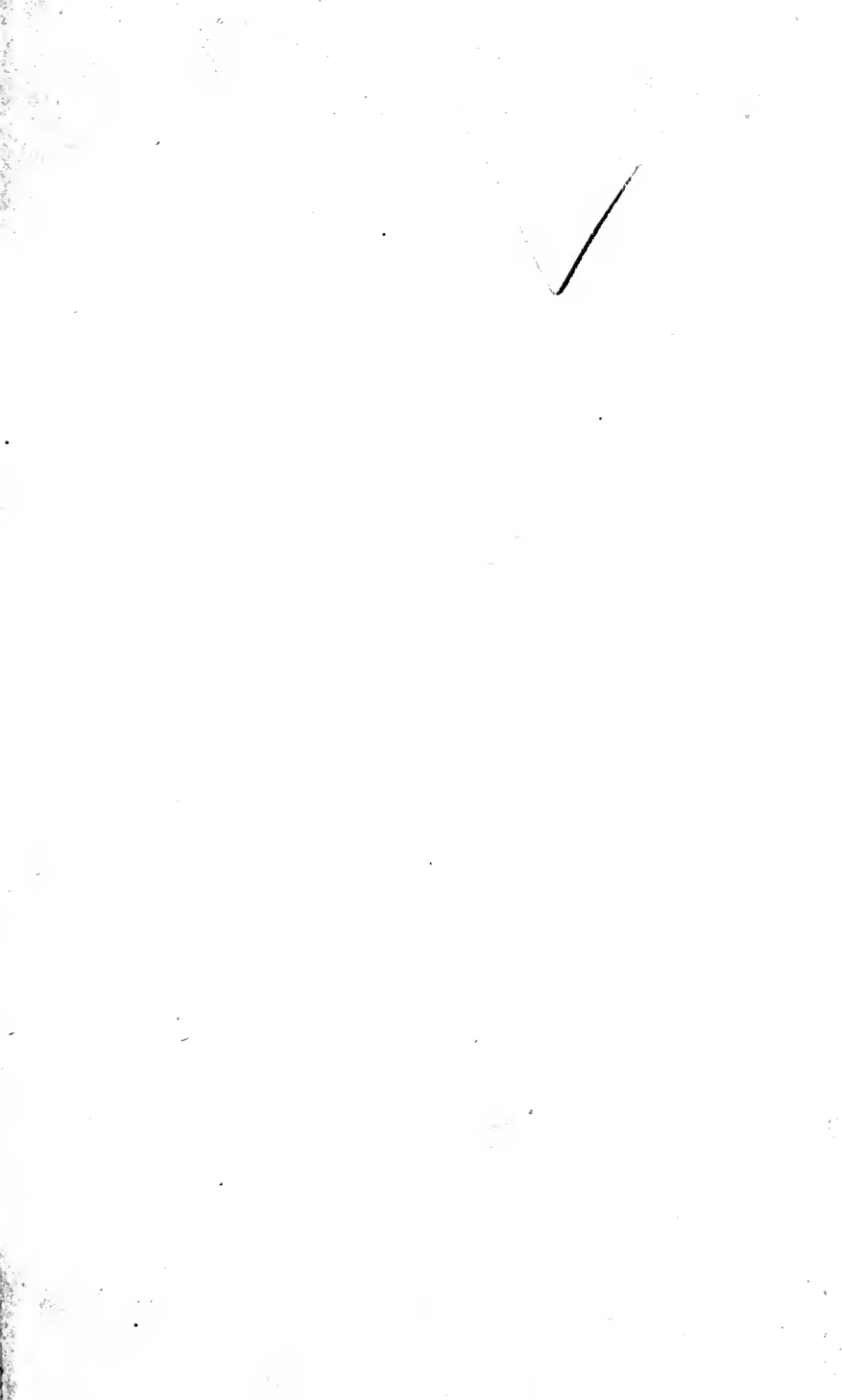


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THE SCLAVONIC PROVINCES
OF THE
OTTOMAN EMPIRE.

ADDRESS AT HAWARDEN.

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



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THE SCLAVONIC PROVINCES OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE.

ADDRESS AT HAWARDEN.

ON January 16th, the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone gave a reading in the schoolroom at Hawarden, founded on Miss Muir Mackenzie's and Miss Irby's work on "The Slavonic Provinces of the Ottoman Empire." The room was crowded from door to door. Amongst the company were Mrs. W. E. Gladstone, Miss Gladstone, the Rev. S. E. Gladstone, and Mr. W. H. Gladstone, M.P.

