans l'association. On rendrait au mari sa quote-part du bien commun, et il devrait sortir immédiatement de la famille.

Quelques mots encore sur les domestiques et leur position dans la communauté. Le traitement des serviteurs est non-seulement humain, mais presque familial. Ils n'ont aucun droit sur les biens de la famille; car ce ne sont jamais de véritables associés. On prend soin, toutefois, de leur bien-être physique et moral, comme s'ils faisaient réellement partie de l'association. Les domestiques sont soumis au chef de la maison, et les servantes obéissent à la *domaćića*; mais les autres membres, et surtout les jeunes gens, sont presque avec eux sur le pied de l'égalité.

Les domestiques se louent au printemps et presque toujours pour une année. La communauté leur donne la nourriture et les vêtements. Une rétribution en argent est rare, surtout pendant la première année du service; mais elle se rencontre. A la fin de l'année,

le domestique ne reçoit pas son congé, et, s'il veut rester dans la maison, le prix de ses gages est réglé et décidé par les autres domestiques, assemblés dans ce but par le chef de la famille. Les paiements en argent sont très-modiques ; ils varient, suivant la contrée, entre 25, 35 et 40 florins par an. En Bulgarie, dans les villes, les gages vont de 200 à 1,200 groschen. La principale rétribution se donne toujours en nature. Une servante, qui reste plus d'une année dans la maison et dont la conduite est irréprochable, reçoit ordinairement une génisse comme rémunération. Les domestiques déposent leurs épargnes entre les mains du chef de la famille, ou bien ils les envoient à leur père, et ce qu'ils ont gagné sert à payer les dépenses de leur mariage. Les servantes qui se marient reçoivent de la communauté un don de 6 à 12 florins. Quand un domestique se marie, il rentre chez son père. Son départ de la famille dans laquelle il a servi est quelquefois fort touchant, et les relations entre ses parents et la communauté restent aussi intimes et amicales qu'entre deux proches parents.

Il arrive très-rarement qu'un domestique se marie avec une fille de la communauté dans laquelle il sert, ou qu'un des associés épouse une servante. On ne voit de tels mariages que dans les communautés petites et pauvres, qui sont près de s'éteindre et où se trouve une fille unique héritière. Dans ce dernier cas, le seul qui puisse se présenter, le domestique doit prendre le nom de l'ancienne communauté.

III

Les communautés slaves se composent de plusieurs

familles naturelles, comme nous l'avons dit plus haut. Cependant on rencontre aussi des familles naturelles en dehors des associations. Nous allons maintenant nous attacher à montrer que toute l'organisation de la famille est fondée sur le principe de la monogamie.

Les Serbes ont des idées si rigoureuses sur les relations entre les deux sexes, et l'organisation économique de la famille est telle que l'introduction de la polygamie n'y était guère possible. Cela est si vrai que, même dans les familles musulmanes d'origine serbe, la polygamie est très-rare, presque inconnue. Nous verrons bientôt que, par des raisons économiques propres à ces familles serbes, il n'est pas possible à tous les hommes de contracter mariage; à plus forte raison ceux qui se marient ne sauraient-ils avoir plusieurs femmes.

Nous retrouvons la monogamie chez tous les Slaves, qui sont même parfois portés au célibat jusqu'à l'exagération. On a de tristes preuves de cette vérité dans l'existence de plusieurs sectes russes, connues sous la dénomination d'*Hommes de Dieu*, de *Skopci* ou origénistes, *Hlisty* ou flagellants, *Bezslavesnijé* ou muets, etc., et qui comptent de nombreux partisans dans toutes les classes de la société. D'après la doctrine de ces diverses sectes, tout homme marié doit se séparer de sa femme ou bien vivre avec elle comme si elle était sa propre sœur.

Un célèbre juriste autrichien, M. le professeur Unger, met, il est vrai, les Slaves au rang des peuples polygames. Dans son ouvrage intitulé : *Le mariage dans son développement historique et universel*, qui est un péché de jeunesse du savant écrivain, M. Unger

cite les *Zaporogues*, les *Strigolnici* et plusieurs autres sectes russes comme vivant en polygamie vers la fin du dernier siècle, et il tire ses preuves des *Notices sur la Russie*, publiées en 1795 par Camphausen, ainsi que du livre d'Ivanow : *La Russie en 1795*, dont il ne semble connaître cependant qu'une fort mauvaise traduction ; car M. Bogišić n'a pu découvrir dans l'original le texte cité par M. Unger. Une remarque très-importante à faire ici, c'est que les *Strigolnici* ont cessé d'exister au seizième siècle ; et d'après un rapport officiel du gouvernement russe, il n'y a de sectes polygames dans aucune partie de l'empire.

Quant aux assertions de Camphausen, elles ne prouveraient rien, fussent-elles justes, parce qu'il s'agit de particularités spéciales à quelques groupes de Cosaques des frontières. Leurs villages étaient autrefois l'asile de tous les aventuriers du monde ; pour cette vie sauvage et guerrière qu'ils menaient, il leur fallait beaucoup de bras. Leurs combats continuels, aussi bien que l'affluence du rebut de toutes les nations, devaient nécessairement corrompre les mœurs. Voilà comment leurs fréquentes débauches ont pu paraître de véritables institutions à Camphausen, qui a eu le tort d'attribuer à tous les Cosaques des vices qui n'existaient que sur certaines frontières. De là, vient probablement la fable de la polygamie chez les *Zaporogues*, qui a induit en erreur M. Unger. Après cette courte digression, revenons à la famille serbe, dont nous allons décrire les intéressantes cérémonies ou coutumes matrimoniales, qui sont encore rigoureusement observées aujourd'hui.

Les noces sont toujours précédées des fiançailles. Un père ne promet sa fille en mariage que lorsqu'elle

est âgée de seize à vingt ans ; mais les garçons se marient ordinairement entre leur vingtième et vingt-cinquième année. Il est vrai que, d'après un proverbe monténégrin, ils prennent femme quand on leur ceint l'épée ; mais, en général, ce dicton ne se réalise pas. Chez tous les peuples, c'est le besoin d'une aide qui fait les mariages. Le paysan prend une femme pour qu'il y ait plus de bras dans la famille. Les enfants eux-mêmes ne sont pas une charge, car on les fait servir dès leur première jeunesse à l'exploitation. Les intérêts économiques doivent, en effet, exercer une grande influence sur la conclusion des mariages, surtout chez un peuple qui vit généralement en communauté de familles. Si l'association ne possède qu'un petit nombre de ménages, les garçons se marient avant leur vingtième année ; s'il y en a trop, on ajourne ordinairement le mariage. Cette règle est surtout observée dans les pays peu fertiles et peu riches, comme le Monténégro, par exemple, l'Herzégovine et toute la région des bouches de Cattaro.

Il y a d'autres circonstances encore qui font parfois négliger l'observation rigoureuse de cette coutume. Ainsi que nous l'avons dit au chapitre précédent, les filles se marient toujours avec leurs frères. Dans les confins de la Hongrie et de la Croatie, les garçons ne se mettent parfois en ménage qu'après avoir accompli leur temps de service militaire, ce qui a des conséquences morales fort tristes ; car le soldat sous les drapeaux vit ordinairement en concubinage avec une fille ; et quoiqu'il l'épouse, lorsqu'il a obtenu son congé, une pareille conduite est toujours fatale aux bonnes mœurs. Mais cette coutume déplorable va certainement disparaître sous l'influence de l'ad-

ministration civile , qui régit désormais les confins militaires. Lorsqu'une communauté se trouve menacée dans son existence , parce qu'elle n'a plus qu'un seul héritier, celui-ci doit se marier après la mort de son père, quand même il n'aurait pas atteint sa quinzième année. On lui cherche une fille sage et bonne ménagère; et comme il est trop jeune encore pour conduire la maison , c'est sa femme qui dirige les travaux domestiques. Hors ce cas tout à fait exceptionnel, il est rare qu'un garçon épouse une fille plus âgée que lui. C'est seulement en Bulgarie qu'on trouve cet usage. Les maisons bulgares veulent souvent retirer un certain profit du travail de leurs filles, avant de les laisser sortir de la communauté. Tout père cherche aussi pour son fils une fiancée forte, habituée au travail et possédant une certaine expérience, qualités qui se rencontrent fort rarement chez une fille trop jeune.

Dans les anciens temps , au contraire , on fiançait assez souvent des enfants encore au berceau. Deux hommes ou deux femmes , par exemple , se juraient une amitié éternelle et se promettaient sous forme de vœu de marier leurs filles avec leurs garçons, dans le cas où ils en auraient, ou de former entre leurs enfants une confraternité, s'ils n'avaient que des garçons; et s'ils n'avaient que des filles , elles devaient continuer l'amitié de leurs parents. C'était comme un héritage de constante fidélité. Cependant de telles promesses faites au nom des enfants avaient quelquefois des suites très-dangereuses, et cette coutume ne s'est point maintenue.

Le temps qui sépare les fiançailles du mariage n'est pas exactement déterminé; il varie suivant les con-

trées, entre deux mois et trois ans. Dans certaines contrées occidentales, les fiançailles ont ordinairement lieu à la Saint-Martin; mais, dans les orientales, c'est presque toujours au carnaval; et le mariage n'est célébré qu'à l'automne suivant, parce qu'à cette époque de l'année la maison est pourvue de tout ce qui lui est nécessaire pour l'hiver. Le gain fait à l'étranger par les associés qui voyagent est également rentré à l'arrière-saison. On peut donc couvrir toutes les dépenses de la noce.

Si le garçon a lui-même choisi sa future, ses parents ne s'opposent pas à son choix, pourvu que le conseil de famille l'ait autorisé d'une manière générale à se marier. Mais dans le cas où le jeune homme n'aurait pas encore trouvé la fille de son choix, c'est le père qui lui en propose une, et le fils adhère ordinairement par obéissance à ce choix de son père. La fille est alors demandée en mariage à ses parents; mais la première visite se fait toujours de grand matin pour que la demande reste ignorée du voisinage en cas de refus. Comme les Serbes sont très-susceptibles dans ses sortes d'affaires et qu'un refus leur causerait beaucoup de peine, ils emploient généralement un intermédiaire. C'est parfois le *domaćin* du jeune homme qui va lui-même sonder le terrain. En général, avant de demander solennellement la main d'une fille, on s'assure de son consentement et de celui de sa famille.

A Gradiška, le jeune homme cherche une occasion favorable et dans le plus grand secret pour savoir de la fille elle-même si elle consentirait à l'épouser. Mais les filles de cette contrée, qui sont très-espiègles, laissent quelquefois languir assez longtemps les

pauvres garçons avant d'accepter leur offre. Aussi ne refuse-t-on jamais directement la main d'une fille. On trouve toujours une excuse polie pour déguiser un refus, tantôt l'affection des parents qui ne pourraient se séparer de leur fille, tantôt la grande jeunesse de la fille qui ne leur permet pas de songer à la marier. Et si les parents n'ont pas été prévenus de la proposition de mariage, ils invitent celui qui la fait à revenir dans quelque temps, afin qu'ils puissent connaître les intentions de leur fille sur le mariage projeté. Un refus, même indirect, est donc toujours poliment adouci.

Mais les démarches préliminaires ayant été faites, c'est le père du jeune homme qui rend la première visite. Il est accompagné de quelques-uns de ses plus proches parents. Dans divers endroits de la Croatie, c'est la mère qui va faire la demande en mariage; une de ses amies l'accompagne. Elle apporte du *raki*, espèce de ratafia; et dès qu'elle voit la fille disposée à se marier, elle prend un verre et lui demande si elle veut boire de son *raki*. La réponse affirmative est toujours une preuve du consentement. Les provisions apportées par la mère sont alors offertes à la fille, et de plus un foulard de laine ou un essuie-main est donné à chacune des femmes. Le prétendu se rend aussi quelquefois avec plusieurs de ses amis chez les parents de la fille; mais, dans ce cas, ce sont toujours les amis qui font la demande en mariage. Ils offrent de la liqueur et du pain aux membres de la famille en leur faisant un discours solennel, pendant lequel le prétendu distribue des pommes aux enfants; et il en jette une à la fille, s'il l'aperçoit quelque part. En Serbie, c'est un intermédiaire, *provodadžija*,

qui fait la demande en présentant à la fille un bouquet de basilic, au milieu duquel se trouvent quelques pièces de monnaie. Si elle accepte le bouquet, c'est une preuve tacite de son consentement. Le même usage existe en Bulgarie, mais c'est le prétendu qui apporte le bouquet.

Les fiançailles se terminent rarement à cette première visite. A Brod, dans les confins militaires, on en fait quatre. Après la mère, c'est le père qui va voir la fille; puis vient le tour du *domačín*; et à chaque visite on se donne mutuellement des cadeaux. La quatrième, à laquelle assistaient tous les parents de la fille, n'est plus en usage; mais on dédommage la fiancée en lui donnant une petite somme d'argent. Quant aux cadeaux, la fille les partage entre ses parents; les enfants et même les chevaux ne sont pas oubliés, car elle leur envoie des foulards de couleur qui servent à les parer le jour des noces. Lorsqu'on a obtenu le consentement de la fille et celui de ses parents, le père du prétendu invite ses amis à venir le voir, et il leur annonce le mariage de son fils en les engageant à faire avec lui une visite à la prétendue. La demande en mariage est alors renouvelée d'une manière solennelle, et le père de la fille donne de nouveau son consentement à peu près dans ces termes : « Je donne la main de ma fille au vaillant » N. Que Dieu soit avec eux ! »

En Croatie, les invités vont ensuite déjeuner dans le voisinage, et pendant ce temps la prétendue revêt ses habits de fête et se rend à l'église avec une femme de la communauté. Puis, accompagnée d'un ami de son prétendu, elle fait une visite à tous ses parents pour leur demander à chacun de consentir à

son mariage. Après toutes ces visites, on va s'inscrire chez le prêtre, et tous les invités se rendent chez le père de la fille, où la journée se termine gaiement par le souper des fiançailles. C'est le prétendu qui fournit toujours le vin; mais s'il est particulièrement aimé du *domačín* de la fiancée, celui-ci met sa cave à la disposition des convives.

Pendant le souper, le prétendu et la prétendue échangent entre eux les anneaux, et ils se partagent aussi les cadeaux. La fiancée reçoit une pomme dans laquelle plusieurs pièces d'argent sont à demi enfoncées; puis elle donne un mouchoir à son fiancé. A Lika, la fille est parée ce jour-là comme au jour des noces. Son frère la conduit de sa chambre dans la salle du festin, et la présentant aux convives il s'écrie : « Qui veut prendre soin de ma sœur ? » Le témoin de la noce répond : « Dieu et moi. » Il prend ensuite la main de la fiancée, lui met au doigt un anneau et une pièce d'argent dans la main, et s'adressant aux convives il leur dit : « J'offre cet anneau à » cette honnête fille. Qu'il soit pour elle un gage » d'amour et de foi ! » Puis il se tourne trois fois de gauche à droite vers l'Orient, embrasse la fiancée sur la joue, lui offre une pomme avec des pièces d'argent que la mère garde, mais pour les remettre plus tard à sa fille, et il prononce d'un ton solennel les paroles suivantes : « Que Dieu donne sa bénédiction » aux deux fiancés ! Qu'ils jouissent ensemble d'une » longue et heureuse vie ! » *Amen*, répondent en chœur tous les assistants. Si le prétendu offre lui-même la pomme à sa prétendue, celle-ci la prend; mais, au lieu de la donner à sa mère, elle la cache dans son sein.

A Risan, le père du prétendu offre l'anneau au père de la fiancée qui le remet à sa femme, et celle-ci le garde jusqu'au jour des noces. Les cadeaux ne sont échangés qu'à la troisième visite, et c'est alors que le père du jeune homme apporte à la mère de la fille une belle robe, un fichu de soie et un morceau de savon pour chaque femme de la famille. Pendant le souper, on distribue divers cadeaux aux convives; on leur offre ordinairement des foulards, des bas ou des chemises. La fiancée donne un essuie-main à son futur beau-père, et celui-ci lui met dans la main une pièce d'argent.

A Serajévo, en Bosnie, l'anneau est offert par le témoin du mariage; mais on le place aussitôt devant l'image d'un saint, où il reste jusqu'au jour des noces. Quelquefois, c'est le frère du prétendu qui offre la bague nuptiale à la fiancée, dont il prend les mains qu'il joint comme pour la prière, et, faisant le signe de la croix avec l'anneau, il le lui met au doigt et dit : « Au nom du Père, et du Fils, et du Saint-Esprit. »

Chez les Bulgares, le jeune homme, après avoir obtenu le consentement de la fille, va lui faire une visite quelques jours après avec ses parents. Celle-ci présente alors un bouquet à son prétendu, et on convient, à cette visite, des cadeaux qui doivent être donnés, ainsi que du jour où le mariage sera célébré. On fixe également le prix de l'*ogrluk* ou cadeau, que le fiancé doit donner à sa future belle-mère. Pendant le souper, c'est la fille qui sert à table. Mais les véritables fiançailles, qui sont toujours célébrées devant un prêtre, n'ont lieu qu'à la troisième réunion des deux familles; et c'est la mère de la fille qui, ce

jour-là, échange les anneaux. Le fiancé paie alors le souper, ainsi que la moitié du prix convenu pour l'*ogrtluk* de sa future belle-mère. Les deux prétendus baisent ensuite la main de leurs parents, et puis on distribue les cadeaux.

Chez les Serbes en général, le prétendu se rencontre rarement avec sa fiancée. A Risan, on ne lui permet de la voir et de l'embrasser qu'après de longues supplications; mais elle résiste toujours, s'arrache de ses bras et s'enfuit. Dans le Monténégro, il ne la voit qu'à la troisième visite faite avec son père, et c'est alors qu'on échange les cadeaux. Il donne à la fille des pantoufles, et il reçoit d'elle une chemise; mais jusqu'au jour des noces il ne fréquente plus la maison de sa future. Dans le Monténégro, le jour des noces est fixé dans une réunion qui s'appelle *svila*, la soie. On détermine également à cette visite le nombre des convives qui doivent prendre part aux fêtes. La *svila* a lieu deux ou trois semaines avant les noces. Le fiancé n'y assiste jamais, mais il envoie deux petits tonneaux de *raki*, l'un pour la maison de la fille et l'autre pour ses parents qui font partie du clan. Trois personnes se rendent à la *svila* chez la prétendue et lui apportent de la toile pour faire des chemises, de la soie à broder et un sequin. Les cadeaux ayant été offerts, on boit du *raki* avec tous les parents de la fille. Les membres du clan de celle-ci se réunissent alors devant l'église; les chefs de maison boivent du *raki*, et toute l'assemblée exprime de cette manière son assentiment au mariage. On fixe encore à la *svila* la somme que le futur doit payer pour les cadeaux de noces.

Dès que les anneaux sont échangés et les présents

distribués, la foi est alors solennellement engagée. Parfois, la pomme, qui joue à cette occasion un rôle si important dans le cérémonial des Serbes, remplace l'anneau; et le couple se regarde comme fiancé, si la fille accepte la pomme. Les fiançailles étant terminées, la prétendue ne danse plus dans aucun bal; elle ne sort jamais seule, et jusqu'à son mariage elle mène une vie très-laborieuse et très-retirée. A Risan, dès que la fille s'est engagée par sa promesse de mariage, son fiancé doit lui fournir la chaussure; mais il reçoit en échange, le dimanche et les jours de fête, un bouquet de fleurs naturelles jaunies à l'or.

La foi engagée est rarement trahie chez les Serbes. Pour la rompre, il faut des motifs très-graves. Dans le Monténégro et l'Herzégovine, le jeune homme devient libre si la fille continue de fréquenter les jeunes gens du village. Une maladie regardée comme incurable, la cécité, par exemple, peut aussi faire rompre la foi; mais, dans ce cas, on rend au fiancé sa parole. Il en est de même si, après les fiançailles, on découvre un empêchement de parenté, ou que les deux prétendus aient été fiancés sans se voir et qu'ils se déplaisent mutuellement.

Chez les Bulgares, les fiançailles forcées sont considérées comme nulles. Mais, hors quelques cas graves, celui qui trahirait sa foi sous un prétexte ou pour une cause futile serait blâmé très-sévèrement par l'opinion; il devrait rendre tous les cadeaux. La fille ne rend, au contraire, que l'anneau, si le garçon lui-même renonce au mariage.

Il y a cependant des contrées où toutes les dépenses doivent être compensées entre les deux familles. A Lika, dans les confins militaires, la fille rend au

jeune homme le double de ce qu'il a dépensé pour les fiançailles, si elle viole elle-même la foi; mais le jeune homme rend le triple, s'il retire sa parole. Dans les régiments ou cercles de Gradiška et de Brod, la fille ne peut se marier tant qu'elle n'a pas compensé toutes les dépenses faites par son ex-futur. En divers endroits de la Croatie, les compensations n'ont lieu que lorsque la partie lésée les fait réclamer par la voie des tribunaux. Dans le cas contraire, on ne rend que le bouquet avec l'argent et les autres cadeaux.

Dans les pays de montagne de la Dalmatie, et autrefois au Monténégro, la violation de la foi engendre des rixes sanglantes. La famille trahie somme le jeune homme de tenir sa parole; et s'il refuse, on se livre de véritables batailles. L'inimitié même ne cesse que lorsqu'il consent à épouser la fille ou à lui payer une certaine somme pour le dommage et la honte qu'elle a éprouvés. Si c'est, au contraire, la fille dalmate qui trahit la foi, elle doit rendre le double de ce qu'elle a reçu.

Dans l'Herzégovine et le Monténégro, autrefois le jeune homme qui avait violé la foi jurée était forcé de quitter le pays, sinon on l'aurait contraint à épouser la fille à laquelle il avait manqué de parole sans motif. Il arrivait cependant que, pour réparer la faute du jeune homme, ses parents demandaient la main de la fille délaissée pour leur fils cadet, s'il était toutefois plus âgé que la fille; et dans le cas où le fugitif ne laissait pas de frère, les voisins et les amis intervenaient pour empêcher les combats entre les deux familles.

On est moins rigoureux en Bulgarie. Celui des deux

fiancés qui retire sa parole doit payer à l'autre une petite somme d'argent pour la honte qu'il lui a infligée. Il paraît que ce sont les filles bulgares qui violent ordinairement la foi ; mais, avant de se regarder comme libres, elles doivent se rendre chez l'archiprêtre, qui tâche de les ramener à la fidélité de leur parole ; et si ses observations ne produisent aucun effet, les fiançailles sont déclarées nulles après la troisième admonestation.

Quant aux Serbes, qui condamnent si hautement la simple rupture d'une promesse de mariage, ils poursuivraient le coupable avec une rigueur d'autant plus grande qu'il aurait abandonné sa prétendue après l'avoir déshonorée. Il est vrai que de pareils crimes ne sont pas fréquents ; mais s'ils étaient commis, la vie du coupable paierait bientôt sa faute, à moins qu'il n'ait fui dans un pays lointain. On raconte qu'il y a trente ans environ deux fiancés de Risan, bourgade de la Dalmatie, commirent la même faute. On consulta les saintes Ecritures pour savoir quelle punition méritaient les coupables ; et comme on trouva dans le Vieux Testament qu'il fallait les lapider, on força les parents des deux infortunés à exécuter eux-mêmes la sentence. Les frères d'une fille déshonorée provoqueraient le coupable à un combat singulier. Mais ce n'est pas la crainte des punitions humaines qui arrête les passions ; car un peuple naturellement guerrier redoute moins la mort que les malédictions qui le poursuivent toute sa vie. Et celles d'une fille trompée sont terribles parfois. « La terre » tremble, » dit une fort belle chanson, « lorsqu'une » fille prononce une malédiction. Sa plainte monte » jusqu'à Dieu, et les larmes qui tombent de ses

» yeux s'enfoncent dans la terre jusqu'à la profondeur de trois lances. »

Un dédommagement en argent n'est pas connu dans ces contrées pour les cas fort rares de séduction. Mais, en Autriche-Hongrie, où les mœurs ont perdu leur pureté primitive, on est moins rigoureux. A Lika, on condamne le coupable à supporter tous les frais de l'entretien, si l'enfant qui vient au monde est un garçon; mais, pour une fille, les deux coupables se partagent les dépenses. Cattaro, seul, fait une exception. Là, ce sont les armes qui vengent l'honneur. En Bulgarie, le jeune homme qui séduit une fille doit l'épouser; mais si la fille ne veut pas qu'on le force au mariage, on livre le coupable aux tribunaux qui le punissent d'après la loi. A Ljeskovac, on est moins sévère encore. On condamne le séducteur à épouser la fille déshonorée ou bien à lui donner un dédommagement en argent.

En ce qui touche la bigamie, les sources où nous prenons tous ces détails offrent un très-grand intérêt. Les cas de bigamie volontaire sont fort rares, mais il s'en présente quelquefois. En outre, il est souvent arrivé, dans les confins militaires, par exemple, qu'une femme ait contracté un second mariage du vivant de son premier mari qu'elle croyait mort. Presque tous les régiments des confins ont jadis pris part aux guerres de l'Autriche en Italie, et beaucoup de soldats grièvement blessés sont tombés au pouvoir des Italiens, qui les ont gardés longtemps malades ou prisonniers de guerre. Les camarades, rentrés dans leur patrie, affirmaient les avoir vus morts sur le champ de bataille; et, en effet, ces prétendus morts ne donnaient plus de leurs nouvelles. Il y en a qui

sont restés quinze ans en pays étranger sans donner signe de vie à leurs parents. On pouvait les croire morts; et voilà comment bien des femmes, dans les confins militaires, ont pu contracter un second mariage du vivant de leur mari.

L'espèce de jugement, prononcé à Lika par le peuple sur la valeur des deux mariages, mérite par sa singularité que nous en fassions ici une courte mention. Le premier mari d'une femme retourne chez lui un an après les secondes noces de sa femme. Il veut faire valoir ses droits; mais les anciens du village décident qu'elle doit rester avec son second mari, vu qu'elle avait un enfant de celui-ci et n'en avait jamais eu du premier; seulement le second mari dut indemniser le premier de ses frais de mariage. Dans un autre cas, une femme qui croyait son mari mort eut des relations avec un autre homme et il en naquit des enfants. Quand le mari revint, elle s'enfuit en Bosnie, et alors le mari fut autorisé à se remarier.

Dans l'Herzégovine et le Monténégro, on permet également aux femmes de se remarier lorsque leur mari a quitté le pays et qu'il n'a donné aucune nouvelle depuis de nombreuses années. Et si le mari revient ensuite dans son village, on l'autorise à contracter de son côté un second mariage. Cette coutume existe aussi en Bulgarie, mais le consentement de l'évêque est indispensable pour convoler en secondes noces. Il arrive cependant que le premier mari reprend sa femme avec les enfants du second lit. Dans le cas où la femme hésiterait à prendre une décision et à choisir entre ses deux époux, les anciens de l'endroit concluent toujours en faveur du premier mariage, quand même le second aurait été fait avec l'autorisa-

tion de l'évêque ; car le peuple croit que l'homme vivra en paradis avec sa première femme. Toutefois, en Bulgarie, il y a des exemples de sentences populaires approuvant le mariage d'un homme durant la vie de sa première femme. Nos sources mentionnent deux cas qui méritent d'être cités.

Il y a dix ans environ, un nommé Drino Kušev, originaire de Ljeskovac, demanda à son évêque, M^{gr} Hilarion, de le séparer de sa femme, parce qu'elle était très-âgée, et de lui permettre d'en épouser une autre. L'évêque phanariote fit appeler la première femme de Kušev et lui demanda si elle voulait consentir à ce que son mari en prit une autre. La bonne vieille consentit à la séparation ; elle logea même dans la maison de son mari, qui l'appelait sa *sœur*. La seconde femme lui donnait le nom de *mère*, et ce fut vraiment comme une mère véritable, comme une sœur qu'elle prit soin des enfants de Kušev. Quant au peuple, il trouvait que cet homme avait fait une chose naturelle et sage, en épousant la femme de son choix, au lieu de vivre avec elle en concubinage public. Le second cas n'est pas moins curieux. Un homme, dont la femme était folle depuis quatre ans, se remaria avec le consentement de l'évêque et des anciens. Mais, peu de temps après les secondes noces, la première femme recouvra la raison et apprit alors qu'une autre épouse l'avait remplacée. Ne voulant pas troubler le bonheur du mari dans son nouveau ménage, elle se rendit immédiatement chez son frère sans revoir son volage époux.

Ces divers faits démontrent que le peuple met quelquefois l'équité à la place du droit rigoureux ; car, dans ces pays, on ne regarde que le premier ma-

riage comme légal, surtout lorsque les secondes nocces peuvent se baser sur la fraude de l'un des deux époux.

Dans ce cas même de fraude, les communes du cercle de Ljeskovac laissent à la femme le soin de décider si elle veut vivre avec son premier ou avec son second mari. Le jugement dans cette question dépend tout à fait de son choix.

Mais, comme nous l'avons dit, les cas de bigamie sont extrêmement rares parmi les Slaves méridionaux. Et si l'on est assez indulgent pour suivre les prescriptions de l'équité et non celles du droit rigoureux, c'est qu'on a peur du concubinage, qui paraît au Serbe un bien plus grand vice que la dissolution du mariage, lorsqu'il n'existe entre les deux époux aucun lien de sympathie.

Dans la Hongrie et la Croatie, où les relations entre les deux sexes sont beaucoup plus libres, surtout dans les villes, le peuple ne blâme pas sévèrement les personnes qui vivent ensemble sans être mariées; mais il en rejette la faute sur les lois et surtout les ordonnances militaires, qui, dans les confins, mettent des entraves au mariage. Le concubinat comme institution n'existe nulle part chez les Slaves méridionaux. Ils n'ont pas même dans leur langue une expression pour le désigner; mais ils ne regardent pas comme une concubine la femme qui épouse un homme avec lequel elle a vécu pendant longtemps. Le mariage légalise tout à leurs yeux. Toutefois si une fille vit dans une maison où n'habite pas sa mère ni aucune autre femme mariée, le peuple considère ce fait comme une immoralité scandaleuse.

Les cas où les pères et les mères forcent leurs en-

fants à se marier contre leur gré sont fort rares. On voit aussi très-peu d'enlèvements de filles. Nous ne parlons pas ici de l'empire austro-hongrois, où les lois écrites punissent le rapt, mais des provinces où la coutume seule est en vigueur. Le prince Miloš fit cesser les enlèvements par des lois draconiennes ; et depuis lors on n'en voit plus en Serbie.

Il y a pourtant des cas où la fille qu'on veut marier contre son gré se laisse enlever. En Bulgarie, lorsqu'elle entre chez le prétendu de son choix, elle s'assied au foyer domestique et remue le feu. Cela démontre qu'elle cherche un asile. Le chef de la famille la reçoit, et le mariage s'ensuit presque toujours ; mais les parents de la fille n'y assistent pas. La maison du fiancé économise alors les dépenses nuptiales, et parfois dans ce seul but on simule une fuite ou un enlèvement, mais du consentement de la famille. Cependant de tels mariages ne peuvent être conclus avant que le prêtre ne se soit convaincu qu'il n'y a aucun empêchement légal et que la fille n'est pas victime d'une violence. Et s'il arrive que le père réclame sa fille auprès de l'évêque, celui-ci parvient ordinairement à réconcilier les deux familles, en déclarant au père qu'il n'a pas le droit de forcer sa fille à quitter la maison de son mari.

Quoi qu'il en soit, le peuple ne regarde nulle part d'un bon œil ces sortes de rapt des filles ; car il aime et loue seulement les mariages qui sont faits avec l'autorisation volontaire des parents et de la famille.

La question de mariage est toujours un sujet de disputes entre les associés, surtout lorsqu'il s'agit de marier un garçon. Le choix de la future, la question des dépenses sont les principaux motifs des contesta-

tions. Les membres les plus âgés de la communauté assistent aux conseils de famille, qui se tiennent ordinairement le soir, lorsque tous les enfants sont couchés. Dans l'Herzégovine et le Monténégro, il n'y a que les hommes, mariés ou non mariés, qui assistent à ces conseils. En Serbie, les femmes y prennent également part.

Les mariages entre personnes de différentes religions ont très-rarement lieu chez les Serbes. Le chef de la maison ne le permettrait pas ; et si l'un des deux prétendus refusait de se soumettre à cette défense, il devrait quitter l'association. On autorise pourtant les mariages entre personnes de nationalités différentes, mais pourvu qu'elles aient la même religion. Ainsi, par exemple, en Hongrie, on voit des Roumains épouser des Serbes, des Croates, qui sont catholiques, s'unir avec les Slaves catholiques du Nord. L'homme qui changerait de religion pour se marier, comme on le fait si souvent en Autriche, serait tellement pris en aversion qu'on le chasserait immédiatement de la communauté ; il ne pourrait pas non plus rester dans son village. Mais s'il veut épouser une fille d'une autre confession, on exige qu'elle embrasse la religion de son mari ; car il est le chef de sa femme et de ses enfants, il donne son nom à la famille, il décide de leur nationalité, et il doit par conséquent vouloir qu'une seule religion soit professée chez lui.

Le peuple condamne surtout la diversité de religion parmi les enfants, telle qu'elle se rencontre souvent dans les villes de Hongrie et de Croatie, où les lois écrites veulent que, dans les mariages mixtes, les filles suivent la religion de leur mère et les fils celle de leur père. La coutume serbe nous paraît beaucoup

plus logique que les décisions de la plupart des codes européens, qui, tout en cherchant à protéger les droits de la femme, introduisent de funestes divisions entre frères et sœurs. Dans le Monténégro, on n'empêche pas les mariages entre les filles indigènes et les étrangers d'une autre religion.

Quant aux empêchements de mariage pour cause de parenté, il nous suffira de peu de mots pour les indiquer. Le peuple comme l'Eglise distingue trois sortes de parenté : la parenté du sang, l'affinité ou alliance, et la parenté spirituelle, qui établit un véritable empêchement de mariage entre le parrain, son filleul et sa famille. En Serbie et dans quelques contrées de la Croatie, on ajoute à ces divers empêchements la confraternité et l'adoption. Il y a d'autres contrées où l'on considère aussi comme parent au degré prohibé celui qui a rempli les fonctions de garçon d'honneur dans une noce. Il est vrai de dire qu'on choisit presque toujours un consanguin, très-souvent même le frère ou le plus proche parent de la mariée.

En Dalmatie, la confraternité n'établit pas un empêchement, et le garçon d'honneur n'est pas non plus regardé comme parent, s'il n'y a aucun lien d'affinité, de consanguinité ou de parenté spirituelle avec sa prétendue. Toutefois, à Konavlje, le garçon d'honneur ne peut pas épouser celle qu'il a conduite à l'autel, lorsqu'elle devient veuve; et les parents aux degrés les plus rapprochés de deux confrères ne peuvent pas se marier entre eux. Il en est de même dans l'Herzégovine et le Monténégro.

Les Serbes de certaines contrées sont très-rigoureux dans l'observation de ces divers empêchements. Ils

vont même plus loin que l'Eglise. Ainsi , par exemple , l'Eglise orthodoxe défend le mariage entre parents spirituels jusqu'au quatrième degré seulement, tandis que, dans l'Herzégovine et le Monténégro, parfois on ne se marie pas même au neuvième degré. Le mariage est impossible entre personnes du même clan, ne fussent-elles parentes qu'au vingtième degré seulement. Cet usage , d'ailleurs , tend à disparaître au Monténégro. En Croatie, on ne se marie pas non plus dès qu'il y a parenté, sans même chercher à en connaître le degré. Le peuple n'approuve jamais de tels mariages , quoique le haut clergé puisse accorder des dispenses.

Quant aux degrés de parenté faisant empêchement au mariage, nos sources ne sont pas explicites. Pour la consanguinité, elles mentionnent le quatrième ou le cinquième degré. Mais le peuple ne compte pas les degrés comme les hommes de loi : ceux-ci suivent le droit romain, tandis que le peuple compte les degrés par souche. En Bosnie et dans d'autres contrées, on regarde généralement comme condamnable toute union qui a besoin d'une dispense de l'évêque.

Pour ce qui concerne les enfants adoptifs, dans les confins militaires, ils peuvent se marier avec les enfants de l'adoptant. A Gradiška, au contraire, on regarde de tels mariages comme un péché ; mais , à Konavlje, on les permet, si le père adoptif a stipulé cette condition, lorsqu'il a adopté l'enfant. Il est cependant rare qu'on adopte un étranger, lorsqu'on a des enfants. S'il en survient après l'adoption, le mariage est interdit ; car alors l'adopté et les enfants légitimes sont frère et sœur spirituels. Sur tout le

littoral dalmate, si l'adoption a lieu sans aucune cérémonie religieuse, on ne la regarde pas comme une parenté, et on permet le mariage entre l'adopté et l'enfant du père adoptif. Dans l'Herzégovine et le Monténégro, celui qui adopte est « le père sans péché » et l'adopté son « enfant par l'esprit. » Un mariage ne peut donc jamais avoir lieu entre l'adopté et l'enfant du père adoptif. Les Bulgares paraissent avoir d'autres idées sur la parenté spirituelle. Aucune cérémonie religieuse n'accompagnant chez eux l'adoption, ils ne la regardent pas comme une parenté. L'enfant devient un simple associé de la maison et non pas un parent. Les mariages avec les enfants du père adoptif ne sont donc pas défendus.

Nous mentionnerons encore pour mémoire l'empêchement entre les frères et les sœurs de lait.

