

is made up of thirty thousand skulls, contributed by the rebellious Servians in the early part (I believe) of this century; I am not at all sure of my date, but I fancy it was in the year 1806 that the first skull was laid. I am ashamed to say, that in the darkness of the early morning, we unknowingly went by the neighbourhood of this triumph of art, and so basely got off from admiring "the simple grandeur of the architect's conception," and "the exquisite beauty of the fretwork."<sup>38</sup>

All this was delivered with irony and the proverbial aristocratic stiff upper lip but it is a far cry from the denunciations of Balkan barbarity that followed after the turn of the next century; it is also far removed from any outburst of moral outrage against the Ottoman perpetrators of the crime, a line followed by some of Kinglake's countrymen a couple of decades later. Ten years after Kinglake, William Makepeace Thackeray cruised the Mediterranean on board the *Iberia*, and arrived on the Greek mainland at Athens. While reputed to be the only distinguished novelist of the nineteenth century to have experienced the traditional classical education, he did not show much interest in the monuments of classical antiquity. Rather, the present palace of the king of Greece attracted his attention: "The shabbiness of the place actually beats Ireland, and that is a strong word. The palace of the Basileus is an enormous edifice of plaster, in a square containing six houses, three donkeys, no roads, no fountains (except in a picture of an inn)." Neither was Thackeray much interested in the rest of the Mediterranean; he "behaved like a bourgeois solipsist."<sup>39</sup>

Edward Lear became famous as a talented landscape artist (although he had made a name for himself with ornithological drawings, and is remembered mostly among children because of his "Book of Nonsense"). His landscapes were acclaimed for their boldness of conception and accuracy of detail. Most of his exquisite drawings, watercolors, and oil paintings came from journeys through Albania and Greece in the 1840s and 1850s.<sup>40</sup> Lear was less enamored with humans whom he rarely depicted. He liked them only when they matched the picturesqueness (a favorite word) of the landscape: "Let a painter visit Aërocerania — until he does so he will not be aware of the grandest phases of savage, yet classic, picturesqueness — whether Illyrian or Epirote — men or mountains; but let him go with a good guide or he may not come back again." Accordingly, Lear employed an Albanian servant, Giorgio Kokali, a "semi-civilised Suliote, much like wild Rob Roy" who was fiercely devoted to him. In regions that looked more subdued and civilized, however, Lear loathed "the mongrel appearance of every person and thing," a theme that becomes a discreet refrain in many descriptions.<sup>41</sup>

In the complex interplay between foreign policy, travelers' discourse, and public opinion, different sides of the triangle at different times played the role of *agent* (the source of influence) and *target* (its recipient).<sup>42</sup> Where travelers' accounts were instrumental in shaping public opinion, this was not always in only reproducing and disseminating the official foreign policy line. In fact, there was always a plurality of British sympathies in the East and there is hardly a single group or nation that had not attracted the support of *some* group in English society at *some* time, although, in general (and with all the due exceptions to a gross generalization), there was a Turkophile aristocratic bias and a pro-Christian bias among the liberal middle class.<sup>43</sup> An important example of dissenting voices as the forerunners of an important though temporary shift in Britain's traditional foreign policy was the series of public lectures

of two women travelers, Georgina Mackenzie and Adelina Irby, following their extensive tours of the Balkans, and especially Bulgaria, Serbia, Bosnia, and Macedonia between 1861 and 1863. The subsequent publication in 1867 of their popular and influential *Travels in the Slavonic Provinces of Turkey-in-Europe*, adorned with the drawings of Felix Kanitz, introduced the British public to a virtually unknown subject: the plight of the subject Slavs.

It would not be exaggerated to say that the two travelers discovered the South Slavs for the English public, which in 1860 still “vaguely supposed all the lands [of the Balkans] to be inhabited by Turks or Greeks,” in which latter category were classed all non-Muslims.<sup>44</sup> In August 1862, while visiting the famous Rila monastery, Mackenzie and Irby were received by Abbot Neophyt Rilski, a renowned educator and linguist, prolific writer, and author of the first Bulgarian grammar. He was concerned by news that the Montenegrin Cetigne monastery was burned by Muslims. Reassured by his visitors that France would not allow this to happen, he exclaimed: “France, perhaps; but England!” The ladies’ response was that “the want of interest displayed by England in the Slavonic Christians arose in great part from her ignorance respecting them — that one really never heard their name.” Neophyt’s reaction revealed his awareness of the intricacies of great power politics: “It is, however, a pity that so great a country, whose children are free to travel where they please, and publish what they please, should remain in such profound ignorance of the *Christians* in a country where she is on such intimate terms with the *Turks*.”<sup>45</sup>

Mackenzie and Irby not only discovered the South Slavs, but became their staunch supporters; “they penetrated the country more deeply, saw beyond the sullenness, the poverty and the squalor of the Christian Slavs, and were less contented by the mannered courtesies and the facile explanations of the Turkish officials.” One the daughter of a baronet, the other the granddaughter of a peer, “they were ladies of the Victorian era: they had great faith in their religion, great belief in progress, great confidence in their nationality and their background; and they were possessed of a passionate call that drove them on.” The result was not only an attempt to enlighten the English public but also to enlighten the objects of their championship. In 1869, a school for Orthodox girls began operating in Sarajevo and, after Mackenzie’s death in 1874, it became the lifelong passion of Irby, who presided over the establishment until her death and burial in Sarajevo in 1911. In the Bosnian people, Irby had found a purpose for dedication and was their unwavering champion although she never forgot her class and country and was “proudly conscious of her superiority of birth, breeding, and civilisation.” The Bosnians always remained “semi-barbarians,” and despite the efforts to produce “a better class of peasant woman,” “the dishonest outweigh the honest,” and their lasting weakness was “their inability to work hard.”<sup>46</sup>