Mr. Gladstone said :—My friends and neighbours : My object in addressing you this evening is not to meddle, even for a moment, with any portion of the political questions that at this moment deeply interest the country. I do not mean to say that my subject has no bearing upon those questions, because everything that relates to the interior state of Turkey and the condition of the Government there may be said to have an indirect bearing upon them. But I shall not say a word which can be understood to belong properly to the province of English politics. My object really is to give a little information, and I will tell you why. I think that, as a general rule, the English people feel that it is difficult enough to understand their own affairs, much less those of other people ; and that is the principle upon which I have always been very much disposed to act. I have invariably held, and have often contended in Parliament, that this nation and its Government were already overweighted, and that we had undertaken more responsibilities than we could properly discharge. Consequently, I always regret any measure, from whatever quarter it comes, that tends unnecessarily to increase our responsibilities ; but that is no reason why we should flinch from responsibilities that have been already incurred, when they amount to honourable engagements ; and undoubtedly we have incurred responsibilities in the nature of honourable engagements with respect to Turkey. We have meddled in the affairs of the East—whether from motives of policy, whether from motives of philanthropy, whether for the preservation of the

public order of Europe, or upon whatever ground—we have, as you know very well to your cost, taken an important and active part in former years in the affairs relating to the Government of Turkey. We have, in truth, I may say, set up Turkey upon her legs. The probability is that she would not be upon her legs at this moment but for the powerful assistance which, in conjunction with France, we rendered to her, and which it was very doubtful whether France would have undertaken to render if she had stood alone. Consequently, considering the grievous complaints that are made, and the horrors that occur, it becomes a matter of great importance to us in the discharge of our responsibilities to know something about the interior state of Turkey. It is extremely difficult for us to know the state of our own country. We know it but very imperfectly, although we have the assistance of a Press which is organised to the very highest degree, and although we have the aid which we derive from the invaluable privilege of public discussion, inherited from our forefathers, and never more valued than at present. In Turkey, on the other hand, we are dealing with a country in a state that is in some respects semi-barbarous, and in some respects worse than barbarous—meaning by the term barbarous a country in a very early stage of social progress. We are, therefore, in some difficulty, because we have duties to discharge, and we are not amply provided with the means of discharging them. The consequences of this are to be seen and felt by us all in our different positions. I can assure you that I, as a public man, having perhaps opportunities of information superior to the average, have to lament very deeply the insufficiency of my own information. For the last six months I have laboured almost unceasingly to increase it; but I still feel that it is very defective. My desire this evening is to do something, as far as time permits, towards providing my hearers with a clearer view of the interior condition of Turkey than is commonly possessed at present, and likewise to do something towards bringing home to the public mind that which is by many most strongly felt—namely, that down to the present moment, in the case of the people, in the case even of statesmen, aye, and very often in the case of travellers, who went to the East and who came back lamentably deficient of information, we all have been too much in the dark as to the real state of affairs.

I have chosen as the principal source of what I shall say this night, the Work of two English ladies. It may seem a little strange that two ladies should undertake the task of travelling through a country like Turkey; but these two ladies were persons of great courage and intelligence, and likewise imbued with feelings of great philanthropy; and one of them (Miss Irby) has devoted years of her life, and is at this moment devoting herself, to the highly important and laudable purpose of the extension of education in some of the Turkish provinces.

The other, Miss Mackenzie, has been cut off in her honourable career by death. I have no hesitation in saying that the book I have chosen is, as far as I know, the very best that can be obtained upon the interior condition of part of Turkey. They devoted themselves morning, noon, and night to see with their own eyes, and hear with their own ears, and consider with their own minds and hearts the condition of the country. That was the purpose for which they went there. Another reason why I take their book is that it has not been produced amid the somewhat heated conditions of the last six or twelve months. It was published nine or ten years ago; but the state of things which it described was a state of things which undoubtedly has not mended. It has decidedly, and that I think by general confession, grown worse, and not better, in the most essential points, within that time.