Les parents qui ont un fils à marier lui cherchent une fiancée de bonne famille, jouissant d'une certaine renommée dans le pays. C'est là un sentiment naturel exempt de toute préoccupation plus ou moins aristocratique. Une famille un peu distinguée aura certainement beaucoup mieux soigné l'éducation de ses enfants; et les filles bien élevées offrent toujours aux parents d'un jeune homme plus de garantie de bonheur. Le Serbe ne recherche pas avant tout la beauté. « La beauté est vantée dans le monde, mais » la maison ne se glorifie que de la bonté du cœur de » la femme. » On veut surtout avoir une bonne ménagère, et on n'est pas trop avide d'argent. « Si tu » prends le diable à cause de sa fortune, » dit un proverbe, « la fortune s'en va, mais le diable reste. »

Dans certaines contrées, les garçons choisissent leur future parmi les filles du village; mais dans

d'autres, au contraire, dans le Monténégro et dans la haute Herzégovine, où existe encore le régime du clan, il leur est interdit de prendre leurs femmes dans le clan dont ils font partie, à cause de la parenté, quoiqu'elle soit le plus souvent fort éloignée. Ce serait une honte pour l'endroit, s'ils allaient prendre leurs femmes dans une autre contrée. Une étrangère s'habitue d'ailleurs très-difficilement aux mœurs et aux coutumes d'un village qu'elle ne connaît pas. Ses idées ne s'accorderaient peut-être pas non plus avec les idées de sa nouvelle résidence, et la paix domestique en souffrirait certainement. Mais si les garçons prennent leurs fiancées dans leur pays natal, les filles désirent souvent aller s'établir dans des régions étrangères. C'est un honneur pour elles d'être recherchées par un jeune homme d'un pays éloigné. Leur renommée s'en accroit beaucoup. Mais aussi quelle splendeur aux noces ! Un brillant cortège les conduit en triomphe à travers tout le pays ! « O » ma mère, » dit une chanson du peuple, « donne- » moi en mariage bien loin de nous, à l'étranger, » afin que je puisse me glorifier de ma famille ! »

Il est rare qu'on traite la question de la dot aux fiançailles. Ceci n'a lieu que dans les contrées où les filles reçoivent des immeubles en se mariant. La dot se porte généralement la veille de la noce et quelquefois deux jours auparavant dans la maison du futur. Si elle consiste en bétail, du moins en partie, on le laisse presque toujours chez la mère, sauf un accord spécial, et le bétail est confié à un paysan du voisinage, qui l'emploie et l'utilise de son mieux. Ce bétail se compose ordinairement de quelques brebis, vaches ou génisses. Le vêtement, qui forme aussi une

partie de la dot, ainsi que l'argent donné à la fille par ses parents, est porté la veille de la noce par le fiancé et ses amis dans sa maison. Il y a des contrées cependant où la dot est apportée le lendemain des noces par les parents de la fille. Dans l'Herzégovine et le Monténégro, la jeune femme ne reçoit sa dot qu'à la fin de l'année dans laquelle s'est accompli le mariage. Le cortège de la noce emporte seulement avec lui les cadeaux que la mariée a préparés par le témoin, les frères et les sœurs de son mari. Tout cela se trouve renfermé dans une ou deux malles portées par un cheval.

La dot est rarement constituée en immeubles. On laisse cependant quelquefois la mariée jouir pendant quelque temps du petit coin de terre où, étant fille, elle semait le chanvre et qu'elle labourait elle-même. En Bulgarie et dans quelques endroits de la Croatie et de la Dalmatie, on lui donne aussi des immeubles lorsqu'elle n'a pas de frères et que ses parents possèdent des biens-fonds en dehors de l'association. Mais au Monténégro et en Herzégovine, souvent la fille n'use pas de ce droit. Cela tient à ce que la fille qui a reçu aussi un immeuble, même de peu de valeur, est considérée comme sortie définitivement de la famille ; elle n'y peut rentrer en cas de veuvage ou de détresse, tandis qu'on lui reconnaît ce droit si elle n'a rien pris dans les immeubles.

L'achat des filles est une coutume qu'on retrouve chez beaucoup de peuples anciens et modernes ; mais chez les Serbes, il n'en reste que de très-faibles vestiges, car les cadeaux et les dons échangés aux fiançailles et aux noces ne peuvent être regardés comme le prix d'un véritable achat. Toutefois, en Serbie, le

fiancé paie à son futur beau-père de un à six ducats pour la fille, outre les cadeaux habituels. Il lui paie encore le prix d'une pelisse. Le frère de la fiancée reçoit aussi une somme d'argent pour s'acheter une paire de bottes. Avant la publication du code serbe, on convenait de ces divers paiements le jour des fiançailles.

En Bulgarie, le jeune homme donne jusqu'à mille grosches aux parents de la fille et, en outre, quelques ducats à la mère. Il donne aussi des mouchoirs, des chaussures et autres objets à ses futurs beaux-frères et belles-sœurs. A Risan, on fait l'espèce de cérémonie suivante : Huit jours avant les noces, les deux pères des fiancés rassemblent leurs amis sur la grand-place du village. On sert de l'eau-de-vie à tous les convives. Le père du jeune homme boit toujours le premier à la santé du jeune couple. Il tient de sa main droite son verre sur lequel on a placé une pomme avec un sequin, et il le présente au père de la fille qui prend la pomme et met le sequin en poche au profit de la caisse de la maison. C'est sans doute à cause de cette cérémonie que le peuple dit qu'on a vendu la fille pour un sequin.

Quant au cérémonial de la noce, qui est ordinairement très-solennel et caractérise bien l'esprit d'un peuple, voici en quoi il consiste chez les Serbes. C'est presque une analyse que nous allons faire maintenant du livre de M. Bogišić, si riche sur cette matière en détails fort intéressants.

Le mariage est pour les Serbes un des actes les plus solennels de la vie. Ce n'est pas seulement une grande fête de famille, c'est comme une fête publique ; car tout le village est heureux d'y apporter sa

part de joie. Les convives de la noce sont accostés par tout le monde et salués avec l'appellation de *monsieur*, titre que les Serbes ne se donnent pas dans leurs relations ordinaires. On se découvre devant le cortège nuptial, mais les convives n'ôtent jamais leur chapeau, pas même à la table du festin. Ils portent tous des bâtons ornés de rubans de diverses couleurs ; le bâton est chez le Serbe un signe de distinction. Il n'y a que les hauts personnages du village qui aient le droit d'en avoir à la promenade. Le menu peuple n'en porte jamais.

Et quelle activité ! quel mouvement dans la maison où les noces vont avoir lieu ! On frotte, on balaie, on nettoie l'habitation durant toute une semaine. Les filles s'occupent de leur toilette et les femmes préparent le repas nuptial dans la cuisine, surtout les gâteaux, qui jouent un si grand rôle pendant les fêtes du mariage. La veille des noces, divers rôtis tournent sur les broches autour d'un grand feu, et chacun est heureux de donner un coup de main ; car, ce soir-là, on attend le futur avec ses amis.

Sur le littoral croate, les noces ont toujours lieu un dimanche ; mais la fête commence le samedi soir. Dès le coucher du soleil, quatre femmes vont en chantant de porte en porte ; elles se rendent ensuite devant la maison du fiancé, qui paraît sur le seuil en habit de fête et distribue aux chanteuses des gâteaux et du vin. Une foule de petits bambins qui les suivent réclament aussi leur part, et la jeune fiancée ne les oublie pas devant la porte de sa maison. Elle prend dans un grand tamis des prunes et des figues sèches, des morceaux de pain doux, des amandes, des roses et les jette au milieu des petits criards, qui se dispu-

tent gaiement et s'arrachent toutes ces friandises. La même scène a lieu devant la maison du fiancé, mais c'est une de ses plus proches parentes qui distribue les mêmes cadeaux aux enfants.

La nuit venue, on ferme toutes les portes de la maison de la fiancée pour n'être point surpris par les convives, parce qu'ils doivent payer leur entrée. On est attentif au moindre bruit extérieur; et dès qu'on entend un chant lointain, car les convives d'une noce chantent toujours, on éteint les lumières et le plus grand silence règne dans la maison. Mais les chants se rapprochent, et voilà qu'on frappe à la porte. Personne ne répond. On frappe une seconde fois. Point de réponse encore. L'impatience gagne les convives et on frappe avec plus de force. Une voix de l'intérieur se fait entendre : « Au nom de Dieu, qui frappe donc » si tard ! » — « De pauvres voyageurs, répond une » voix du dehors, des honnêtes gens qui cherchent » leur brebis égarée. Peut-être pourrez-vous nous en » donner des nouvelles. Ouvrez-nous donc la porte. » Mais le *domacín* ne se rend pas à cette supplication, et il réplique : « Il est trop tard! Vous viendrez de- » main chercher votre brebis. » Comme cette réponse ne satisfait pas les visiteurs nocturnes, l'un d'eux prend la parole et dit : « Ah ! mes braves gens, celui » qui a une affaire urgente n'a pas le temps d'atten- » dre jusqu'au lendemain. Ouvrez-nous la porte, car » le temps est bien mauvais. » Et l'on se met alors à chanter en chœur : « De la neige jusqu'aux genoux , » de l'eau jusqu'aux épaules. » Mais la porte reste toujours fermée, et les colloques durent encore long-temps.

Enfin, l'entrée devient libre, et le premier qui

franchit le seuil offre du vin à tous les assistants. Ce vin est apporté par les convives dans une grande outre. Après que tout le monde a bu, le *domačín* fait défiler toutes les filles de la maison devant les visiteurs, afin qu'ils cherchent « leur brebis perdue. » La fiancée arrive toujours la dernière. Dès que son futur l'aperçoit, il l'embrasse; la musique commence alors à jouer, et on se met à table. Puis les jeunes garçons et les jeunes filles chantent et dansent; et quand on s'est bien amusé, on se sépare avant minuit, mais pour recommencer joyeusement le lendemain.

A Gradiška et à Brod, le fiancé se rend la veille des nocés chez son témon pour l'inviter au souper qui se donne chez lui. Il est accompagné d'un joueur de cornemuse et de l'ami qui doit, au mariage, remplir les fonctions de cuisinier. Celui-ci invite à son tour les convives de la noce. Pendant ce temps-là, les filles que le fiancé connaît se rendent chez lui; elles s'asseyent autour d'une table sur laquelle il y a un gâteau, une bouteille de vin et un bouquet de fleurs, et elles se mettent à chanter. Durant la même soirée, le frère du fiancé, sa femme et quelques-uns des convives, accompagnés du joueur de cornemuse, vont se présenter chez la future; mais on leur défend l'entrée de la maison. Toutefois la résistance n'est pas aussi longue ni aussi grande que sur le littoral croate. Les convives paient une certaine somme, et on leur ouvre la porte. Cette espèce de droit d'entrée appartient toujours aux chanteuses et à la cuisinière de la noce; car on fait beaucoup chanter les jeunes filles, surtout en Serbie. Elle donnent ordinairement une sérénade devant la maison du fiancé, trois jours avant les nocés, et la veille cette sérénade a lieu

dans la maison. Le droit d'entrée, payé chez la future par le cortège nuptial, se retrouve également comme coutume chez les Bulgares et les Dalmates.

Aux bouches de Cattaro et à Bukovica, l'invitation des convives se fait très-solennellement. C'est le *domaïn* du fiancé qui s'en charge lui-même; et pour accomplir dignement sa mission, il porte avec lui une outre, ornée de rubans, de mouchoirs, de pommes, et remplie de vin. L'outre se vide chez l'invité, et l'invité la remplit de nouveau, mais il reçoit un mouchoir, de la laine ou autres objets comme présents de noce, qui sont ensuite offerts à la mariée.

En Bulgarie, le futur désigne de ses plus proches deux parents pour aller inviter le témoin et les autres convives. Ils ont pour la circonstance une couronne de fleurs sur la tête, et l'outre de vin richement parée ne s'oublie jamais.

Ces fêtes qui précèdent le mariage sont très-répan- dues, surtout dans le cercle bulgare de Ljeskovac. Toutes les femmes de la communauté du futur se rendent, la veille des noces, chez la fiancée, avec qui elles soupent; mais, avant de se mettre à table, on leur montre les cadeaux qui leur sont destinés et qui se trouvent étalés sur un meuble. Chaque femme met une pièce d'or ou d'argent sur le présent qui lui est destiné.

A Risan, c'est le frère du futur, accompagné de sa sœur, qui va voir les cadeaux; et à cette occasion, il apporte à la fiancée divers présents, des bas, un miroir, un peigne et des chaussures pour la mère, etc. Lorsqu'on a examiné les robes et les autres objets étalés, on les met tous dans une caisse, où les visiteurs jettent quelques pièces d'argent; on ferme en-

suite la caisse, et la clé est apportée au fiancé par son frère.

En Bulgarie, lorsque les femmes s'en vont, la future leur distribue quelques nouveaux présents et envoie à son fiancé un mouchoir brodé en or. Cette visite des femmes se fait le jeudi. Le vendredi, toutes les filles parentes du futur sont régalingées chez lui; et après le repas, elles se rendent chez la fiancée pour la saluer en son nom. Un dîner leur est offert; on s'amuse après le dîner, et les filles vont ensuite faire toutes ensemble les invitations à la noce.

Lorsqu'elles sont de retour chez le futur, on procède à une curieuse cérémonie. On fait passer de la farine à travers sept tamis, et dans l'un de ces tamis se trouve l'anneau nuptial avec quelques noix. Le tamis est tenu par deux garçons, dont l'un doit être un premier né; l'autre est payé pour remplir sa fonction. Au chant des filles, les femmes font un gâteau avec cette farine; on l'enduit de miel, et on le rompt en forme de croix au-dessus de la tête du futur, dont on enduit également le visage de miel. Le gâteau est ensuite distribué aux femmes et aux enfants de la maison. Dès que la nuit arrive, les femmes se séparent, et les jeunes amis du futur viennent souper chez lui. Le fiancé n'est pas assis à table, mais il doit servir ses amis. Pendant ce temps, la fiancée reçoit également ses amies et les invite à souper.

Le lendemain, le jeune homme envoie à sa future ses robes de noce avec toute la parure qu'elle doit porter le jour de son mariage. Sept jeunes garçons portent ces cadeaux sur leur tête. Des filles les accompagnent. De son côté, la future envoie à son fiancé divers objets de toilette et la chaussure du jour de la

noce. Le même jour, le frère ou un cousin du fiancé va saluer la future. Il porte avec lui une gourde pleine de vin et une *gusla*, espèce de mandoline à une corde. Il tient à la main un bâton et un mouchoir. En saluant la future, il lui offre du vin de sa gourde, mais elle n'en boit que quelques gouttes et lui donne une seconde *gusla* qu'elle lui suspend au cou. Le jeune homme se rend ensuite chez les convives pour les inviter une seconde fois à la noce.

Dans la plupart des pays où les Slaves méridionaux ont conservé l'habitude de porter les armes sur eux, tous les hommes viennent en armes à la noce. Il y a quatre sortes de personnes qui prennent part aux fêtes nuptiales : les maires; les membres de leur famille; les *svati*, c'est-à-dire ceux qui constituent le cortège et jouent un rôle actif dans la cérémonie; tous les autres invités qui, eux, sont de simples spectateurs.

A Risan, les fêtes nuptiales commencent huit jours avant le mariage. Ce jour-là, le futur envoie une bouteille d'eau-de-vie à la maison de sa fiancée; et après avoir bu l'eau-de-vie, on lui renvoie la bouteille de nouveau pleine avec une grenade et un bouquet de fleurs dorées. On fait ensuite un régal chez les fiancés; mais, avant toutes choses, on va chercher à l'église un drapeau qui est tout particulièrement destiné aux fêtes nuptiales. Quelques jeunes gens, cinq ou sept, le nombre doit toujours être impair, l'apportent et le mettent sur le point le plus élevé de la maison, afin que tout le monde puisse le voir.

Pendant ce temps-là, on danse le *kolo*, ou ronde nationale, devant la porte, et c'est la mère du fiancé qui conduit la danse. Jadis, au lieu du drapeau, on

allait chercher un olivier ; et cet usage est observé de nos jours, lorsque la famille de l'un des deux fiancés se trouve en deuil. Enfin, la veille des noces, les convives envoient un demi-mouton, dont la tête n'a pas été séparée du corps. On lui met dans la gueule une branche de laurier. Le présent du demi-mouton est toujours accompagné d'un pain orné de petits drapeaux, de fleurs et de deux bouteilles de vin.

Le personnage le plus important ce jour-là parmi les *svati*, c'est le *kum* ou témoin du fiancé qui devient, par sa fonction même, un très-proche parent des nouveaux mariés. Dans les maisons riches, il y a plusieurs témoins qui sont tous cependant inférieurs en rang à celui du fiancé. Un autre personnage presque aussi important, c'est le *stari svat*, qui arrange toute la cérémonie. Dans l'Herzégovine, il remplit en outre les fonctions d'orateur. Il y a encore comme personnage le *père des noces*, commandant du cortège nuptial, et qui doit être toujours l'oncle maternel du fiancé ou le neveu de sa mère. A la tête du cortège marchent le porte-drapeau et le *prvenac*, qui remplit les fonctions de messenger et annonce partout l'arrivée de la noce. Le premier garçon d'honneur est toujours le frère ou le cousin du futur ; et les filles d'honneur, qui forment une espèce de cour à la mariée, sont aussi de ses plus proches parents. Le *čauš*, personnage demi-comique, remplit encore dans la noce un rôle important assez semblable à celui d'un maître des cérémonies. Il tient à la main un gros bâton, orné de mouchoirs de diverses couleurs. On choisit ordinairement pour cet office un bon parleur et un homme d'esprit. C'est lui qui porte les toasts et qui veille attentivement à ce que tout se passe con-

formément au programme de la fête. En Dalmatie, il y a un autre personnage, nommé le *bukliaš*. C'est un enfant de dix à quinze ans. Il porte une bouteille en bois remplie de vin, du pain blanc et de la viande rôtie. Tous ces dignitaires de la noce sont nommés à Risan par les deux pères des fiancés.

Le jour des noces, tout le village est pavoisé de drapeaux, d'où pendent de longs rubans de diverses couleurs. Une pomme est attachée au bout de la hampe des drapeaux. Les convives se réunissent dans la maison de la future ; ils prennent du café pendant qu'elle fait sa toilette, et on attend le fiancé.

Dans quelques parties de la Croatie, la future sort de sa chambre tout habillée, mais déchaussée : la chaussure lui est apportée et mise aux pieds par le témoin. Au sortir de la chambre, son père lui donne un petit soufflet sur la joue, en lui mettant sur la tête une couronne de perles, qui, dans ce pays, remplace les fleurs.

Enfin, on entend le chant du cortège qui arrive ponctuellement à l'heure convenue. En tête paraît le drapeau porté par l'un des convives. Il est suivi du témoin qui marche avec la première fille d'honneur. Vient ensuite le fiancé avec la seconde fille d'honneur. La dernière personne du cortège, c'est la *soljača*, qui est toujours une proche parente de la fiancée. Elle porte dans son tablier des sucreries et des grains de froment qu'elle jette durant la marche parmi les membres du cortège nuptial. Quand le cortège approche de la maison, les filles attachent un bouquet de roses artificielles sur la poitrine des convives ; mais le témoin reçoit un gros bouquet de fleurs naturelles. Son premier devoir en entrant est de chausser la fiancée.

Il apporte la chaussure dans un mouchoir de soie, et la présente à la future qui s'empresse d'en retirer sans qu'on s'en aperçoive les pièces de monnaie qu'on y a mises.

Dès que la future est chaussée, on se rend à l'église; et la cérémonie religieuse finie, on revient à la maison de la mariée. Une table bien garnie attend les convives. Des toasts sans fin sont portés. Les jeunes filles récitent des vers composés pour la circonstance. Mais les filles d'honneur sont très-affairées. Elles vont de maison en maison distribuer dans le village, au nom des convives, des gâteaux, du rôti et des fruits; car chaque invité a le droit d'envoyer à ses connaissances tout ce qu'il lui plait.

A Lika, lorsque la future sort de sa chambre, elle est présentée aux convives par son frère, qui dit à haute voix : « Voici ma sœur! qui veut en prendre soin? » Le témoin s'avance et répond : « Dieu et moi. » Il la prend alors par la main, en lui glissant une pièce de monnaie, et va la remettre au premier garçon d'honneur, qui lui fait faire trois fois le tour du foyer, et à chaque tour elle s'incline profondément devant le feu. Après cette courte cérémonie, elle reçoit la bénédiction de ses parents, et on se rend à l'église. Le cortège est toujours armé et à cheval. A côté de la fiancée marche son futur beau-frère, qui tient la bride du cheval; elle salue tout le monde en passant, à l'exception des jeunes enfants et des mendiants.

Il en est de même en Serbie et dans beaucoup de contrées de la Dalmatie. Mais, en Bulgarie, on va chercher la fiancée dans une voiture attelée des plus beaux bœufs que possède la maison. Deux autres voitures portent séparément les filles et les hommes.

Une partie du cortège est souvent à cheval. Lorsqu'on se rend à l'église, la future est toujours debout dans sa voiture. Le témoin se trouve près d'elle ; et à l'église, elle est portée à son banc par le *djever*.

Dans quelques parties de la Croatie, le jour des noces commence par un déjeuner chez le futur. On sert trois plats seulement, et après chaque plat on porte les toasts : le premier, à la sainte croix ; le second, à l'un des trois archanges, et le troisième, au nom du Tout-Puissant. Les mêmes toasts sont portés dans la maison de la future, chez qui l'on se régale aussi, mais toutes portes closes ; car les *svati* ne doivent pas pouvoir entrer librement. Toutefois, dans cette contrée, on ne les laisse pas attendre longtemps, et on leur ouvre la porte à la simple demande de celui qui conduit le cortège. Alors on se met à boire, mais on évite soigneusement de parler directement de la future ; le premier garçon d'honneur invite, au contraire, d'un ton plaisant l'ancien des convives à se mettre à la recherche du gibier qu'on est venu chasser pour le futur, qui, seul dans la société, n'est pas encore marié ; les dignitaires de la noce sont toujours mariés. On va donc chercher la fiancée dans sa chambre et on l'amène au futur. Les parents les aspergent d'eau bénite ; et après un court déjeuner, on se rend à l'église.

Dans l'Herzégovine et le Monténégro, lorsque les parents donnent leur bénédiction à la future, celle-ci tient un verre de vin, et elle conserve ce verre durant toute sa vie comme une précieuse relique.

Dans les villages des bouches de Cattaro, la fiancée se cache le jour des noces. Lorsque les convives se présentent chez elle, ses parents leur demandent s'ils

reconnaîtraient celle qu'ils cherchent. « Très-certainement, » répondent-ils. On fait alors venir une vieille femme. L'hilarité est grande à la vue de cette bonne vieille jouant le rôle de fiancée ; et après quelques remontrances de la part des convives, on fait défiler devant eux toutes les filles de la maison. La future se trouve la dernière, mais elle est habillée comme une femme. « La voilà ! » s'écrie-t-on ; et les femmes la poussent parmi les convives, du milieu desquels le premier garçon d'honneur la prend sous son manteau rouge qu'il lui jette sur les épaules. C'est alors seulement que tout le cortège peut entrer dans la maison. Le chef présente à la future ses cadeaux ; elle les baise tous en s'inclinant profondément jusqu'à terre ; puis, elle embrasse les *svati*. Pendant le dîner, elle est assise à une table séparée avec les deux garçons d'honneur. Lorsque le cortège se met en marche pour aller à l'église, un nouvel incident l'arrête tout court. Devant la maison se trouvent trois outres, dont deux entièrement remplies de vin, la troisième pleine à demi. L'ancien de la maison demande au témoin s'il préfère vivre au village ou à la ville, et celui-ci répond : « J'ai traversé bien des villes en faisant le commerce ; » mais je suis né au village et je le préfère à la ville. » En disant ces paroles, il vise celle des trois outres qu'il croit à demi-pleine, et s'il se trompe, on ne le laisse point partir avant que lui et les *svati* n'aient bu tout le vin.

En Croatie, c'est le garçon d'honneur et la sœur du fiancé qui vont chercher la fiancée. Les autres membres du cortège se rendent directement à l'église. A Strašnica, dans le comitat de Syrmium, c'est le *stari svat* qui va chez la future ; il est accompagné du

commandant ou capitaine du cortège. Le *stari svat* apporte à la jeune fille sa robe des noces comme un présent de son futur mari, et il en revêt lui-même la fiancée.

Sur le littoral dalmate, on ne livre pas de suite la future, qui est du reste fort bien cachée dans la maison. La *domaćica* fait venir toutes les filles de la communauté, et les visiteurs cherchent en vain celle qu'ils ont mission de découvrir. Sur ces entrefaites, un ou deux garçons du cortège s'esquivent et tâchent de découvrir la cachette de la fiancée. S'ils la trouvent, ils annoncent leur découverte par deux coups de pistolet.

A Risan, on ne connaît pas cette coutume. Lorsque le cortège arrive devant la maison, les convives tirent un coup de fusil. Un domestique sort, prend leur long fusil, le nettoie et le charge de nouveau, mais avec la poudre de son maître. Les convives étant entrés se lavent les mains, et on se met à table.

Chez les Serbes, les divers toasts sont toujours adressés au commandant du cortège, et c'est lui qui doit répondre pour celui à la santé duquel on a bu. Ainsi, par exemple lorsqu'on porte la santé du *djever*, on lève son verre en disant : « Que mon commandant se porte bien ! » au lieu de : « A la santé de notre *djever* ! » etc., etc., et le commandant porte lui-même la santé du *djever*, qui remercie en levant et buvant un troisième verre de vin. Une pareille coutume existe en Hongrie dans tous les grands dîners.

Quant à la future, elle n'apparaît à ces repas que vers la fin. Elle sort de sa chambre, conduite par son frère et par le garçon d'honneur. Son père l'attend,

assis sur une chaise. Dès qu'ils sont tous les trois près de lui, il leur demande ce qu'ils veulent d'un « pêcheur. » « Nous demandons, répondent le frère et le » garçon d'honneur, que tu dises une bonne parole » à ta fille, afin que Dieu te donne aussi tout ce que » tu désires. » Le père prend alors un gâteau avec un verre de vin, et il dit : « Ma chère fille, que Dieu » t'accorde tout le bien que je puis me souhaiter à » moi-même. » Il boit ensuite quelques gouttes de vin et passe le verre et le gâteau à sa femme, qui prononce à peu près les mêmes paroles. Le verre et le gâteau font le tour de tous les parents, et tous expriment les mêmes souhaits. Cette cérémonie, qu'on appelle la *bonne prière*, se termine enfin par des chants, et l'on se rend à l'église. Mais le frère, qui ne veut point livrer sa sœur, dit au *djever* : « Si tu » veux que je te donne une pareille fille, tu dois » l'adorer. » Et après une longue dispute, le *djever* donne un ou deux écus au garçon d'honneur, et la future lui est immédiatement livrée.

Dans le banat de Hongrie, les filles retiennent aussi la future et ne la lâchent pas avant d'avoir obtenu une certaine somme d'argent. La fiancée doit acheter elle-même sa délivrance. Le premier qui entre reçoit d'elle un essuie-main. Son frère la remet alors au témoin, qui la conduit à l'église.

Le même cérémonial ou à peu près a lieu en Bulgarie. Lorsque la fiancée paraît devant le témoin, celui-ci lui couvre le visage d'un mouchoir qu'on ne lui ôte qu'au domicile de son mari, ainsi que nous le dirons tout à l'heure, et dès qu'elle est voilée, elle s'incline profondément devant les convives au moins douze fois.

A Konavlje, deux cortéges armés se mettent en route en même temps pour se rendre à l'église. L'un part de la maison du futur et l'autre de la maison de la future. Ils se rencontrent à mi-chemin. Mais il s'agit alors d'obtenir livraison de la fiancée. Il y a de longues disputes, qui se terminent toujours par le compromis suivant : Le cortége de la future promet à l'autre de lui livrer la fiancée, mais à l'église seulement ; et, la paix conclue, les deux cortéges marchent de concert.

Dans quelques parties de la Serbie, la future attend le cortége sur le seuil même de sa maison. Elle place un soc de charrue devant sa porte, et lorsque son futur descend de cheval, il doit mettre un pied sur le soc.

Lorsque la cérémonie religieuse est terminée, on revient avec ordre à la maison de la mariée, où les convives se régalaient encore une fois. Mais il y a des contrées, en Serbie et en Bulgarie, par exemple, où les jeunes mariés se rendent directement de l'église à la demeure de l'époux. Dans le comitat de Syrmium, on se sépare au sortir de l'église ; chacun rentre chez soi, mais pour se réunir de nouveau chez la mariée, où la communauté du mari donne un grand dîner aux convives. Le cortége accompagne ensuite la jeune épouse, le soir et à travers tout le village, dans sa nouvelle maison. A Bednja, village de Croatie, on dîne dans une auberge ou chez un ami de la famille de l'épouse, s'il y en a un qui demeure dans le voisinage de l'église ; mais on soupe dans la maison de la mariée, et l'on y reste ordinairement jusqu'à l'aube. A Risan, l'époux se rend seul avec ses amis de l'église à la maison de ses parents. Les convives et la mariée restent quelque temps devant

l'église jusqu'à ce que le jeune marié soit rentré chez lui.

Vuk raconte que, dans ces contrées, les fiancés ou les filles qui souffrent de la fièvre se pressent autour de la mariée devant la porte de l'église et lui demandent à quelle époque ils seront enfin délivrés de leur mal. Comme il s'agit presque toujours, dans ces cas de fièvre, de savoir à quelle époque on se mariera, la nouvelle épouse fixe ordinairement, pour la fin de leurs souffrances, un terme très-rapproché. Ceci démontrerait chez les paysans de cette contrée la croyance à une certaine vertu prophétique dans la fille qui vient de recevoir le sacrement du mariage. Il serait intéressant de savoir si les prophéties de la nouvelle mariée se réalisent assez souvent pour confirmer cette croyance populaire.

Le moment le plus solennel et le plus touchant de la journée des noces, c'est lorsque la mariée prend congé de ses parents, de ses frères, de ses sœurs, et qu'elle dit adieu à toutes les compagnes de sa jeunesse, ainsi qu'aux associés de sa maison. Dans les contrées où la fiancée ne rentre plus au foyer paternel, lorsqu'elle en sort pour aller à l'église, elle fait ses adieux avant la cérémonie religieuse, c'est-à-dire au moment où elle quitte pour toujours la maison de ses parents. Mais, dans les autres contrées, les adieux se font ordinairement après le dîner ou après le souper.

La malle de la mariée est apportée au milieu de la chambre. On la recouvre entièrement d'un long et grand tapis sur lequel le jeune couple se met à genoux. Le père s'approche d'eux et leur demande ce qu'ils désirent. « Père, ta bénédiction, » répondent-

ils. Le père met alors ses mains sur leur tête courbée, et, s'adressant à son gendre, il lui recommande sa fille et lui dit d'être tout à la fois un père et un frère pour elle. « Ma puissance paternelle, ajoute-t-il, » cesse maintenant. Prends donc ma fille sous ta » garde et sois désormais son protecteur, son soutien » durant toute ta vie. » Il récite ensuite la prière de la bénédiction. La mère prononce rarement quelques paroles ; mais elle se jette en sanglotant dans les bras de sa fille et la tient longtemps embrassée. Pendant que les femmes plourent, quatre convives mettent la malle sur leurs épaules, et un cinquième porte le tapis. Dans l'Herzégovine, un petit garçon, frère ou cousin de la mariée, s'assied sur la malle et la défend contre ceux qui veulent l'enlever. Il faut lui donner une petite somme d'argent pour qu'il se décide à la laisser emporter.

Enfin, le cortège se met en marche. En Croatie, les filles chantent : « Adieu maintenant, pauvre vieille » mère ; » et cette chanson mélancolique dure jusqu'aux approches de la maison du nouveau marié. On change alors de rythme, et l'air retentit subitement du chant plus joyeux : « Attends, attends-nous, » très-chère mère. »

Dans l'Herzégovine, les parents de la mariée suivent le cortège jusqu'à une certaine distance de leur maison et souhaitent encore une fois bon voyage à leur fille, qui doit tourner la tête vers ses parents pour que ses enfants ressemblent à sa famille. Dans ces contrées, la future quitte la maison paternelle avant la cérémonie religieuse. C'est de la demeure du futur qu'elle se rend à l'église. Les parents du jeune homme attendent les nouveaux époux sur le seuil de

leur maison. La mère tient à la main une coupe d'argent ou de métal, car elle ne doit pas être transparente ; et avant que le témoin ait présenté la nouvelle épouse, le marié demande à sa mère ce que renferme cette coupe. « C'est du miel et ta bonne volonté, mon » cher fils, » répond la mère. Les témoins jettent plusieurs pièces d'argent dans la coupe, et la mère boit alors quelques gouttes du liquide que la coupe renferme. Cette cérémonie se renouvelle trois fois. Le marié prend ensuite la coupe et la présente à sa femme, qui boit également ; il avale ce qui reste et met l'argent dans sa poche.

La malle est alors portée dans la maison ; mais avant d'entrer, le cortège se rend au puits du village, dont il fait trois fois le tour. Cette espèce de procession terminée, les nouveaux époux jettent en l'air leur pomme avec quelques pièces de monnaie, mais de manière qu'elle ne tombe pas dans l'eau, ce qui n'est pas très-facile ; car une foule d'enfants entourent le puits et cherchent à attraper la pomme en l'air. On entre ensuite à la maison. Partout où passe le cortège, on offre du vin aux convives ; les femmes leur jettent des grains de froment, ce que la *soljača* rend au double naturellement. Pendant le souper, la première fille d'honneur distribue des cadeaux à tous les convives au nom de la mariée, en leur disant : « La jeune mariée vous offre ce cadeau ; il est petit, » mais l'amitié est grande. » Les convives distribuent aussi des présents de noce. Ils mettent une obole dans une grande assiette placée sur la table. Dans le Monténégro, c'est le premier garçon d'honneur qui distribue les présents de la mariée.

Après l'échange des cadeaux, le témoin conduit le

nouveau couple dans sa chambre. Le mari ôte lui-même la couronne nuptiale de la tête de sa femme ; et pendant que les convives se régalent jusqu'à l'aube, les jeunes mariés se couchent en présence du témoin. Ainsi se termine le premier jour des noces sur tout le littoral croate.

A Lika, la mariée, avant d'entrer dans la maison de son mari, jette la pomme de la noce par-dessus les toits ; il en est de même dans d'autres contrées. Ensuite, elle embrasse sa belle-mère, les sœurs de son mari qui l'attendent sur le seuil de la porte, mais le cortège ne va pas au puits, et la mariée entre dans la maison de son beau-père, conduite par le premier garçon d'honneur. Elle fait trois fois le tour du foyer, en s'inclinant profondément devant le feu. Après cette cérémonie, sa belle-mère vient s'asseoir devant le foyer, et la belle-fille pousse vers elle quelques morceaux de bois enflammés. On demande à la *domaćica* de la graisse, avec laquelle on prépare un mets tout particulier.

Cette coutume se pratique également dans les villages des bouches du Cattaro. Il n'y a qu'une légère modification. Lorsque la mariée a poussé le bois de l'âtre vers sa belle-mère, celle-ci se lève précipitamment, et la belle-fille fait une profonde révérence devant sa belle-mère qui l'embrasse. Pendant le souper, on joue à divers jeux. Les nouveaux mariés se cachent derrière le témoin. Si la jeune femme aperçoit son mari, elle lui jette une pomme. Lorsque le témoin sort de la chambre nuptiale, il tire un coup de pistolet, et, à ce signal, les convives s'écrient : « Ah ! voilà que le loup vient d'attraper un agneau ! »

En Croatie, on offre à la mariée, sur le seuil même

de sa nouvelle demeure, une petite gerbe de froment et une assiette pleine de miettes de pain qu'elle pose sur la table de la salle à manger. Cette coutume, qu'on retrouve dans les confins militaires, dans le Monténégro, en Herzégovine et dans le comitat de Syrmium, est un symbole de l'abondance qu'on souhaite au jeune ménage. La mariée apporte à son tour, dans la maison où elle entre, un ou deux pains, qui sont un symbole de richesse.

Dans le comitat de Syrmium, on lui offre au lieu de pain une cuillerée de miel, avec laquelle elle fait son entrée dans sa nouvelle habitation. Il y a des contrées où elle baise le seuil de la porte et le foyer de la maison qui va devenir sa demeure et où elle trouvera sa nourriture. Elle remue la braise du foyer en faisant des vœux pour « que les brebis, les poules, » les juments procurent autant de petits qu'il pétille » d'étincelles. »

Dans beaucoup d'endroits, elle entre dans la chambre de son beau-père, s'assied sur ses genoux et à ce moment on lui met un enfant sur les bras, autant que possible un garçon.

A Bednja, la mariée est d'abord conduite dans l'écurie par une femme de la communauté; et là elle enfonce dans le mur une pièce de monnaie. Pendant le dîner, elle coupe sur une assiette de bois la viande qui doit être servie au convives. Le père du marié se sert le premier, et un des invités lui dit à cette occasion : « Voilà le premier cadeau qu'elle t'offre; qu'elle » te le donne encore cent fois ! »

Dans d'autres contrées de la Croatie, c'est la mariée qui est servie la première; mais elle ne touche à rien. Le premier garçon et la fille d'honneur, qui

sont assis à ses côtés, prennent tous les mets qui lui sont destinés et les lui coupent tous en morceaux. Il y a cependant des contrées où la nouvelle épouse ne se met à table que lorsque les légumes sont servis. On porte alors le premier toast à la gloire de Dieu.

A Risan, la mariée est toujours présente à la *bonne prière*, qui se fait ce jour-là comme dans sa propre maison. Le jeune couple se met à l'un des bouts de la table, qui est la place d'honneur. On leur couvre la tête avec un foulard, et ils restent ainsi jusqu'à la fin du repas. Alors la mariée offre de l'eau aux convives pour qu'ils se lavent les mains.

Dans le Banat, la nouvelle épouse n'assiste jamais au repas qui se donne chez ses parents, et le marié ne s'y présente pas non plus chez lui. A Gradiška, la mariée ne mange même que du laitage. On croit par ce repas maigre garantir les troupeaux des ravages que causent très-souvent les loups. En général, pendant que les gens de la noce boivent et mangent largement, les nouveaux mariés font très-maigre chère, et cela durant toutes les fêtes de leur mariage. Après le souper, les frères et les sœurs du marié accompagnent le nouveau couple dans sa chambre à coucher. Une des sœurs ôte d'abord à la mariée sa couronne nuptiale et lui défait les tresses de ses cheveux. Ensuite, la jeune femme déchausse son mari et lui donne un petit coup avec la botte pour indiquer par là qu'il doit toujours lui être soumis. Lorsqu'ils se couchent, le *djever* les couvre et jette sur le lit quelques pièces de monnaie.

Dans les bouches du Cattaro, la mariée reste la première nuit des noces avec les deux garçons d'honneur, entre lesquels elle se trouve également assise.

pendant le souper. Ce n'est que la seconde nuit des nocés qu'il lui est permis de coucher avec son mari ; mais celui-ci entre toujours le premier dans la chambre, et il doit se mettre au lit tout habillé. Alors les garçons d'honneur conduisent la mariée près de lui , et les deux époux se couchent après s'être seulement déchaussés. Les convives sortent , mais pour revenir bientôt en chantant et apportant aux mariés un coq rôti encore pendu à la broche , et les deux époux soupent au lit.

A Zumberak, en Croatie, la mariée, avant d'entrer dans la maison de son beau-père, monte à cheval ; et, tenant un petit garçon sur ses genoux, elle fait trois fois le tour des filles qui dansent en rond devant la maison. Cette coutume de porter un petit garçon, en entrant pour la première fois dans la demeure du mari, se retrouve chez presque tous les Serbes. Elle existe encore sur le littoral croate, dans le comitat de Syrmium et dans le Monténégro, si ce n'est qu'au Monténégro la mariée tourne trois fois l'enfant autour de sa tête ; dans le comitat de Syrmium elle s'assied avec lui sur les genoux de sa belle-sœur, assise elle-même sur une très-haute chaise. Dans le Banat, il y a des régions où la mariée porte en entrant un petit cochon ou un agneau. On lui présente un garçon de deux ans qu'elle embrasse ; mais elle ne le porte pas dans l'intérieur de la maison et lui donne un ruban pour ceinture.

Dans l'Herzégovine et le Monténégro, les mariés ne couchent pas ensemble la première nuit des noces. La jeune épouse reste tout habillée avec le garçon d'honneur, qui est ordinairement choisi parmi les frères du mari ; elle passe les nuits suivantes avec ses belles-

sœurs. Cette séparation de corps peut encore durer longtemps. La mère de l'époux a seule le pouvoir de décider cette question. Elle choisit ordinairement un dimanche ou un mardi, que le peuple regarde comme des jours heureux, mais elle reste cette nuit auprès de sa bru jusqu'à ce que celle-ci dorme; elle s'esquive alors lentement, va éveiller son fils, lui donne sa bénédiction et le fait entrer dans la chambre à coucher.

En Bulgarie, il existe une singulière coutume. A l'arrivée des époux dans leur nouveau domicile, la mère du marié, sur le seuil de la porte, offre du pain, du sel et une bouteille de vin; puis, on attache à la taille de la mariée une de ces longues ceintures que portent les paysans dans ces contrées, et, la tirant avec force par les deux bouts de cette ceinture, on tâche de la faire entrer dans la maison; mais elle résiste. Enfin, le *domačîn* ou la *domačica* lui promet une vache ou une brebis. A cette promesse, la mariée s'incline sept fois devant le *domačîn* et consent à entrer dans la maison.

A Ljeskovac, on va jusqu'à lui promettre quelques arpents de terre ou une maisonnette. Dans le comitat de Syrmium, au contraire, c'est la mariée elle-même qui doit payer l'entrée. La cuisinière, tenant à la main une cuiller à pot, se met devant la porte, qui est barricadée au moyen d'un baquet. La jeune mariée lui donne quelques pièces d'argent, et le passage devient libre aussitôt.

En Bulgarie, le repas des noces a lieu dans la cour de la maison, même en hiver. La mariée seule reste dans sa chambre, et son mari, pour entrer chez elle, doit livrer un véritable combat aux jeunes gens qui

en défendent l'entrée et qui lui montrent par là combien ils lui envient son bonheur.

A Ljeskovac, on boit avant le dîner une boisson composée de vin, de poivre et de miel. Pendant tout le repas, le cierge des noces est allumé. Lorsque les jeunes époux vont se coucher, la sœur du mari se tient devant la porte de la chambre, où elle attend que son frère vienne lui dire que la mariée avait conservé son innocence ou qu'elle l'avait perdue. Si la pureté de la jeune femme est constatée, la joie redouble dans la maison. Tout le cortège se rend avec le mari chez les parents de la mariée et lui apportent divers cadeaux, entre autres un petit tonneau d'eau-de-vie. Le mari paie alors le prix de l'*ogrluk* promis aux fiançailles, et les parents vont chez la jeune femme, qui est naturellement très-heureuse de cette visite. Dans le cortège se trouve un jeune homme qui porte sur le dos un mouton, dont les cornes sont dorées et auxquelles sont attachées des pommes toutes dorées également. C'est à ce moment qu'on ôte à la mariée son voile, et on continue de se régaler jusqu'à l'aube.

Mais si la jeune femme avait perdu sa virginité pendant qu'elle était fille, ce qui arrive très-rarement, et dès que les convives apprennent cela, la musique se tait ; on se sépare sans bruit, et la plus grande tristesse règne parmi les convives. Le père de la femme doit payer la honte faite à la maison, ou bien on lui renvoie sa fille. Mais si on la garde, sa honte est proclamée dans tout le village. Une vieille femme de la communauté la publie à tous les coins de rue. On n'échange plus de présents, et le prix de l'*ogrluk* n'est pas payé à la mère, car elle a trop mal gardé son enfant.

Les fêtes nuptiales se terminent rarement en une journée ; elles durent très-souvent deux semaines. Le lendemain des noces, on se lève de bonne heure. La mariée doit tout mettre en ordre dans la maison et préparer le café qu'elle sert elle-même au déjeuner des convives. A Risan, elle offre le café à tout le monde, excepté à son mari, mais par timidité seulement. Il y a des contrées où l'on déjeune chez le témoin. Après le déjeuner, on se rend à l'église, et de là on va faire une visite aux parents de la mariée. Un splendide déjeuner chez les nouveaux époux termine joyeusement cette seconde journée.

A Risan, ce sont les parents de la jeune femme qui font la première visite. Tous sont en habit de fête. On apporte beaucoup de cadeaux, mais on en reçoit aussi. Cette visite est rendue le troisième jour ; toutefois la mariée ne va à l'église que le premier dimanche ou la première fête après les noces. Elle est parée ce jour-là comme pour son mariage. Toutes les femmes de sa famille et de la famille de son mari se réunissent chez elle et l'accompagnent à la messe, à l'exception des hommes qui font pour ainsi dire bande à part. Après la messe, les femmes s'embrassent devant l'église et saluent les hommes. Jusqu'à ce jour la nouvelle mariée est censée fille, mais dès le lendemain on la range parmi les femmes ; elle ne porte plus de couronne et n'est plus obligée, comme fiancée, de s'incliner par respect devant tout le monde.

Dans quelques parties du littoral dalmate, on conduit également la jeune mariée pour la première fois à l'église le dimanche qui suit les noces, et de l'église on se rend chez ses parents. Le mari, avant d'entrer dans la maison de son beau-père, doit donner des

preuves de son talent comme bon tireur. Il prend un fusil, vise une figure de bois attachée à un arbre de la cour et, s'il la touche, on lui ouvre les portes. Le dimanche suivant, les parents de la jeune femme vont lui rendre sa visite. Le troisième jour après les nocces, on distribue des gâteaux aux voisins, afin qu'ils prennent part aux réjouissances des fêtes nuptiales et qu'elles ne leur portent pas ombrage.

Chez les riches paysans du littoral croate, huit jours après les nocces on donne une nouvelle fête. La musique du village va chercher les filles d'honneur, qui ont chacune préparé une galette, ornée d'un petit drapeau, couverte d'un mouchoir, et qu'elles portent sur la tête. Tout le cortège des filles se rend ainsi, d'abord chez le témoin, qui, portant une poule rôtie, s'en va avec les filles chez les nouveaux mariés et on s'y régale encore une fois très-gaiement.

Une coutume fort répandue chez les Serbes et qu'ils appellent *poljevačina*, c'est-à-dire arrosement, s'accomplit le lendemain ou le troisième jour après les nocces. A Lika, ce sont les belles-sœurs qui apportent de l'eau aux mariés pour se laver le lendemain des nocces. Au grand dîner de ce jour, auquel tous les invités de la veille prennent part, les sœurs du marié apportent une cruche d'eau sur une assiette avec un essuie-main, et tous les convives se lavent les mains, puis ils jettent une pièce de monnaie dans l'assiette. Le soir, la jeune mariée distribue des cadeaux.

Dans la haute Croatie, tout le cortège nuptial, musique en tête, se rend le lendemain des nocces au puits du village, où l'on se fait toutes sortes de farces. On s'arrose réciproquement; on ne boit que de l'eau ce

jour-là et on mange du pain sans levain. Pendant qu'on s'amuse, la mariée doit tâcher de remplir un verre d'eau à l'improviste, et si elle y parvient, on rentre aussitôt à la maison. Là, elle se met à nettoyer et à arranger les chambres, mais les convives font tout leur possible pour l'empêcher dans son travail. Ils renversent les meubles, mettent tout en désordre, de telle sorte que les femmes de la maison doivent venir l'aider et on finit par remettre tout en ordre.

A Gradiška et à Brod, la mariée va de maison en maison avec de l'eau et une serviette pour faire laver les mains de tous les voisins et de toutes les voisines, et on la régale partout. Le soir, les convives viennent souper chez elle; mais chacun lui apporte un cadeau et elle leur en distribue aussi. Ce soir-là, le jeune couple doit danser devant chaque convive pour faire voir qu'il n'est pas boiteux.

Aux Bouches de Cattaro, la mariée doit se lever de bonne heure, et après avoir mis tout en ordre dans la maison, elle va chercher de l'eau au puits. Elle en offre à tous les convives qui ont passé la nuit dans la maison et qui se débarbouillent le visage et les mains avec cette eau, et puis chacun lui fait un présent. Dans le Monténégro, où la fête des noces ne dure qu'un jour, cette eau est apportée après le dîner.

Dans le comitat de Syrmium, l'échange des cadeaux a lieu; mais la coutume de se laver les mains n'existe pas. Le lendemain des noces, et de bon matin, le maître des cérémonies (*čajo*) du cortège va réveiller les nouveaux époux en tirant trois coups de pistolets sous leurs fenêtres. La sœur du mari entre alors dans la chambre pour coiffer la mariée d'un mouchoir. Le *čajo* lui met la coiffure des femmes; et,

avant d'aller déjeuner, la jeune femmes embrasse les convives qui lui offrent des cadeaux. Toute cette journée se passe, dans le comitat de Syrmium, chez le témoin, et c'est après le souper seulement que les jeunes époux rentrent avec les convives à la maison, où la mariée fait la distribution des cadeaux.

Chez les Bulgares, cette espèce de procession à l'eau se fait très-solennellement. A Ljeskovac, elle a lieu le troisième jour des noces, c'est-à-dire un mardi; car le lundi est un jour de repos, ou plutôt une préparation aux fêtes du lendemain qui commencent de bonne heure par un déjeuner. La mariée apporte de l'eau aux convives, qui se lavent les mains et lui donnent ensuite quelques pièces de monnaie. Vers minuit, les mariés se lèvent, distribuent les cadeaux entre leurs plus proches parents, et, à partir de ce moment, ils doivent se séparer jusqu'au mardi suivant, à minuit. Ceux qui ont reçu des présents de noces se rendent en chantant chez les parents de la mariée qui les régalent très-bien, et ils lui apportent à leur retour quelques ustensiles de ménage avec un peu d'argent que la mère envoie à sa fille pour la récompenser d'avoir si bien gardé son honneur. Ce jour-là, on ôte à la mariée le voile qu'elle portait depuis son mariage.

La cérémonie a lieu dans le verger. Sous un pommier se trouve un seau rempli d'eau, dans lequel on jette quelques pièces de monnaie.

Le voile ayant été ôté, les femmes se réunissent en cercle; en mettant la mariée au milieu, elles tournent trois fois autour d'elle. Puis elle renverse le seau d'eau avec le pied, et des enfants qui portent le voile sur un bâton ramassent l'argent jeté dans le seau.

C'est le lendemain que la mariée se rend au puits au son de la musique et avec tout le cortège. Elle fait trois fois le tour du puits et jette une poignée de millet aux quatre coins. Le garçon d'honneur remplit ensuite une cruche d'eau, y jette quelques pièces de monnaie et la porte devant la jeune femme qui la renverse du pied comme la veille; mais elle la remplit de nouveau et l'apporte à la maison toujours accompagnée de la musique et du cortège.

A Tatar-Pazardžik, c'est le 7/19 janvier, fête de Saint-Jean-Baptiste, que le garçon d'honneur conduit la nouvelle mariée à la rivière. Le *djever* perce la glace et plonge la jeune femme tout habillée dans l'eau. Lorsqu'elle en sort, elle s'incline trois fois devant le *djever* et lui donne un *ogrluk* en lui baisant la main. A son tour, le *djever* lui donne, suivant sa fortune, un écu ou un ducat. S'il n'y a pas de rivière dans le village, cette cérémonie se fait au puits. A partir de ce jour, le *djever* et la mariée se regardent comme frère et sœur.

Cependant les devoirs du *djever* ne sont pas encore tous remplis. Il doit régaler les jeunes mariés le vendredi et le samedi après la noce, et à ce dîner on sert du miel, des raisins secs et du maïs rôti. A côté de ce plat, se trouve de la laine, un écheveau de laine et un fuseau. La mariée s'assied, prend une quenouille et se met à filer de la laine trois fois le tour du fuseau. Cela fait, le *djever* lui offre le plat de maïs qu'elle met de côté en baisant la main du *djever*. Elle lui donne ensuite des cadeaux, et un dîner termine gaiement la fête. Une semblable coutume existe aussi à Gradiška et à Brod dans les confins militaires croates, où la mariée doit filer le dimanche après la noce avec

une quenouille donnée par les frères de son mari.

L'entrée des nouveaux mariés dans l'église a toujours lieu très-solennellement, le premier dimanche après la noce. La jeune épouse porte sa robe nuptiale, et cette journée est encore une fête pour toute la famille. La messe finie, on félicite la jeune femme, qui distribue des cadeaux à tous ceux qui lui ont adressé leurs félicitations. Dans quelques contrées, la mariée va ainsi parée à l'église pendant trois dimanches consécutifs, et chaque fois elle distribue des cadeaux. Les cérémonies et les fêtes de la noce sont alors erminées.

Le mariage doit être regardé comme irrévocablement conclu, lorsque les deux fiancés ont fait serment devant le prêtre de se prendre pour époux. Aussi le peuple ne semble pas considérer la consommation du mariage comme indispensable à son accomplissement. Nos sources, il est vrai, n'en font mention qu'une seule fois. Mais, ainsi que nous l'avons dit plus haut, comme il se passe quelquefois des mois entiers avant que le mariage ne soit consommé, le Serbe ne peut pas croire que, pendant si longtemps, le mariage soit en suspens. Les anciens canons de l'Eglise orthodoxe ne reconnaissent pas non plus le *matrimonium non consummatum* comme une cause légitime et naturelle de divorce, et il n'existe chez les Serbes aucune cérémonie spéciale qui ait rapport à l'accomplissement du mariage.

Nous avons vu seulement qu'on tourne trois fois autour de la mariée devant le foyer de son beau-père, que le témoin la fait tourner autour de lui en lui tendant l'anneau nuptial. La jeune épouse marche également, en Croatie, trois fois autour de la table, après être entrée pour la première fois dans la maison

de son mari. Au premier tour, elle met des gants sur un clou; au second, elle y attache un essuie-mains et une *podvijača* (1) au troisième tour. Chez les orthodoxes, la cérémonie religieuse étant terminée, les anneaux ayant été échangés, les époux se rendent au milieu de l'église, où se trouve sur une table le livre des Evangiles, et c'est là qu'a lieu le couronnement des mariés; car on met une couronne sur la tête des deux époux. Ensuite ils boivent du vin dans une coupe d'argent, comme pour faire serment qu'ils partageront ensemble le bonheur aussi bien que le malheur. En Russie, les garçons d'honneur tiennent ces couronnes sur la tête des mariés, comme un témoignage de fidélité mutuelle. Les époux font ensuite trois fois le tour de la table, et toute la cérémonie religieuse est alors terminée.

Dans le mariage, l'homme est le chef de la maison; la femme doit lui obéir; mais, à son tour, le mari doit la défendre et la protéger, il doit aussi la pourvoir de tout ce que la communauté ne lui donne pas. Les deux époux se doivent réciproquement protection, amour et fidélité; ils ont le même devoir pour l'éducation et l'entretien de leurs enfants. La femme partage toujours le domicile de son mari. Dans les anciens temps, le mari avait le droit de punir sa femme. « L'homme est la tête, dit un proverbe; la femme n'est que l'herbe. » Les deux époux ne s'appellent jamais par leur nom de baptême. Lorsque le mari vient à mourir, sa femme ne le désigne que par ce mot *lui* ou le *défunt*. Mais

(1) Le coussinet que les femmes mettent sur leur tête pour porter en équilibre des fardeaux.

le mari écoute toujours les conseils de sa femme et défend son honneur au péril même de sa vie. Leurs relations intimes sont très-pudiques, surtout durant les premières années du mariage. La femme sert son mari ; elle ne sort pas de la maison sans son consentement, et il lui est défendu de vendre et d'engager quoi que soit à son insu. Les femmes se mettent rarement à table pour prendre leur repas, et c'est le mari qui distribue à chacune sa portion. Mais si le *domaćin* commande quelque chose à une femme dans l'intérêt de la communauté, son ordre domine toujours celui du mari. Dans l'Herzégovine et le Monténégro, lorsque le mari rentre à la maison, sa femme va au-devant de lui, le débarrasse de son manteau et lui apporte le *čibuk*. Dans les affaires domestiques, c'est, au contraire, la femme qui est la maîtresse absolue.

Nous avons déjà parlé du *domazet*. C'est ainsi que les Serbes appellent l'homme qui entre en se mariant dans la maison de sa femme, seule héritière de la fortune. Une fois que le mari ou *domazet* s'est fait inscrire dans la maison, il est le maître comme les autres maris. « La vache a cherché un bœuf, dit un » proverbe ; elle en a trouvé un. » Toutefois, le *domazet* n'est pas très-estimé dans sa nouvelle famille. On lui rappelle souvent que toute la fortune appartient à sa femme.

En Dalmatie et dans le comitat de Syrmium, le *domazet* conserve son nom de famille pour lui et ses enfants. Dans l'Herzégovine, sa nouvelle maison l'accepte devant toute la commune assemblée. On décide alors s'il gardera son nom ou s'il prendra celui de sa nouvelle famille. En Bulgarie, il devient l'associé de la communauté dans laquelle il entre par son

mariage. Il ne change pas de nom, mais il perd le sien avec le temps; car ses voisins, ses amis et puis tout le village ne l'appellent que du nom de la famille de sa femme.

Tout ce que la femme apporte en dot lui reste en administration, en jouissance et en propriété. En fait, surtout si ces biens ont peu de valeur comme dans les familles pauvres, ils sont confondus pendant le mariage avec ceux du mari. Dans les familles riches, la femme dépense les revenus de sa dot au profit du ménage; elle en conserve toujours l'administration et la propriété. Le trousseau et les bijoux de la femme ne peuvent, sous aucun prétexte, passer au mari ni être saisis par ses créanciers. Quant aux acquisitions réalisées pendant le mariage (ce qui suppose des époux vivant hors de toute communauté, car autrement celle-ci y aurait droit), elles sont entre les mains du mari comme représentant de la maison. Les enfants héritent toujours par indivis de la dot de leur mère.

En Croatie, la coutume est tout à fait différente. Ce sont les filles seules qui héritent de la dot de leur mère après sa mort; les garçons n'y ont aucun droit, à moins que, mariées du vivant de leur mère, les filles aient reçu les robes et les parures ou bijoux que celle-ci avait dans sa dot. En ce cas, elles ont perdu tout droit à la succession. Les vêtements que la mère peut laisser après sa mort appartiennent aux femmes des garçons. Si elle n'a pas de filles parmi ses héritiers, elle peut disposer librement de sa dot; et, meurt-elle sans testament, ses plus proches parents deviennent les héritiers naturels.

Dans l'Herzégovine et le Monténégro, lorsqu'une femme meurt sans enfants, les robes et la malle, où

elles sont mises le jour des nocés, appartiennent à ses propres parents. Si elle ne laisse qu'un enfant mineur, on ne touche à rien de ce qui est dans la malle jusqu'à sa majorité. Outre les robes, la mère possède comme propriété personnelle tous les cadeaux qu'on lui a faits à ses nocés.

Dans quelques parties de la Bulgarie, le tiers des cadeaux et des bijoux ou parures de la femme appartient à son mari survivant, et les deux autres tiers à ses enfants. S'il n'y a pas d'enfants, le mari a droit à la moitié, et l'autre moitié revient aux parents de la femme.

A Ljeskovac, en Bulgarie, les enfants succèdent à leur mère; après eux le père et la mère de la défunte sont ses héritiers; et en cas de mort de ceux-ci, c'est le mari qui hérite; mais, dans tous les cas, il prélève ou garde ce qu'il a donné. Pendant la vie, tous les biens non communs sont administrés par le mari. La femme peut vendre certains objets de modique valeur, en cas de maladie grave ou de longue absence de son mari; elle peut même disposer des choses communes, mais elle doit en rendre compte plus tard à son mari. Si, après la mort de celui-ci, les enfants sont encore en bas âge, la femme devient *domačîn* à la place de son mari, et elle administre le bien jusqu'à ce que son fils aîné soit majeur; mais elle ne peut vendre aucun immeuble, sauf les cas d'extrême nécessité.

Le *domazet* jouit des mêmes droits que le mari; seulement il ne peut rien vendre sans le consentement de sa femme, qui a le droit de tester. Mais tout ce que les époux ont gagné ensemble leur appartient en commun.

D'après l'opinion des Serbes, le mariage dûment

conclu est indissoluble. La mort à peine peut le rompre, car le peuple croit que les époux vivront ensemble au paradis. L'adultère paraît être chez eux la seule cause de dissolution du mariage.

Dans l'Herzégovine, si la femme vole son mari, ou qu'elle vende à son insu quelque chose de la fortune, ou qu'elle sente mauvais de la bouche, on admet que le mari peut la renvoyer.

En Bulgarie, le divorce est admis, lorsque la femme se trouve enceinte au moment de son mariage, ou si elle devient folle. Mais si le mari renvoie sa femme pour toute autre cause, ce qui du reste arrive très-rarement, il est obligé de lui donner une somme d'argent et de pourvoir à tous ses besoins; et lorsqu'il y a des enfants, ils restent toujours auprès du père.

En Bosnie, chez les Serbes mahométans, le mari peut renvoyer sa femme et se remarier; mais il doit lui payer la *niča*; et dans le cas où elle aurait un enfant à la mamelle, il est également tenu de lui donner une somme d'argent pour l'entretien du nourrisson. Les autres enfants plus avancés en âge restent avec le père.

Quant à la séparation de lit et de table, elle ne semble être connue que chez les Serbes de l'Autriche-Hongrie. C'est évidemment l'influence des lois écrites qui a fait pénétrer cette sorte de séparation dans les usages du peuple.

Dans les cas de divorce, la femme emporte toute sa dot. Si le divorce est le fait du mari, on convient d'une certaine somme qu'il doit payer à sa femme. En Bulgarie, il doit l'entretenir de tout durant sa vie. Quant aux enfants, ils restent auprès du père, à l'exception du nourrisson que la mère garde,

mais pour le rendre plus tard à la communauté du père. Dans les confins militaires, la femme divorcée emmène avec elle tous les petits enfants, et le père est obligé de fournir une dot à ceux-ci ; mais les filles nubiles peuvent choisir entre leur père et leur mère. Si elles préfèrent habiter avec celle-ci, c'est toujours le père qui leur donne une dot. Il arrive souvent qu'on fait décider cette question par les tribunaux, surtout en Hongrie.

La femme qui n'a pas d'enfants peut léguer sa dot à qui elle veut ; mais si elle meurt sans testament, sa dot revient à son mari, à l'exception des robes qui appartiennent à sa mère ; si cette dernière est morte, les robes reviennent de droit aux sœurs de la défunte ou à ses belles-sœurs. Dans la haute Dalmatie, le mari rend tout à la famille de sa femme ; il ne retient que les cadeaux faits par lui aux fiançailles ou au mariage. En Serbie, la femme emporte toute sa dot après la mort de son mari ; et quand même elle aurait des enfants, elle n'est pas tenue de leur donner une partie de ce qui lui appartient.

Dans le mariage, les époux ont le même droit sur les enfants. Cependant l'autorité du père est plus grande, et il a une influence plus directe sur les garçons, tandis que les filles et les petits enfants restent sous la garde immédiate de la mère. Le père jouit d'une grande puissance sur tous ses enfants. « Il est » pour le fils comme un Dieu sur la terre ; » et le fils lui doit une obéissance illimitée ; mais dès qu'il est marié ou qu'il entre au service militaire, le père n'a plus aucune puissance sur lui. Néanmoins, le fils est toujours obligé de payer les dettes de son père, quand même il n'aurait rien reçu de lui. En général,

pendant la vie du père, les fils ne peuvent prétendre en rien au pécule de leur père ni à ses bénéfices ; mais ils ont les mêmes droits que lui sur les biens de la famille. Ils peuvent quitter la maison paternelle avant leur mariage, mais en fait ils ne le font qu'après cette époque. Le plus jeune seulement reste à la maison. Si le père n'est pas *domaïn*, il n'a de puissance que sur les petits enfants ; c'est le *domaïn*, pour tout ce qui concerne les affaires, qui exerce l'autorité sur les garçons adultes. La puissance sur les filles cesse dès qu'elles se marient.

Dans quelques contrées, le fils mineur, même marié, reste sous la puissance de son père et de sa mère, ainsi que ses propres enfants. Mais il n'existe en général qu'un simple lien moral entre le père et son fils marié, surtout après le partage. Il en est de même pour les filles. « La fille mariée, » dit un proverbe, « est une voisine désirée. » Souvent les parents de la fille interviennent amicalement auprès de son mari, lorsqu'il y a mésintelligence entre eux. Si le mari se sépare de sa femme, celle-ci retourne chez ses parents ; mais si elle osait quitter son mari par suite de disputes, les parents la lui renverraient, quand même le mari aurait tous les torts. « La mauvaise *odiva* (1) » se plaint à ses parents, mais la bonne souffre sans rien dire. »

Pendant la vie du père, surtout dans les petites familles, ses enfants ont rarement un bien à eux. Ils lui donnent même ce qu'ils gagnent à leurs moments de loisir, ou bien ils le remettent au *domaïn* pour la

(1) Toute fille mariée devient *odiva* vis-à-vis de la communauté où elle est née.

communauté. Mais la communauté ou le père leur fournit la chaussure, le vêtement, etc., etc. Toutefois, dans les confins militaires, si les gardiens du bétail de leur père surveillent aussi des troupeaux étrangers, ils reçoivent pour ce surcroît de service un paiement en nature ou en argent. Ce qu'ils gagnent ainsi et ce qu'ils peuvent trouver dans les champs, ou ce qu'on leur donne en cadeau, leur appartient. Ils héritent aussi de la dot de leur mère, après sa mort. Dans quelques contrées, ils peuvent même avoir des immeubles, ce qui paraît d'ailleurs être très-rare.

L'institution de l'adoption se rencontre aussi dans les coutumes serbes; toutefois, les adoptions ne sont pas fréquentes. D'abord, les mariages sont en général très-féconds, et, par conséquent, les familles nombreuses; et lorsqu'un vieillard reste sans postérité, il aime mieux s'associer avec une autre communauté, à laquelle il lègue tous ses biens et qui prend soin de lui jusqu'à sa mort. Quelquefois, au lieu de se faire inscrire dans une maison, il prend chez lui toute une famille pauvre, mais honnête, et il fonde ainsi une nouvelle communauté.

Les enfants adoptifs sont ordinairement des orphelins; car ce serait une très-grande honte de quitter ses parents et de changer de famille. Ceux qui adoptent sont presque toujours des gens riches et âgés, sans enfants, sans espoir d'en avoir, et qui se donnent ainsi un héritier. Lorsqu'ils vivent en bonne amitié avec les divers membres de leur parenté, c'est parmi eux que l'enfant adoptif est choisi; mais on fait très-souvent une adoption parce qu'on est brouillé avec sa famille.

En Serbie, celui qui n'a que des filles marie l'aînée, et, s'il est trop vieux pour conduire lui-même sa maison, il prend chez lui son gendre comme *domazet*. Tout le bien appartient dès lors à cette fille; les autres n'ont droit qu'à leur entretien. La loi écrite des Serbes prescrit le partage égal entre les filles. Le peuple ne renonce pourtant pas à sa vieille coutume; et pour éluder la loi, les filles cadettes donnent leur part d'héritage au beau-frère et à sa femme. Lorsque l'enfant adoptif n'est pas orphelin, le consentement de ses père et mère est nécessaire pour l'adoption. Dans quelques contrées, il lui faut, en outre, le consentement de l'association à laquelle appartiennent ses parents. En Autriche, on exige même celui de l'autorité publique; en Bulgarie, celui de la commune.

Les femmes peuvent adopter, lorsqu'elles se trouvent à la tête d'une maison et qu'elles n'ont ni enfants ni un proche parent pour administrer le bien et continuer la communauté.

L'adoption se fait solennellement chez les Serbes. Dans l'Herzégovine et le Monténégro, on invite à la cérémonie les maîtres de toutes les maisons du village, ainsi que le prêtre; et celui qui adopte lève son verre: il fait la déclaration que « Dieu ne lui » ayant pas donné d'enfants, il est dans la ferme résolution d'adopter le garçon N. pour son fils. » Il se tourne alors vers l'enfant et lui dit: « Tu m'obéiras » comme à ton véritable père, et je t'élèverai comme » mon propre fils. » En Bosnie, le père adoptif et l'enfant qu'il vient d'adopter se ceignent ensemble de la ceinture du père. L'adoptant prononce les paroles suivantes: « Ce sera mon enfant; après ma

» mort, il héritera de tous mes biens. » En Bulgarie comme dans plusieurs autres contrées, on ne fait pas pour l'adoption de cérémonie particulière. Le père adoptif donne seulement un vêtement neuf à l'enfant qu'il adopte. Les vieux habits restent chez les parents de l'adopté. Dans les confins militaires, l'adoption se fait aujourd'hui devant l'autorité et par écrit, ce qui n'avait pas lieu autrefois. Il paraîtrait donc que cette manière d'adopter résulte plutôt de prescription des autorités militaires que d'une coutume nationale.

L'enfant adoptif entre dans tous les droits d'un enfant légitime. Il prend le nom de son père adoptif; mais pas dans toutes les contrées slaves. En Autriche, pour avoir le droit de changer de nom, il faut le consentement des autorités publiques. Quant aux filles adoptives, on les marie et on leur donne une dot, mais on ne leur cherche pas un *domazet*; elles n'héritent pas des biens de la maison adoptive.

Lorsqu'un enfant en bas âge est adopté, il n'y a plus entre lui et ses parents naturels que des liens moraux. Aussi ses père et mère ne sont plus obligés de veiller à son éducation ni de l'entretenir, et il n'a plus aucun droit sur la succession de ses parents naturels. Il devient pour eux comme une fille mariée; il ne cesse pas cependant d'avoir de la vénération pour son père, qui a toujours une véritable confraternité d'amitié avec le père adoptif. Toutefois, à Lastovo, île de l'Adriatique, et à Sinj, en Dalmatie, l'enfant adoptif ne perd aucun de ses droits à l'héritage de ses parents naturels; il peut toujours en disposer librement.

Quant à l'âge où il est permis d'adopter et d'être adopté, il n'est pas déterminé exactement. On adopte

ordinairement dans un âge peu avancé des jeunes gens de quinze, dix-huit ou vingt ans. Si le père adoptif n'est pas marié, il ne prend pas un enfant au-dessous de sept ans. Nous avons déjà dit qu'un vieillard sans enfants et sans proches parents fait venir chez lui toute une famille qui hérite de ses biens, comme si elle était parente du vieillard. Sauf ce cas, l'*adrogation*, dans le vrai sens du mot, n'est pas connue chez les Serbes.

Chez un peuple aussi charitable que le Serbe, et dont un vieux proverbe dit que « celui qui ne connaît pas la charité ne connaît pas Dieu, » il doit souvent arriver que les familles aisées reçoivent des enfants pauvres dans leur maison. On les élève comme les autres enfants de la communauté; mais s'ils doivent avoir une grande estime pour leurs bienfaiteurs, et s'ils ont à remplir diverses obligations morales, il ne leur en revient aucun droit; car il n'y a pas adoption. L'enfant peut quitter la maison dès qu'il est en état de vivre de son travail, et il ne demande jamais aucun dédommagement pour les travaux qu'il a pu faire dans la maison. Il a été élevé et entretenu jusqu'au moment où il a pu se suffire à lui-même. C'est là son véritable dédommagement. Il peut entreprendre tout ce qu'il veut. Si c'est une fille, elle reste dans la maison de son bienfaiteur jusqu'à ce qu'elle se marie.

Il nous reste maintenant à parler des enfants naturels, de leurs droits et de leurs devoirs. Nous avons déjà dit que les enfants naturels sont très-rare chez les Serbes, du moins dans les campagnes. Dans les confins militaires, les artisans qui vivent souvent en concubinage ont des enfants illégitimes; mais le peu-

ple regarde cela comme un grand malheur. Il n'y a pas de nom plus méprisable pour le Serbe que celui de bâtard. Si la mère tue son enfant pour cacher sa honte et qu'on trouve le cadavre, on ne l'enterre pas dans le village, de peur que le lieu où reposent ces êtres malheureux ne soit tôt ou tard dévasté. On leur creuse donc une fosse profonde dans une forêt lointaine et déserte.

Toutefois, malheur au père qui ne veut pas reconnaître son enfant ! Il est obligé d'épouser la mère, ou du moins de prendre l'enfant dans sa maison. Dans ce dernier cas, les relations de l'enfant avec son père sont celles d'un enfant légitime. Et si le père n'est pas connu, l'enfant reste chez sa mère. Il devient membre de la communauté de son grand-père maternel, dont il porte le nom. L'enfant naturel, reconnu par ses parents, jouit des mêmes droits que l'enfant légitime. Il porte le nom de son père. Quant aux enfants dont le père est inconnu, ils reçoivent au baptême le nom de famille de leur mère ou toute autre dénomination.

Dans les Bouches de Cattaro, par exemple, où il y a une maison spéciale pour les enfants trouvés, le prêtre leur donne au baptême un prénom sous lequel il les inscrit et qui devient leur nom propre. Ces enfants sont ordinairement élevés dans une famille de campagnards. La maison des enfants trouvés paie la première année quelques florins pour leur entretien ; et si leur conduite est bonne, dans les familles les plus pauvres, ils sont regardés comme des associés. Il arrive quelquefois qu'ils quittent plus tard la maison pour entrer dans la marine ou ailleurs ; mais des relations de parenté continuent à exister entre ces

enfants et la famille qui les a élevés, au point qu'on les aide, lorsqu'ils viennent à tomber dans le malheur.

Nous parlerons de la dissolution des communautés et des testaments dans le chapitre qui suit.

IV

Ainsi que nous l'avons dit plus haut, les idées de l'Europe occidentale se sont répandues parmi les Slaves du Sud, et leur influence toujours croissante a dû nécessairement ébranler l'institution des communautés de familles. La lutte entre l'ancien droit et les idées modernes n'est pas encore terminée; mais l'abolition de l'administration militaire dans les confins croates, surtout la nouvelle loi sur les communautés votée par la diète d'Agram, loi fortement imprégnée de doctrines étrangères, achèveront de désorganiser cette vieille institution, dont la décadence fait des progrès assez rapides depuis 1848. Cependant le peuple voit d'un mauvais œil le partage des communautés. « Plusieurs mains, » dit-il, « produisent beaucoup plus qu'une seule, et il n'y a que les forces unies qui parviennent à fonder de solides maisons. » Malgré cette résistance de l'opinion aux idées modernes, nos sources font remarquer qu'une espèce d'instinct pousse le peuple, à son insu, vers la dissolution des communautés.

A Konavlje, les habitants sont persuadés que l'appauvrissement est la conséquence des partages, et ils ont certainement raison; car on voit dans la contrée beaucoup de familles très-riches qui vivent en communauté depuis trois siècles, et toujours dans la prospérité. Malgré ces exemples, les communautés ten-

dent à disparaître dans le Banat ; et même dans le comitat de Syrmium, où l'esprit national s'est fortement maintenu, on commence à ne plus reconnaître que la vie en communauté contribue beaucoup au bien-être et à la richesse de la famille. Le paysan ne voit pour lui de véritable salut que dans le partage. Ce n'est que dans l'Herzégovine et chez les autres Slaves de la Turquie en général que les communautés sont encore intactes. Il y a bien des partages, mais la séparation d'une famille est toujours regardée comme un grand malheur, triste suite quelquefois d'une implacable nécessité. Dans la plus grande partie des confins militaires, les communautés se maintiennent encore ; mais il est douteux quelles puissent lutter longtemps contre le nouvel ordre de choses.

Les principales causes des partages sont presque toujours des dissensions intérieures, ou bien un trop grand accroissement du nombre des associés, de sorte que la terre ne suffit plus à les nourrir tous. Les dissensions naissent ordinairement lorsqu'il y a des membres qui possèdent des biens non communs et qui cherchent à les accroître aux dépens de l'association.

Dans les communautés des confins militaires, composées de membres dont les uns ont une nombreuse postérité, tandis que les autres sont privés d'enfants, cette inégalité est une cause fréquente de difficultés. Ceux qui sont sans enfants se refusent à travailler pour les autres, et l'on ne peut mettre fin à ces difficultés qu'au moyen d'un partage. Une autre cause de partage spéciale à ces mêmes pays et la plus fréquente, c'est l'autorité despotique du *domaćin*. La loi autrichienne a cru nécessaire d'accorder des pouvoirs considérables à ce même *domaćin* dans

l'intérêt de l'administration militaire; il abuse de ces pouvoirs et en profite pour vivre dans l'oisiveté et commettre toutes sortes d'injustices envers les autres membres de la communauté. Les querelles entre femmes introduisent aussi une cause de division dans les familles.

Le partage est général ou partiel. Dans ce dernier cas, ce ne sont que quelques membres qui sortent de la communauté pour en former une nouvelle ou pour vivre séparément. Le besoin de fonder une famille, de devenir maître et indépendant s'est également emparé des esprits chez beaucoup de Slaves; et ce double sentiment d'orgueil et de liberté fait courir de très-grands dangers à l'institution de la communauté. En Bulgarie, où la communauté n'est pas encore fortement ébranlée, on se sépare bien souvent, tout en laissant la fortune en commun, mais surtout les immeubles. Dans cette contrée, les fils se séparent très-rarement du vivant de leur père. Il en est de même en Herzégovine.

Il arrive quelquefois qu'après un certain temps de séparation, les membres divisés se réunissent de nouveau. Dans les confins militaires, l'associé qui obtient de l'autorité publique la permission de sortir d'une communauté et d'en fonder une nouvelle ne peut pas faire inscrire les immeubles sous son nom avant l'expiration d'une année. Pendant ce temps-là, s'il regrette d'avoir quitté l'association, il peut y rentrer, mais avec le consentement de ses anciens associés; et si de fâcheuses dissensions ont amené la séparation, des intermédiaires bienveillants parviennent quelquefois à réconcilier les membres ennemis, et la communauté se refait de nouveau.

Tout associé majeur a le droit de sortir de la communauté, lorsqu'il peut faire valoir de justes raisons. Dans les confins militaires, de semblables séparations ne peuvent se faire que clandestinement; l'autorité militaire ne permet pas les partages, sauf dans des cas exceptionnels, parce que chaque partage crée plusieurs chefs de famille qui tous, en cette qualité, seraient exempts du service militaire.