So much, then, for the book to which I am about to refer; but still it is necessary that I should say a few words to assist you in understanding the very peculiar and unexampled condition of the Turkish government, and the Turkish race in the European provinces of the Ottoman Empire. I am going to limit myself to a very small portion of the Turkish Empire. The whole dominion has a population of 40,000,000, and not only so, but it is composed of a great multitude of countries differing very much in their political relations to Turkey, and all of them, I am afraid, having only this in common—that wherever they are directly under the Government of the Porte, they are under an incredibly bad government. The best-conditioned of them by far are those who, although they pay tribute to the Porte, and maintain a certain mildly-developed connection with it, yet in the main have the management of their own affairs. To-night we have to deal with a very small portion indeed of the Turkish Empire. These ladies have described principally the northern part of Macedonia, the country lying immediately round the southern and western parts of Servia, and also Montenegro. Now, the Turkish Government is a government without any parallel, so far as I know, in the world. It is a government established by conquest, and in that respect it is exceedingly like a great many other governments that have been established by conquest. For example, the Norman Government was established in England by conquest, and was maintained for a certain time by force, and for a time there was a great inequality between a man who was a Norman by birth in England, and the condition of a man who was a Saxon, or a Briton, or a Dane by birth; but all these differences have long ago worn off, and we do not know whether a man is a Briton, a Jute, a Dane, or a Saxon, or a Roman, or a Celt; we have all happily settled down into one homogeneous whole. The case of Turkey is exactly the reverse. There has been no settling down, no amalgamation. It is with

Turkey, not a case of milk put into tea, which amalgamates with the tea; it is the case of oil put into water, which will not mix. That may make intelligible to you the condition of the Turks in regard to their subject races. They are no more mixed than the oil with the water.

The only qualification which I must make to that saying is this: when the Turks came into the country they came upon this principle, that all the populations of the countries that they conquered were to have the choice between three alternatives. One of them was death, another was a sort of servitude, in which the Christians now remain, and the third was the embracing of the Mahometan religion. A portion of the Christian population of those countries chose to embrace the Mahometan creed; and I am sorry to say—for it does not tell well for the benefit of worldly prosperity on the human heart and character—that these were almost entirely the wealthy people. They were the people who had what is called something to lose, who had what is sometimes spoken of as “a stake in the country.” We sometimes hear “a stake in the country” spoken of really as if it invested a man with special virtues and moral excellences. However that may be, in Bosnia, Herzegovina, Crete, and Bulgaria, a number of those who had wealth turned Mahometan to save their property, and have formed a class by themselves, the Turks being partially, and only very partially, mixed with these Mahometans; but with the Christian population, whether Roman Catholic or belonging to the Eastern Church, they have not amalgamated at all.

Their government was originally a government of force, and a government of force it still remains. It is impossible for me to explain at full length the nature of that government, but it is as unlike as anything can be to the government of England. That is something of a beginning towards an explanation. If you consider what is done by our government—I do not mean a particular administration, but the whole constitution, or rather, the series of those who administer that constitution—if you consider the aspects of our own government, you must wipe them all out and put them away, and then start afresh to consider what the Turkish government is. The business of our government is to preserve property, to preserve order, to prevent each man from injuring his neighbour, to promote education, and knowledge of religion, to guard the sanctity of the family, and, above all, the sanctity and honour of women. In Turkey not one of these is guarded; except, to a certain degree for the Turks themselves and the Mussulmans. For the Christian they are not guarded; and that is the great and palpable fact which distinguishes the Turkish government from the English government, and, in its degree, from every government in Christendom.

The Turkish government, in truth, so far as it has merit, has it not in what it does, but in what it does not do. When this

conquering race came into Europe they were wonderful as a conquering race. They had an immense talent as a conquering race, as a military horde, and they understood right well the business of conquest, the business of bloodshed, the business of setting themselves up by force above their fellow-creatures. But, as to the ordinary arts of government, they neither understand them at all, nor care one pin about them. At times, in the course of the Turkish history, plans have been submitted to the Ottoman Porte—which, I believe, is the proper official name of the Government—for the total destruction and extermination of the whole of the Christians; but these plans have been rejected, and why? Because they said, “No, it is much better to allow the Christian to pay a ransom for his life. When he has paid a ransom for his life, he will remain and serve our purposes. He will pay taxes for us; cultivate the soil for us. He will have no rights of property. His property will only be that which we do not want. So much of it as we want will be our property. He shall remain, therefore, upon these conditions; and, as to the concerns of his government, we are not going to bother ourselves as to the government of inferior animals, such as the populations of those countries that we have trodden under foot. Let them manage for themselves, so far as they can do so without interfering with our objects and purposes. As for their religion, let them shift for themselves: they have paid their ransom.” The name given to the Christian population was “Rayahs.” I am informed, or at least I have seen it printed in books, by those who profess to understand the Turkish language, which I do not, that “rayah” means ransomed—one who has paid a price for permission to live. Whether that be the meaning of the word or not, it is the essential idea of the condition of the Christians in the Turkish Empire.