Il arrive assez souvent que celui qui veut sortir d'une communauté n'ose pas le dire ouvertement au *domačín*; alors, du moins dans quelques localités, il allume un feu non loin du foyer commun, et c'est là un signe qu'il désire se séparer. S'il y a plusieurs frères, dont le père soit en même temps le *domačín*, chacun a le droit de demander sa quote-part. Cependant, en Bulgarie, il faut le consentement du père. Si celui-ci refuse, ce n'est qu'après sa mort que le fils peut sortir de la communauté.

Beaucoup de Dalmates servent dans la marine, et ils sont même de fort bons matelots. Ils quittent donc leur famille; mais ils appartiennent toujours à la communauté qui les habille, lorsqu'ils s'éloignent. Aussi peuvent-ils toujours rentrer comme membres de l'association. Dans les maisons riches, souvent des membres qui ont quitté l'association sans prendre leur part sont ensuite aidés dans leurs entreprises par la communauté; car chaque famille est fière de compter parmi les siens un vaillant capitaine de navire ou un riche négociant. A leur tour, ils soutiennent au besoin leur famille dans les moments de détresse, et quand le succès leur est contraire, ils trouvent toujours un asile dans leur communauté.

Dans l'Herzégovine et le Monténégro, comme en

Bulgarie, nul ne peut quitter l'association sans la volonté du père, qui a même le droit de refuser la quote-part à celui qui ne veut plus vivre dans la maison. Toutefois, M. Bogišić doute que le père possède ce droit dans les contrées éloignées de la mer. D'après nos sources, en effet, le Monténégrin du cercle de Katuni peut toujours répondre à son père : « Nous » n'habitons pas le littoral où le père est tout, et » les enfants ne sont rien. » Le fils qui sort de la communauté peut donc forcer son père à lui donner une partie du bien commun.

La communauté a le droit d'exclure un membre pour cause de paresse et de désobéissance, ou lorsque ses dissipations excitent le mécontentement général dans la maison. Toutefois, c'est le conseil de famille seul qui a le pouvoir de chasser un membre, et on doit toujours lui donner sa quote-part, quand même il aurait commis un crime ; car il ne peut être frustré de son bien. En Bulgarie, le père a le même droit d'expulsion contre son fils, mais il ne peut le déshériter.

Lorsqu'une communauté a décidé le partage, il est rare que chaque membre s'établisse séparément. On forme ordinairement des groupes. Les garçons et les jeunes filles qui ne sont pas encore mariés se joignent aux hommes mariés et à leur famille. Des associés sortent quelquefois de communauté ; mais la majorité y reste et en forme une nouvelle.

La loi fondamentale des confins militaires avait admis le principe du partage par tête ; la loi hongroise, au contraire, a ordonné le partage par souches ; et une loi du 3 mars 1874, votée par la Diète d'Agram, le prescrit également. M. Bogišić rapporte

à ce sujet que, dans beaucoup de contrées, le peuple admet déjà ce genre de partage pour éviter un funeste morcellement de la propriété. Les immeubles sont donc divisés par souches, mais c'est par têtes que les fruits et les meubles sont partagés.

A Konavlje, en Bosnie et en Bulgarie, les partages se font par souches. On compte tous les membres d'une branche, puis on remonte jusqu'à l'individu, au huitième degré quelquefois, dont la postérité s'est divisée en plusieurs rameaux; et le partage se fait à cette souche, mais subdivisé en autant de parties qu'il y a de branches.

Dans l'Herzégovine, les filles qui n'ont pas de frères reçoivent la même quote-part que les hommes; mais cette quote-part est réunie au bien de la nouvelle communauté. Lorsque la fille se marie, on lui donne un habillement complet, mais rarement des immeubles. Dans cette contrée, le *domačín* reçoit un bon cheval, un fusil, etc., en outre de ce qui lui revient légalement. On partage aussi le bétail par souches, et les denrées alimentaires par individus.

En Bulgarie, le bien hérité des ancêtres se partage par souches, et le bien récemment acquis par têtes, mais non en portions égales. Celui qui a le plus contribué à l'acquisition reçoit la plus grande part.

En Croatie et dans les confins militaires, le peuple a maintenu de préférence le partage par têtes masculines. Les fruits, l'ameublement et les divers instruments servant à l'exploitation se distribuent en général par têtes. Toutefois, les petits enfants ne sont pas admis au partage, mais leur mère reçoit tout ce qui est indispensable à leur entretien. Celui qui a beaucoup d'enfants obtient, outre sa quote-part, un sur-

plus des produits de la dernière récolte. Les filles et les femmes ne reçoivent rien dans le partage. On leur donne seulement une partie des fruits et un peu de bétail, mais on doit prendre soin d'elles et fournir une dot aux filles. Celles qui n'ont ni parents ni frères ont le droit de choisir le groupe auquel elles désirent s'associer; elles peuvent aussi réclamer une certaine portion du bien paternel.

En Bulgarie, les filles ont droit à la moitié des meubles. Quant aux immeubles, elles ne peuvent prétendre qu'à la moitié des vignes et des vergers. La loi mahométane accorde aux femmes le droit à la moitié de la quote-part d'un homme. Mais le recours aux autorités turques est toujours regardé comme une honte par le peuple; aussi se garde-t-on bien de réclamer leur intervention dans ces affaires de familles.

Dans les petites communautés, les partages se font rarement pendant la vie du père et de la mère; mais lorsqu'ils ont lieu, chacun des parents obtient une quote-part, ou bien on détermine d'un commun accord ce qu'ils recevront durant toute leur vie. Les parents choisissent eux-mêmes celui d'entre leurs enfants chez lequel ils veulent s'établir, et celui-là obtient une plus grande quote-part en immeubles. Ils restent ordinairement avec le fils cadet, qui continue l'ancienne maison. Mais il y a des contrées où les parents gardent la moitié de la fortune dans tous les cas de partage; cette moitié revient aux enfants après la mort du père, et ils se la partagent en portions égales.

En Bulgarie, lorsque le père a décidé de faire le partage, les fils doivent avant toutes choses se construire de nouvelles maisons; mais un des fils reste

dans l'ancienne avec ses parents, et il en hérite après leur mort, ainsi que de tout ce qui a appartenu à son père. Quant aux autres enfants ou associés qui n'auraient pas de maison, ils doivent eux-mêmes s'en bâtir une. Toutefois, dans les confins militaires, ils reçoivent une quote-part sur le prix de la maison paternelle, d'après l'évaluation qui en a été faite. Il y a des endroits où la communauté donne à chaque associé tout ce qui lui est nécessaire pour se bâtir une habitation ou bien il reçoit une plus grande part du bien commun. Dans l'Herzégovine, celui qui n'obtient pas une maison demeure chez l'un de ses frères jusqu'à ce qu'il ait pu s'en bâtir une. Tous l'aident dans cette construction ou lui fournissent les matériaux dont il a besoin; car un proverbe dit : « Lorsqu'on bâtit une maison, on garde le village. »

Le partage des produits agricoles, qui se fait par têtes, comme nous l'avons dit plus haut, a toujours lieu après la dernière récolte de l'année, et ce sont les copartageants eux-mêmes qui le font. Ce qui se trouve déjà dans le grenier au moment du partage est distribué sans retard entre les associés. En Herzégovine, une fois les lots faits, on prend des brins de paille de diverses longueurs, et on les fait tirer au sort par un enfant. Le plus long échoit à l'aîné, et les plus courts sont pour les cadets. Quant au choix du lot, c'est également le sort qui décide la question, en Dalmatie. S'il n'y a que deux frères, l'aîné fait le partage, et le cadet choisit son lot. Dans le cas où l'on ne peut se mettre d'accord, on appelle des arbitres, des *bonnes gens*, comme disent les Serbes. Ce sont des habitants du même village ou d'un village voisin, regardés de tous comme justes et honnêtes,

soit le maire, soit un allié ou ami de la maison. Dans les confins militaires, on choisit pour arbitres les anciens des régiments. Ces *bonnes gens* ne reçoivent rien pour le service qu'elles rendent, si ce n'est quelques cadeaux et un splendide repas; mais on donne un salaire au scribe.

Comme on ne partage naturellement que le bien commun, tout ce qui appartient en propre aux associés, dot, pécule ou présents, ne forme jamais l'objet d'un partage. L'associé qui n'a pas d'enfants peut en disposer librement à sa mort. Les filles mariées ne peuvent pas hériter *ab intestat* de leur père, lorsqu'elles ont des frères; mais dans le cas contraire, si elles n'ont pas reçu leur quote-part en se mariant, elles peuvent la demander à la mort du père. Le pécule de la femme appartient également après sa mort aux enfants; à leur défaut, ce sont ses parents qui héritent.

Les père et mère ne sont pas tenus de léguer tout leur pécule à leurs enfants; ils peuvent le laisser à l'église, pour faire dire des messes, par exemple. Les héritiers accomplissent toujours consciencieusement la dernière volonté de leur père, quand même elle absorberait tout le pécule; « car, dit le peuple, celui qui ne » contente pas l'âme de son père perd la sienne. » Les filles qui, en se mariant, ont quitté la communauté n'héritent pas du pécule de leur père. Dans le cas où il n'y aurait pas de fils, tout le pécule du défunt appartient à l'association.

Les mêmes principes ou plutôt les mêmes coutumes sont en vigueur dans les familles naturelles, c'est-à-dire celles qui vivent hors de toute communauté. Les enfants héritent de leur père et mère. Si le père n'a pas d'enfants et qu'il n'ait fait aucune dis-

position, ce sont les proches parents qui héritent, et, à leur défaut, la commune s'empare de la maison et de tout ce qui s'y trouve au moment de la mort.

Les filles, comme nous l'avons vu, n'héritent du bien de leurs parents que lorsqu'elles n'ont pas de frères; car le peuple ne trouve pas juste qu'elles emportent ce que les hommes ont acquis et même souvent défendu par les armes. « Fille mariée passe pour voisine, » dit un proverbe. Toutefois, lorsqu'il n'y a d'autre enfant qu'une fille, elle hérite de toute la fortune paternelle. On la marie ordinairement à un homme, brave et honnête, qui devient *domazet*, comme nous l'avons dit. Dans l'Herzégovine et le Monténégro, si la fille héritière ne se marie pas peu de temps après la mort de son père, elle s'associe avec un de ses plus proches parents en mettant en communauté toute sa succession; et, dans le cas où elle se marierait plus tard, elle peut tout reprendre; mais elle laisse presque toujours ses immeubles à ses parents et se contente de ce qu'on donne ordinairement aux filles en les mariant; seulement, dans ce cas, on lui fait une plus belle part que d'habitude. En Bulgarie, les filles héritent *ab intestat* de la moitié de la quote-part d'un enfant. Toutefois, on exclut de cette moitié les terres et les maisons, tout en y laissant les vignes, les vergers, les jardins et les meubles.

Lorsque la famille s'éteint entièrement et que le dernier membre ne laisse pas de testament, les plus proches parents paternels, et, à leur défaut, les parents maternels héritent de tout. Mais dans le cas où il n'y aurait pas même de parents éloignés, l'église, la commune ou le fisc recueillent la succession.

Dans le Monténégro, ce n'est que depuis fort peu de temps que l'Etat se déclare héritier des successions vacantes. En Hongrie et en Croatie, pendant la féodalité, lorsqu'une famille appartenant à un seigneur venait à s'éteindre, le seigneur avait le droit d'établir une nouvelle famille qu'il choisissait ordinairement parmi ses domestiques. En Bulgarie, les terres qui n'ont pas d'héritiers sont vendues aux enchères par le *cadi* ou juge au profit du grand-sultan.

L'usage des testaments ne s'est introduit chez les Slaves que fort tard. L'esprit d'association, qui a des racines si profondes chez ce peuple et la communauté des biens ne permettaient pas un grand développement de l'usage si répandu aujourd'hui de faire un testament. Cependant les influences étrangères, et peut-être aussi des changements survenus dans les relations intérieures de ces diverses nations, ont donné entrée aux testaments; mais ils ne pénètrent que difficilement dans les coutumes nationales. Le Serbe n'est pas encore très-enclin aujourd'hui à faire des legs par écrit. Les pères ou chefs de famille règlent leur succession pendant leur vie, même dans les familles naturelles. Mais, en Dalmatie, l'usage des testaments est beaucoup plus répandu.

En Bulgarie, le peuple les condamne, et il blâme sévèrement le testateur; aussi les testaments oraux sont beaucoup plus usités que les testaments par écrit. Le curé, l'ancien des écoles et le maître d'école du village remplissent ordinairement les fonctions de témoins. On exige, en outre, la présence des héritiers; car ce qui se lègue pendant leur absence n'a aucune valeur. Chez les Serbes, les héritiers sont aussi pres-

que toujours présents, mais leur absence n'invalide pas un testament.

Des legs sont ordinairement faits à l'église. On lègue au curé une certaine somme d'argent pour dire des messes à l'intention du défunt. On fait également des legs à l'école ; on fonde des bourses pour les étudiants, et on donne encore certaines sommes pour diverses œuvres de charité ; mais il y a très-rarement des legs en faveur des pauvres. Ce sont les héritiers qui se chargent des aumônes. Dans l'Herzégovine et le Monténégro, on les régale pendant sept jours ; et à l'anniversaire de la mort, après avoir fait célébrer une messe pour l'âme du défunt, tous les parents et amis se réunissent dans un dîner solennel, qui se termine par une distribution de cadeaux aux pauvres.

Quant aux droits successoraux du conjoint survivant, on rencontre parmi les Slaves des usages tout à fait différents. Il y a des contrées où les époux héritent l'un de l'autre réciproquement. Mais il ne s'agit ici que du pécule et des biens appartenant à une famille naturelle. Dans tous les cas, que le mari ait ou non laissé un pécule, la femme, en sa qualité de membre de la communauté, a droit à des aliments. En Croatie, la femme a la jouissance de tout ce que son mari lui a légué ; et, après sa mort, ses enfants ou ses parents consanguins, à défaut d'enfants, deviennent ses héritiers légitimes. Les consanguins héritent même des meubles, quand le mari survit à sa femme et qu'elle ne laisse pas d'enfants. Dans le cas où le mari était *domazet*, les immeubles échoient aux parents de la femme, si elle les possédait en propre. Pourtant, lorsqu'il y a des enfants, le *domazet* partage avec eux la jouissance de tous les biens.

Dans diverses contrées du même royaume, la femme qui a des enfants hérite en usufruit de tous les biens de son mari, pour les laisser après sa mort à ses enfants ; mais si elle n'en a pas et qu'elle songe à se remarier, elle ne reçoit que le quart de la succession ; le reste appartient aux frères du défunt. C'est seulement lorsqu'elle renonce positivement à un second mariage qu'elle a jusqu'à sa mort la jouissance de toute la fortune. Après sa mort, ce sont les frères ou les neveux du mari qui héritent. Dans les confins militaires, tout le pécule du mari appartient à la femme survivante ; ce sont au contraire les parents de la femme qui héritent de son pécule. Le lit et le linge seulement restent au mari.

Dans certaines parties de la Dalmatie, les deux époux héritent l'un de l'autre réciproquement ; mais ils n'ont que la jouissance des biens pendant leur vie. Les enfants sont toujours les véritables successeurs. Si le mari convole en secondes noces, la dot dont il avait hérité de sa première femme devient la propriété des enfants du premier lit. Aux bouches du Cattaro, si la veuve quitte la maison de son mari, elle fait une transaction avec ses beaux-frères, qui lui donnent une indemnité en retour de ses travaux, qui ont profité à la famille pendant son mariage et son veuvage ; la somme est plus ou moins forte, suivant la fortune de la famille. Il est cependant bien rare qu'une veuve un peu âgée quitte une maison où elle a vécu heureuse pendant longtemps.

Dans la haute Herzégovine, lorsque la femme meurt sans enfants *ab intestat*, ce sont les parents de la femme seulement qui ont droit à la succession. En Bulgarie, le mari n'hérite de sa femme que pour la

huitième partie de sa fortune ; les autres parties reviennent aux enfants. Lorsqu'il n'y a pas d'enfants , le mari a droit au quart , et le reste appartient aux parents de la femme. En général, le mari n'hérite pas de sa femme, mais s'il y a des enfants, il a l'usufruit des biens qui iront après lui aux enfants.

Les orphelins qui font partie d'une communauté sont placés sous la tutelle du chef de la maison. On choisit une femme ou une fille de l'association , pour s'occuper d'eux et prendre soin de leurs vêtements. Dans les familles naturelles , on leur donne un tuteur qui administre le bien. Si la fortune est grande , on ne confie au tuteur que des terres en quantité suffisante pour l'entretien de ses pupilles et le paiement des impôts , et on afferme le reste. On choisit ordinairement pour tuteur un proche parent ou , comme en Bulgarie , l'ancien du village. Si les enfants sont en bas-âge , ils habitent la maison de leur tuteur jusqu'au moment où ils peuvent disposer de leur fortune.

Les tuteurs obtiennent rarement une rétribution pour leur gestion. Si les pupilles sont pauvres, on regarde cette fonction comme un devoir sacré ; et non-seulement les plus proches parents s'occupent des orphelins , mais les voisins et jusqu'à des personnes étrangères se font un plaisir de les élever dans leur communauté. Si personne ne peut les prendre pour les entretenir et les élever, la commune ou l'église doit se charger de leur trouver une place.

Mais lorsque le pupille est riche , le tuteur et sa communauté qui administrent les terres en ont l'usufruit. Les chevaux et le bétail qui font partie de la succession du pupille sont confiés à un paysan du

village, qui les emploie à labourer ses terres moyennant une indemnité. Cette indemnité appartient au pupille ; une faible partie revient quelquefois au tuteur comme simple rémunération. Si l'orphelin est encore à la mamelle, on lui donne une pauvre femme pour nourrice, à qui on paie par mois une petite somme convenue d'avance.

Comme les fonctions de tuteur chez les Serbes sont plutôt un devoir moral qu'un emploi, les tuteurs ne sont pas ordinairement soumis à rendre compte de leur gestion. Dans l'Herzégovine et le Monténégro, lorsque le pupille devient majeur, son tuteur lui remet tout le bien, en lui rendant un compte très-détaillé de son administration. Cela se fait publiquement. Il est rare que le tuteur trompe son pupille ou qu'il veuille même lui passer sous silence quelque chose de sa gestion ; car le peuple croit que tromper un orphelin est un plus grand crime que de voler dans une église. De son côté, le pupille ne demande jamais compte des produits ou fruits qui ont été perçus, parce que, ordinairement, les fruits ne représentent pas la valeur des travaux de culture faits par le tuteur et par ses parents pour le compte de l'enfant. Il n'existe donc pas une véritable surveillance officielle de la gestion du tuteur. Cependant, les plus proches parents du pupille et les honnêtes gens, surtout les *bonnes gens* du village, ont le droit de porter plainte contre le tuteur et de le forcer à se justifier, si son administration ne leur paraît pas conforme aux intérêts du pupille. Le curé du village ou l'ancien de la commune a également le devoir de surveiller le tuteur. Dans les confins militaires, le tuteur est nommé par le régiment, et il est surveillé par le chef de la

compagnie ; mais on n'exige pas de lui une reddition de compte. Dans les provinces civiles de la Croatie, aussi bien qu'en Hongrie, les autorités judiciaires surveillent le tuteur, et c'est envers elles qu'il est responsable de sa gestion.

Le pupille sort de tutelle, dès qu'il a atteint l'âge où il peut lui-même administrer sa fortune. Cet âge varie entre dix-huit et vingt-quatre ans. Mais dès qu'il est apte à se marier, il est affranchi de toute tutelle.

Nous allons maintenant faire voir les diverses espèces de parenté qui existent dans le droit coutumier des Serbes.

Les Slaves méridionaux établissent d'abord une grande distinction entre les consanguins et les parents maternels. Ceux-là sont appelés parents par le *gros sang*, ceux-ci parents par le *petit sang*. Les premiers correspondent aux agnats, les seconds aux cognats du droit romain. Ils ont pour chaque rapport de ces parentés une dénomination toute particulière qu'il serait trop long de faire connaître. On regarde comme une parenté toute spéciale les relations entre deux époux et leurs parents respectifs.

Dans le Monténégro, tous les membres du clan sont considérés comme des parents. Il y a encore la parenté spirituelle, qui embrasse la *confraternité* (*pobratimstvo*, ἀδελφοποίησις) et le *parrainage* (*kumstvo*) ; puis les rapports entre frère et sœur de lait et leur parenté en ligne ascendante, descendante et collatérale.

Les rapports de parenté entre le parrain et son filleul ne vont pas au delà des enfants du parrain. Quant à l'alliance, elle n'existe qu'entre les beaux-

frères, les belles-sœurs et leurs enfants. Nous allons nous arrêter un instant à expliquer la confraternité, à cause des particularités remarquables qu'on relève dans cette institution presque inconnue en Occident.

Les Serbes vénèrent beaucoup la *confraternité*, qui est une sorte d'adoption comme frère. Les *confrères* ont un attachement mutuel plus grand que celui qui existe parfois entre des parents naturels. Cette forte amitié, qui engendre souvent la confraternité et qui se rencontrait chez la plupart des Slaves des anciens temps, se perd de plus en plus dans les temps actuels; mais elle s'est maintenue presque partout chez les Serbes, et on la voit surtout répandue dans le Monténégro et en Serbie. En Hongrie, on ne rencontre pas aussi fréquemment la confraternité. En Croatie; il y a même des endroits où elle n'est plus connue; pourtant elle n'a pas entièrement disparu de ce royaume. Ainsi, dans les confins militaires, on trouve des gens, unis depuis longtemps par une amitié intime, qui jurent de s'aider mutuellement dans toutes les circonstances de la vie et de ne jamais s'abandonner dans le bonheur ni dans le malheur. Ces sortes de vœux se font aussi entre hommes et femmes. Le soldat blessé qui a été soigné par un camarade sur le champ de bataille devient son confrère. De pareilles amitiés se contractent également entre des filles.

Les Serbes catholiques ou croates, dans plusieurs endroits de la Dalmatie, se jurent à l'église une amitié éternelle. Lorsque deux individus veulent conclure une confraternité, ils se rendent chez le curé du village et lui déclarent leur intention, en lui remettant une petite somme d'argent pour dire une messe et

payer les cierges. Au jour fixé pour la cérémonie, les deux amis se rendent à l'église avec toute leur parenté. Ils sont en habits de fête et portent leurs plus belles armes, qu'ils déposent à la porte de l'église. Ils entendent la messe, agenouillés devant l'autel et tenant un cierge à la main. Le maire remplit les fonctions de témoin.

Après la messe, le prêtre s'approche des deux confrères et leur demande ce qui les a décidés à s'unir par une amitié éternelle. Le plus âgé répond : « C'est » l'amour. » Le prêtre leur fait alors un petit sermon, pour leur expliquer les devoirs mutuels qui vont les unir à jamais. Les deux confrères se jurent ensuite une amitié sincère et éternelle; ils s'embrassent devant tout le peuple, après avoir reçu la bénédiction du prêtre, et la cérémonie est terminée. On se régale ce jour-là chez le plus âgé des deux amis, et chez l'autre le lendemain.

Dans le Monténégro, il y a trois sortes de confraternités : la petite confraternité, la confraternité du malheur et la confraternité par communion. La première se conclut en se donnant un baiser; celui qui fait la proposition régale l'autre. Lorsqu'un Monténégrin se trouve dans un grand danger, il appelle à son secours la personne qu'il voit près de lui, en disant : « Viens à mon aide, au nom de Dieu et de saint Jean, » Secours-moi, et je te prends pour mon frère en » Dieu. » Il ne se trouverait pas un homme ni une femme qui n'accourût avec empressement à cet appel. Dès ce moment les deux individus deviennent confrères, et ils s'embrassent trois fois pour sceller leur vœu. C'est la confraternité du malheur. La troisième confraternité se conclut à l'église. Le curé dit une

prière, en couvrant les deux amis de son *petrachilj* (περιτραχέλιον) ou étole. Puis les deux confrères boivent trois fois du vin dans la même coupe, en mangeant quelques bouchées de pain; ils baisent la croix, quelques saintes reliques et l'Évangile, et s'embrassent ensuite trois fois avant de sortir de l'église. On se régale après la cérémonie. Celui qui a fait la proposition offre divers cadeaux à l'autre, et les voilà unis d'amitié jusqu'à la mort.

De pareilles *confraternités* se contractent parfois entre des chrétiens et des mahométans; mais, dans ce cas, il n'y a d'autre cérémonie que la triple accolade et le régal.

Ce que nous avons dit pour les hommes se pratique aussi entre les filles et les femmes, et même quelquefois entre deux personnes de sexe différent.

Les *confraternités* se contractent aussi à l'église dans la principauté serbe. Autrefois, cette cérémonie se faisait très-solennellement; et M. Bogišić a publié, dans son premier ouvrage sur « *les coutumes des Slaves*, » le texte primitif de la prière qui se récitait à cette occasion. Il l'a trouvée dans un rituel, imprimé à Venise, en 1538-1540, par le fameux voïvode Dieu-donné Vuković. Cette prière nous a paru trop intéressante pour ne pas donner ici une traduction littérale du texte slavon :

« O Dieu, Notre-Seigneur, qui as tout donné pour
 » notre salut, qui nous as fait aimer l'un l'autre et
 » nous pardones nos fautes mutuelles! Toi, Sei-
 » gneur charitable et gracieux, sanctifie et bénis dans
 » ton sanctuaire tes serviteurs ici présents et unis en-
 » tre eux par un amour spirituel. Donne-leur la foi
 » sans honte et l'amour sans feinte. Accorde-leur

» également ta paix et ton amour, ainsi que tu les
 » avais accordés, ô Jésus-Christ Notre-Seigneur, à tes
 » saints apôtres et à tes disciples. Accorde-leur en-
 » core ce qu'ils te demandent pour leur salut et la
 » vie éternelle; car tu es la Lumière de la Vérité, et
 » nous te louons avec le Père éternel et le Saint-
 » Esprit. »

Vuk dit que ce sont ordinairement des femmes bulgares qui contractent de semblables amitiés à l'église, et il cite un exemple qu'il a vu à Belgrade parmi les Bulgares. Si une femme, dit-il, vient à tomber malade, elle prie un jeune homme de la conduire à l'église ou dans un couvent. Arrivée là, et à sa demande, le curé dit une prière pendant que le jeune homme tient une croix sur la tête de la malade. Si cette femme revient à la santé, elle appelle ce jeune homme son frère, et celui-ci la regarde comme sa sœur. Vuk croit que c'est là une coutume bulgare.

Le parrainage (*kumstvo*) est une autre sorte de parenté spirituelle. Les Serbes orthodoxes distinguent cinq espèces de parrainages : d'abord, le parrainage du baptême, du mariage, de la coupe des cheveux, du malheur, et enfin le parrainage de la réconciliation, qui a lieu, comme nous allons le dire, lorsqu'on veut apaiser une vengeance de famille. Le parrainage de la coupe des cheveux n'établit pas une véritable parenté spirituelle; et voici en quoi il consiste : Lorsqu'on fait couper les cheveux à un enfant pour la première fois, cela se pratique toujours avec une certaine solennité. On appelle comme parrain une personne qu'on aime et qu'on estime beaucoup, mais avec laquelle il ne peut s'établir aucune autre parenté comme entre chrétien et musulman. On lui donne

une assiette et des ciseaux , et cette personne coupe les cheveux. Des cadeaux sont échangés ; et si les parents ont un second enfant, ce parrain de la coupe des cheveux devient le parrain du baptême, s'il est chrétien.

Quant au parrainage du malheur, il a pour première source la confraternité qui s'établit entre celui qui est sauvé d'un péril et le sauveur. Le premier enfant qui vient à naître à la personne sauvée est tenu sur les fonts baptismaux par celui qui a secouru le malheureux en danger de mort. Voilà pourquoi on appelle cette relation le parrainage du malheur. Ce parrainage se conclut encore lorsqu'on est attaqué par un homme plus fort que soi. Le plus faible implore la générosité du plus fort, et il lui offre le parrainage en Dieu. Si l'autre accepte, il devient un jour le parrain de l'enfant de son adversaire. Mais si, malgré l'invocation de Dieu, le plus fort n'épargne pas son adversaire, celui-ci peut le tuer à la première occasion.

Pour ce qui regarde le parrainage de la réconciliation, il met fin pour toujours aux luttes sanglantes de la vengeance héréditaire, odieux héritage que se transmettent les parents. La vengeance du sang existait naguère encore dans le Monténégro, et on la retrouve encore dans quelques endroits des montagnes de la Dalmatie. Celui qui tue est poursuivi jusqu'à la mort par la famille de la victime. Il doit fuir pour toujours son pays, s'il ne veut pas être tué ; car on ne lui laisse aucun repos jusqu'à ce que le sang répandu soit vengé ! Il arrive cependant que, pour sortir de cette pénible situation, le meurtrier prie ses amis de le réconcilier avec son adversaire. Et voici comment se fait la réconciliation.

Les amis du *krvnik* (coupable) ou ses proches parents se rendent chez celui qui a juré vengeance et le prient de se réconcilier avec le meurtrier. Lorsqu'il paraît disposé à le faire, ils doivent s'engager à lui faire des cadeaux. Le lendemain, douze femmes apportent devant la maison du vengeur douze berceaux, et dans chaque berceau il y a un enfant. Douze anciens du village précèdent ce singulier cortège. Les anciens n'entrent pas dans la maison; mais, de dehors, ils crient au vengeur : « Accepte les douze par- » rains. Accepte Dieu et saint Jean avec l'argent que » tu demandes. » A ces paroles, le vengeur, s'il est disposé à la réconciliation, sort de sa maison et dit : « J'accepte; je veux vendre mon frère et m'apaiser. » Donnez-moi dix sequins pour la foi de la paix, et » je veux que vingt-quatre anciens choisis par moi » jugent mon sang. » Cependant il arrive bien des fois que la déclaration de paix n'est pas faite le premier jour. On offre souvent le parrainage durant trois jours consécutifs. Mais si le vengeur accepte la paix, il s'approche de l'un des douze berceaux et baise l'enfant qui s'y trouve. Toute sa parenté réunie imite son exemple, et on fixe le jour où les cadeaux seront donnés.

Le vengeur et ses parents se rendent ce jour-là dans la maison du meurtrier, où ils sont attendus par les parents et amis du meurtrier. Les anciens vont au-devant du vengeur; ils sont tête nue et sans armes, tandis que les autres ont la tête couverte et sont armés. On se salue de part et d'autre; on parle bas et on entre dans la maison, où une table bien servie attend les convives. Après le dîner, auquel le *krvnik* n'assiste pas, les anciens disent à haute voix : « Où

» est le meurtrier? » A cet appel, le *kronik* paraît dans la chambre du repas. Son fusil, le fusil avec lequel il a tué son adversaire, est suspendu au cou par la bretelle : il se traîne sur les genoux comme un suppliant. Les anciens, parlant pour le meurtrier, disent alors trois fois au vengeur, mais à voix basse : « Accepte d'être mon parrain, au nom de Dieu et de » saint Jean. » Et le *kronik* répète à haute voix ces paroles, en s'approchant sur les genoux jusqu'aux pieds du vengeur ; il lui baise les genoux et les mains. Celui-ci relève le meurtrier et l'embrasse ; il lui enlève son fusil, qu'il peut garder ou rendre. Quatre femmes ou marraines s'avancent alors avec quatre berceaux, et la première offre les dix sequins demandés par le vengeur, qui les prend, en met neuf dans son sein et le dixième ou un thaler dans le sein de la marraine. Les parents du vengeur reçoivent les cadeaux de la réconciliation, et ils embrassent ensuite les marraines en leur donnant à leur tour quelques présents. Ce parrainage du sang réconcilié est aussi estimé que le parrainage du baptême.

Après cette cérémonie, on choisit dans les deux camps vingt-quatre anciens, qui sortent l'un après l'autre de la maison en s'embrassant. Cela fait, on se met de nouveau à table. Alors l'un des anciens du vengeur dit en son nom : « Vous anciens, qui avez » jugé, réconciliez-moi le sang entièrement et dé- » finitivement. » Les anciens du *kronik* se lèvent aussitôt, et déposant leurs armes devant l'ancien du vengeur qui a parlé, ils lui demandent s'il est réconcilié. L'ancien répond : « Oui, le sang est bien » réconcilié. » Et les vingt-quatre anciens répliquent : « Tiens cette réconciliation, et nous te lirons la sen-

» tence. » Cette sentence est lue par le curé ou par celui qui l'a rédigée ; elle contient l'indication du prix donné pour la victime.

On apporte ensuite du vin que l'on met devant celui qui reçoit les cadeaux. Tous les assistants se découvrent, et l'ancien des chefs dit au chef du parti des vengeurs : « Nous, vingt-quatre chefs, nous te » prions ; car nous ne pouvons ni te commander ni » te forcer ; donne quelque chose au meurtrier. » Des présents sont alors apportés. Le parti du *kronik* exprime ses remerciements ; on distribue des cadeaux à tous les domestiques qui ont servi à table les convives, et on examine si le prix de la réconciliation est complet. Les vingt-quatre anciens adressent ensuite la parole au *domaćin* et lui disent : « Maintenant, ra- » chète cette arme. » Lorsque le fusil du *kronik* est racheté, on demande une seconde fois au vengeur et à sa parenté s'ils sont réconciliés de tout leur sang. L'ancien de leur parti répond : « Oui, nous sommes » réconciliés. »

Après cette réponse, le meurtrier sort de la maison avec la sentence à laquelle se trouve attaché un para d'argent avec un fil de soie rouge. Il tient à la main une paire de ciseaux. Le vengeur et le meurtrier prennent chacun de son côté la pièce d'argent, et celui-ci la coupe en deux avec les ciseaux. Une moitié lui appartient, et il la garde précieusement ; car elle devient pour lui comme un talisman contre une rupture de la réconciliation.

Tels sont les détails de cette étrange cérémonie. Le parti du *kronik* distribue ensuite divers présents à toute la suite du vengeur. On tire des coups de fusil, et enfin on se sépare. Le réconcilié donne les dix se-

quins aux membres de son clan, et le meurtrier invite son ancien adversaire à être le parrain de ses enfants qui viendront à naître après cette réconciliation.

Nous ne terminerons pas cette longue étude sur la famille chez les Slaves du Sud sans dire au moins quelques mots sur l'hospitalité et les rapports entre voisins. Il ne peut exister naturellement entre les voisins que des liens moraux. Le Serbe dit avec beaucoup de sagesse « qu'un bon voisin vaut toujours » mieux qu'un mauvais frère. Se haïr entre voisins » est une honte ; ils doivent s'estimer, s'aimer et s'aider mutuellement, se consoler aussi dans le malheur. On affirme au frère, mais on emprunte au » voisin. » Dans beaucoup de pays habités par les Serbes, le voisin possède le droit de préemption d'un immeuble touchant à ses propriétés.

Quant à l'hospitalité, elle est grande chez tous les Slaves méridionaux. Une extrême misère seule peut empêcher quelquefois qu'ils ne l'exercent envers les voyageurs et les malheureux. Mais celui qui franchit le seuil d'une maison devient comme le protégé de toute la famille, et les voyageurs sont même invités à prendre part au repas du maître de la maison. Dans quelques pays, la coutume exige qu'ils soient présentés à table à tous les associés. Le voyageur à qui l'on fait très-cordialement cette gracieuseté doit alors se verser un verre de vin pour répondre au toast qu'on lui porte, et qui consiste ordinairement en ces quelques mots : « Soyez le bienvenu, cher hôte. Buvez » en santé ce verre de vin que nous vous offrons. » On regarde généralement comme un bonheur d'avoir des hôtes. Lorsqu'on n'en a pas, on invite le premier venu. La famille qui reçoit beaucoup d'hôtes

passé pour une maison très-heureuse ; car un des mérites les plus vantés, c'est l'hospitalité en première ligne ; et on estime d'autant plus une maison qu'elle reçoit un grand nombre d'étrangers à sa table.

En Dalmatie, lorsqu'un hôte arrive dans une famille qui n'a pas assez de place pour le traiter convenablement, on le conduit chez un voisin dont la maison est plus grande, offre au voyageur plus d'agrément et de commodité. Toute maison devient un asile pour l'étranger dans les temps de troubles.

Dans le Monténégro et l'Herzégovine, lorsqu'un pauvre voyageur passe la nuit dans une maison, on s'estime très-heureux ; car le peuple dit que « l'hospitalité donnée à un mendiant est faite pour le salut de l'âme. » Et lorsqu'on veut faire un grand affront à quelqu'un, on lui dit : « Que personne ne devienne ton hôte pendant cette année ! » Mais si on veut louer une famille, c'est presque toujours avec cette parole : « Ne blâme pas cette maison, car elle est toujours remplie d'hôtes. » Dans ces contrées, lorsqu'un étranger entre dans une maison, une des femmes va à sa rencontre et le déchausse. C'est là une marque de bienvenue. On lui apporte ensuite tout ce qu'on a de meilleur, en lui disant : « Confrère, voilà ce que Dieu et la maison nous ont donné. Nous regrettons de ne pouvoir t'offrir quelque chose de meilleur. »

En Bulgarie, l'hôte est regardé comme un envoyé de Dieu. En entrant dans la maison, il confie au maître tout son argent, et lorsqu'il quitte le toit hospitalier, on le pourvoit, lui et son cheval, de tout ce qui leur est nécessaire pour le voyage.

Nous terminons ici notre esquisse sommaire sur le

droit coutumier relatif à la famille chez les Slaves méridionaux. Nous ne renonçons pas cependant à continuer nos études sur les autres parties de ces coutumes d'après les savantes recherches de M. Bogišić ; car le sujet que nous venons de traiter n'offre pas seulement un intérêt spécial au juriste, mais aussi un intérêt général pour une étude approfondie des peuples. Ce que nous avons surtout cherché à rendre ou plutôt à indiquer, dans cette rapide analyse d'une partie du travail de M. Bogišić, ce sont les nombreux matériaux rassemblés avec autant de peine que d'intelligence par l'auteur ; et c'est pour cela que nous nous sommes gardés de nous lancer témérairement dans des comparaisons de coutumes ou dans des généralisations hasardées. Nous n'avons pas osé entreprendre ce que l'auteur lui-même n'a pas cru à propos de faire, par les raisons que nous avons données au commencement de ce travail.

LES RESPONSABILITÉS

LES
RESPONSABILITÉS

Constantinople, 20 Janvier 1877.

Prix : Un Médjidié.

(Droits de traduction réservés.)

Clé Chiffrée.

Si le lecteur a bien voulu honorer de quelque attention nos publications précédentes, il sait que nous avons la pudeur des noms propres.

Cette pudeur, nous la professons même à l'égard de ces êtres collectifs que l'on nomme des Puissances, des États. A plus forte raison comprendra-t-on que nous en respectons le principe lorsqu'il s'agit des personnes.

Cependant nous n'oserions infliger au lecteur la peine que nous avons dû nous donner de deviner des chiffres de chancelleries, d'ambassades, de consulats et de sociétés secrètes. Aussi, afin de ne l'associer à nos fatigues que dans une mesure raisonnable, nous sommes-nous borné à composer à son intention la clé chiffrée ci-après :

Mr X... est un haut personnage résidant à Constantinople.

Mr Y... est son collègue résidant à Vienne.

Mr Z... dirige le Département asiatique à la Chancellerie d'une grande Puissance Européenne

*Mgr * est un auguste personnage.*

*Mgr **, parent rapproché du précédent, est un personnage auguste de même rang.*

*Mgr ***, personnage plus auguste encore, est l'héritier présomptif d'un grand empire.*

*Mgr ****, est un personnage auquel on ne donne pas le titre d'auguste, mais qui règne sur un peuple de 120,000 âmes.*

*Mgr *****, autre personnage n'ayant rien d'auguste, gouverne une contrée sur laquelle il a eu plus d'une fois la tentation de régner.*

Quant aux acteurs de moindre rang que cette publication met en scène, leur nom sera simplement remplacé par des points. Leur qualité seule importe à la valeur de notre démonstration.

Le lecteur nous pardonnera de lui imposer ce léger travail.

Ce mode de procéder était indispensable.

Nous traitons un sujet élevé, mais présentant des détails que nous devons caractériser sévèrement.

Or, nous ne saurions consentir à ce que les sévérités de notre plume puissent jamais être confondues avec des personnalités.

LES RESPONSABILITÉS



I

L'heure est solennelle. Des résolutions prises à Constantinople, doit sortir la paix, ou peut-être la guerre.

L'Europe, anxieuse, attend les oracles que le télégraphe lui transmet d'heure en heure, et se demande de minute en minute si elle devra s'alarmer ou se réjouir.

Si la paix doit être le résultat des négociations dont le palais de *Tershané* a été le théâtre, qu'elle soit la bienvenue. Nul ne s'en réjouira plus que la Turquie, car nul, plus que la Turquie, n'a besoin de paix, de tranquillité, de repos. Elle en a besoin pour se remettre des sacrifices que lui ont imposés vingt années de perturbations, dues aux coupables menées de voisins ambitieux ; elle en a besoin pour panser des plaies auxquelles les vices d'une administration défectueuse ne sont pas étrangers ; elle en a besoin enfin

pour développer les institutions réparatrices dont son nouveau Souverain vient de la doter.

Ces quelques lignes suffiront, mieux que de longues démonstrations, à déterminer exactement l'esprit dont ont pu être animés les représentants de la Porte au sein de la Conférence. Les louables efforts des délégués de l'Europe pour assurer une solution conciliante, ont donc trouvé ici un écho sympathique et reconnaissant.

D'où vient cependant que la conciliation n'a pu se dégager encore des travaux de la Diplomatie? Question complexe, à laquelle nous ne pourrions répondre qu'en ayant recours à toutes les ressources de la discussion. Or, ce n'est point une œuvre de discussion que nous entreprenons aujourd'hui ; nous entendons faire œuvre de pure démonstration.

Notre but n'est point d'analyser les raisons qui peuvent faire aboutir les négociations passées et futures à la guerre ou à la paix. Tous nos vœux sont pour la paix ; mais la guerre, trompant notre désir et notre espoir, peut, d'un instant à l'autre, se dresser menaçante pour le repos du monde.

Il faudra alors que le monde entier sache les causes qui l'ont produite, qui l'ont rendue inévitable. C'est à quoi vise cet écrit.

En d'autres termes, nous venons dresser ici : — LE BILAN
DES RESPONSABILITÉS.

II

La Porte, dit-on, est responsable de la situation actuelle. Depuis vingt ans admise dans le concert Européen, elle n'a point fait ce qu'il eût fallu pour élever ses populations au niveau des nations civilisées ; elle a négligé de leur assurer des institutions susceptibles de les préserver de ces commotions périodiques qui sont un danger permanent pour l'Europe. — Soit. Nous acceptons d'autant plus facilement ce reproche, que, s'il était mérité, le peuple Ottoman lui-même s'est chargé de faire justice. En un jour mémorable, il s'est levé, calme comme un juge, et, sous son souffle puissant, un trône, dont les flatteurs du dedans et les suppôts du dehors avaient faussé la base, s'est écroulé.

Que dire de plus ? Faut-il, après une telle déclaration, discuter le *quantum* des défauts de l'administration précédente ? Ce serait oiseux. Nous faisons bonne mesure aux détracteurs de la Turquie ; nous reconnaissons que l'Empire a eu une période d'administration vicieuse, alors qu'il lui eût fallu de grands citoyens et presque des hommes de génie pour accomplir, avec le moins de secousses possible, l'évolution économique-politico-sociale dont l'heure était venue pour lui. Oui, l'administration était défectueuse ; oui, les hommes que la faveur plutôt que le mérite désignait habituellement au choix du souverain, manquaient souvent de lumières et d'expérience ; ils étaient trop dé-

pourvus des qualités qui font les administrateurs habiles. Tout cela est vrai, tout cela nous l'avouons : mais les défauts de ces hommes étaient des défauts négatifs ; leur incapacité pouvait prolonger le malaise du pays, entraver sa marche vers le progrès ; elle n'avait rien de commun avec ces vices actifs qui excitent les grands mouvements d'indignation populaire et provoquent les révoltes.

Qu'on nous passe une expression fort triviale mais qui peint exactement notre pensée : Ces administrateurs mal choisis pouvaient être *bêtes* ; nul n'osera dire qu'ils étaient méchants. Or, ce sont les actes de cruautés qui poussent les peuples à la rébellion, et non les actes d'administration maladroite, comme en commettaient les fonctionnaires Ottomans sous le dernier règne.

Ce qui exaspère les populations au point d'amener les explosions insurrectionnelles, ce sont ces ordres cruels, prémédités, qu'édicte parfois des fonctionnaires ivres d'autorité, et que des soldats ivres d'alcool exécutent plus cruellement encore. Par exemple, ce qui provoque l'insurrection Polonaise de 1862-1863, c'est la tuerie improvisée de la population paisible de Varsovie dans les Eglises.

» Pouvais-je imaginer, dit un Anglais, témoin oculaire
« de ce massacre, que le gouverneur chrétien d'une ville
« chrétienne irait donner l'ordre de fouler aux pieds
« une population chrétienne, un peuple inoffensif, parce-
« qu'il entre dans la maison de Dieu ou s'en approche ? » (1)

(1) Lettres adressées au Comte Russell par G. Mitchell, sur les événements du 15 Octobre à Varsovie, Paris, Dentu 1862, in 8° Page 11.

Nous défions qui que ce soit d'affirmer qu'aucun gouverneur, dans les provinces ottomanes, ait provoqué la colère des populations par des actes de cette nature. Qui a jamais songé ici à s'opposer au libre exercice du culte et à la libre effusion de la langue des populations conquises? Qui oserait faire, dans le 13^e siècle de l'Hégire, le contraire de ce que fit à Jérusalem le Grand Kalife Omar, trois ans à peine après la mort du Prophète?

Non, quels que soient les torts que l'on veuille prêter à l'administration ottomane, nul ne pourrait prouver que ces torts aient été de nature à devenir la raison déterminante des faits insurrectionnels dans lesquels la phase actuelle de la question d'Orient puise son origine.

C'est donc ailleurs que dans l'administration intérieure du pays, qu'il faut chercher les causes de ces faits. C'est ailleurs aussi qu'il faut en rapporter la responsabilité.

III.

Après la guerre de 1870-1871, il se produisit à Constantinople un déplacement d'influences. Les ennemis de la Turquie ont compris dès ce moment-là que l'heure approchait où ils pourraient entrer sérieusement en action. On en jugera par le soin avec lequel la lettre confidentielle ci-après, adressée à M. Y... à Vienne par M. X..., en date de Péra-Constantinople, 4 Mars 1871, touche

un peu à tout : politique, administration, religion, hommes et choses :

N^o 1.

« Les renseignements si pleins d'intérêt que V. Exc. a
« bien voulu me donner sur les relations du Prince de
« Monténégro avec notre Consul à Raguse m'ont causé
« un très-grand plaisir. Nos amis de St.-Pétersbourg pour-
« ront juger maintenant la différence qui existe entre M.
« Yonine et Petrowich, et comprendront enfin combien il
« nous importe d'avoir près du Prince Nicolas, un fon-
« tionnaire capable, et dont les manières affables et dis-
« tinguées nous gagnent l'attachement de tout le monde.

« Les détails que vous me donnez sur vos relations avec
« Khalil Bey et les liens intimes de ce dernier avec le
« fameux homme d'Etat Saxon, ne m'étonnent nullement.
« Je connais de longue date votre collègue de Turquie.
« Jadis, quand il ne songeait pas encore à devenir grand
« homme, il aimait la Russie, autant toutefois qu'un Os-
« manli peut nous aimer. Depuis son départ de Saint-Pé-
« tersbourg et son alliance politique avec Moustapha Fa-
« zyl, il se détacha complètement de ses amis d'autrefois
« et ne cessa de nous honorer de son antipathie. Il n'y a
« donc rien d'étonnant que Khalil Bey ait acquis, dès son
« arrivée à Vienne, l'amitié de M. de Beust. Ce dernier,
« ennemi avoué du Slavisme, n'aurait pu trouver de plus
« actif auxiliaire, dans ses intrigues, que Khalil Bey. Ce
« qui est triste seulement, c'est de voir votre collègue de
« Turquie qui, croyant éviter le péril, intrigue contre nous
« et finira par précipiter son pays dans un abîme imminent.

« Grâce à l'entêtement des Turcs et à l'opiniâtreté du
« Patriarche, la scission entre les Bulgares et les Grecs est

« devenue inévitable. A vrai dire, j'ai craint un instant que
« la réconciliation allait s'effectuer, mais le Patriarche
« n'ayant pas voulu céder, l'affaire s'est envenimée à tel
« point que tous les efforts d'Aali Pacha n'aboutiront à
« rien. C'est à présent qu'il faudrait doubler d'activité. Si
« le Vizir accepte la démission du Patriarche (ce qui est
« presque certain), il faudra inaugurer l'avènement du
« nouveau Prélat par une adresse des habitants de Thrace,
« Macédoine, Bosnie et Herzégovine qui demanderont des
« évêques nationaux. De cette manière, à chaque nouveau
« Patriarcat, nous gagnerons quelques diocèses. J'ai déjà
« écrit dans ce sens à Andrinople et à Monastir. Il faudra
« que votre comité en fasse autant pour l'Herzégovine et
« la Bosnie.

» Avez-vous reçu les nouvelles cartes stratégiques des
« provinces Occidentales de la Turquie? D'après les rapports
« de nos explorateurs, je vois que nous nous sommes bien
« avancés dans l'esprit des populations, et que même les
« Musulmans sont prêts à nous aider dans notre œuvre
« émancipatrice. Grâce à Dieu, tout va bien; mais je serai
« encore plus content quand je recevrai l'ordre de deman-
« der mes passeports.

(Traduit du Russe.)

Nous nous abstiendrons, quant à présent, de toute appréciation sur ce document dont l'importance n'échappera à personne. Les occasions analogues d'exercer le sens critique du lecteur ne nous feront d'ailleurs pas défaut au cours de cet opuscule. Le but que nous avons voulu atteindre, en reproduisant la lettre que l'on vient de lire, c'est de nous dispenser de faire nous-même un exposé de la situation générale à l'époque précitée, c'est-

à-dire à la fin de la guerre Franco-Allemande. Ce document en tient lieu, et il a, sur tout ce que nous pourrions écrire, la supériorité de sa couleur d'actualité et de son exactitude du détail.

Ainsi, au commencement de l'année 1871, une scission avait été produite entre l'Eglise Grecque et l'Eglise Bulgare. A vrai dire, on a pu *craindre un moment que la réconciliation s'effectuât*, mais heureusement le Patriarche de Constantinople est un vénérable Pontife, incapable d'abandonner les principes sur lesquels repose son Eglise; il ne cédera donc pas. Or, pour que la réconciliation soit possible, il faut qu'il s'incline devant les dissidents. — Le système, on le voit, ne varie pas; aujourd'hui encore ce n'est pas à l'insurrection à céder; c'est à l'autorité légitime; la paix est à ce prix. — La réconciliation ne s'effectuera donc pas, car l'auteur de la lettre est sûr de la fermeté de ses dissidents, et les *efforts d'Aali Pacha n'aboutiront à rien*. Pour qui sait lire, pour qui a étudié la Turquie dans ces dernières années, toute l'histoire de la crise Orientale est dans ces huit mots que nous venons de souligner.

Les efforts du Grand-Vizir, quel qu'il fût, et de ses fonctionnaires à tous les degrés *n'aboutissaient pas*: en politique comme en religion, en administration, comme en finances, le résultat était: *Rien!* une vaste intrigue, enveloppant tout le pays, s'appliquait incessamment à en paralyser tous les ressorts vitaux.

En attendant, le plan général du complot se manifeste franchement; l'auteur de la lettre épanche librement son cœur dans le cœur de son correspondant: il faut *redoubler*

d'activité ; il faut que la *Thrace*, la *Macédoine*, la *Bosnie*, l'*Herzégovine* soient poussées à se détacher du Patriarcat, et qu'à chaque changement de Patriarche, quelques diocèses soient acquis à la conspiration. Les mesures sont déjà prises par lui quant à *Andrinople* et *Monastir*. Au Comité de Vienne à commencer l'agitation en *Herzégovine* et en *Bosnie*.

Et les *cartes stratégiques*? Et les *explorateurs* qui travaillent l'*esprit* des *populations*? Comme tout cela sent déjà l'odeur de la poudre qui sera brûlée en Herzégovine et le fumet des rôtis de cannibales que l'on fera en Bulgarie, pour y provoquer ou une insurrection efficace, ou, à défaut, des représailles qu'on exploitera dans une future campagne *atrocitiste*. Ah ! c'est que, voyez-vous, tout va bien, *grâce à Dieu* ! Pourtant le bon Dieu a encore un vœu à exaucer ; il faut une dernière joie à notre brave homme de conspirateur-diplomate : *ses passeports*.

Conspirateur-diplomate ! Etrange assemblage de mots ! Le droit des gens n'a donc plus de sens ? L'inviolabilité diplomatique n'est donc plus à Constantinople que le manteau discret destiné à protéger les grands attentats ?

IV

Nous venons de dire que Constantinople était devenu le foyer d'une conspiration à laquelle ont été dûs et l'*insurrection de l'Herzégovine* et les évènements que l'on a qualifiés *Massacres de Bulgarie*.

Cette vérité ressortira avec la dernière évidence de la lecture des documents qui vont suivre. Il s'en dégagera la preuve :

Que des personnages investis d'un haut mandat diplomatique organisaient et dirigeaient le complot ;

Que tous les consuls sous leurs ordres mettaient, comme on dit vulgairement, la main à la pâte, et présidaient à tous les détails de l'exécution ;

Qu'une puissante affiliation de sociétés secrètes ayant leur société-mère au dehors, enserrait la Turquie et les pays limitrophes dans un réseau étroit ;

Que ces Sociétés correspondaient avec des Ambassadeurs, commandaient à des consuls, et obéissaient à des Princes ;

Qu'enfin, le mouvement enveloppait non seulement les provinces Ottomanes d'Europe, mais encore celles d'Asie et même celles d'Afrique.

Après une telle démonstration, ce que nous avons appelé le *bilan des responsabilités* se trouvera dressé tout naturellement, et l'Europe et le monde sauront à qui ils devront reprocher le malaise dont ils souffrent comme les maux qu'ils redoutent.

N° 2.

M^r X....

de Péra, Constantinople, 14/26 Novembre 1872.

A M^r Y.... à Vienne.

« Je vous ai écrit dernièrement concernant les nouvel-
« les intrigues de nos chers coreligionnaires. Les Pha-
« nariotes, après avoir forcé leur Patriarche à lancer ses
« foudres contre le monde Slave, s'évertuent maintenant
« à rejeter de l'Eglise le vénérable Prélat qui occupe si
« dignement le trône Patriarcal de Jérusalem. Enchantés
« d'avoir trouvé un allié digne de leur cause en la per-
« sonne du fameux Khalil-Chérif, ils ont conçu l'ingé-
« nieuse idée de faire mettre les scellés sur les proprié-
« tés du Patriarche Cyrille, qui se trouvent à Constanti-
« nople. Je n'ai pas besoin de vous dire que j'ai pris mes
« précautions contre ce nouvel acte de justice Greco-
« Turque. J'ai écrit immédiatement à C. . . . d'agir
« sur les Arabes et de les pousser à protester contre
« la décision illégale du Synode Phanariote de Jérusalem.
« En même temps, j'ai écrit à Pétersbourg, et j'espère
« qu'on finira par mettre à exécution mon ancien projet,
» c'est-à-dire de séquestrer les grandes propriétés que l'E-
» glise de Jérusalem possède en Russie.

« Vous voyez, cher ami, que ma position ici n'est pas
« très-enviable. Si le régime actuel dure encore quelques
« mois, nos intérêts seront gravement compromis, et nous
« serons peut-être obligés de sacrifier l'exarchat pour éviter
« de plus grands sacrifices. Quel malheur que notre Synode
« n'ait pas accepté, il y a trois ans, la convocation du
« Concile Œcuménique ! La majorité des voix nous étant
« acquise, nous aurions pu éviter le Schisme, et forcer les
« Grecs à des concessions. Mais qui aurait pu prévoir alors
« l'obstination du Patriarche ? Il est vrai, cependant, que
« la faute n'en est pas à lui, et qu'il serait prêt à céder
« aujourd'hui, comme il le faisait toujours, s'il n'était pas
« poussé par les *grammairiens*, ce fléau permanent de
« Byzance.

« Le seul espoir qui nous reste, c'est le remaniement
« ministériel, que tout le monde attend avec le Baïram.

« Notre ami A. et la bonne V. S. y travaillent activement.
« Si nous réussissons, Byzance verra dans ses murs un
« nouveau *Milet Bachi*, et le Patriarche Grec tendra de
« nouveau la main pour implorer l'argent Panslaviste.

(*Extrait d'une lettre particulière traduite du Russe*).

Pour qui connaît l'homme et son style, cette épithète *cher*, qui vient ainsi sous sa plume dans un sens ironique, est tout-à-fait *suigeneris*. Donc ses *chers* coreligionnaires « Phanariotes » font « de nouvelles intrigues », c'est-à-dire que, fidèles aux droits de leur Eglise, ils s'indignent de ce que Mgr Cyrille, Patriarche de Jérusalem, veuille placer la sienne sous l'obédience du Métropolitain de Moscou; de sorte que le Synode « Phanariote » de la ville sainte dépose le chef spirituel, qui fait ainsi litière de son indépendance

Pontificale. Mais tout n'est pas désespéré encore : « les Arabes » seront travaillés, et Pétersbourg « séquestrera » les biens de l'église insubordonnée.

Il y a un malheur à tout cela : Le Synode de Moscou n'eût pas dû repousser la convocation du Concile Œcuménique ! Il était si facile d'y arranger une majorité, et de continuer ainsi à y dominer ; tandis que voilà un schisme quelque peu gênant ; il peut s'ensuivre une sentence d'hérésie contre l'Eglise Bulgare, et même contre l'Eglise Russe. Alors, comment pourrait-on poursuivre la pensée de *Russifier toutes les Eglises d'Orient* ? Décidément ce schisme est une mésaventure ; mais qui pouvait prévoir que Mgr Anthymos refuserait « l'argent Panslaviste ? »

Heureusement l'ami A...., qui n'a rien de Patriarcal dans sa personne ni dans sa vie, bien que son nom corresponde à celui d'un grand Patriarche, ne professe pas la même horreur pour les roubles du Panslavisme ; et la bonne V. S., toute très-grande dame et mère de Grand-Seigneur qu'elle est, ne craint pas de salir ses doigts au contact de l'or Moscovite. Or, ces deux dignes serviteurs de l'intrigue étrangère « travaillent activement », et il reste encore de l'espoir pour la bonne cause.

N° 3.

M. X.....

de Péra, Constantinople, 23 Novembre (5 Décembre) 1872.

A M. Y.... à Vienne.

« Le Baïram n'a rien changé dans l'état provisoire dont
« je vous ai entretenu dans ma dernière lettre. Malgré les
« efforts des esprits sains et éclairés, la clique des intri-
« gants l'a emporté, et notre petit crevé de Paris reste,
« comme par le passé, à la tête des affaires étrangères du
« pauvre malade, que nous tâchons de guérir malgré lui.
« Je crois inutile de vous donner tous les détails de
« la lutte que nous avons eu à soutenir contre le parti
« Midhat, protégé par mes collègues de l'Occident. Vous
« allez me demander, peut-être, d'où vient cet engouement
« des Ambassadeurs occidentaux pour un homme d'Etat
« qui est le vrai représentant de l'ancien régime Turc,
« et n'a pas le moindre lien d'attache à la civilisation
« Européenne, dont mes collègues ont l'air d'être les
« protecteurs désintéressés dans notre Orient *chaotique*.
« La sympathie dont ils l'honorent provient tout bonne-
« ment de ce que Midhat pousse son hostilité contre la
« Russie jusqu'au ridicule. La cruauté dont il a fait preuve
« dans le temps en Bulgarie, et que *je ne saurais certes*

« *blâmer sous le point de vue des intérêts du gouvernement*
« *qu'il servait*, fut la principale cause de la popularité
« qu'il a acquise dans certaines Ambassades.

« C'est grâce à ces considérations que Khalil jouit tou-
« jours de la sympathie de mes collègues, et qu'il a pu se
« maintenir provisoirement à son poste, malgré la juste
« indignation du Sultan contre son trop étourdi Ministre.
« Ce dernier, au lieu de servir les vrais intérêts de sa
« patrie adoptive, ne commet que sottises sur sottises,
« uniquement pour faire du dépit au souverain de son
« pays natal *et à nos frères de race*. Dernièrement en-
« core, M. Christich m'a confié qu'il lui devient presque
« impossible de protéger les intérêts de son pays contre
« le mauvais vouloir d'un ministre *animé des sentiments*
« *les plus hostiles à l'égard des Slaves*. S'étant fait en-
« tourer d'individus appartenant à la trop fameuse Jeune
« Turquie, et de Polonais accourus de nouveau comme des
« corbeaux à la curée, il excite sous main les *Vieux du*
« *Phanar*, et rend impossible tout compromis entre les
« Grecs et les Bulgares. Il est vrai aussi que les fana-
« tiques du Patriarchat lui rendent très-facile la tâche
« qu'il s'est imposée. Ces descendants bien dégénérés de
« Jean Chrysostôme sont enchantés d'avoir trouvé un
« protecteur à la hauteur de leurs intrigues. J'ai écrit der-
« nièrement à nos consuls de cesser tous subsides et se-
« cours aux églises et écoles grecques. Peut-être que ce
« moyen leur ouvrira les yeux, et fera revenir au
« bercail les brebis égarées par la propagande Phana-
« riote.

« Quant aux Bulgares, je n'ai qu'à me louer de leur tact
« et de leur savoir-faire. Ils ont parfaitement compris les
« conseils que je leur ai fait donner par O..u, et ils se con-

« duisent de sorte que nos ennemis ne trouvent rien à
« dénoncer contre eux au gouvernement.

« J'ai reçu hier une lettre du Prince Nicolas, qui m'a-
« nonce le mauvais état de ses affaires en Albanie. Mal-
« heureusement, d'après la copie ci-incluse, vous verrez
« qu'il ne me donne pas de détails sur les conséquences
« des arrestations opérées par Chevket. Vous a-t-il écrit
« quelque chose là-dessus ? M. H. . . . m'écrit dans ses
« rapports que les agents du Prince, envoyés dernière-
« ment à Scutari, ont dû retourner immédiatement à Cetti-
« gné, de peur d'être arrêtés par la police. N'auriez-vous
« pas quelque moyen d'arranger cette affaire avec votre
« comité, et de lui indiquer la ligne de conduite qu'il devrait
« prendre en cas d'impossibilité pour le Monténégro d'en-
« tretenir ses agents en Albanie. Ayez la bonté de me com-
« muniquer ce que vous avez fait sur ce sujet là....

(Extrait d'une lettre traduite du Russe.)

Les esprits « sains et éclairés » voulaient guérir le
« pauvre malade » ; la « clique des intrigants » s'y est
opposée. Trois ans plus tard, ces mêmes *intrigants*
étaient depuis longtemps éloignés des affaires ; alors les
esprits sains ont pu entreprendre librement la cure ; ç'a été
vite baclé : Une dose d'Herzégovine, une goutte de Bosnie,
un grain de Bulgarie, un gros de Serbie et de Monténégro
ont suffi pour mettre le patient dans l'état satisfaisant où
désiraient le voir ses bons amis les Slavo-Russes. Aussi,
est-ce assez « ridicule » à Midhat Pacha d'être hostile à
la Russie ? parole d'honneur ! S'il n'avait pas fait preuve,
lors de la première insurrection bulgare, d'une certaine
sévérité qu'on veut bien même relever jusqu'à la qualifier

de *cruautés*, ce serait un homme déshonoré. Mais il y a toujours un brin de sympathie dans un vrai cœur Moscovite pour les actes énergiques, même quand il faut forcer la note pour les transformer en actes cruels. Ah ! c'est qu'il en a tant fallu en Pologne et ailleurs ! Par contre, il est bien certain que cet homme d'Etat, qui a le tort de rêver sérieusement de régime constitutionnel et de libertés publiques, ne peut avoir « aucune attache avec la civilisation européenne ». Les constitutions, on les promet toujours, comme en Pologne ; mais on se garde bien de les donner, si l'on veut avoir quelque chose de commun avec un homme d'Etat civilisé. Apprenez ce précepte, Altesse, ou bien résignez-vous à n'être jamais qu'un barbare.

Et cet autre prétendu homme d'Etat civilisé, ce « Khalil », qui s'avise de faire « dépit aux frères de race » de l'illustre conspirateur-diplomate ? Conçoit-on un ministre Turc qui a la « sottise » de se montrer « animé des sentiments les plus hostiles à l'égard des slaves ! »

Et ces Polonais, « corbeaux accourus à la curée, » absolument comme feraient des Cosaques, s'abattant sur une ville Ruthène ! Sont-ils assez audacieux ? Quant aux « Vieux du Phanar », il n'y a plus qu'un moyen à tenter pour les rappeler à la pudeur, c'est de couper les vivres à leurs écoles et à leurs églises.

Mais parlez-nous des Bulgares ! Dieu ! que ces chers amours de Bulgares sont aimables ! Ont-ils assez de tact ? Et comme ils écoutent M. O..u !

En revanche, le Prince **** a du chagrin. Cet affreux Chevket pacha a le mauvais goût de faire coffrer les émis-

saires qu'il envoie troubler l'Albanie. On n'est pas plus grossier. Il faudra vraiment que le comité de Vienne avise à mettre le Prince et ses agents provocateurs à l'abri de pareilles vilénies.

N^o 4.

M. X.....

De Péra. Constantinople, 27 Novembre (9 Décembre) 1872.

A M. Y.... à Vienne.

« Méhemet Ruchdi Pacha est de nouveau retombé sous
« l'influence pernicieuse du Ministre des Affaires Étran-
« gères. Depuis son avènement au pouvoir, cet homme
« d'Etat ne fait que pencher tantôt d'un côté, tantôt d'un
« autre, et se trouve actuellement livré corps et âme aux
« intérêts de la politique magyarophile de Khalil et Cie.

« Vous avez appris sans doute les compliments que le
« Sultan a cru bon de faire à son Sadrazam lors de l'au-
« dience du Baïram. Ces compliments répandus partout
« parle parti de la jeune Turquie et ses adhérents, les Græ-
« culi du Phanar, ont produit la plus douloureuse impres-
« sion, sur cette partie de la population de Stamboul qui
« sait déjà apprécier à leur juste valeur les promesses
« pompeuses de Khalil et les blagues Austro-Hongroises.

« La consolidation de Khalil a eu pour première consé-
« quence la recrudescence des attaques Grecques contre le

« Patriarche de Jérusalem et l'Exarque des Bulgares. Ces
« deux prélats, qui vont probablement succomber, grâce à
« leur sincère dévouement à nos intérêts, sont en butte à
« tant d'attaques de la part de nos ennemis, que j'admire
« leur patience. Mgr Anthime surtout, qui pourrait, s'il
« voulait, susciter de très-graves embarras à la Porte, se
« conduit d'une manière admirable. Après le récent ou-
« trage que lui a infligé le très-perspicace diplomate Turco-
« Egyptien, il a eu la sagesse de se soumettre complète-
« ment à la ligne de conduite que je lui avais tracée. D'ail-
« leurs il n'attendra pas longtemps, car, avec le caractère
« ombrageux et fougueux du Sultan, l'ordre de choses
« actuel ne saurait durer au delà de deux, ou tout au plus
« trois lunes.

« Quant à ce qui concerne Mgr Cyrille, sa position es-
« beaucoup plus grave. Si la Porte sanctionne sa dépositi-
« on, le Synode de Jérusalem procédera immédiatement
« à l'élection d'un nouveau Patriarche, et nous voilà frus-
« trés de nos droits sur le Saint-Sépulcre. Pour obvier à
« ce désastre, j'ai écrit à P..., C... et Y..., de travailler
« adroitement la population de Syrie et de Palestine
« pour aboutir à la création d'une église Arabe, séparée
« du Patriarchat, et qui élirait pour chef Monseigneur
« Cyrille.

« Khalil ne se borne pas seulement à l'agitation ecclé-
« siastique. Il vient de recourir à un autre moyen qui vous
« donnera une idée de son amitié pour nous. La nouvelle
« du vol de la Poste de Roustchouk lui a suggéré l'ingé-
« nieuse idée d'en rejeter la responsabilité sur les Bulgares,
« qu'il tâche de présenter maintenant à S. M. comme les
« ennemis les plus dangereux de l'Empire. Vous ne sau-

« riez vous imaginer le désagrément que m'a causé cette
« nouvelle. Grâce à la bêtise de notre M....., l'une des
« personnes qui ont pris part à cet acte de brigandage
« se trouve avoir été affiliée par notre agence de Roust-
« chouk. Si la police Turque arrête cet individu, je crains
« des révélations qui, certes, nous feront le plus grand
« tort. Je m'étonne qu'un homme aussi sensé que
« Mr M....., ait pu affilier à notre cause un individu
« dont il ignorait les antécédents. Cette faute impardon-
« nable doit nous servir de leçon, dont j'ai déjà profité
« d'ailleurs, en prescrivant à tous nos consuls de s'abs-
« tenir désormais de toute affiliation sans mon autorisation
« préalable.

« J'ai appris que Khalil a proposé à Méhémet-Ruchdi
« d'envoyer à Sofia le trop fameux maître en pendaison
« Midhat, en qualité de Président de la commission d'en-
« quête. Nous voici donc à la veille de nouveaux exploits
« de ce terrible exécuteur de hautes œuvres, qui certes
« ne perdra pas cette occasion de faire expédier *ad Patres*
« quelques centaines de malheureux *ghiaours* !

« Je vous remercie infiniment pour les détails pleins
« d'intérêt que vous me donnez sur la lutte Tchèque. Quel
« malheur, cependant, que cette cause si noble en principe
« n'ait pas été préservée des intrigues de nouveaux Judas.
« L'exemple de Sabina a trouvé malheureusement des
« imitateurs, ce qui ne manquera pas de compromettre la
« plus sainte des causes. »

(Extrait d'une lettre traduite du Russe.)

Il était de fort mauvaise humeur, en ce jour néfaste du
27 Novembre (9 Décembre), notre aimable conspirateur-
diplomate, et il y avait de quoi. Songez donc ! Un Sultan

qui s'oublie jusqu'à faire des compliments à son ministère anti-Slave ! La raison en est confondue, et le sang-froid va à tous les diables. Aussi, le cabinet prend une sorte d'enseignement commerciale sous la plume de l'aimable contempteur de ces inepties patriotiques, et s'appelle désormais « Khalil et Cie ». Il n'y a plus de « Vieux du Phanar » ni de « grammairiens » ; Græculi est le seul nom qui convienne désormais à ces sortes des gens. Quant à la politique du Comte Andrassy, on pensera ce qu'on voudra de cet écart de style ; on dira si l'on veut, que c'est du pur Tartare, mais la seule expression digne de la caractériser est celle-ci : *Blagues Austro-Autrichiennes*. Le fait est, Excellence, que le mot est peu diplomatique ; mais aussi, pourquoi vous fait-on monter ainsi la moutarde au nez ?

Et puis ce jour-là, vraiment, tout marchait d'une manière indigne : Jusqu'à cet affilié de *Votre Agence de Roustchouk*, qui s'avise de prendre part au vol de la Poste. S'il allait être arrêté et faire des révélations ? Quel gachis !... Au surplus, à quelque chose malheur est bon : Ce voleur de grand chemin à qui vous vous êtes trouvé affilié, on ne sait trop plus comment, sera cause, du moins, que désormais, Monsieur M... ne fera plus la maladresse de vous affilier personne « sans votre autorisation préalable. »

D'ailleurs, ce 27 novembre (9 Décembre) devait être décidément un mauvais jour ; car, vrai, vous n'étiez pas en veine : Jusqu'au « trop fameux maître en pendaison » qui ne vous a pas même accordé la douce petite satisfaction de voir expédier *ad Patres* quelques centaines de braves gens ; du tout, il a eu le mauvais ton de vous refuser ce

modeste plaisir, pour continuer à se livrer à ses rêveries constitutionnelles. C'est d'une impertinence sans nom !

Et Mgr Anthyme, ce prélat « si dévoué à vos intérêts ! » Et Mgr Cyrille, dont la déposition peut avoir pour résultat de vous « frustrer de vos droits sur le Saint-Sépulcre ! » Et, pour comble de malheur, en Bohême, la cause Tchèque qui va mal, absolument comme si elle n'était pas « la plus sainte des causes. » Je vous l'ai dit, Excellence, ce 27 novembre (9 décembre) ne pouvait être qu'un mauvais jour.

Heureusement, il vous restait toujours la distraction de « travailler adroitement » la Syrie et la Palestine. C'est quelque chose après tout, convenez-en.

N^o 5.

M^r X...

De Péra, Constantinople 7¹9 décembre.

A M. Y.... à Vienne.

« Décidément les Grecs ne veulent point rester tranquilles. Depuis l'avènement au pouvoir de leur triste protecteur, ils pataugent dans une telle mare d'intrigues, qu'il faut être aussi aveugle et obstiné ennemi de la vérité que Khalil, pour continuer à prêter foi à tous les mensonges que lui débitent journellement ses amis les sarafs et orateurs du Phanar.

« Grâce aux perfides insinuations de ces misérables chevaliers du marché de Galata, l'Orient orthodoxe va per-

« dre le prélat éminent qui fait la gloire de notre église;
« ce qui est plus triste encore c'est de voir les Grecs, ces
« soi-disants amis de la liberté, implorer la protection des
« Autrichiens et Prussiens, et solliciter l'intervention des
« Protestants dans leurs affaires ecclésiastiques, tout en
« niant ce même droit au gouvernement de leur coreli-
« gionnaire la Russie. Leur rage contre nous vient d'aug-
« menter encore davantage à la nouvelle de la Séquestra-
« tion des biens conventuels en Bessarabie. Cette perte est
« si sensible pour les prélats Phanariotes, que je serais
« prêt à parier de voir bientôt tous les vieux du Synode se
« prosterner devant nous pour avouer leur *Culpa*, s'ils n'a-
« vaient pas peur des Grammairiens de Galata ! Ce sont ces
« derniers, appuyés de quelques banquiers-orateurs et des
« folliculaires du *Néologos* et du *Phare du Bosphore*, qui
« entretiennent le feu de la discorde.

« La seule chose qui pourrait faire cesser ce triste règne
« d'intrigues, ce serait un changement de ministère, ou du
« moins l'éloignement de Khalil, qui seul a intérêt dans
« tous ces troubles religieux. D'après ce que je viens d'ap-
« prendre du Palais, il ne serait point improbable que
« d'ici peu, nous soyons délivrés de ce brouillon incorri-
« gible ! L'ancienne et fidèle amie de la bien estimable
« mère de Mme Novikow a promis dernièrement encore à
« Mme I.....w, d'agir dans ce sens-là au Palais... »

(Lettre traduite du Russe.)

Les survivants de l'ancien ministère Midhat, avaient décidément la vertu de mettre notre diplomate hors de lui. Toute la population Grecque de Constantinople se transforme maintenant en « misérables chevaliers du marché de Galata ». En revanche, le Patriarche que le Synode de Jérú-

salem a jugé indigne de rester à sa tête, devient « l'éminent Prélat qui fait la gloire de l'Eglise ».... Russe. La passion aveugle vraiment. Voici un diplomate fort habile, et qui ne comprend pas qu'un prélat qui fait la gloire de l'Eglise Russe, ferait nécessairement la honte de l'Eglise Grecque, aujourd'hui désabusée pleinement à l'endroit des projets Russes, sur l'Eglise comme sur les populations Helléniques. D'ailleurs, si l'homme s'emporte en lui, le diplomate ne perd pas la carte. Il lui faut la chute du Ministère ; il l'aura, dût-il pour cela, faire agir les dames, qu'il ne craint pas de nommer en toutes lettres — sauf une cependant : *L'ancienne et fidèle amie de la bien estimable mère de Madame Novikow*. Nous avouons humblement que les chiffres dont nous sommes en possession ont été impuissants à nous donner la clé de cette dénomination mystérieuse.

N° 6.

M. Z...

de Pétersbourg — 8^h20 décembre 1872.

A M. Y.... à Vienne.

« Comme le général Ignatiëw vous tient au courant de
« tout ce qui se passe à Constantinople, il est superflu que
« je vous rapporte tout ce que nous recevons de désolant
« de Tzargrad. L'arrivée au pouvoir de Khalil pacha ne
« devait certes pas nous donner l'espoir de ressaisir l'in-

« fluence que nous avons perdue avec la chute de Mah-
« mouid pacha.

« Par la lettre du général, vous pourrez voir aisément
« qu'il conserve toujours cet optimisme qui fait le fond de
« son caractère. Quant à moi, je vous dirai franchement
« que je ne crois plus aux brillants espoirs de nos amis de
« Constantinople. L'intrigue Anglo-Autrichienne est si
« puissante à Constantinople, que je n'espère plus à la pro-
« chaine rentrée aux affaires de Mahmoud, d'autant plus
« que le Sultan lui-même, avec son caractère faible et
« vacillant, paraît s'être laissé persuader sur la nécessité
« de maintenir au pouvoir le ministère actuel.