This was a state of things which you will easily understand required radical reform; and radical reform in Turkey was contemplated as a sequel to the Crimean War. At the end of the war the Ottoman Government gave an engagement, perhaps the most solemn ever contracted, certainly one of the most solemn ever contracted in the public history of the world—for it was an engagement sealed in blood and tears—in the blood and tears of many an Englishman and English family—a most solemn engagement to set all this right, and to establish full civil, religious, social, and legal rights amongst its subjects. Twenty years of tranquillity followed. I do not mean that the Empire was always tranquil. There were, there could not but be, rebellions, a natural growth in such a case, that cannot be repressed; but there was no foreign attack or aggression of any kind upon the empire. At the end of these twenty years, when the recent rebellions occurred and the facts were brought more fully to light, we find that, instead of that engagement’s having been redeemed,

matters appear to be absolutely worse than they were twenty-five years ago.

Such is the state of things which we approach in this great question. And I will endeavour now to give you some details which will open it up to you in a certain degree—I am afraid, in a very limited degree, because it is far too wide to be embraced in the time which you can to-night devote to it; but I can show you that the language which I hold is not the language of persons with inflamed and heated minds. It is rather a striking fact that several members of the legal profession, and of great legal authority, have been writing upon this subject in different parts of the continent of Europe. I have read three works of this description, one of them by a German who is the greatest authority on international law of the present day, another by a Belgian legist of very great ability, and the third by an Italian Advocate; and I will read an extract from the writings of the latter to show that, although the language I use might appear to be extremely strong, yet it is not really stronger than what these lawyers use. These lawyers make no doubt whatever about the fact that it is the absolute duty of Europe to look at the condition of Turkey, and to prevent the continuance of the horrible state of things that prevails there. The Italian lawyer says that Turkey has never existed in Europe as a nation, if a state be an organic union of one or more peoples within defined limits of space, dependent upon a sovereign authority for the well-being of those associated in it. It follows logically that Turkey, as it is constituted, is not to be held as a state. An organic union of the different peoples constituting Turkey does not and cannot exist, because the denial of the equality of the subject in the face of the public authority carries logically, as a consequence, the violation of the sanctuary, of the family, of property, of religion, of personal existence. The Turk believes in his own supremacy over other people, and does not hold possible any relations between them except upon this condition. Lawyers are supposed to take judicial views of these matters, and such is the language of an Italian lawyer who has written upon this terrible subject.

I shall now go on to describe the condition of Servia, Bosnia, and Herzegovina, and those southern and northern parts of Macedonia which are inhabited principally by people of the Servian race and people of Servian sympathies. In former times, the countries that run along the south of the Danube were occupied by two kingdoms of considerable power. One of them, the Bulgarian kingdom, was subdued in the fourteenth century; the other was the Servian kingdom, and that was subdued at the end of the fourteenth century; that is, they made themselves vassals of the Turks; but the Turks very soon trampled them altogether under foot. The conditions under which they submitted to a Mahometan power were broken:

absolute power was established in the whole of the country, and a large portion of it still continues under the direct government of the Turks. But one important portion of it—namely, Servia—has exempted itself from the direct government. In 1804 a very serious rebellion took place, and there was a long struggle for liberty, ending in the establishment of that liberty about the year 1829 or 1830; and that part of the country is now called, and is to be regarded as, free Servia. But the other provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which we have heard so much talked about, are inhabited by people of Servian race just as much as Servia itself is. The consequence is that Servia did not stand with them as a foreign country or a foreign state. A great number of people thought it very odd that Servia, which was very weak, and had only a million and a quarter of people, should declare war in the beginning of last July against an empire of thirty or forty millions like Turkey. These people said: "What has Servia to do with Bosnia and Herzegovina? Nothing has been done against Servia." I can only explain this by an illustration. Suppose that all England had been subdued in the same way as all Servia was, and then, that after a length of time Yorkshire or Wales had made a gallant fight, and had shaken off the yoke of the conqueror, and established its right to self-government in its own affairs. Do you think there would be no sympathy in Yorkshire for the rest of England? and do you not think that the rest of England would look to Yorkshire to assist them to recover their liberty? That is the case with the little state of Servia. The people of Servia, of Bosnia, and of Herzegovina are the same people, and have suffered in a common servitude. The people of Servia have been able to shake off that yoke; the others are still in servitude, and they look to free Servia as their rallying-point, and as an indication of what they themselves trust they will come to be in the future. When travelling in Old-Servia, Misses Mackenzie and Irby once lodged in the house of Pope Dantcha, a person well known for his intelligence, courage, and uprightness, and looked up to as he deserved. "There are here," he said, "but 200 Christian houses, and from 400 to 500 Mussulman, so the Arnaouts have it all their own way. They rob the Christians whenever and of whatever they please . . . and as the Christians receive no support against them, no enlightenment nor hope from Constantinople, they naturally look for everything to Servia." It is not an incredible thing, therefore, that this country should rush into a war which its resources were inadequate to maintain.

I shall now give to you some instances which will show the persecution and indignities to which Christians are subjected in Turkey, and the deplorable condition in which they are placed by being treated as the inferiors of the Turks. The book I hold in my hand is Mr. Evans' "Through Bosnia and the Herzego-

vina," and the incident I am about to relate is at page 204. Mr. Evans was occupied in sketching a ruin at a place called Travnik, when he became unpleasantly conscious of stones falling in his vicinity. Looking round, he perceived a lad of about fourteen : hard by were a group of armed Turks, to whom Mr. Evans made signs that he would be obliged to them to restrain the lad's proceedings. He then resumed his drawing, but shortly afterwards a large stone struck him on the middle of the back ; and this time Mr. Evans, thoroughly roused, pursued his assailant, who fled for refuge into a neighbouring house. Meantime one of the Turks above-mentioned came up to him, shouting "Tursko ! Tursko !" meaning, says Mr. Evans, that the boy, being a Turk, might throw as many stones as he liked at the cursed Giaour. Mr. Evans returned once more to his drawing, when the lad, accompanied by two armed Turks, one on each side, issued forth from his shelter, and the three swaggered up to insult the dog of a Christian at their leisure. Seeing Mr. Evans bent on chastising their *protégé*, they again shouted "Tursko ! Tursko !" ("He is a Turk ! he is a Turk !"), as though they would bid him lick the dust off the urchin's feet. He simply replied, "Inglese" ("I am an Englishman"), and gave the stripling a hearty box on the ear. The rage of the Turks knew no bounds. For a moment they were dumb with amazement ; then one of them drew his sword-knife ; but before he had time to disentangle it from his sash, Mr. Evans was on him with his stick—happily a heavy one—and the coward took to his heels. The other Turk imitated the example of his comrade ; the boy made off also ; and Mr. Evans was left in possession of the field. He went home and provided himself with a revolver.

A more terrible story is related at page 312. Mr. Evans had fallen in with a Belgian engineer, who was erecting a bridge across the Narenta river. As they were walking along, the engineer pointed to a part of a maize-plot, where the maize was slightly trodden down. "Do you see that?" he said ; and he then recounted to him the following story. A few days ago a young Herzegovinian Christian was passing through the district, provided with a Turkish pass, properly *viséd* ; but as he was passing by some booths near the bridge, two Turks—not officials or soldiers of any kind, but armed nevertheless—came up and demanded his pass. Though they had no right to ask for it, the young Christian complied, and handed it to them for their inspection. Thereupon the two Mahometans, who could not read a syllable, swore that the whole thing was wrong, and, seizing hold of him, began to drag him along, crying out to the Christians at the booths that they were taking him off to the Road Commission : but they had not proceeded far when they suddenly fell upon him, and hauling him off into the maize,

butchered him with seven blows from their *handshars*. They then made off in broad daylight, making their way through the Christians and others whom the young fellow's cries were bringing to the scene of the tragedy—not a soul daring to lay a hand on the murderers, for they were Turks. The Belgian, coming out from his tent, and finding the young *rayah* dying or dead, at once sent for *zaptiehs* to arrest the murderers, but of course in vain; they made no real effort. You will say, "How cowardly of the Christians to make no attempt to seize them;" but cowardice is one of those vices engendered by a long course of tyranny that crushes the very heart out of its victims. Wherever there is a subject and a dominant race, the vices of subjection belong not to the oppressed, but to the oppressor. It is on those who practise the oppression that the whole responsibility of these vices devolves. Take the case of negro slavery; it is just the same thing. We are often told that among negroes lying, stealing, and every kind of petty fraud and trickery prevail, and that they are poor debased creatures. But who are responsible for this state of things? If those Christians failed to do their duty, as they did fail in not standing up like men to act against the wrong-doers, the whole responsibility of their failure of duty and justice belongs to the system under which they live, and to those who favour and maintain that system.