« Le prince Gortchakoff vient d'écrire au général, de
« suspendre pour quelque temps toute attaque contre le
« Ministre des Affaires Etrangères et le Grand-Vézir. Le
« caractère de Khalil et l'état des esprits en Turquie nous
« font prévoir que d'ici peu devra surgir quelque circons-
« tance favorable qui, en démontrant l'insuffisance de ces
« deux hommes d'Etat, obligera le Sultan à confier de
« nouveau, l'administration à nos amis.

« En attendant, nous pensons qu'il serait utile de prépa-
« rer le terrain d'une toute autre manière. Le Monténégro
« et la Serbie pouvant nous procurer l'occasion que nous
« attendons, vous porterez votre sollicitude sur ces deux
« pays. En favorisant le développement matériel et moral
« de ces deux avant-gardes du Slavisme, nous servirons
« notre cause beaucoup plus efficacement que par des in-
« trigues de Palais, indignes de notre grand pays et de
« l'idée qu'il représente.

« Vous avez appris, sans doute, la dernière décision sur
« la Séquestration des biens de l'Eglise de Jérusalem.

« Quoiqu'un peu tardive, cette mesure n'en sera pas moins
« salutaire pour nos adversaires en religion. Les Grecs
« comprendront, il faut l'espérer, l'insanité de leurs attaques
« contre la Russie et les Bulgares, surtout lorsqu'ils ver-
« ront le trône patriarcal œcuménique, dont ils sont si fiers,
« dépendre de la bienveillance d'un Khalil, qui les pousse
« contre nous pour satisfaire ses rancunes.

(Lettre traduite du Russe.)

A Pétersbourg on est plus positif qu'à Constantinople ; M. Z... gouaille l'optimisme de M. X..., mais au surplus ne critique pas autre chose dans les actes de celui-ci. Cependant il y a ici un peu plus de dignité que dans tout ce que nous avons lu précédemment. Les intrigues de Palais sont déclarées « indignes », et l'on préférerait saisir l'occasion du côté de la Serbie et du Monténégro, « ces deux avant-gardes du Slavisme ». C'est par là en effet qu'il faut ouvrir le chemin qui mène à la conquête de *Tzargrad*, la VILLE des TZARS ; tel est aujourd'hui le nom que les Slaves donnent déjà à la cité des Empereurs et des Sultans.

M. Z..., au surplus, s'abandonne trop facilement au découragement. Pourquoi désespérer déjà de la « rentrée de Mahmoud aux affaires » ? Soyez donc sans inquiétude, MM. les médecins du « pauvre malade ». Mahmoud reviendra à son heure, et vous pourrez, grâce à lui, vous procurer la jouissance de soulever l'opinion Européenne, au moyen de l'*iradé d'Octobre* !...

N° 7.

M. X....

De Péra, Constantinople, 13/25 Décembre 1872.

A M. Y...., à Vienne.

« Khalil Pacha a bien tenu sa parole ! Il avait promis
« à Mgr Anthime de s'occuper, après le Baïram, de la
« question greco-bulgare, et il vient de le faire à sa
« manière.

« Invité par le Grand-Vizir à se rendre chez le Ministre
« des Affaires Etrangères, pour lui exposer les vœux de la
« communauté bulgare, l'exarque reçut de Khalil Pacha
« un accueil digne de cet homme d'Etat. Au lieu d'entendre
« les explications et les vœux du vénérable prélat, le mi-
« nistre ottoman lui déclara, avec la plus grande hauteur,
« que la Porte était décidée à annuler le firman promul-
« gué sous Aali, vu que les relations entre l'église ortho-
« doxe et celle des Bulgares ne sont plus les mêmes qu'au-
« paravant. Ni les observations respectueuses de Mgr
« Anthime, ni ses protestations n'ayant pu ébranler le parti-
« pris de Khalil, l'exarque a dû quitter le cabinet du
« ministre, emportant la conviction que la plus grande des
« iniquités ne serait pas loin d'être consommée.

« D'après ce que j'ai appris, Khalil veut annuler l'ancien
« firman et lui substituer un autre, par lequel les Bulgares

« seraient reconnus officiellement schismatiques et retran-
« chés du giron de l'orthodoxie. Je vous avoue que j'igno-
« rais jusqu'à présent cette nouvelle qualité de Khalil.
« Il faudra donc que nous ajoutions à toutes celles que
« nous lui reconnaissons jusqu'aujourd'hui, la qualité de
« profond théologien et maître es-matières dogmatiques.
« Vouloir trancher une question de dogme purement chré-
« tien, serait d'un ridicule si complet, que je n'y croirais pas,
« si je n'étais pas, pour ainsi dire, témoin des prouesses
« théologiques du Révérend Père Khalil.

« Je suis bien curieux de voir comment il résoudra
« l'incident qui va se produire, sous peu, dans l'église
« d'Antioche. Grâce à nos relations avec les primats et les
« prélats de ce patriarcat, le Synode d'Antioche répètera
« inmanquablement l'histoire de Jérusalem, avec cette
« différence que le patriarche sera désavoué par son Sy-
« node, pour s'être déclaré contre nous. Nous verrons
« comment se conduira en cette circonstance le docte turco-
« égyptien (1).

« Je n'ai pas besoin de vous dire que l'affaire d'Antioche
« ne sera pas la seule : Roustchouk, Viddin, Varna et
« d'autres villes bulgares donneront bientôt signe de vie,
« et les autorités locales auront maille à partir avec l'ef-
« fervescence des esprits provoquée par la partialité inqua-
« lifiable de la jeune Turquie. J'ai déjà donné mes ins-
« tructions là-dessus à nos consuls et agents, qui devront
« s'abstenir de toute intervention ostensible. Rira bien qui
« rira le dernier. »

(Lettre traduite du Russe.)

(1) Ce fut tout vu. Le Synode d'Antioche trompa l'espoir des fauteurs de dissensions.

Le *dernier qui a ri*, c'est sans doute celui qui a pu avoir intérêt à se réjouir des épouvantables malheurs arrivés en Bulgarie, et des [conséquences qu'ils devaient produire dans la main d'aussi habiles opérateurs que ces « Consuls », dont le rôle est de « s'abstenir de toute intervention ostensible. » En lisant des phrases aussi malheureuses que celle-ci, on croirait que l'on a sous les yeux, non des lettres écrites dans une résidence diplomatique, mais bien plutôt des documents sortis d'un office de police secrète.

N° 8.

M. X....

De Pére, Constantinople, 28 décembre (9 janvier) 1872.

A M. Y.... à Vienne.

« Vous avez, sans doute, lu dans nos journaux d'ici et
« surtout dans ceux publiés en langue turque, que la Porte,
« prenant en considération les armements qui se font
« depuis quelque temps en Serbie, aurait prescrit aux
« gouverneurs des provinces limitrophes de cette princi-
« pauté et aux commandants des troupes y cantonnées, de
« se tenir prêts à toute éventualité. Cette nouvelle et les
« bruits sur les armements considérables de la Turquie,
« ont obligé le gouvernement serbe à s'adresser à la Porte

« pour lui en demander des éclaircissements. M. Cristich
« ayant demandé là-dessus des explications à Khalil pa-
« cha, ce dernier lui a répondu que tous ces bruits n'a-
« vaient aucun fondement, et que le gouvernement les fera
« démentir officiellement.

« Malgré cette réponse du ministre et le démenti officiel,
« les Serbes ne pourront, certes, pas se rassurer sur les
« tendances belliqueuses du ministère actuel. Le gouver-
« nement du Sultan, qui reçoit, d'après ce que je vois, des
« renseignements assez exacts sur tout ce qui se passe en
« Serbie et les provinces slaves du Nord-Ouest de l'Em-
« pire, fait tout son possible pour ne pas être pris au dé-
« pourvu.

« J'ai appris dernièrement que la Porte, redoutant la
« prochaine explosion du mécontentement qu'elle ne cesse
« de provoquer par sa politique inepte, voudrait entrer en
« campagne avant que les Serbes ne soient en état d'entre-
« prendre la réalisation de leurs projets. Khalil et ses
« amis pensent que les Serbes, une fois châtiés comme le
« furent les Grecs lors de la question crétoise, ils devien-
« dront aussi soumis et *serviles* que les Hellènes. Il faut
« appartenir à cette clique de suffisants, comme le sont
« les membres de la jeune Turquie, pour supposer les
« Serbes aussi *lâches* que les Grecs. Il faut espérer que les
« yeux de ces messieurs s'ouvriront bientôt, mais plaise à
« Dieu que ce soit un peu tard pour le cher malade !

« Les journaux grecs ne vous ont pas trompé en noti-
« fiant si pompeusement la conversion de Monsieur C...
« (ou G... Effendi, selon le langage officiel). Cependant
« je suis en état de vous rassurer là-dessus. Si Monsieur
« C... est rentré au giron de l'église présidée si indi-
« gnement par le patriarche Anthimos, il ne faudra point

« en attribuer la cause à son repentir personnel, ni à sa
« conviction sur l'injustice de la cause représentée par Mgr
« Anthime. Monsieur C.. s'est vu forcé de rentrer au
« bercail phanariote, d'abord par les insinuations de sa
« femme, grecque de naissance et de conviction, et ensuite
« par des considérations pécuniaires, si puissantes dans ces
« parages. Occupant un poste assez important au service
« de la Porte, Monsieur C... a eu tout bonnement peur
« de se voir calomnié par les Grecs et de perdre par con-
« séquent ses appointements (8000 roubles environ.) Ce
« Monsieur qui jouit, justement d'ailleurs, d'une très gran-
« de considération parmi ses compatriotes, a pris part, ou,
« pour mieux dire, a dirigé *secrètement* toute la marche
« des négociations bulgares. Cela suffit à vous donner la
« mesure de la sincérité de sa conviction. »

(Lettre particulière traduite du Russe.)

Pas si inepte que vous voulez bien le dire, Excellence, la politique qui consistait à être « exactement renseigné sur ce qui se passait en Serbie » ainsi que « dans les provinces Slaves de l'Empire », et qui eût voulu qu'on entrât en campagne avant la réalisation des projets Serbes. Heureusement vous vieilliez, ainsi que celle que vous nommiez tout à l'heure « l'ancienne et fidèle amie de la bien estimable mère de Madame Novikow » ; et à vous deux sans doute, vous avez fait en sorte qu'il ne fût pas possible de voir si les Serbes deviendraient aussi « serviles » et aussi « lâches » que les Grecs. Ainsi seulement les choses ont pu s'arranger de façon à ce qu'il fût « trop tard pour le cher malade ». Quant à ce personnage dont nous nous abstenons d'écrire, comme vous, le nom en toutes lettres, et auquel

la Porte paraît avoir la faiblesse de servir un traitement équivalant à 8000 Roubles, nous comprenons parfaitement que ce que vous considérez comme une apostasie chez lui ne provoque point votre religieuse indignation, ordinairement si chatouilleuse. N'a-t-il pas, en effet, « dirigé secrètement toute la marche des négociations Bulgares » ? Comme vous devez rire de ce qu'il y ait eu des gens assez niais pour s'étonner, vous étant là, des faits sanglants dont la Bulgarie a fini par devenir le théâtre !

N^o 9.

M. X...

De Péra, Constantinople, 4/16 Janvier 1873.

A M. Y..., à Vienne.

« La lutte entre le Patriarcat Œcuménique et les Bulgares
« a pris depuis quelque temps un caractère diplomatique.
« Tandis que les Grecs mettent en œuvre toutes sortes d'in-
« trigues qu'ils peuvent inventer, pour compromettre les
« Bulgares devant la Porte, ceux-ci opposent à leurs ad-
« versaires une conduite pleine de franchise et de fermeté
« basée sur la conscience qu'ils ont de leur force. Les de-
« mandes des Grecs peuvent se résumer en ces quatre points:
« 1.) Annulation du firman décrété sous Aali, et édition

« d'un autre, dans lequel les Bulgares seraient déclarés
« schismatiques.

« 2.) Changement de costume du clergé bulgare.

« 3.) Maintien en la possession des Grecs des églises,
« couvents, écoles et autres établissements publics qui se
« trouvent dans les provinces ayant une population mixte ;

« 4.) Maintien du droit du patriarcat grec d'envoyer
« ses évêques dans les provinces bulgares.

« Ces droits, que notre bon ami Khalil semble disposé
« à accorder aux Grecs, sont si contraires aux intérêts de
« l'église bulgare, que l'Exarque a dû, malgré son extrême
« répugnance, intervenir de nouveau pour combattre les
« intrigues de nos ennemis. C'est avant-hier que Mgr
« Anthime est allé voir le fameux ministre, qui l'avait
« invité pour parler de cette malheureuse affaire. Leur
« entrevue cependant n'a pas duré longtemps, et n'a abouti
« à rien. Après s'être montré au commencement très poli
« et bienveillant envers l'Exarque, Khalil a fini par des
« menaces, lorsqu'il a vu que Mgr Anthime n'avait nulle-
« ment l'intention de céder la moindre des choses aux
« réclamations des Phanariotes.

« L'affaire de l'Exarchat n'est pas d'ailleurs la seule qui
« soit dévoyée, grâce aux intrigues et viles calomnies de
« nos ex-amis. Grâce aux cris des Phanariotes et de leurs
« nouveaux alliés, les folliculaires de Vienne, on a com-
« mencé à me faire mille chicanes contre nos consuls de
« Macédoine. Vous avez déjà, sans doute, appris l'institu-
« tion par le Patriarcat d'une commission d'enquête, qui
« doit se rendre au Mont-Athos. Je n'aurais, certes, fait
« aucune attention à toutes ces machinations greco-tur-
« ques, si nos ennemis n'avaient eu la perfidie de mé-
« ler à toutes leurs calomnies les noms de L.... et

« J.... J'ai dû par conséquent écrire à ces Mes-
« sieurs de quitter pour quelque temps leurs postes, et de
« venir ici, après avoir donné à nos amis les instructions
« nécessaires pour mettre à néant les nouvelles intrigues
« grecques.

« J'accepte avec la plus grande reconnaissance votre
« obligeante proposition quant à la *Clio*, et je suis sûr que
« le Ministère Impérial ne refusera pas de tenir la promes-
« se que vous avez faite à l'excellent Rédacteur de ce très-
« influent journal. D'ailleurs, si le Prince continue à lési-
« ner sur quelques milliers de roubles, je m'engage à payer
« de ma propre bourse les 5000 roubles que vous avez bien
« voulu promettre au Rédacteur du journal triestin. Le
« concours de cette feuille nous sera d'autant plus utile
« que, jouissant d'une très-grande autorité parmi les popu-
« lations chrétiennes des provinces turques, la *Clio* servira
« notre cause mieux que les feuilles bulgares de Roumanie
« et les petits journaux Serbes. »

(*Lettre particulière traduite du Russe.*)

Oui, les Bulgares devaient avoir la conscience de leur force, c'est-à-dire de la force d'un grand empire dont ils servaient inconsciemment les vues ambitieuses.

Quant aux quatre points Grecs, il n'était que temps de provoquer le changement ministériel qui devait les mettre au panier. S'ils avaient pu passer, moins de six mois eussent suffi pour qu'un paysan Bulgare ne pût apercevoir un prêtre Russe sans s'éloigner en faisant le signe de la croix. Cette simple mesure supprimait la question Bulgare, et rendait impossibles les tueries de Bazardjik et de Battak qui ont provoqué les « massacres ». On comprend que

l'influence Russe s'appliquât à faire mettre à néant les quatre points Grecs.

Cette lettre est importante en ce qu'elle montre, comme on dit, le bout de l'oreille, à l'endroit du Mont-Athos. C'est une affaire fort grave que cette affaire du Mont-Athos, que la plupart ignorent complètement. Si l'on ne met fin à l'intrigue Slave au moyen de laquelle le moine Russe prend insensiblement la place du moine Grec, la Macédoine deviendra sous peu une seconde Bulgarie. Or, il semblerait que la première a déjà occasionné assez de calamités.

N° 10.

M. X.....

De Péra, — Constantinople, 8^h20 février 1873.

A M. Y... à Vienne.

« Ainsi nous avons un nouveau ministère, qui, à vrai
« dire, n'est qu'un replâtrage maladroit de l'ancien. Bon-
« net blanc, blanc bonnet; tout s'explique, on ne saurait
« mieux, par cette phrase stéréotype.

« Vous vous souvenez, sans doute, du jeune aide-de-
« camp que Fuad pacha a pris avec lui en Syrie en 1860.
« Qui aurait pu supposer alors que ce jeune soldat appar-
« tenant à une famille grecque osmanlysée, serait appelé,
« au bout de 13 ans, au premier poste de l'Empire !

« L'avènement d'Essad pacha vous prouve assez clairement la force et la persistance de l'idée fixe du Sultan, le nouveau Sadrazam étant très-dévoué au Prince Yousof et intimement lié avec lui.

« La destitution de Mehemed-Ruchdi ayant été faite en dehors de toute exigence politique, et provoquée uniquement par une cabale des dames du palais, qui trouvaient toujours de leur goût le jeune et brillant général, il m'est encore impossible de définir les rapports que j'aurai avec lui. Ce qui me vexé, c'est de voir Khalil, quoique bien ébranlé, conserver toujours son portefeuille, et continuer par conséquent ses intrigues ineptes contre le Slavisme.

« La semaine passée, ce ministre a fait dire à l'Exarque que la Porte était fermement résolue à autoriser le patriarchat à envoyer ses évêques dans toutes les éparchies bulgares. Cette communication a tellement affligé Mgr Anthime, qu'il serait tombé malade, si je ne tâchais pas de le rassurer là-dessus, lui promettant l'appui décisif de notre gouvernement. D'après mon conseil, il a répondu à Khalil, par le canal de son vicaire, que, vu les réclamations et protestations qui lui arrivent de toutes les éparchies bulgares, il craint que l'arrivée d'évêques grecs suscite de grands troubles, et que par conséquent, il en rejette toute la responsabilité sur ceux qui, nonobstant ses avis, recourront à cette mesure.

« Nos amis de Toultscha ont exécuté les ordres que nous leur avons donnés, il y a quelques semaines. Ils ont fait signer par des Bulgares de Toultscha une adresse au Métropolitain de Roustchouk, protestant contre l'annulation du firman. Cette protestation a déjà produit une grande impression ici, et il faut espérer que cette démarche, suivie d'autres démonstrations de ce genre, qui se

« préparent en Bulgarie et en Thrace, empêcheront Khalil de
« brusquer l'affaire, si elles ne le jettent pas lui-même du
« siège qu'il occupe si indignement au Conseil des Minis-
« tres.

« Si ces démonstrations-là ne suffisent pas à nous donner
« la victoire, je recourrai enfin à l'*ultima ratio*—le cotillon.

« Le camouflet que j'ai fait préparer à Roustchouk à la
« commission d'enquête, a réussi, sinon complètement, du
« moins en partie. Les membres de la commission sont
« maintenant persuadés que toute cette affaire fut inspirée
« et menée par les émissaires des Bulgares de Bucharest.
« J'espère que l'on finira à Pétersbourg, par me donner
« raison, surtout lorsqu'on verra la facilité avec laquelle
« nous sauvons les apparences. »

(Traduit du Russe.)

Pour ne point lasser l'attention du lecteur nous clôturons par cette dernière lettre, la première série de documents que nous avons entrepris de présenter au public.

Il s'en dégage un grand enseignement : On y voit un personnage investi d'une haute qualité, couvert de l'inviolabilité diplomatique, mettant au service d'une intrigue, d'un complot, tous les puissants éléments d'action qu'il doit à sa situation privilégiée. Il conspire contre un Gouvernement allié du sien et auprès duquel il est accrédité. Est-il un attentat plus grave ? N'est-ce pas l'équivalent absolu d'une violation de territoire ? Un soldat passe une frontière avec son fusil sur l'épaule ; c'est assez pour donner naissance à une effroyable guerre entre deux États. Quelle devrait donc être la conséquence de l'introduction d'une armée d'agents étrangers venant fomenter des troubles et

provoquer des explosions de guerres civiles ? Il est vrai, comme le dit si naïvement l'auteur de ces lettres, dont chaque mot est une révélation, qu'il n'y a rien à lui reprocher, « *vu la facilité avec laquelle il sauve les apparences* » !

VI

Nous venons de saisir les confidences intimes de la pensée dirigeante.

Descendons maintenant un degré de l'échelle hiérarchique, et nous suivrons pas-à-pas l'exécution dans ses détails essentiels.

N° 11.

*Dépêche chiffrée de M^r..., Consul à Scutari
au Comité de Vienne, en date du 8/20 Août 1872.*

« L'emprisonnement des Albanais qui ne voulaient pas
« ou, pour mieux dire, ne pouvaient pas livrer aux autori-
« tés turques les deux chefs les plus influents des Mirdi-
« tes, a produit dans le pays une grande effervescence qui,
« je le crois, finira par exercer une mauvaise influence
« sur les relations du Monténégro avec les chrétiens de
« cette province. Ces derniers, irrités de l'oppression tou-
« jours croissante des Turcs, et voyant l'impassibilité ap-
« parente du gouvernement Monténégrin qu'ils expli-
« quant par un sentiment de peur, pourront se réconcilier

« avec les Turcs, et devenir d'autant plus acharnés contre
« les Monténégrins, qu'ils étaient jusqu'à présent dévoués
« à leurs intérêts.

« Pour y remédier autant que possible, j'ai envoyé deux
« de nos amis chez les Mirdites et les tribus voisines avec des
« *présents en argent et quelques armes*. Mes agents sont
« chargés de tranquilliser nos alliés et de leur promettre
« une prompte solution de leur différend avec les Turcs.

« Quant à ce qui concerne la politique du Monténégro,
« j'ai recommandé à mes agents d'expliquer au chef Shion
« que le prince Nicolas est prêt à fondre sur les Turcs,
« mais qu'il attend seulement que ces derniers lui offrent
« un prétexte plausible pour commencer les hostilités.

(Traduit du Russe.)

Le document que l'on vient de lire est, comme tous ceux qui vont suivre, rempli de révélations touchant les distributions d'armes et d'argent aux futurs soldats de la révolte.

Il serait fatigant pour le lecteur d'être arrêté à chaque instant par de longues réflexions critiques. Nous nous bornerons donc à mettre en lumière, par quelques mots à peine, le point saillant de chaque dépêche.

Ce qu'il y a de particulièrement remarquable dans ces documents, c'est le cynisme avec lequel ces agitateurs émérites et officiels essaient de glisser, au milieu des aveux les plus accablants, des affirmations tendant à faire croire que les troubles qu'ils suscitent procèdent de la prétendue oppression des Turcs, et non de manœuvres incessantes qui ne laissent ni repos ni trêve à l'esprit des populations.

N^o 12.

*Extraits d'une dépêche chiffrée de M^r.... Consul à Sérajevo
au Comité de Vienne, 10122 Août 1872.*

.....
« Tous ces changements ont fini par discréditer complé-
« tement le gouvernement dans l'esprit de la population,
« qui comprend déjà, sans qu'on ait besoin de le lui
« expliquer, que *le salut lui viendra de la Serbie libre*
« *et forte grâce à l'appui de la Russie.*

« La rixe de Colachine a effrayé tellement les Turcs,
« qu'ils ont concentré 8 bataillons du côté de l'Albanie
« et de l'Herzégovine. Il faut voir cependant, si cette
« mesure de précaution suffira à arrêter les *agressions*
« *qui se préparent des deux côtés.*

(Traduction du Russe.)

« Les *agressions qui se préparent des deux côtés* ! L'aveu
est bon à retenir, après l'idée du Salut que les populations
devront à la Serbie grande et forte « par l'appui de la
Russie. »

N^o 13.

*Extrait d'une dépêche chiffrée de M^r.... vice-consul à Mostar
au Comité de Vienne, 11123 Août 1872.*

« L'agent que j'ai envoyé à Nicksich et Popovo est revenu
« ce matin, porteur de plusieurs pétitions des habitants
« adressées au Gouvernement Impérial.

« Après avoir exposé en détail tout ce qu'ils endurent de
« la part des autorités musulmanes, nos coreligionnaires
« imploront la clémence du *gouvernement impérial* et de-
« mandent, ou d'être transportés en Russie, où ils pour-
« ront vivre à l'abri de toute persécution, ou bien les moyens
« de combattre l'ennemi de notre religion et de seconder un
« joug devenu trop odieux à force d'être insupportable.

« Les *sommes* que j'ai envoyées aux parents et amis de
« Cocacervich ont donné la possibilité à 18 d'entre eux de
« se rendre au Monténégro, *pour se mettre à la disposition*
« *du Commandant de la vaillante troupe monténégrine.*
« Quant aux autres, ne pouvant quitter le pays à cause de
« leurs familles, ils ont prié ceux qui se sont rendus au
« Monténégro de leur envoyer, aussitôt qu'ils le pourront,
« *de la poudre de guerre, pour pouvoir courir aux armes,*
« *au premier appel du Prince Nicolas.*

Le *gouvernement Impérial* dont il s'agit ici n'est pas, bien
entendu, celui du souverain légitime des pétitionnaires; c'est
à un souverain étranger que l'on pousse les populations à
pétitionner, et c'est le consul de ce souverain étranger qui
les corrompt par des distributions d'argent, destinées à leur
faire prendre du service dans l'armée du futur ennemi de
leur pays !

N° 14.

*Extrait d'une dépêche chiffrée de M..., Consul à Seraïevo
au Comité de Vienne 21 Août (2 Septembre 1872.)*

» Les fêtes de Belgrade ont produit partout une excel-
« lente impression. Les patriotes de Serajevo en ont été
« *électrisés* à tel point, que plusieurs notables sont venus

« *me voir* et me déclarer leurs dispositions de sacrifier la
« moitié de leur fortune pour l'*armement* des volontaires,
« en cas d'une guerre entre la Turquie et la Serbie.

« Les voyant dans une telle disposition d'esprit, j'ai
« cru devoir les féliciter pour leurs sentiments patriotiques,
« leur promettant d'en informer le *gouvernement impérial* ;
« quant à ce qui concerne leurs suppositions sur l'imminence
« d'une guerre, j'ai tâché de les tranquilliser là-dessus,
« tout en leur ajoutant que, si les hostilités ne commen-
« cent pas maintenant, *cela ne veut pas dire qu'elles soient*
« *remises indéfiniment...*

« La Serbie, qui se prépare sérieusement à une guerre
« prochaine, a besoin, leur ai-je dit, du concours de tous
« ses enfants ; par conséquent vous ferez bien de *mettre à*
« *exécution vos projets d'armement.*

« A la suite de longues conférences que nous avons eues
« ensemble, ils décidèrent d'envoyer deux membres de leur
« Société à Belgrade, pour remettre au Prince Milan le
« montant des sommes qu'ils veulent *donner à la patrie.*

(Traduction du Russe).

La « patrie » des Bosniaques, c'est la Principauté où règne celui qui déclarera la guerre un jour à leur propre souverain ; car les hostilités sont loin « d'être remises indéfiniment », le consul le leur a bien spécifié dans son discours paternel destiné à les maintenir « électrisés ». Ce « Gouvernement Impérial » étranger, auquel on doit rendre compte des bonnes dispositions des populations pour la révolte, vient ici avec un à-propos sans pareil.

N° 15.

Dépêche chiffrée de Mr... Vice-Consul à Raguse

au Comité de Vienne, 26 Août (6 Septembre) 1872.

« Après quatre mois d'absence, C..... est arrivé hier
« à Mostar, porteur de plusieurs lettres et pétitions des
« habitants de l'Herzégovine adressées au *Ministère Im-*
« *périal* des affaires étrangères ainsi qu'à des *fonc-*
« *tionnaires supérieurs à Saint-Pétersbourg.*

« Grâce au zèle et au savoir-faire de C...., la cause
« monténégrine a gagné du terrain dans ce pays, où
« même les catholiques commencent à s'habituer à l'idée
« de s'unir un jour aux sujets du Prince Nicolas.

« Comme il m'a promis de me laisser une relation dé-
« taillée de son voyage et de ses pourparlers avec les moines
« et les propriétaires les plus influents du pays, j'espère
« être bientôt en mesure de faire parvenir au comité cette
« pièce intéressante. Quant aux lettres et pétitions pour
« Pétersbourg, je les ai envoyées directement au départe-
« ment asiatique.

» Ce matin, sont arrivés ici deux agents de la Société
« Serbe « *Mlada Srbadia* », ils sont venus me voir et m'ont
« dit que les directeurs de la Société les ont chargés de
« visiter les couvents de l'Herzégovine et de la Dalmatie,
« pour y établir des *bibliothèques populaires.*

Les « bibliothèques populaires » jouent un rôle impor-
tant dans la conspiration, ainsi qu'on le verra par les

documents qui suivent. Il faut bien répandre les lumières. Jusqu'au moine catholique, ce *scanna-pidocchi*, comme le qualifie Salvator Rosa, qui sort de son obscurité pour éclairer le paysan ottoman, et lui apprendre que son devoir de citoyen consiste à se mettre aux ordres du *Ministère Impérial Russe* et des hauts fonctionnaires de Saint-Petersbourg.

N° 16.

Dépêche chiffrée de M..., Consul à Raguse

au Comité de Vienne, 28 Août (9 Septembre) 1872.

« Le prince Kh..... arrivé ici avant-hier, se trouve
« déjà à Cettigne. Lors de son passage, il a pu non-seu-
« lement voir la famille princière, mais encore s'entretenir
« avec plusieurs de nos amis dans cette ville.

« Son arrivée à Cattaro coïncidant avec celle du neveu
« de V....., il m'a été très-facile d'arranger leur
« voyage simultané pour le Monténégro, d'où, d'après
« ce que m'écrit M. Khilkoff, ils se rendront ensemble en
« Bosnie.

« *J'ai reçu les 10000 florins du Comité central* et me
« *ferai un devoir d'exécuter* dans le plus bref délai sa déci-
« sion, concernant la nouvelle agence à Budna. Quant aux
« secours destinés aux Monténégrins, j'ai prié M. Kh.....
« de remettre au Prince Nicolas *3,000 florins*, que S. A.
« distribuera aux familles les plus nécessiteuses.

Voilà un Consul-Général qui « se fait un devoir » d'exé-

cuter les ordres d'une Société secrète, et se charge de distribuer les sommes que cette Société consacre au budget de l'insurrection qu'elle médite. Quant au Prince Nicolas, c'est un vrai grand Seigneur décidément. Il distribue les secours à ses sujets nécessiteux par trois mille florins à la fois..... mais, c'est encore la même Société qui lui permet ainsi de *faire grand*.

N^o 17.

*Dépêche chiffrée de M^r....., Consul-Général à Belgrade,
au Comité de Vienne, 1/13 Décembre 1872.*

« Conformément aux instructions du Comité Central,
« en date du 18/30 Août, j'ai l'honneur d'annoncer au Co-
« mité de Vienne, que la formation de la Société libératrice
« est en pleine voie d'exécution. M. Ristich ayant accepté
« la présidence provisoire, tous les officiers de troupes
« régulières de la Principauté, ainsi qu'un nombre consi-
« dérable de la milice nationale, se sont empressés de
« s'inscrire sur la liste des Sociétaires.

« Avant-hier et hier, il y a eu une telle affluence aux
« bureaux des directeurs provisoires, que nous avons été
« obligés d'ouvrir trois nouvelles agences :

« 1^o A la rédaction de Mlada Srbadia ;

« 2^o Au Casino national ;

« 3^o Chez M. Lechjanin.

« Aujourd'hui, j'envoie notre J..... à Seraïevo, pour s'y
« entendre avec le consul impérial, afin de commencer
« *notre œuvre en Bosnie.*

« Emissaires que la Société Mlada Srbadia vient d'en-
« voyer en Bosnie et Herzégovine :

« 1. — D..... (prêtre).

« 2. — A..... (moine).

« 3. — D..... I.....

« 4. — S..... A.....

« 5. — M..... F.....

« 6. — M..... S.....

(Traduction du Russe.)

Le Consul-Général qui agit, « conformément aux instruc-
tions du Comité central », pour opérer « en Bosnie » et ail-
leurs, est vraiment édifiant.

Il nous saura gré sans doute de ne point rendre impos-
sibles ses acolytes dans quelque prochaine opération, en
publiant leurs noms en toutes lettres.

N° 18.

*Dépêche chiffrée du Comité Central au Comité de Vienne
en date de Pétersbourg, 2114 Septembre 1872.*

« Par ordre de Son Altesse Impériale M^{gr} notre Au-
« guste Président, le Comité de Vienne est invité à en-
« voyer deux agents plénipotentiaires à Neusatz, afin de
« prendre part aux Conférences que tiendront les chefs

« du parti national, pour le choix des candidats à porter
« aux futures élections du Patriarche Serbe. En même
« temps, vous aurez à envoyer quelques agents dévoués
« et intelligents en Bosnie et en Herzégovine, qui s'y
« entendront avec les émissaires de la Mlada Sbradia pour
« la création des bibliothèques populaires. Si le Comité
« n'a pas à sa disposition des personnes capables de rem-
« plir cette tâche, ils pourront s'adresser aux Consuls
« Impériaux à Raguse et Séraïevo, ainsi qu'au Vice-Consul
« à Mostar, qui choisiront les agents voulus. Ces agents
« devront, tout en surveillant les faits et langage des
« émissaires Serbes, procéder à la formation, dans le pays,
« d'une *société secrète* dont les membres s'obligeraient
« à *courir, au premier signal, aux armes*, et à se porter
« là où leur ordonneraient les chefs qui seront élus par
« la direction centrale. »

(Traduction du Russe.)

O Monseigneur, vous qui présidez d'une manière si
« auguste » le Comité où se centralisent les conspirations,
soyez sans inquiétude ; vos « Consuls Impériaux » sauront
bien trouver, moyennant finance, les Séides dévoués dont
vous avez besoin : Vous savez bien que qui se ressemble
s'assemble. Convenez cependant que tous ces gens vous
compromettent étrangement ; passe pour les « bibliothèques
populaires » ; cela peut tromper l'œil et se prendre pour
une bonne œuvre ; mais ces mots de « Société secrète »
dans une dépêche où vous êtes nommé, c'est raide ; car
malgré tout, vous êtes une Altesse.

N° 19.

Dépêche chiffrée de M^r... Consul-Général à Belgrade


au Comité de Vienne, du 7/19 Septembre 1872.

« Je m'empresse de vous annoncer que le Comité de
« Belgrade, ayant confié à T.... P.... et B.... B.... la mis-
« sion de parcourir les *districts septentrionaux du*
« *Vilayet du Danube*, pour y propager les idées de la
« Mlada Srbadia et établir des succursales de l'agence
« unioniste d'ici, ces MM. ont quitté, le 4/16 courant, la
« Serbie, pour se rendre à leur destination.

« T..... P..... se rendra d'abord à Roustchouk,
« accompagné de Jovan B.... et Bogow D....

« B.... s'arrêtera, pour quelques jours, aux environs
« de Viddin, où il sera rejoint par notre compatriote
« D.... Ces MM. étant venus me voir et prendre mes ins-
« tructions avant leur départ, je leur ai donné des lettres
« pour notre Consul-Général à Roustchouk, ainsi que
« 250 francs à chacun.

(Traduction du Russe.)

Il faut, Monsieur le « Consul-Général, » que vous em-
ployiez de vrais gens de sac et de corde. Conçoit-on des
malheureux qui font un pareil métier à raison de 250
francs par tête ! Cependant le Comité Central  subven-
tionne grassement ; il envoie des fonds par 40,000 florins.
Qui donc spéculé sur les gages de ces misérables ?

N° 20.

*Dépêche chiffrée de M^r. . . Consul à Seraïevo
au Comité de Vienne, 24 octobre (5 novembre) 1872.*

« J. . . . m'écrit, en date de Banja-Lucca, 18/30
« courant, qu'il se voit obligé de quitter le pays et de partir
« immédiatement pour la Serbie. Son voyage d'ici à Banja-
« Lucca s'est effectué avec grande difficulté, vu le nombre
« considérable de zaptiés et soldats turcs qui parcourent
« depuis quelque temps le pays. S'il n'avait pas emmené
« avec lui notre M. . . . , il lui aurait été impossible *de par-*
« *venir sain et sauf* dans la ville sus-mentionnée. Il a failli
« même être pris deux fois par les policiers turcs, envoyés
« depuis quelque temps contre le *clergé patriotique du*
« *pays*, et il n'en a été délivré que grâce à sa présence
« d'esprit et à ses relations amicales avec le Khodjabachi.
« Les affaires à Banja-Luca vont pis qu'il y a quatre
« mois. L'énergie fiévreuse du Mutessarîf, qui vient de
« succéder à son apathie habituelle, forme un obstacle
« impossible à surmonter pour le moment. En même temps,
« J. . . . a reçu de nouvelles instructions de Cragu-
« jevatz lui enjoignant de repasser le plus tôt possible la
« frontière, afin d'assister à l'assemblée extraordinaire de
« la Srbadia, qui aura lieu vers les premiers jours de No-
« vembre (n. s.). C'est M. . . . qui restera à sa place, et
« comme sa présence (sous le nom surtout qu'il porte
« actuellement ici) ne saurait susciter aucun soupçon, il

« faut espérer que la mission confiée à J. . . . sera menée
« à bonne fin.

« Avant-hier sont arrivés ici deux Monténégrins. Ils
« sont envoyés par B. . . . P. . . ., pour s'entendre, avec
« le conseil de l'évêché sur le nombre d'élèves que le dio-
« cèse de Mgr Païssios a l'intention d'envoyer prochaine-
« ment au séminaire de Cettigné. Je doute fort que Mgr
« Païssios ait le pouvoir de faire quelque chose dans ce
« sens Ce *digne prélat* est, depuis quelque temps, très
« mal vu par les autorités turques, et il fera bien (comme
« je le lui ai dit) d'éviter toute démarche qui pourrait
« le perdre dans l'esprit des Turcs, et provoquer sa desti-
« tution et son remplacement par *quelque phanariote*,
« *digne émule* de l'ex-métropolitain Dionissios. »

(Traduction du Russe.)

Quel malheur vraiment si ce gibier de potence de M. . . ,
n'était pas arrivé sain et sauf, et que le « *digne* » Prélat
Païssios, assisté de son « *clergé patriotique* » eût du s'é-
gosiller à prier pour sa vilaine âme ! Quant aux Autorités
Turques, elles sont d'une indécence sans nom ; elles se-
raient capables de songer à remplacer ce saint Prélat, qui
conspire par quelque Evêque « *Phanariote* » assez indigne
pour professer le respect des lois. C'est l'énormité des
énormités.

N^o 21.

*Dépêche chiffrée de M..., vice-consul de Mostar au comité
de Vienne, 1713 Novembre 1872.*

« Je m'empresse de vous accuser réception des paquets
« 418 et 419, que j'ai transmis immédiatement à leur
« adresse.