There is, in fact, a great deal of resemblance between the system which prevails in Turkey and the old system of negro slavery. In some respects it is less bad than negro slavery, and in other respects a great deal worse. It is worse in this respect, that in the case of negro slavery, at any rate, it was a race of higher capacities ruling over a race of lower capacities; but in the case of this system, it is unfortunately a race of lower capacities which rules over a race of higher capacities. The hinge of both alike was the law of evidence. Whatever misdeed the master of the slave committed, he was pretty sure of impunity, because the slave's evidence against him could not be received. Now that is the case with the Christians in the Turkish provinces. It was promised in 1856 that that should be redressed, and that the Christian's evidence should be received. But to this hour it is not generally received. Here is a story related by Misses Mackenzie and Irby as taking place at Ipek:—A Servian woman was taken ill: the master of the house went out to call assistance, and an Arnaout, who had a grudge against him, shot him dead. In an evil hour, the Christians of Ipek, knowing the murderer, denounced him to the *kaimakam*; and thereupon the Arnaouts seized on another Christian, and declared that he, and not an Arnaout, was guilty of the deed. Christian evidence going for nothing against a Mussulman, of course the Servian could not be cleared. The *kaimakam* threw him into prison. Months passed, and

at length the prisoner was taken to Prizren to be judged by the Pacha ; but he did not return. Would they (Misses Mackenzie and Irby) intercede on behalf of the poor Serb? They promised to mention the story to the first consul they met ; more they could not do. The woman who related the story said, "We do not know who you are, but ever since your coming was talked of the Arnaouts have not dared to meddle with us : they are quite hushed, and sit so," and she crossed her hands over her breast. "Ay," quoth Katerina (Katerina Simitch was a schoolmistress—one of the most remarkable persons they met in Turkey, and the bravest woman they knew anywhere : her school had been twice broken into by the Arnaouts), "that is what they always do when a consul is coming ; but they make up for it afterwards, insulting and tormenting us, and exclaiming, 'Do not fancy your turn is come yet.'" With these words they left them, Katerina leading the way, her companions cowering behind her. Again, as to evidence :—Three horses which had been hired by the ladies were stolen when pasturing at night. The men in charge were Christians, but in order to prove they had been in possession of the horses over-night, they must call in the evidence of the *cavass*, "because his oath, as that of a Mussulman, would be received, and theirs would not." This state of things entirely destroys the basis of civil rights between man and man, and poisons the whole of life with fear and apprehension. Consequently, of these Servians outside of "Free Servia," there are but few who have courage remaining to hold up their heads like men.

With regard to the abuse of religion, the grievance is not altogether at the hands of the Turks. The clergy of these provinces belong very much to their own people, but their bishops unfortunately do not. I am sorry to say that the accounts given of them by the lady-writers from whose work I am quoting are rather disgraceful accounts. They frequently do not reside in their diocese. They think a great deal more about fleecing their flocks than feeding them. The clergy are called popes, and they appear to be closely attached to the people, and the people reciprocate their attachment. Misses Mackenzie and Irby found the people eager purchasers of the Bibles, or such portions of the Bible, as they had with them. For instance, at Vesea they sold all their store—especially the Old Testaments, of which the few books already translated into modern Bulgarian were bound together in volumes at 2s. 6d. apiece ; and the priest was quite cross with them because they had not brought a larger supply. Again, at Prizren they gave Pope Kosta their last Servian Testament, little anticipating how welcome the gift would prove. He received the book without appearance of pleasure, and took it home with him ; but next morning he reappeared radiant, together with his wife and another relative. He said that he had

begun reading to the women, and, having found that the language was such as they commonly used, the words came home to them familiarly as never in the Church-Slavonic version. They had sat up till late, poring over the book, and now the pope was going forth into the villages to read it out to all the people.

I have now endeavoured to describe to you, by the light of these books of travels, the general state of the Christian provinces of Turkey; but I must still say a little on the subject of Montenegro, which is an extraordinary subject. The history is briefly this:—A portion of the Slav inhabitants of the northern part of Albania, near the Adriatic Sea, were conquered by the Turks in the fifteenth century; but a number of them were determined not to accede to any of the three alternatives which were usually given—that is to say, either to be put to death, or to be ransomed by paying tribute, or to become Mussulmans. Instead of submitting to any of these conditions, they journeyed to a remarkable group of mountains, very high and very difficult of access. That was in 1485, and they remained under the prince who led them, and under his son, until 1516, when a very curious circumstance happened, and a state of things occurred that I believe was entirely without example. In 1516 their sovereign retired because he wanted an easier life; because you must bear in mind that for the sake of their religion and their freedom this people abandoned everything else that could make life happy and desirable. They abandoned property; they went up to an inhospitable climate, with very limited means of subsistence, to maintain a desperate struggle against the whole power of the Ottoman race. They carried on the struggle with very little aid and almost without intermission for 400 years, and this remarkable people are there still, and it is to be observed in the course of the last six months that while the Turks boasted that they had beaten the Servians and 3,000 or 4,000 Russian volunteers who aided them, there has not been a Russian volunteer with the Montenegrins. Theirs is a population of 120,000 or 140,000, and in every case they have beaten the Turks. (Cheers.) The Montenegrins have had nothing to fight with, for the most part, except old-fashioned weapons which no other nation would look at. They have no cavalry, no artillery, and if ever they had cannon brought into action, those cannon they had taken from the Turks. With all these disadvantages, and in spite of the vast numbers that were brought against them, on every occasion they have beaten the Turkish forces, and at this moment they are blockading one of the Turkish towns called Nistics, about which there was a question raised in connection with the armistice. In 1516, when their lay sovereign retired, what do you think he did? He made the government of the country over to the bishop. A succession of bishops governed that country, and led the

people in their desperate struggle, standing between life and death almost without intermission for 336 years. These bishops were warriors. Every priest in Montenegro was and is a warrior. They wore the dress of the country, and wore arms like the rest of the people. It would be a very extraordinary thing, you might think, to see the rector and curates of Hawarden going about with arms in their hands; but you must consider the circumstances in which these Montenegrin priests were placed. It has been a deadly conflict between life and death from day to day, and from year to year; and at no period during the whole of these many generations had the people been permitted to lay aside the terrible habits which were connected with a constant conflict of blood between different races of mankind. Their object had been to maintain their freedom and religion. Everything else they lost when they went into the hills. Their leader summoned them together, and made them take a solemn oath on the New Testament to abide true to their faith and nation, and rather die than accept terms with the infidel. Whoever broke that oath was to be invested with a woman's apron—(laughter)—and hooted from the ranks of men. You laugh; but you would hardly believe the respect which these people had and have for women. These women did hard labour—the severe conditions of their life required it—and these women were sometimes keen and eager to go into the fight under the circumstances in which they lived. But the honour of a woman is never broken, and the purity and chastity of that people is something marvellous. We may hear people talk of their superstition and ignorance. They may have superstitions, and they may be ignorant in many things; but in many points of the Christian law they will put us all to shame. And these ladies (Miss Mackenzie and Miss Irby) inform us that if a traveller wanted to go through Montenegro, and to be perfectly secure from incivility as well as violence, the only thing he had to do was to get an unprotected woman of the country to go with him, and her protection would carry him safely through. Nay, we learn from the work of the two ladies, that in Montenegro all unchastity is punished with death. I have spoken of the cowardice and unmanliness and effeminacy of character which undoubtedly taints some of the unhappy subjects of Turkey. There is none of that effeminacy, but there has been a certain taint of cruelty, in Montenegro. The practice of the Montenegrins when they took Turks in battle was to cut off their heads and exhibit them on their battlements. It will be said that this was very savage, but you will understand it when I tell you something which is, perhaps, more startling still. When Montenegrins went into battle together, and one of them was so wounded that he could not be removed, it was the duty of the other, especially if he were his brother or his friend, to cut off his head. Why? To save him from the tortures, the foul insults and disgrace, to which he, whilst living,