« Ayant reçu en même temps *les 750 ducats destinés*
« aux familles de Popovo qui ont souffert des persécu-
« tions turques de l'année passée, je me suis adressé à
« notre ami Y..... pour qu'il se charge de la distribu-
« tion. Ce Monsieur ne pouvant pas s'y rendre pour le
« moment, je me suis vu obligé d'envoyer la dite somme
« au Consulat Impérial de Raguse, qui a toute la possibilité
« de faire parvenir cet argent, sans obstacle, à sa desti-
« nation.

« J'ai reçu une lettre de Y..... qui m'annonce son
« arrivée à Trebigné. Il n'y restera que quelques jours,
« et sera ici au commencement de la semaine prochaine.
« Il paraît que son voyage a parfaitement réussi et qu'il
« n'a plus rencontré à Suttorina les mêmes obstacles qui
« avaient tant nui autrefois à C..... D'ici, il se ren-
« dra, m'écrit-il, à Banja-Lucca, et peut-être jusqu'à la
« frontière autrichienne.

Ces paquets Nos 418 et 419 nous font rêver ; quant aux
750 ducats que le comité envoie au vice-consul, nous som-
mes faits maintenant à ces sortes de choses ; elles ne valent
plus la peine d'un développement.

N° 22.

Dépêche chiffrée de M... vice-consul à Mostar au Comité

de Vienne, 10122 Novembre 1872.

« C'est avant-hier seulement que j'ai reçu la dépêche
« en date du 18/30 Octobre et la proclamation de V.
« J'ai mandé immédiatement notre ami J. , et,
« après lui avoir communiqué votre désir, je lui ai remis
« un exemplaire de la proclamation. Hier soir, les diffé-
« rentes copies étaient déjà préparées et, aujourd'hui, notre
« ami s'est mis à les distribuer parmi les plus *influents de*
« *nos partisans.*

« Quant à ce qui concerne l'évêque Procopius, j'ai en-
« voyé un article contre lui à Cettigné avec une lettre à
« B. , le priant de le faire publier par le *Cesno-*
« *govac.*

« Après l'apparition de cet article, nous commencerons
« avec plus de facilité notre propagande contre cet
« *indigne prélat*, et il ne nous sera plus difficile de vaincre
« la résistance de ceux dont la timidité nous a beaucoup
« gênés dans l'accomplissement de nos désirs. »

L'évêque Procopius n'a qu'à se bien tenir, si votre article est aussi bien conçu que votre morale est facile ; cet « indigne prélat », après la « propagande » qui suivra votre éreintement vice-consulaire, peut être considéré comme radicalement perdu. Pourtant, quel *digne* prince de l'Eglise c'eût été, s'il avait

eu la chance d'être venu au monde avec un peu de sentiment slave dans le cœur.

N° 23.

*Dépêche chiffrée de Mr..... Consul à Scutari,
au Comité de Vienne, 12/24 Novembre 1872.*

« Notre situation ici devient de plus en plus intolérable.
« Malgré le nombre considérable de nos partisans parmi les
« montagnards, et malgré les émissaires du Prince Nicolas,
« qui ne cessent de parcourir en tous sens le pays, il nous
« est bien difficile de lutter contre les *intrigues de Chevket*.
« Ce Turc inspire à tout le monde une telle peur, qu'il est
« impossible de songer à quelque diversion en faveur du
« Monténégro.

« Il serait bien dans l'intérêt de nos malheureux frères
« de race, si le Comité écrivait aussi à Constantinople pour
« appuyer mon dernier rapport à S. Exc. l'Ambassadeur.
« La destitution de Chevket pourra seule préserver le pays
« de grandes calamités, et fructifier nos efforts en faveur
« de la régénération de ce peuple digne de toute notre
« protection. »

Quel *intrigant* que ce « Chevket » ! Avoir le front de gêner les auteurs de troubles dans la province qu'il administre ! Il faut vraiment être « Turc » pour se conduire ainsi ; mais il aura affaire à l'influence de Son Excellence l'Ambassadeur, et bien fou qui lui donnerait dix paras de sa place.

N° 24.

Dépêche chiffrée du comité central à M^r..., Consul à Salonique.

St-Pétersbourg, 14/26 Novembre 1872.

« Le Comité Central a l'honneur de vous annoncer que
« par ordre de S. A. I. Mgr notre Auguste Président,
« l'agence du Mont-Athos devra être transformée en
« Comité organisateur.

« Ce comité aura pour mission :

« 1° D'établir dans le couvent dit « Roussikon » *un dépôt*
« *d'armes et de munitions* de guerre ;

« 2° D'envoyer en *Macédoine, Thrace, Bulgarie et an-*
« *cienne Serbie des émissaires* chargés d'y distribuer de
« *livres et de l'argent, et d'enrôler des partisans* à la cause
« *Slave et des volontaires pour le mouvement patriotique.*

« 3° D'établir dans la péninsule d'Athos, des colonies
« Russes et Bulgares afin de transformer cette contrée en
« *pays essentiellement Slave.* Dans ce but, vous ne néglige-
« rez aucun moyen pour déposséder les Grecs, dans l'es-
« pace de quelques années, de tous les couvents et terrains
« d'Athos qui restent encore en leur possession.

« Le Comité organisateur aura à sa disposition, annuelle-
« ment, *la somme de 50,000 Roubles*, dont l'emploi sera
« *contrôlé par l'Ambassade Impériale* à Constantinople.

« La direction du Comité sera confiée au *Consul Impé-*
« *rial* à Salonique, qui sera tenu de séjourner la moitié de
« l'année à Athos. En son absence, la Présidence passe au

« Réverend Père Hiéronime auquel seront adjoints trois
« des moines que vous avez recommandés à la protection
« du Comité, savoir : les Pères Macarius (de Roussikon)
« Benjamin et Etienne (de Lavra). »

S. A. I. l'Auguste Président du Comité Central, voyait très-juste dès cette époque : Quand le Roussikon serait devenu un dépôt d'armes et un foyer d'où seraient parties les distributions d'argent et où se seraient faits les enrôlements de volontaires ; quand les moines Russes auraient suffisamment expulsé les moines Grecs pour pouvoir agir librement aux environs, alors il deviendrait facile d'agiter le pays, d'y susciter des troubles qui pourraient aller même jusqu'à occasionner des assassinats de Consuls — l'évènement, d'ailleurs, est là pour combler d'orgueil l'auguste personnage qui voyait de si loin.

N° 25.

*Dépêche chiffrée de M^r... Consul à Scutari,
au Comité de Vienne, 17/29 Novembre 1872.*

« B.... P..... vient de m'annoncer le retour à Cettigné
« des deux agents qu'il avait envoyés, il y a quatre mois,
« dans l'Albanie méridionale.

« La mission confiée à ces deux émissaires était, comme
« vous ne l'ignorez pas, de parcourir le pays au-delà de
« Dulcigno et d'y étendre l'influence du Monténégro. Grâce
« à l'habileté de B.... et surtout aux moyens pécu-

« niaires qui furent mis à sa disposition par ordre du Comité Central, cette mission a été couronnée de succès.

« Prêchant partout la guerre sainte contre les ennemis de l'indépendance Slavo-Albanaise, B..... et son collègue ont dû s'exprimer aussi contre les Bulgares pour ne pas effaroucher les sentiments tant soit peu Grecophiles des Albanais. Cette conduite aussi habile que sage a valu aux émissaires Monténégrins la confiance de la population ignorante du pays des Guègues, et nous sommes fondés à espérer que l'argent dépensé si généreusement en cette occasion portera les meilleurs fruits pour l'avenir.

« C'est seulement au diocèse de Janina que B..... a vu échouer ses tentatives. L'influence de l'Archevêque Grec de cette ville est si grande, que notre ami a dû s'arrêter dès les premières paroles dites dans le sens de sa mission. Prévoyant même des désagréments et quelque trahison, il a dû rebrousser chemin, et rejoindre son collègue, qui l'attendait depuis une dizaine de jours aux environs de Vallona.

« En me communiquant ces détails, B..... P..... ajouta que, d'après B....., l'influence de R..... P..... est à tel point insignifiante dans le pays, que les habitants de plusieurs bourgs de l'Epire ont renvoyé dernièrement à Trieste les numéros de la *Clio*, qui a pris la défense des Phéréistes contre les attaques du parti Anglais de Corfou.

« M. C..... se fait, à ce qu'il paraît, de grandes illusions sur l'importance et l'avenir de son œuvre, qui aura, sans aucun doute, le même sort que la mission de nos agents à Corfou et en Epire en 1870.

« Avant d'agir sur les habitants de cette province, il faut

« drait, d'après le Prince Nicolas (et je partage entière-
« ment son avis), parvenir à faire remplacer l'archevêque
« de Yanina par un Prélat *plus ambitieux* et moins Turco-
« phile que le titulaire actuel. Autrement nous tournerons
« toujours dans un cercle vicieux et, plus nous jetterons
« de l'argent, plus nous compromettrons notre cause dans
« ce pays.

Ce M^r B. . . , à la disposition de qui on met « des moyens
pécuniaires » considérables, nous paraît n'être en somme
qu'un misérable fort réussi. Voyez-vous comme il lâche au
besoin ses bons amis Bulgares ! Il est bien regrettable tou-
tefois que ce digne homme ait trouvé à Janina un évêque
aussi peu « ambitieux » que le titulaire en question.
Quel digne Prélat ferait pourtant cet évêque, s'il avait la
moindre ambition à l'endroit des « moyens pécuniaires »
dont dispose l'excellent M^r B?

N° 26.

Dépêche chiffrée du Comité de Vienne

à M. Consul à Sarajevo 13/25 Décembre. 1872.

« Le Comité de Vienne vient d'envoyer au Consulat Géné-
« ral à Belgrade *la somme de 1400 L.S.* avec prière de vous
« la faire parvenir à la première occasion favorable. Cette
« somme est destinée, par le Comité Central, à la population
« orthodoxe de Bosnie, pour lui donner les moyens de sou-

« tenir *vigoureusement la lutte nationale* contre les empiè-
« tements du clergé Phanariote et contre le despotisme
« toujours croissant de l'administration turque. En consé-
« quence de cela, vous êtes prié de vous entendre avec Mon-
« seigneur Païssios et les notables qui sont dévoués à
« notre cause, sur le meilleur et plus efficace emploi de la
« dite somme.

« Tout en vous communiquant cette décision du comité
« central, nous croyons devoir y ajouter que vous êtes
« parfaitement libre de donner une partie de la somme en
« question à ceux des moines catholiques qui pourraient
« exercer une influence sur la population bosniaque. Ayant
« en vue de consolider les liens de bonne entente qui se
« sont établis depuis quelques temps entre les membres
» principaux du clergé des deux églises, nous serions très-
« heureux si les abbés des couvents catholiques ap-
« puyaient de leur influence la propagande du clergé or-
« thodoxe pour la revendication de ses droits.

« Une dépêche identique vient d'être envoyée au Vice-
« Consul de Mostar, *qui recevra 800 L.S.* voie de Raguse

Il est certain que le Gouvernement Turc, qui ne fait pas d'envois de livres sterling à distribuer pour raccoler des partisans, ne peut être qu'un gouvernement oppresseur.

Quant au clergé catholique de Bosnie, dont on tient tant à consolider la bonne entente avec le clergé Russe, il faut croire qu'il ne lit pas l'histoire de l'Eglise catholique de Pologne, et qu'il n'a jamais entendu parler des odieuses pasquinades politico-religieuses des Siestrencewicz et des Siemaszko.

N^o 27.

*Dépêche chiffrée de M^r..... vice-consul à Mostar,
au Comité de Vienne, 14²⁶ Décembre 1872.*

« Hier, est arrivé ici l'agent principal du Comité de l'ini-
« tiative nationale, M. B... B..... Une heure après son
« arrivée, il s'est présenté au Consulat pour me remet-
« tre une lettre de Monsieur A..... D....., et se mettre à ma
« disposition.

« Le secrétaire du Comité m'écrit dans sa lettre que
« les deux agents envoyés, il y a deux mois, en Herzé-
« govine, ayant échoué dans leur mission, le Comité a
« cru utile de confier la même besogne à M. G....., et
« le mettre en relation directe avec moi et M. C.....

« D'après ce que j'ai pu juger, le choix du comité a été,
« cette fois-ci, plus heureux qu'auparavant. Monsieur G...
« a commencé ses travaux le même jour de son arri-
« vée ici, et l'on peut-être sûr du succès de sa mission.
« Comme il part demain, il laisse à sa place à Mostar le
« plus âgé des maîtres de l'Ecole Orthodoxe, qui jouit
« d'une certaine considération dans le pays et nous est
« très-dévoué.

« Grâce au zèle de ce dernier et au savoir faire de M.
« P....., l'évêque Procopius n'a rien pu découvrir ; je
« crois même qu'il ignore complètement l'arrivée de
« l'agent Serbe.

« Après avoir parcouru l'Herzégovine orientale, T.....

« se rendra à Seraïevo, où il devra se trouver vers le
« commencement de Février. Comme c'est à cette époque-là
« que le Comité de l'initiative sera en possession *des armes*
« *qu'il distribuera aux volontaires*, P... se croit sûr
« de pouvoir achever alors *l'enrôlement* et remettre, aux
« nouveaux délégués de Belgrade, *les listes des volontaires*
« avec leurs signatures.

« Distribution d'armes, enrôlements de volontaires » ; telle
a été l'œuvre incessante d'une certaine diplomatie pen-
dant dix ans. Et le cabinet pour le compte duquel cette
diplomatie agissait, est précisément celui qui ose repro-
cher à la Turquie les insurrections ainsi préparées, fomen-
tées par ses agents.

N° 28.

*Dépêche chiffrée de M^r..... Consul à Fiume,
au Comité de Vienne, 13^e 25 Janvier 1873.*

« Je viens de recevoir une lettre de Monsieur M... ..
« qui m'annonce le départ de son secrétaire pour Banja-
« Lucca. Le but de ce voyage est d'établir des *relations*
« *directes entre le clergé orthodoxe de la Serbie d'Au-*
« *triche et celui de Bosnie*, en vue d'aboutir, un jour, à la
« réunion de ces pays sous la même *autorité ecclésiast-*
« *tique*.

« L'émissaire monténégrin L..... est arrivé ici, il y
« à quatre jours. Son voyage à travers la Bosnie fut une
« une vraie Odyssee, qu'il vous racontera bientôt lui-même,

« car il doit partir dans huit jours pour Vienne. N'ayant
« pu remplir sa mission en Bosnie, à cause de la grande
« vigilance de la police turque, il a remis sa besogne à
« son ami M... de Livno.

« Les brochures et les livres de prières, que le comité
« m'a expédiés, il y a un mois, me sont parvenus avant-
« hier. Je les enverrai en Bosnie à la première occasion
« favorable.»

On sait quel rôle la Russie fait jouer au clergé, lorsqu'elle parvient à le détacher de l'Eglise Grecque.

C'est dire quel but elle poursuit, en provoquant la réunion, sous une même autorité, du clergé orthodoxe de la Serbie d'Autriche et de celui de la Bosnie. Avis au Gouvernement autrichien.

N^o 29.

*Dépêche chiffrée de M^r..., Consul à Scutari,
au Comité de Vienne, 15^h27 Janvier 1873.*

« R..... m'a envoyé une copie de deux lettres circu-
« laires, que les Albanais, réfugiés au Monténégro, adres-
« sent à leurs compatriotes. Les signataires de ces circu-
« laires, après avoir exposé à leurs compatriotes les causes
« qui les ont obligés de s'expatrier, conseillent aux Alba-
« nais d'oublier leurs dissensions intérieures et de s'unir
« étroitement, pour pouvoir combattre l'opresseur de leur
« patrie, dès que leurs vaillants alliés, les Monténégrins,
« entreront en Albanie.

« Ces circulaires, dont l'une est destinée aux Albanais
« Serbes et l'autre, aux habitants des districts méridio-
« naux, sont remplies d'expressions de gratitude envers
« le gouvernement princier de Monténégro, pour la
« manière cordiale et toute fraternelle, avec laquelle ils
« ont accueilli, eux et leurs familles, dans la Principauté.
« Son Altesse, d'après ce que m'écrit R... , a ordonné
« de tirer plusieurs milliers d'exemplaires de ces circu-
« laires et de les envoyer en Albanie par des émissaires
« spéciaux.

« On m'annonce de Prizrène, que les greco-valaques
« s'agitent beaucoup pour faire destituer l'évêque, et qu'ils
« ne s'arrêtent devant aucune calomnie. Il faut espérer
« pourtant que l'influence de l'Ambassade Impériale à
« Constantinople, préservera le pays d'un si grand mal-
« heur.

En jetant les yeux sur une dépêche précédente du Consul de Mostar (pièce N° 13), le lecteur pourra voir que ces prétendus réfugiés au Monténégro étaient dix-huit agents, que le dit Consul y avait envoyés, suffisamment pourvus d'argent pour pouvoir promettre des envois de poudre et de munitions, à ceux de leurs complices qui, avaient dû rester chez eux. Nous n'avons pas sous la main la circulaire des dix-huit émissaires; il serait curieux de voir s'ils ont osé y exposer les *véritables* causes qui les ont obligés de s'expatrier.

N° 30.

*Dépêche chiffrée de M^r... Consul à Séraïevo
au Comité de Vienne, 12/24 Janvier 1873.*

« Les nouvelles de Prizrène sont toujours satisfai-
« faisantes. Grâce au patriotisme de Monseigneur M.....,
« les prétentions des Coutzo-Valaques ont été repous-
« sées avec énergie par les membres de la communauté,
« et la cause serbe est sortie victorieuse des embûches,
« qui lui avaient été dressées par le clergé Phanariote.
« L'arrivée du père A..... ranimera, il faut l'espérer,
« le courage de nos amis, et donnera à l'évêque la possi-
« bilité de lutter avec plus de force contre les nouveaux
« ennemis du slavisme. Le père A..... ne pouvant pas
« rester longtemps à Prizrène, il confiera le chiffré à
« l'évêque qui correspondra, désormais, directement avec
« nous.

« La distribution des secours d'argent, dont je vous ai
« parlé dans ma dernière dépêche, a eu lieu, le 1113 cou-
« rant, à Séraïevo et, le 6118, aux bourgades des environs.
« Quant aux armes et munitions, j'en ai donné une partie
« à B..... qui s'est chargé de les distribuer parmi nos
« amis de Tranvik. Pour ce qui concerne le reste, j'at-
« tends la première occasion favorable, afin de l'expédier
« à Prizrène et Detchany.

« Ce *digne* évêque assez peu scrupuleux pour avoir un
« chiffre, » au moyen duquel il correspond avec les sociétés

secrètes et les Consuls conspirateurs, était en butte aux « embûches du clergé Phanariote. » Mais il est donc sans foi, ni loi, cet abominable clergé, qui ose ainsi contrecarrer les innocentes distractions d'un aussi saint homme !

Quant aux distributions d'argent, que nous voyons ici, c'est un détail. Il faut bien essayer de nous y accoutumer.

N° 31.

*Dépêche chiffrée de M^r..., Consul à Scutari,
au Comité de Vienne, 719 Février 1873.*

« Radovich m'écrit que c'est le mauvais temps qui a
« empêché la grande revue que le Prince Nicolas projetait
« de faire à Tzernoevitchereka. Cette revue pourtant aura
« indubitablement lieu, car les députés des tribus alba-
« naises ne pourront rester au Monténégro, sans s'exposer
« aux mauvais traitements des autorités turques.

« Le Prince a reçu, à la fin du mois, trois prêtres, dont
« deux orthodoxes de Glava et Stravisa et un catholique
« de Riolli. Ils sont venus à Cettigné pour recevoir les
« subsides, qui leur avaient été promis par le gouverne-
« ment du Prince. M. Radovich ajoute qu'ils ont promis à
« Son Altesse, de se conformer, en tous points, aux instruc-
« tions qui leur avaient été données au mois de Novembre.

« A peine fondée, la confrérie de Dulcigno a élargi son
« cercle d'action sur les tribus voisines. La population

« chrétienne d'Alessio paraît très-disposée à marcher
« d'accord avec celle de Dulcigno. »

Trois prêtres, dont un catholique, recevant les sub-
sides panslavistes, c'est nauséabond ; mais nous avons déjà
trop fait remarquer des faits de cette nature pour insister.

N° 32.

Dépêche chiffrée de M^r . . . Consul à Raguse,

à M^r Y . . . à Vienne, 16/28 Décembre 1872.

« Le Prince Nicolas, ayant appris les dernières disposi-
« tions du Comité central à l'égard du Monténégro, m'a
« prié de transmettre au dit Comité, l'expression de *sa pro-*
« *fonde reconnaissance*. En même temps, il m'a fait remet-
« tre une lettre autographe pour Son Altesse Monsei-
« gneur **, que je m'empresse de joindre à ce pli sous
« cachet volant, en priant Votre Excellence de la faire
« parvenir à sa haute destination.

« La lettre en question étant remplie de détails très-in-
« téressants et minutieux sur l'état des armements dans la
« Principauté, je crois inutile d'en importuner davantage
« Votre Excellence et me bornerai seulement à ajouter
« que B..... m'a déclaré dernièrement ne pouvoir rien
« faire, pour ce qui concerne *les munitions, sans l'autori-*
« *sation d'Opuich.*

(Traduit du Russe.)

Si le Prince Nicolas a de sérieuses raisons de témoigner « sa profonde reconnaissance » au Comité central, c'est ce que l'avenir démontrera. En attendant, il est certain que cette puissante officine de l'insurrection panslaviste a eu intérêt, jusqu'ici, à tirer le Principicule de Cettigné de l'obscurité où il était condamné à vivre et à mourir, pour en faire l'instrument de ses desseins.

Quant aux munitions dont il s'agit ici, on verra plus loin qu'elles étaient le produit d'un contrat considérable passé avec la maison Opuich de Trieste.

N° 33.

*Dépêche chiffrée de M^r... Vice-Consul à Mostar,
au Comité de Vienne, 22 Décembre 1872 (v. s.).*

« Je viens de recevoir une lettre de B. P....., en date
« de Trébigné, le 18|30 courant. Il a complètement réussi
« dans sa mission et a pu s'entendre avec *tous les chefs*
« *des pays qu'il a parcourus.*

« *L'archimandrite M... , à qui j'avais recommandé*
« *P....., l'a beaucoup aidé dans l'accomplissement de sa*
« *besogne.* Il finissait sa lettre en m'annonçant son départ
« pour Popovo, d'où il se rendra, le lendemain, à Niksich.

« Les caisses 798-801 A. P. C. M. sont arrivées ici le
« 19. *J'ai déjà distribué le contenu de 799 f. aux personnes*
« *qui m'étaient désignées, et ne manquerai pas d'envoyer*
« *le reste à sa destination.*

Nous ne doutons pas du zèle que M^r le Consul mettra à distribuer « le reste »; mais ces 799 f. . . nous préoccupent. F. peut aussi bien être ici pour florins ou pour fusils. Le lecteur choisira.

N^o 34.

Dépêche chiffrée de M^r . . . Consul à Serajevo
au Comité de Vienne, 29 Décembre 1872 (v. s.)

« On m'écrit de Prizrène que la cause de l'église indé-
« pendante fait des progrès sensibles. Le Père A.... est
« parti, avant-hier, pour Prizrène et nous l'avons chargé,
« Mgr Païssios et moi, de remettre aux notables du pays
« plusieurs lettres venant de Serbie, *ainsi que 1000 francs*
« *pour les prêtres*, qui défendent si courageusement la
« cause nationale.

« M. B... P... m'a écrit dernièrement pour me demander
« des nouvelles de son agent L..... Malheureuse-
« ment, je ne suis pas en état de lui donner quelques ren-
« seignements là-dessus. D'après ce que je viens d'appren-
« dre, ce monténégrin s'est rendu, il y a quelques semaines,
« à Banja-Lucca et en est reparti immédiatement. C'est
« tout ce que j'ai pu apprendre sur son compte, et j'ignore
« complètement s'il a réussi à passer la frontière autri-
« chienne. J'ai écrit à Agram, pour que l'on m'instruise sur
« la disparition mystérieuse de ce *malheureux patriote*.
« Ce serait un grand malheur, s'il était tombé dans les
« mains des Turcs.

« J'ai pris les mesures nécessaires pour procéder, après
« les fêtes, à la distribution des *secours d'argent* et des
« *munitions de guerre*, qui me furent envoyées de Bel-
« grade au commencement de l'année (1872), et que j'avais
« fait déposer dans *les grottes que vous savez*. Ayant
« réussi à *endormir tout soupçon à cet égard*, j'ai pu, la
« semaine passée, faire transporter ici les objets en ques-
« tion et j'espère les distribuer sans aucun obstacle. »

(Traduit du Russe)

Mille francs pour les prêtres ! Ce clergé slave, conspi-
rant pour de l'argent, finit par inspirer un véritable
dégoût. Est-il nécessaire d'appuyer sur ces « munitions de
guerre », que le Consul garde dans les « grottes que
vous savez » ? N'est-ce pas la reproduction d'un fait avec
lequel nous sommes déjà familiarisés ?

N° 35.

*Dépêche chiffrée de M^r.... Consul à Scutari,
au Comité de Vienne, 2/13 Janvier 1873.*

« Conformément aux dernières instructions que j'ai
« reçues du Comité de Moscou, j'ai expédié un courrier
« spécial à Prizrène, pour remettre à l'évêque la somme de
« 500 ducats, ainsi que les livres de prières pour l'église
« Bulgaro-Serbe.

« L'énergie de caractère et les sentiments patriotiques de
« ce *digne prélat*, nous donnent à espérer que le mouvement

« national ne tardera pas à prendre une tournure décisive.
« Pour activer le mouvement, j'ai écrit à notre agent à
« Detchany, qu'il fasse, tout son possible, pour amener une
« réconciliation entre les Serbes orthodoxes et les Alba-
« nais de ce district. Comme les deux membres du Comité
« de Kiew seront, dans ces localités, vers le commencement
« du printemps, il est à espérer qu'ils contribueront beau-
« coup à la réussite de nos plans, d'autant plus qu'ils
« seront amplement *munis du nerf de l'action.* »

(Traduit du Russe.)

Il est parfaitement convenu que le « digne Prélat » est invariablement, le Prélat schismatique, autrement dit, d'obédience Russe ; et le « Prélat indigne », un évêque resté fidèle à l'église régulière de l'orthodoxie. Mais un fait nous frappe : C'est toujours dans la catégorie des « dignes Prélats », que nous voyons, selon l'expression du poète, « une main longue et sale » s'avancant pour toucher le honteux subside, qui paie les consciences vendues.

Cette dépêche, d'où ressort avec tant d'évidence l'utilité de ce que ces Messieurs appellent, à si juste titre, le « Nerf de l'action », terminera notre seconde série de documents. Elle est bien placée à côté de celle qui précède.

Le Consul de Scutari constate sans honte, ici, qu'il agit, « conformément aux instructions qu'il a reçues du Comité de Moscou » ; de même que celui de Seraïevo avouait tout à l'heure, non sans une légère pointe d'orgueil, comme quoi il avait « réussi à endormir tout soupçon. » — Dignes Agents diplomatiques en vérité ! Dignes

membres de ce corps consulaire, auquel il est prescrit, comme instruction permanente, de n'exercer qu'une *action inostensible* !

Nous craindrions de faire injure au sens moral du lecteur, en ajoutant le moindre commentaire à tout ce qui précède. Il est sans doute, comme nous, révolté à la lecture de telles révélations : Un pays tout entier livré, pendant six ans, aux intrigues ténébreuses de Sociétés secrètes ayant, pour Patrons, des Princes de famille souveraine ; pour récéleurs, des diplomates, dont la maison est inviolable ; et, pour agents, des Princes de l'Eglise, donnant à leur clergé le hideux exemple de la simonie.

Il est d'usage de reprocher à l'Empire Ottoman ces commotions fréquentes, dont les oscillations, parties de ses provinces comme d'un volcan en éruption, menacent d'ébranler les autres Empires.

En conscience, nous avons la conviction, qu'après la lecture des pages qui précèdent, il n'y aura plus de place dans l'esprit du lecteur, que pour un seul sentiment : La surprise que cet Empire, représenté à plaisir comme caduc, ait eu assez de vitalité pour résister, autant de temps, à la combinaison satanique d'éléments dissolvants aussi irrésistibles.

VI

Nous avons lu les confidences intimes des hauts bonnets de la diplomatie Russe, et nous savons à quelles passions ils obéissaient ; à quelle formidable conspiration ils prêtaient l'appui de leur grande situation ; puis, nous avons assisté au détail de l'exécution, dont leurs subordonnés étaient chargés.

Pour compléter le dossier, il nous suffira maintenant de mettre sous les yeux du lecteur, à titre d'échantillon, quelques-unes des instructions et des délibérations des Comités insurrectionnels, délibérations et instructions, dont tous, chefs et subalternes, s'inspiraient.

N° 36.

Dépêche chiffrée du Comité Central au Comité de Vienne, en date de Pétersbourg, le 9/21 Août 1872.

« Par ordre de Son Altesse Impériale Monseigneur ***,
« le Comité de Vienne est invité à envoyer à tous les sous-
« Comités et Agences, une dépêche circulaire, pour tran-
« quilliser nos frères de race sur les faux bruits que
« nos ennemis tâchent de propager parmi les Slaves, con-
« cernant l'entrevue des trois Empereurs à Berlin.

« Sincèrement dévoué à la cause Slave et s'intéressant,
« comme toujours, à la prospérité et à l'avenir de nos
« frères de race, le Gouvernement Impérial n'a nullement
« l'idée, que lui attribuent les Polonais, ces ennemis sécu-
« laires du Slavisme, d'abandonner les Slaves à leur sort
« et de se lier, par un traité solennel, avec l'Allemagne
« et l'Autriche.

« Tout en désirant la paix et *la consolidation de l'ordre*
« *public en Europe*, la Russie ne se laissera jamais dévier
« de la ligne de conduite qu'elle a inaugurée si glorieuse-
« ment, depuis l'avènement au trône de Sa Majesté l'Em-
« pereur Alexandre II.

« Vous écrirez donc à vos agents, qu'ils communiquent
« à tous nos amis la teneur de la présente dépêche, tout
« en les assurant que, malgré son profond désir de la
« paix, la Russie ne laissera jamais *ses frères de race*
« sans aide ni secours, et qu'elle reste, comme par le
« passé, prête à tous les sacrifices, pour leur assurer *un*
« *avenir digne de la race à laquelle nous avons, tous, le*
« *bonheur d'appartenir.* »

« L'ordre public » dont la Russie désire la « consoli-
dation en Europe » c'est — ne l'oublions pas — cet ordre
sans équilibre, qui lui permet de travailler sans danger,
fût-ce même par des moyens qui peuvent menacer le
repos de cette même Europe, à assurer aux Slaves « un
avenir digne de la race », à laquelle « l'Auguste Président »
du Comité Central a « le bonheur d'appartenir »

N° 37.

*Dépêche chiffrée du Comité Central
au Comité de Vienne, du 17/29 Août 1872*

« Par ordre de Son Altesse Monseigneur**, vous êtes
« chargé d'établir, aussitôt que possible, une agence spé-
« ciale à Viddin. Ses attributions étant déjà définies par
« la circulaire du Comité Central, en date du 25 Juillet
« 1871, § 3, le Comité n'a qu'à y ajouter que, par ordre de
« notre illustre Président, il vous est ouvert un crédit
« extraordinaire de 5,000 roubles, pour frais d'installation
« et d'entretien de cette agence, jusqu'au 1^{er} Janvier 1873. »

(Traduit du Russe)

Viddin est une des places fortes du quadrilatère turc. La sollicitude du Comité Central et de son « illustre Président » devait nécessairement s'étendre sur elle. La doter d'une « agence spéciale », dût-il en coûter 5000 roubles par trimestre, était, on le comprend, une nécessité de premier ordre.

N° 38.

*Extrait du procès-verbal de la séance du Comité de Moscou
le 26 Septembre (8 Octobre) 1872.*

« La Séance a été ouverte par Monsieur P....., qui a
« donné lecture d'une brochure publiée récemment et con-
« tenant la biographie de A. H..... Monsieur A... . ayant
« proposé d'éterniser la mémoire de l'illustre défunt, qui
« avait rendu des services éclatants à la cause et à la
« science Slaves, le Prince B. A..... Tch.... et le secrétaire
« du Comité N..... P.... ont soumis à la sanction du Comité
« les projets suivants :

« 1. Fonder une bourse à l'école Slave du couvent des
« nonnes à Alexeyevsk, pour une demoiselle de *nationalité*
« *bulgare*, qui portera le nom de boursière de A. H....

« 2. Ouvrir une souscription parmi les membres de
« tous les comités et sous-comités slaves, pour la forma-
« tion d'un capital qui servira à la fondation d'un prix à
« décerner aux meilleurs ouvrages sur la Serbie.

« 3. Publier, aux frais du Comité, toutes les œuvres
inédites de A. H....

« Ces projets ont été adoptés à l'unanimité.

« Le secrétaire N. A. P... a communiqué, aux membres
« du Comité, les noms de nouveaux élèves slaves, arrivés
« en Russie et admis aux écoles de la Couronne, depuis la
« dernière séance (du 22 juillet v. s.).

« Après un discours de N. A.... sur l'urgence de l'union
« morale de tous les Slaves pour combattre les ennemis du

« Slavisme, M^r. P... a clos la séance, en invitant les
« membrés effectifs de la section politique du Comité, à pas-
« ser au salon des séances secrètes.

« SÉANCE SECRÈTE. »

« La séance a été ouverte par N. A. P... qui a donné
« lecture du compte-rendu des recettes et dépenses pour le
« 2^{me} trimestre de 1872.

RECETTES.

1 ^o . Subsidés du Gouvernement.	66,666 2/3
2 ^o . Sommes provenant de différents dons.	2,874
3 ^o . Intérêts (à 5 0/0) du capital de 50,000 Roubles, légué par le comte Grégoire C... B.	2,500
4 ^o . Intérêts des capitaux légués par G... P... etc., et formant la somme de 18,400 Roubles	920
Total.	<u>72,960 2/3</u>

DÉPENSES.

1 ^o Entretien de 216 boursiers du Comité aux <i>Universités et Ecoles spéciales</i> (à raison de 25 Roubles par mois à cha- cun).	21,600
2 ^o Dépenses ordinaires pour les agents permanents dans les provinces Slaves <i>d'Autriche et Turquie</i> (65 personnes)	13,000
3 ^o Dépenses extraordinaires pour des <i>émissaires en Bulgarie, Gallicie, Bohême</i> <i>et Russie hongroise</i>	2,500
à reporter: . . .	<u>37,100</u>

	Report.	37,100
4°.	Achat et frais de transport de <i>livres et objets de culte pour les cabinets de lecture, églises, et Couvents en Turquie et Autriche.</i>	1,330
5°	Dépenses secrètes du Président, conformément au §. 12 du Statut	1,680
	Total	<u>40,110</u>

« L'excédant de 32.850 2/3 roubles a servi à couvrir
 « presque en entier le déficit du trimestre précédent,
 « (34.760 1/3 roubles). Le reste du déficit (1.909 2/3 roubles)
 « sera couvert au courant du trimestre actuel.

« Le même M^r. N. A. P.... a présenté, ensuite, aux mem-
 « bres du Comité, le portrait photographique de l'exarque
 « bulgare Anthime. Ce portrait est envoyé par S. S. au
 « Comité de Moscou, avec sa bénédiction apostolique.

« Sur ce, il fut décidé à l'unanimité de tirer de ce por-
 « trait un nombre considérable de copies, qui seront dis-
 « tribuées à tous les amis de la sainte cause bulgare.
 « Quant au portrait, il sera rangé parmi ceux des hommes
 « illustres de la Slavie. Sur la proposition du Prince T....,
 « le Comité a décidé d'adresser à l'Exarque, par le canal
 « de l'Ambassade Impériale à Constantinople, une lettre de
 « remerciements et d'assurances sur les sentiments frater-
 « nels du peuple Russe à l'égard de tous les Slaves de la
 « Turquie et surtout des Bulgares qui tiennent, haut et
 « ferme, le drapeau Slave contre les intrigues des Phana-
 « riotes. »

Ce budget, qui, pour un seul des nombreux comi-

tés établis en Russie, en Autriche, en Turquie et peut-être ailleurs, s'élève à plus de 72,000 roubles par trimestre, (environ 50,000 livres sterling par an), donne la mesure des sacrifices que fait le Panslavisme pour arriver à ses fins. On se demande, après une telle constatation, comment la Turquie, cet empire pauvre d'argent et nullement rompu aux pratiques policières modernes, a pu résister jusqu'à ce jour à des efforts aussi prodigieux.

Cette réflexion générale l'emporte sur le détail des articles du budget en question, si précieux que soient les enseignements dont ce détail est amplement pourvu. Au surplus, ces enseignements sont pleins d'intérêt pour d'autres cabinets que celui du Sultan. Nous voyons, au titre DÉPENSES, un article 2. un article 3. et un article 4. qui prouvent bien que Monsieur le Chancelier d'Autriche-Hongrie ne savait guère où il menait les affaires de son souverain, lorsqu'il se faisait l'arbitre complaisant du procès politique, soulevé par les intéressants clients des agents secrets ordinaires, que le Comité insurrectionnel de Moscou à lui seul entretient en Autriche, — sans préjudice des agents extraordinaires dont ce même Comité et tous les autres gratifient l'empire Austro-Hongrois.

Malgré la longueur du procès-verbal qui précède, nous avons jugé essentiel de l'insérer *in extenso*.

Il renferme des parties qui, sans doute, ne présentent qu'un intérêt médiocre, mais c'est l'ensemble qui offre un intérêt primordial, en ce qu'il fait voir la procédure régulière de ses sortes d'assemblées, le mode suivi pour transformer les séances ordinaires en séances secrètes, les res-

sorts puissants enfin, dont disposent ces dangereuses associations, qu'un gouvernement monarchique et conservateur de son essence ne craint pas de protéger et d'encourager pour satisfaire ses projets ambitieux.

N^o 39.

*Dépêche chiffrée de M^r. . . ., Membre du Comité central,
au comité de Vienne, 20 Octobre (2 Novembre) 1872.*

« Par ordre de Son Altesse Impériale Monseigneur
« notre Auguste Président, le Comité de Vienne est invité à
« envoyer deux hommes de confiance à Scutari et Banja-
« Lucca. Celui qui se rendra à Scutari aura pour mission
« de s'entendre avec le Consul Impérial, sur les moyens les
« plus sûrs pour parvenir jusqu'aux Mirdites.

« L'émissaire en question devra donc connaître à fond le
« pays et la langue albanaise. La mission consistera
« d'abord à *distribuer des secours* aux membres des fa-
« milles qui *ont souffert des dernières mesures de répres-*
« *sion des autorités turques*, et à tâcher de relever le moral
« de la population, à l'aide de *différents cadeaux* et des assu-
« rances sur une prochaine et efficace *intervention des*
« *puissances européennes en leur faveur*. Notre Consul à
« Scutari indiquera à votre agence les *moines et les prêtres*
« *catholiques gagnés à la cause slave*, ainsi que ceux des
« chefs dont le dévouement à la cause slave est indubitable.
« Après avoir accompli sa mission, votre agent attendra à

« Scutari l'arrivée de Monsieur P....., qui s'y rendra,
« au commencement de Mars, pour compléter *nos cartes*
« *topographiques*

« Quant à celui qui devra se rendre à Banja-Lucca, il
« serait préférable, selon nous, de le choisir parmi les
« membres subalternes du sous-comité de Belgrade. Dans
« ce cas-là, vous écrirez à Monsieur B.... et lui enverrez
« *1500 florins que vous noterez à la rubrique des dépenses*
« *extraordinaires, §. 2.* L'agent en question devra s'enten-
« dre *avec le clergé du pays*, pour la création d'une école
« primaire. Les livres qui seront nécessaires à cet effet,
« seront envoyés prochainement par le Comité central.

« Après avoir parcouru le pays et travaillé dans le sens
« de *l'autonomie ecclésiastique*, cet agent devra se rendre
« à Seraïevo, et y attendre les dispositions ultérieures du
« Consul-Général de Belgrade. »

(Traduction du Russe.)

« Distribuer des secours aux familles qui ont souffert des
mesures de répression des Turcs » était, en effet, un
excellent moyen pour « relever leur moral », c'est-à-dire
pour les encourager à ne point cesser les désordres qui
occasionnaient « ces répressions. »

Le Clergé Slave, les moines catholiques, tous les élé-
ments d'influence morale étaient combinés pour agir sur
l'esprit de populations ignorantes, que l'on dotait « d'écoles »
où devait s'enseigner l'esprit de la révolte ; et l'autorité
consulaire devait appuyer, de son prestige, ces plans sa-
vamment combinés, et leur prêter le concours de son expé-
rience des hommes les plus dévoués à l'esprit insurrec-
tionnel. Tous les moyens étaient bons d'ailleurs pour

atteindre le but, même les mensonges les plus effrontés. « Les promesses d'intervention des Puissances européennes » devaient certainement produire un grand effet sur ces pauvres paysans, incapables d'apprécier la fausseté, l'absurdité de semblables allégations. Mais tout cela pâlit devant la charmante trouvaille que nous faisons dans cette dépêche : « *L'autonomie ecclésiastique* » ! Certes, le mot est heureux, et fait déjà présager cette fertilité d'imagination qui devait, plus tard, inventer *l'autonomie administrative*.

N° 40.

Dépêche chiffrée du Comité de Vienne au Comité Central,

7/19 Novembre 1872.

« Le Comité de Vienne a l'honneur de vous informer que
« les instructions contenues dans la dépêche de Son Excel-
« lence M. K....., en date de Pétersbourg, le 20 Octobre
« (2 novembre), sont déjà en pleine voie d'exécution.
« M. A....., que le Comité a choisi pour la mission de
« Scutari, a quitté Vienne, le 4/16 courant, porteur d'une
« lettre de recommandation pour le Consul Impérial à
« Scutari, auquel il devra communiquer en outre une co-
« pie de la dépêche sus-mentionné de Monsieur K.....

« Ayant télégraphié à Belgrade concernant l'affaire de
« Banja-Lucca, le comité en a été informé que c'est le jeu-
« ne D..., qui devra entreprendre le voyage en question.
« En conséquence de cela, nous avons expédié, avant-hier,

« le 5/17 courant, au Consulat Général à Belgrade, 1500
« florins portés, d'après les instructions du Comité central,
« à la rubrique des dépenses extraordinaires §. 2. »

(Traduit du Russe.)

L'auteur de la dépêche précédente est une Excellence ; celle-ci nous l'explique, en nous apprenant que les instructions de ladite Excellence ont été exécutées sans retard. Quelle exactitude ! quelle régularité ! quelle discipline !

Comment un pouvoir attaqué si savamment, si habilement, a-t-il pu résister plusieurs années ! C'est une question que nous ne cesserons de poser et à laquelle nous ne voyons qu'une réponse :

C'est que le gouvernement ottoman avait, sans doute, dans les provinces, des racines beaucoup plus puissantes qu'on ne le supposait.

N° 41.

Délibération du Comité central.

Le Comité central à voté, dans la séance du 11/23 Décembre 1872, une résolution d'une très grande importance.

« Les Comités Slaves établis en Russie et leurs succur-
« sales de l'étranger ont été fondés dans le but de protéger
« les intérêts Slaves et de faciliter à nos frères, l'accom-
« plissement de leurs devoirs envers la race entière. Con-
« sidérant que ceux de nos frères qui émigrent de leur

« pays pour s'établir en Russie, au lieu de servir les in-
« térêts du slavisme, ne servent que ceux du *Germanisme*
« et du *Magyarisme* en Autriche et ceux de *l'Islamisme*
« et *l'Hellénisme* en Turquie; d'accord avec la section
« politique, le Comité central arrête :

« 1. Tous les Comités de Russie ainsi que les sous-
« Comités et agences de l'étranger seront invités à cesser,
« dès le 1er janvier 1873, toute aide et secours à ceux des
« Slaves de l'Autriche et de la Turquie, qui voudraient se
« rendre en Russie pour s'y établir.

« 2. Les Comités, sous-Comités et Agences sont tenus
« d'annoncer à nos frères de race que les pays Slaves placés
« sous le joug étranger, ayant besoin du concours de tous
« leurs enfants, pour lutter contre les ennemis tradition-
« nels de la cause slave, ceux qui quitteraient leur patrie
« perdraient leurs droits au secours des Comités Russes.

« 3. Les personnes qui seraient compromises devant les
« autorités politiques de leur pays, auront seules le droit
« de recourir aux Comités Slaves, pour obtenir les moyens
« de passer en Russie.

« 4. Toutes les sommes destinées, jusqu'à présent, à
« faciliter aux Slaves l'immigration en Russie, seront ré-
« parties entre les sous-Comités et Agences établis à
« l'étranger, pour être *distribuées à ceux de nos frères,*
« *qui rendront le plus de services à la cause slave.*

(Traduit du Russe.)

On ne songe jamais à tout. Ces braves paysans slaves, qui recevaient si facilement chez eux les subsides venus de Russie, avaient dû nécessairement se dire, qu'en allant s'établir à la source même de ces envois d'argent qui leur

étaient destinés, ils pourraient sans doute en saisir beaucoup plus au passage, et, en tous cas, vivre de la vie facile d'émigré appointé. Sans cette résolution du Comité central, peut-être aurions-nous assisté à un dépeuplement général des provinces slaves de Turquie et d'Autriche, et, alors, il n'y aurait plus eu de question slave possible en Orient. Qui sait même si, dans un temps donné, ce n'eût pas été au gouvernement généreux et hospitalier, qui eût accueilli cette affectueuse immigration, d'avoir maille à partir avec tant de « frères de race », venus on ne sait d'où?

N° 42.

Dépêche chiffrée de M..... Secrétaire du Comité de Moscou, au Comité de Vienne, en date de Moscou, le 26 décembre 1872. (v. s.)

« Le Comité de Moscou ayant décidé, dans sa séance
« secrète du 24 Décembre (5 janvier), *d'activer la propa-*
« *gande ecclésiastique en Bosnie et Herzégovine, la somme*
« *de 2,500 roubles* a été fixée à cet objet. Tout en commu-
« niquant cette décision au Comité de Vienne, je dois
« ajouter que notre président vous prie d'envoyer immédia-
« tement cette somme à Mostar et à Sérájévo *et d'exiger*
« *des Consuls Impériaux, résidant dans les pays sus-*
« *mentionnés, qu'ils vous donnent des détails minutieux*
« *sur la manière avec laquelle sera exécuté ce projet de*
« *notre Comité.* »

(Traduit du Russe.)

Il est certain que « activer la propagande ecclésiastique en Bosnie et en Herzégovine » était une distraction faite pour le Comité central de Moscou ; nous n'avons donc rien à reprendre à cela ; mais de quelle essence étaient donc faits ces « Consuls Impériaux », de qui les Comités secrets du Panславisme pouvaient ainsi « exiger » des comptes minutieux de l'emploi de leur temps ainsi que de l'argent mis à leur disposition ?

N^o 43.

*Dépêche chiffrée du Comité central à celui de Vienne, en date
de Pétersbourg le 27 Décembre 1872 (v. s.)*

« Le Comité de Vienne est invité à informer l'agence
« principale de Belgrade que, vu la commission d'enquête
« envoyée par le gouvernement Turc en Bulgarie, il serait
« prudent de suspendre, pour quelque temps, l'expédition
« d'émissaires dans les districts de Roustchouk et de Vid-
« din. Tout ce que l'agence principale de Belgrade pourrait
« faire dans ce moment-ci, ce serait d'entretenir des rela-
« tions actives avec Toultscha et le pays de la Dobrudja.
« L'occasion est d'autant plus favorable à cette activité,
« que les autorités turques ne font plus aucune attention à
« ce qui se passe à Toultscha ; ce dont nous avons profité,
« en y envoyant le capitaine d'Etat-Major A... P ..

« Veuillez écrire à Scutari que le Gouvernement Impé-
« rial est disposé à admettre aux Ecoles Militaires deux

« enfants albanais, qui devront se rendre à Kiew, munis de
« passeports monténégrins.

(Traduit du Russe.)

Monsieur le « Capitaine d'Etat-Major » A... P... nous saura gré, sans doute, de substituer des points aux lettres de son nom. Ce n'est pas qu'un officier n'ait à s'honorer parfois, d'avoir dû s'introduire secrètement dans une place de guerre et *pour faits de guerre*. En ces sortes de cas, le danger couru relève le caractère de l'acte commis ; la ruse alors devient dévouement, et *dévouement est courage*. Mais, en temps de paix et aux ordres d'une société secrète, c'est là une occupation, d'où les épauettes d'un officier ne peuvent guère se tirer propres.

N° 44.

*Dépêche chiffrée de M.... Membre du Comité central au
Comité de Vienne, en date de Pétersbourg le 31 janvier
(12 février) 1873.*

« Par ordre de S. A. Mgr **, le Comité de Vienne
« est invité à envoyer immédiatement un de ses membres
« à Cragujévatz, pour présider la réunion des cercles
« principaux de l'initiative nationale. Ce délégué aura soin
« de diriger l'activité des cercles, vers le but que nous vous
« avons indiqué dans notre télégramme en date du 18[30
« Octobre 1872. Il devra, par conséquent, *exiger des chefs*

« de la *Mlada Srbadia*, que les armes qu'ils auront reçues,
« tant du gouvernement Serbe que de notre agence, soient
« dirigées, sans perte de temps, vers la frontière turque.

« Notre Agent diplomatique à Belgrade va recevoir les
« instructions nécessaires, pour faciliter à votre délégué
« l'accomplissement de sa mission et mettre à sa disposi-
« tion les sommes d'argent, dont il pourra avoir besoin.

« Après avoir achevé ses travaux à Cragujévatz, votre
« délégué devra se rendre à Bucharest, pour s'y entendre
« avec les chefs du Comité Bulgare, sur les nouvelles
« bases d'après lesquelles devront être établis les nouveaux
« cercles nationaux, dans les villes et bourgades de la rive
« droite du Danube.

« N.-B. — C'est le nommé D., membre du Comité de Vienne
« et sous-chef de l'Agence de Pesth, qui a été chargé de
« cette mission. Il part de Pesth le 5/17 Février. »

(Traduit du Russe.)

« L'initiative nationale ! » voilà un mot qui sonne à
merveille et qui a dû tourner bien des têtes. Soyons donc
indulgent pour cet « Agent diplomatique », qui était chargé
de « faciliter l'accomplissement de la mission » de l'émis-
saire, en mettant « à sa disposition l'argent », dont il
pouvait avoir besoin.

Ses « travaux » achevés à Cragujévatz, cet émissaire
dépêché par l'Agence de Pesth devait s'en aller *opérer en*
Bulgarie. Nobles jeunes Magyares, qui êtes venus apporter
ici l'expression des sentiments fraternels de vos généreux
compatriotes, vous doutiez-vous que c'est de chez vous,

de votre propre capitale, que portaient les instruments de la machination bulgaro-slave ?

N° 45.

*Dépêche chiffrée de l'Agence de Belgrade,
au Comité de Vienne, en date du 6/18 Février 1873.*

« Les armes que les augustes membres de la famille
« impériale avaient bien voulu envoyer en Serbie, sont déjà
« arrivées à Belgrade. Grâce au zèle et à l'adresse déplo-
« yés par Monsieur G..., le transport en a été effectué avec
« une très-grande promptitude et sans éveiller le moindre
« soupçon des autorités riveraines.

« Monsieur Ristich nous a fait dire hier, que l'on a déci-
« dé d'envoyer de nouveaux émissaires à Prizerène et jusqu'à
« Okhrida, pour activer le mouvement ecclésiastique, qui
« s'y serait ralenti depuis les dernières intrigues du Pha-
« nar. Il serait à désirer que Y..... et H... .. conseillent au
« Prince Nicolas d'y envoyer, de son côté, des agents pour
« travailler à la réalisation de ce projet Slave.

(Traduit de Russe.)

Les « augustes membres d'une famille impériale » en-
voyant, en temps de paix profonde, des « armes » qu'il
s'agit d'introduire « sans éveiller le moindre soupçon des
autorités riveraines », c'est peut être fort habile, mais
certainement bien peu correct.

D'autre part, M. Ristich envoie des émissaires pour

« activer le mouvement ecclésiastique », et c'est le clergé « du Phanar », qui est censé faire « des intrigues. »

Le sens moral, la langue même, tout est accommodé au goût des gourmets de « l'initiative nationale » et de « la plus sainte des causes ».

N° 46.

Dépêche chiffrée de M^r... Membre du Comité central au Comité de Vienne, en date de Pétersbourg, le 10/22 Février 1873.

« Envoyez immédiatement à H..... 15,000 florins, pour les munitions de Belopavlitchy, fourniture Opuich. Le Président du Comité *approuve* la demande des Chrétiens de Popovo et Trébigné ; par conséquent, entendez-vous avec l'Ambassade et Y.... pour *fournir vite aux populations les armes et munitions*, dont elles ont besoin.

« N.-B. M. . H.... est Consul à Trieste, où se trouve aussi la maison de commerce Opuich, qui a entrepris la fourniture des munitions de Belopavlitchy, tribu monté-
« négrine.

(Traduit du Russe.)

Du moment où le Président du Comité—nous savons qu'on le qualifie d'auguste — approuve, l'ambassade n'a qu'à faire vite l'œuvre très-chrétienne d'envoyer à ces pauvres Chrétiens de Popovo, tout ce dont ils ont besoin, c'est-à-dire des « armes » et des « munitions ».

N° 47.

*Dépêche chiffré de Mr . . . Délégué du Comité de Vienne,
au Comité de Vienne, en date de Cragujévatz, le 15/27
Février 1873.*

« Les chefs des cercles de l'initiative nationale, que j'ai
« réunis ce matin, m'ont déclaré que leurs agents se sont
« déjà installés dans les principales localités de l'ancienne
« Serbie. Les nouvelles qu'ils en reçoivent assez réguliè-
« rement sont très-encourageantes, excepté celles qui
« viennent de la partie méridionale de la province.

« Après avoir expliqué à ces Messieurs les vues du co-
« mité et les instructions que vous m'avez chargé de leur
« de leur communiquer, ils se sont mis à mon entière dispo-
« sition. Deux de ces Messieurs, (Y..... B..... et M.... D.....)
« étant aussi membres principaux de la Mlada Srbadia, ils
» m'ont assuré que leur société était prête à *diriger vers la*
« *frontière turque les armes, qu'elle avait reçues dans le*
« temps.

« Le gouvernement Serbe, tout en ayant l'air d'ignorer
« ce qui se passe à Cragugévatz, n'en est pas moins très-
« disposé en faveur des cercles de l'initiative. Il y a quatre
« jours, le lieutenant-colonel Lechjanin (membre secret de
« la Mlada Srbadia) a fait parvenir à nos amis 1000 ducats
« de la part du Prince.

« Après-demain, je pars pour Bucharest, d'où je vous
« écrirai dès mon arrivée.

« Noms des agents que le Comité Serbe de l'initiative nationale a envoyés dernièrement dans l'ancienne Serbie.

- « 1. — S. B,
- « 2. — M. V,
- « 3. — T. M,
- « 4. — Y. G,
- « 5. — N. T,
- « 6. — B. C.

(Traduit du Russe.)

Peut-être est-ce une faute de ne point écrire tout au long le nom de ces six agents, dont nous ne donnons ici que les lettres initiales ; peut-être serait-il plus moral de leur infliger le stigmate de la publicité ; peut-être, grâce au voile indulgent dont nous les couvrons, pourront-ils continuer à corrompre l'esprit et le cœur des malheureux paysans qu'ils sont parvenus, une première fois, à jeter dans la voie du désordre. Mais, châtier n'est point notre affaire ; notre but est plus élevé ; ce que nous avons eu en vue en entreprenant cette publication, c'est un enseignement ; à l'Europe, que menace toute cette vaste trame mise par nous en lumière, à l'Europe d'en profiter. Un immense réseau de sociétés secrètes, puissantes et richement dotées, enveloppé une grande partie des Etats dont elle se compose et peut, au gré des plus détestables convoitises, y déterminer de formidables explosions. Qu'elle ouvre les yeux enfin sur les dangers qui l'entourent, car, sauvée une première fois par l'énergie inattendue de celui qu'on appelait « le malade », elle pourrait, quelque jour, s'abîmer dans un précipice trop profond pour être comblé à temps.

VII

Nous avons pu, dans les pages qui précédent, étudier les allures des conspirateurs de bas étage, le style des agents diplomatiques d'un ordre moyen, et la *manière* des Excellences.

Voyons maintenant le ton des Altesses :

N° 48.

*Lettre de S. A. Mgr**** à S. A I. Mg*. Celligne 10122
Décembre 1872.*

« Les sentiments de haute bienveillance et de vif intérêt que Votre Altesse Impériale ne cesse de témoigner à mon vaillant mais infortuné peuple, me donnent la confiance de m'adresser à Votre Altesse Impériale, en vous exposant sincèrement la triste position dans laquelle nous nous trouvons, et les *efforts* presque *surhumains* auxquels mon gouvernement est obligé de recourir, *pour ne pas être pris au dépourvu.*

« Par les deux lettres que je me suis permis d'adresser à Votre Altesse Impériale aux mois de Septembre et d'Octobre, vous avez pu voir, Monseigneur, ce qu'ont coûté à mon gouvernement l'affaire de Colachine et l'abandon dans lequel nous nous sommes trouvés,

« grâce aux exigences d'une politique hostile à tout mou-
« vement slave. Depuis le jour, où les vaillants défenseurs
« du dernier asile de la liberté des Slaves méridionaux
« ont cru de leur devoir de se jeter contre les barbares
« ennemis de notre religion, nous nous voyons ici étreints
« d'un cordon de fer, qui va en se resserrant, et finira
« malheureusement par provoquer des luttes beaucoup
« plus sanglantes que celle de Colachine.

« Les rapports de M^r I... ayant dûment renseigné le mi-
« nistère impérial sur toutes les intrigues et machinations
« des autorités turques de l'Albanie, je crois inutile d'y
« revenir, et me bornerai seulement à ajouter que, grâce
« aux moyens, tant en argent qu'en armes, dont dispose
« mon voisin de Scutari, la plus grande partie de mes
« alliés de la veille nous font actuellement défaut ; nous
« finirons très probablement *par perdre le reste*, si le Gou-
« vernement Impérial ne nous vient en aide, dans ce
« moment si critique de notre existence.

« Pour parer aux mines et embûches qui nous sont dres-
« sées du côté de l'Albanie, j'ai fait envoyer de nombreux
« agents dans les pays limitrophes. Mes émissaires ont
« pu même parvenir jusqu'aux coins les plus reculés de
« l'Albanie, et y obtenir quelques succès. Mais Votre
« Altesse Impériale comprendra aisément que ces succès
« ne nous garantissent nullement l'avenir, vu la modicité
« de nos moyens, et les nombreux détachements de trou-
« pes qui occupent le littoral du lac de Scutari.

« Ce qui nous console un peu dans la triste position
« où nous nous trouvons, c'est le développement que prend
« tous les jours l'établissement de Tchernœvitz-Retchka.
« Grâce au zèle de MM. S.... et B..., nous y avons déjà
« amassé 12,000 fusils Krenk, 4,500 Berdan, 6,800

« *pistolets américains, 7,000 sabres de dragon et 3*
« *batteries de montagne. Lorsque nous aurons les mi-*
« *trailleuses et mortiers, ainsi que les 25,000 carabines*
« *américaines avec les cartouches et munitions de*
« *guerre que nous avait promis le Gouvernement Impé-*
« *rial, nous serons en état de commencer la lutte. En*
« *attendant, je fais venir tous les mois, à Retchka ainsi*
« *qu'à Negoche, des centaines de jeunes gens de l'inté-*
« *rieur ainsi que des provinces limitrophes, pour s'y*
« *exercer au maniement des armes européennes. Grâce à*
« *ce système adapté aux mœurs du pays, nous serons en*
« *état de lancer, en cas de besoin, plus de 30,000 hommes*
« *parfaitement exercés et brûlant du désir de combattre*
« *l'ennemi commun.*

« *La seule chose qui nous tourmente, ce sont les arme-*
« *ments et fortifications des Turcs, auxquels on nous*
« *empêche de mettre obstacle. C'est justement sur cet objet*
« *là que je prends la liberté d'attirer l'attention de Votre*
« *Altesse Impériale. Les conseils que nous recevons du*
« *Gouvernement Impérial seraient très-salutaires au dé-*
« *veloppement de mon pays, si les Turcs restaient tran-*
« *quilles. Malheureusement, il n'en est rien. Tandis que*
« *nous sommes forcés de rester les bras croisés, nos voi-*
« *sins se fortifient et prennent les mesures nécessaires*
« *pour nous couper tout accès à l'intérieur de l'Albanie*
« *et de l'Herzégovine. Si cet état de choses dure encore*
« *une dizaine de mois, nous nous verrons dans l'impossi-*
« *bilité absolue d'entreprendre quelque chose de sérieux*
« *contre les Turcs, tandis que ceux-ci pourront péné-*
« *trer facilement chez nous, pour répéter les carnages de*
« *la dernière campagne.*

« *Tout en soumettant ces considérations à la haute*

« appréciation de Votre Altesse Impériale, j'ose La prier
« d'intercéder en notre faveur, auprès du Gouvernement
« Impérial. Mon peuple, Monseigneur, fonde *tout son es-*
« *poir* sur la magnanimité du cœur *du Grand Empereur*
« *de Russie, le Tout-Puissant Père et Protecteur de la fa-*
« *mille slave*. Votre Altesse Impériale qui a manifesté
« tant de fois sa bienveillante sollicitude à l'égard de mon
« peuple, daignera, j'ose l'espérer, couronner ses bien-
« faits, *en nous obtenant d'abord un nouvel envoi d'armes*
« *et de munitions*, et ensuite, *l'autorisation de marcher*
« *contre l'ennemi de notre sainte religion et de la race*
« *slave*.

« C'est dans cet espoir-là, que j'ai l'honneur, etc.

(Traduit du russe.)

Cette lettre est, sans contredit, un chef-d'œuvre du genre. La rouerie ici le dispute à l'humilité, et l'ambition est convaincue jusqu'à la naïveté.

L'auteur fait, dit-il, « des efforts surhumains » ; mais, pour Dieu ! qu'est-ce qui l'y « oblige » ? Qui donc à la moindre intention de le prendre au « dépourvu » ?

Il se plaint des « intrigues et des machinations des autorités Turques de l'Albanie », tout en avouant qu'il inonde l'Albanie de nombreux « émissaires », dont il constate les « succès ». C'est parfait, vraiment.

Mais ce n'est pas tout : Après avoir détaillé avec complaisance le formidable matériel qu'il a amassé dans son arsenal de TCHERNOËVITZ-RETCHKA ; après avoir énuméré, avec une sorte d'amour, les « fusils », les « pistolets », les « sabres », les « batteries de montagne » qui s'y trouvent

déjà; après avoir supputé, avec un accent gros de désir, les « mitrailleuses », les « mortiers », les « carabines » les « cartouches » et autres « munitions » qui y viendront à leur tour, car le « Gouvernement Impérial » — pas le *Gouvernement Impérial* de son suzerain, bien entendu — les lui a « promis »; après avoir expliqué qu'il embauche les jeunes gens des « provinces limitrophes » de sa Principauté pour les exercer à l'attaque qu'il médite contre les Turcs; après tous ces aveux, il fait à son auguste correspondant le récit de ses chagrins; ce qui le « tourmente » c'est que les Turcs font des « armements » et des « fortifications », auxquels il ne peut pas « mettre obstacle ».

Franchement, si la matière était moins sérieuse, si nous avions lu une telle épître, avant que les torrents de sang que nous savons, n'eussent coulé, nous n'aurions pu nous soustraire à un fou rire.

Vraiment, Monseigneur, il vous serait donc bien agréable de vous *développer*, si « les Turcs » avaient la courtoisie de « rester tranquilles »? Mais point. Ils ont une audace qui passe toutes les bornes; ils osent se « fortifier » chez eux, tandis que vous les menacez; ils osent prendre « des mesures pour vous couper tout accès à l'intérieur de l'Albanie et de l'Herzégovine »! Mais ces gens-là n'ont donc rien d'humain! Quoi! Vous leur préparez les doux plaisirs d'une attaque, vous dressez « 30,000 hommes » à cette innocente récréation, et ces mécréants ont le front de chercher à vous fermer les issues de leur territoire! C'est de la dernière indécence? On ne trouble pas ainsi les plaisirs de ses voisins. Il faut être de vrais asiatiques comme les

Turcs, pour vous mettre de la sorte « dans l'impossibilité d'entreprendre quelque chose de sérieux » *contre eux* !

Aussi, avez-vous bien raison de vous plaindre ; vous êtes malheureux ; vous souffrez ; vous avez droit à un « bien-fait » ; on ne peut sans cruauté vous refuser un « nouvel envoi d'armes et de munitions » , pas plus que « l'autorisation de marcher contre l'ennemi de votre sainte religion et de la race Slave ».....

Tenez, Monseigneur. parlons sérieusement. Après tout, vous avez conquis des droits au respect ; car, si vous avez eu une fausse politique, du moins avez-vous, dit-on, justifié d'une vraie bravoure. Et puis, quelque chose nous dit que vos ennemis d'aujourd'hui seront peut-être vos meilleurs amis de demain. Parlons donc sérieusement, car le sujet est sérieux :

Nous vous le disons, mon Prince, avec toute la vraie déférence qui est due à votre haut rang ; l'ennemi de votre « sainte religion » n'est point le Turc, qui vous a toujours laissé libres, vous et les vôtres, de la pratiquer à votre guise ; mais bien celui qui a jeté au sein de votre Eglise la discorde à la suite de laquelle vous avez eu, pour ministres du culte, les Ministres des projets ambitieux dont vous êtes destiné peut-être à devenir la première victime. Croyez-en une parole convaincue, Altesse : L'ennemi de la race à laquelle vous appartenez, n'est point le Turc, qui inaugure une période de liberté pour oublier qu'il a eu jadis une période de conquête ; non, votre ennemi, l'ennemi de votre race, Monseigneur, c'est celui-là seul qui ne s'intitule le « Tout-Puisant Père et Protecteur de la famille slave », que pour arri-

ver un jour à l'asservir, à l'annuler, à la détruire, comme il s'efforce, depuis un siècle, d'asservir, annuler et détruire la noble race des Jagellons chez qui il est aussi entré comme un Protecteur, comme un Père. Prince, demandez au passé les secrets de l'avenir. Il n'est que temps.

Nous avons dit que la conspiration n'avait pas pour seul champ d'opérations les Provinces Européennes de la Turquie ; qu'elle s'étendait également à celles d'Asie et d'Afrique.

Nous craindrions de fatiguer l'attention du lecteur en greffant sur la question Slave d'autres questions, qui trouveront leur place ailleurs. Nous nous bornerons donc à extraire d'un dossier, non moins volumineux que celui qu'on vient de lire, le document ci-après :

*Lettre confidentielle de M^r X... à S. A. M^{gr} *****.*

Péra, Constantinople, 18/30 Mai 1871.

« Je m'empresse de remercier V. A. pour la lettre dont
« Elle a bien voulu m'honorer, en date du Caire, le 8 Mai.

« Je crois en même temps devoir vous informer, Monseigneur, que le Consul-Général Impérial en Egypte m'a
« rapporté l'exposé de l'entretien, dont il a été honoré par
« Votre Altesse.

« Je suis très affligé que Votre Altesse ait voulu donner
« aux nouvelles que je lui avais transmises par ma lettre
« du 15 Avril, une toute autre signification que celle que
« j'avais en vue. Si Votre Altesse veut bien se rappeler ce
« que je lui disais, en lui communiquant les renseigne-

« ments en question, Elle verra que je la félicitais de la
« bonne tournure que commencent à prendre les affaires
« de l'Orient. Je lui disais que l'Europe est tellement épuï-
« sée de la dernière guerre, et l'esprit public, si disposé
« à la paix, que le premier qui voudrait la troubler se ver-
« rait mis de suite au ban de la Société Européenne. Or,
« quoi de plus heureux pour Votre Altesse, si la Turquie,
« excitée de tous côtés, se jetait follement contre l'Egypte,
« sans y être poussée par une cause légitime et réelle. Le
« Gouvernement de Votre Altesse n'aurait qu'à se défendre
« quelques jours, tout en protestant contre l'esprit de con-
« quête ottoman, et l'intervention se ferait jour à travers
« tous les obstacles, réclamée même de ceux qui ne cessent
« de nous poser en missionnaires de la révolution en
« Orient.

« Tout en vous rappelant, Monseigneur, ces considéra-
« tions, je me permettrai d'expliquer encore plus clairement
« la pensée du Gouvernement Impérial. Pour la réussite
« de nos projets, il est urgent que l'Egypte se trouve encore
« tranquille. Armez-vous, faites tous les préparatifs néces-
« saires à une longue guerre, contractez des traités d'al-
« liance défensive et offensive avec la Grèce, la Serbie et la
« Roumanie (en quoi nous vous aiderons indubitablement)
« et continuez de disputer pas-à-pas les prétentions de la
« Cour Suzeraine. Que le Gouvernement Egyptien se montre
« digne et inflexible dans ses relations avec la Porte, et il
« il peut être sûr de la victoire. Plus on vous verra ferme
« et intraitable, plus l'irritation des Ministres du Sultan
« augmentera et aboutira à une explosion. C'est alors que
« l'Egypte connaîtra et appréciera l'amitié Russe, toute
« différente de la protection Française qui, après avoir
« poussé à la guerre l'illustre Aïeul de Votre Altesse, s'est

contentée de le soutenir platoniquement et l'abandonner
« à la vengeance ottomane.

« J'ai l'honneur d'être, etc. etc.

Il faut savoir que la lettre du 8 Mai, à laquelle répond celle que nous venons de transcrire, exprimait de vives appréhensions quant à des « mesures coercitives », que le « Ministère Aali Pacha » paraissait disposé à prendre. M^r X..., comme on le voit, rassure son illustre correspondant sur les conséquences que ces « mesures » peuvent avoir. « Armez-vous, contractez des traités d'alliance offensive et défensive avec la Grèce, la Serbie et la Roumanie ». Quand l'irritation du Ministère aboutira à une « explosion », alors vous connaîtrez le prix de « l'amitié Russe »

La coercition, loin d'être à craindre, devait donc être provoquée. Ne fallait-il pas en effet déterminer « l'explosion », dût le malheureux qui se laissait prendre à ces belles promesses, sauter tout le premier. Heureusement pour lui, ce dernier n'a eu d'audace que pour s'engager. Au moment de l'exécution, le cœur semble lui avoir manqué.

VIII

Nous n'irons pas plus loin. Ce document sera le dernier de la série actuelle. Il a une valeur véritable, non seulement parce qu'il témoigne de ce que le complot s'étendait jusqu'aux limites les plus reculées de l'Empire, mais aussi en ce qu'il donne une idée des procédés d'embauchage de

l'habile M. X... : *Faites-vous battre pour que nous ayons l'occasion de venir à votre aide et de vous procurer ainsi notre « amitié » !* Si cette pitoyable logique a pu convaincre un Prince, presque un Souverain, comment nous étonnerions qu'elle ait trouvé sans défense des milliers de paysans ignorants, aux yeux desquels on faisait miroiter toutes les perspectives de bonheur que pouvait offrir l'amitié « du Tout-Puissant Protecteur et Père de la grande famille Slave » ?

Un autre Prince s'y est laissé prendre aussi ; la malheureuse Serbie sait aujourd'hui ce qu'il lui en coûte

IX

CONCLUSION.

Nous avons promis de dresser *le bilan des responsabilités.*

Notre but est atteint. Après la lecture des pièces qui remplissent ce volume, le doute n'est plus permis : La crise orientale est le résultat d'une conspiration étrangère, que nous ne nous attarderons pas à caractériser une fois de plus.

Mais le Conspirateur a toutes les audaces. Après avoir provoqué la révolte, il met obstacle à la pacification. Il veut dit-il, que l'exécution des réformes soit garantie. Garantie ? Par qui ? Par lui ? Voyons comment il exécute ses propres

promesses ; alors seulement nous saurons jusqu'à quel point il est digne de garantir les promesses d'autrui.

Lors du Congrès de Paris, l'Europe, émue des souffrances de la Pologne, voulut soulever la question de cette malheureuse contrée. Le Comte Orloff, Plénipotentiaire Russe, insinua que S. M. L'Empereur Alexandre voulait inaugurer son règne par des mesures libératrices, dont tous ses sujets, sans distinction, devaient bénéficier ; que, dans ces conditions, il serait pénible à S. M. de se voir ainsi enlever le mérite de l'initiative : qu'en conséquence, le Congrès était prié de ne point traiter la question Polonaise.

On accéda à cette prière, après avoir toutefois obtenu du Plénipotentiaire Russe la promesse solennelle de certaines mesures libérales, et notamment, des trois points ci-après :

Amnistie générale.

Rétablissement de la langue Polonaise.

Liberté de conscience.

L'amnistie fut en effet proclamée le 15/27 Mai 1856. — Dès le mois de Juin suivant, un Oukase prononçait la confiscation des biens de trois Polonais, pour le fait d'avoir servi dans l'armée révolutionnaire de Hongrie (en 1848).

Le rétablissement de la langue polonaise n'eut pas un meilleur sort, témoin l'incident de Kamienee, où S. M. l'Empereur Alexandre, refusant de recevoir une pétition qui lui était présentée à ce sujet, rappela : « qu'il était « Empereur de Russie ; qu'il était sur le sol Russe ; que « ceux qui lui parlaient étaient tous Russes ; qu'il ne

« voulait rien avoir à faire avec la Pologne et les
« nais. » (1)

Quant à la *liberté de conscience*, il suffira, pour avoir une idée de la manière dont elle a été respectée, de lire le document suivant, qui date de sept années après le Congrès de Paris.

*Circulaire adressée par le chef militaire du district de
Wilkomir au chef de police, major Schl_okoff*

« Eu égard aux meurtres et brigandages qui ne cessent
« de se renouveler, j'ai résolu de publier dans le district
« ce qui suit :

« J'attribue tous ces désordres au penchant avéré du
« Clergé Catholique *au brigandage et à la rébellion, pen-*
« *chant commun à tout le clergé catholique, depuis le*
« *Saint-Père Pie IX et ses cardinaux à Rome,* jusqu'au
« desservant de la plus pauvre des églises de Lithuanie.
« C'est pourquoi j'ai décrété :

« 1^o Lorsque les brigands s'approcheront des villages,
« on s'empressera de rappeler aux prêtres leur devoir,
« qui consiste à aller au devant d'eux avec la croix et
« l'Évangile, et non avec le pain et le sel, comme ils le
« font jusqu'à présent. Ils devront faire appel à la persua-
« sion, employer toute leur éloquence pour empêcher ces
« misérables de commettre des crimes ; *on ne permettra*
« *enfin aux rebelles de pénétrer dans le village qu'en pas-*
« *sant sur le corps des prêtres.*

« S'ils font cela, je m'empresserai de rapporter leurs
« exploits à l'évêque de Vilna et au Pape Pie IX à Rome,

(1) *L'Église Catholique en Pologne* par P. Lescoeur, T. I, p. 266.

« ur que ces prêtres martyrs n'aient pas trop longtemps
« à attendre leur canonisation.

« Les prêtres qui n'auront pas suivi à la lettre mes
« dispositions, seront mis en état d'arrestation par mon
« ordre, traduits ensuite devant le conseil de guerre, et
« les procès-verbaux dressés en vingt quatre heures ; ils
« seront jugés comme ayant pris une part active à l'insur-
« rection.

« 2° Les prêtres seront responsables de tous les meur-
« tres commis dans leurs paroisses respectives ; ils ré-
« pondront de leur tête et de leurs biens, pour tous les
« crimes commis et à commettre.

« J'ai prié MM. les propriétaires de coopérer à la paci-
« fication du pays, en faisant des concessions à leurs
« paysans et en donnant à leurs rapports avec eux, un
« cachet tout particulier de bonté et de bienveillance.

« C'est pourquoi, j'ai décrété :

« 1°. J'organiserai immédiatement des administrations
« militaires dans les domaines de ceux des propriétaires
« qui surchargent les paysans de prétentions déplacées ;
« en d'autres termes, j'enverrai des garnisons militaires
« pour faire un peu le ménage à la place des proprié-
« taires.

« Je mettrai sans retard sous sequestre les biens de ceux
« des propriétaires que je reconnaitrai décidément inca-
« pables de gérer leurs fortunes. J'emploierai leurs reve-
« nus à pacifier le pays et à étouffer la rébellion.

Le Colonel MOLLER.

29/17 août 1863. (1)

(1) *Le Code rouge*. Dentu. Paris 1863, p. 36.

Il serait peut-être habile de laisser le lecteur sous l'impression de dégoût qu'excite ce document, où la férocité se montre cynique jusqu'au grotesque.

Mais il nous reste un dernier devoir à remplir.

Les pages qui précèdent contiennent, nous l'avons dit, un enseignement.

Qu'elles soient aussi un avertissement :

La Russie, déjouée dans ses plans à la Conférence de Constantinople, peut essayer de transporter son action sur un autre terrain. Elle peut tenter encore une fois d'entraîner l'Europe à une entente commune.

Or, les révélations dont ce volume est plein ne permettent plus à l'Europe de s'y tromper.

L'ENTENTE avec la Russie désormais ne pourrait porter qu'un nom : LA COMPLICITÉ.

FIN.