would have been exposed at the hands of the Turks. No doubt this is a wild and awful state of manners, but if the people are driven to this state of things, it is the oppressors who are responsible for it. It is idle for the oppressors to complain of conduct of this sort, because, the more they prove, the more they establish the ground of condemnation against themselves. I am glad to say that in recent times great efforts have been made to do away with this ferocity of character. The Montenegrins still maintain their military valour, but I do not believe that many excesses, if any, have been established against them in the present war. For two generations great pains have been taken by their sovereigns, and I believe with much of success, to establish peace and order and good government among them, and the representation of Miss Mackenzie and Miss Irby is that life and property are far more secure in Montenegro at this time than they are in Turkey, and that in the year preceding their visit the whole number of offences committed in the territory was but two. The patron saint of Montenegro is St. Peter; known in his lifetime as Vladika Peter I. He died in 1830, after a long reign of fifty-three years. This is what these ladies say about him. Ask a Montenegrin what St. Peter did for Montenegro, and he tells you—"There are still with us men who lived under St. Peter's rule, heard his words, and saw his life. For fifty years he governed us, and fought and negotiated for us, and walked before us in pureness and uprightness from day to day. He gave us good laws, and put an end to the disorderly state of the country. He enlarged our frontier, and drove away our enemies. Even on his death-bed he spoke words to our elders which have kept peace among us since he has gone. While he yet lived, we swore by his name; we felt his smile a blessing, and his anger a curse. We do so still." Since that time, one of their leading princes was assassinated beyond the limits of Montenegro by a fellow of bad character. The event had no connection with politics, and no connection, happily, with the Turk. The people went into mourning for him, and the mourning must have been real, for the ladies said, "It is more than a year since the whole population went into mourning, but there are still no signs of its being laid aside," and in another passage: "The secretary told us that for eight weeks after the late prince's death the chapel was filled day and night with people lamenting over his grave, and not women alone, but huge sunburnt warriors, weeping like children." These Montenegrins are an extraordinary race, both mentally and physically. I have never seen but one, and that was in the island of Corfu, about twenty years ago. He was one of the most magnificent men that I ever met with—very young, very simple in manner, largely armed even in Corfu, a thoroughly peaceful country, and perfectly well-behaved. He made a very deep impression on me. With respect to the character of the race to which he belonged, they

are in truth a race of heroes ; and though their history has drawn very little attention, and though I am far from denying it has dark spots in it, because, as I have said, the spirit of ferocity in former times prevailed to a considerable extent among them, yet their heroism, the sacrifices they have made, their noble constancy, will secure to them, in my opinion, to the latest times, a name far more illustrious than that which will belong to nations and states and peoples infinitely greater in the eyes of this world, and according to the common measure of human judgment.

In conclusion, let me say I have had to use very hard words about the Turks. I have hardly said a good word for them, except that their soldiers are brave and sober, but let me say this to cover the whole. The Turks are what circumstances have made them, and depend upon it that if a lot of us were taken and put in their circumstances we, either individually or as a race, would soon cease to do even the limited credit to the Christian name that we now bring to it. They exercise a perfectly unnatural domination over their fellow-creatures ; and arbitrary power is the greatest corruptor of the human mind and heart. There is nothing that can withstand it. Human nature requires the restraint of law. There is, unfortunately, no restraint of law in Turkey, and in the sight of God and man, much as these Christians are to be pitied, perhaps the Turks, who are the victims of that system, are to be pitied still more. The very worst things that men have ever done have been done when they were performing acts of violence in the name of religion. That has been the unfortunate position of the Turks, as a race that not only has conquered, but has conquered in the sacred name of religion. The corruption that results from such a system as that is deep and profound. Mahometans, where they manage their own affairs, and have not got the charge of the destinies of other people, can live in tolerable communities together, and discharge many of the duties of civil and social life. In certain cases, as, for instance, in the case of the Moors of Spain, they have exhibited many great and conspicuous merits. It is not the fact, that their religion is different from ours, which prevents them from discharging civil duties. Do not suppose that for a moment. It is not because they are in themselves so much worse than we are. God forbid that we should judge them. It is that this wretched system under which they live puts into their hands power which human beings ought not to possess, and the consequences are corruption to themselves and misery to those around. God in his mercy grant that the wisdom and patience and courage of Christendom may apply an effectual remedy to this state of things. (Loud applause.)—A vote of thanks was passed to Mr. Gladstone, and the proceedings terminated.