Within a decade, public opinion had changed so substantially that William Gladstone, in his preface to the second edition of *Travels* in 1877, wrote that “very nearly all, whether freely or reluctantly, now confess that in treating the question of the Ottoman Empire we cannot refuse to look at the condition of the subject races.”<sup>47</sup> Before, even her closest friends, Florence Nightingale included, looked on Adelina Irby’s ardor and her involvement in Bosnian and Serbian politics with un-

easiness and suspicion. Yet, even here there was a change: "in the summer of 1876 it was no longer indiscreet to have friends among the 'semi-barbarians', nor eccentric to have a knowledge of the Turkish provinces, the Serbian language."<sup>48</sup> New books on the Southern Slavs were published, which added new information and openly criticized the British government for paying little attention to the future dominant nations of the peninsula.<sup>49</sup>

Exposing the press that "systematically suppresses the copious evidence of continuing Turkish outrages in Bulgaria," especially the bloody suppression of the April uprising of 1876, Gladstone concluded that it has "become generally known that the reign of terror is still prolonged in that unhappy Province." He disclosed the desolate state of Bosnia and Herecegovina where "more than a third of the population are exiled or homeless" and where "the cruel outrages . . . are more and more fastening themselves, as if inseparable adjuncts, upon the Turkish name."<sup>50</sup>

Following the gruesome Bulgarian massacres, Viscountess Emily Strangford set up a fund for the relief of Bulgarian peasants which, with the help of the American Missionary Establishment in Samokov and its head, James Franklin Clarke, distributed clothing and gave other help to the needy. The youngest daughter of Admiral Sir Francis Beaufort, Emily Anne had, before her marriage, traveled and written extensively about the East and, as a descendent of the Beauforts of the Crusades, was given the order of the Holy Sepulchre by the Patriarch of Jerusalem. Her husband, Percy Ellen Frederick William Smythe, was the eighth Viscount Strangford and son of the famous British ambassador to Constantinople and St. Petersburg in the 1820s, and was himself one of the most accomplished philologists and ethnologists of the day. With a thorough knowledge of Persian, Turkish, Arabic, Afghan, Hindi, and modern Greek, and some acquaintance with Slavic languages, he had been attaché and secretary at the British embassy in Constantinople in the 1840s and 1850s. After his accession to the peerage, he continued to live "the life of a dervish" in Constantinople until his marriage in the early 1860s. His views on the Eastern question were published in numerous contributions to the *Pall Mall Gazette* and the *Saturday Review*. Considering himself an antiphilhellene but a prophiloromaioi, a revealing differentiation between an abstract affectation with an imaginary past and the active involvement with the present problems of the Greek nation, he nevertheless believed that the future of southeastern Europe belonged to the Bulgarians, "the most numerous and promising body of Christians in Turkey."<sup>51</sup>

Sharing her deceased husband's views, Viscountess Strangford engaged in charitable work, one of the great virtues as well as great fashions of Victorian society. Although her mission was "wholly and solely one of charity and practical benevolence to suffering fellow-creatures," she was "determined to avoid everything that could be open to the reproach of Westernizing them, or of advancing them in an artificial manner beyond the level to which they had brought themselves." Had the Bulgarians been "a stupid people, apathetic and dull," she would have seized the opportunity to urge them on; but since they were burning with the desire for progress, all they needed was encouragement in self-improvement. She was mostly impressed by their thirst for education which she found "the most remarkable feature in the Bulgarian character. . . . They begged for a school-house before they asked for shelter for themselves."<sup>52</sup>

To Lady Strangford, the Bulgarian was “a curious mixture of industry and thrift with laziness and apathy; at one time he appears so Oriental, at another so Western.” A firm believer in progress, she thought that with freedom and independence, “all their faults—the hardness of character, poorness of sentiment, and apathy of heart, even the love of drink, will pass away like morning clouds; and the nation will shine out.” All faults described good-naturedly by Viscountess Strangford are the perennial and international “faults” of poor and overworked peasants all over the globe. While even the slightest reservation about the high-mindedness of Lady Strangford’s personal charity would be more than reprehensible (she later established hospitals for Turkish soldiers during the Russo-Turkish war, opened hospitals in Cairo and Beirut, and originated the National Society for Providing Trained Nurses for the Poor), her *Report* illustrated some of the discrepancies that have earned Victorian charity a reputation for hypocrisy. Describing a scene when on a Sunday, forty-six Bulgarian boys “of a class above peasants, whose parents had been well off before the destruction of their property,” came to thank her for the clothes she had given them and sang grateful songs, she felt ashamed for their appearance in “long black cloaks, looking like penguins, while singing so nicely and gravely. But I did wish the kind English who gave the things had sent me more appropriate garments” rather than bales full of “faded, torn, old muslin gowns; children’s socks without heels or toes, and shoes without soles; cheap frippery, bits of soiled finery, and odd gloves.”<sup>53</sup>

The coincidence between the discovery of the oppressed Christian nationalities and the discovery of the Victorian poor with their respective discourses after the middle of the century was especially remarkable. Just as, “for most of the nineteenth century, Englishmen looked at poverty and found it morally tolerable because their eyes were trained by evangelical religion and political economy,” so the political status quo in the Near East was considered tolerable. The passionate debate about the two nations in English society found its analogy in the awareness of the “other nations” in the Balkans, although in both cases the intellectual climate saw “little that could be done about it beyond the humanitarian charity frowned on by Malthus.”<sup>54</sup> Not only charity presented a useful method for ideological self-preservation among the English. The East offered easy possibilities of translating in simple terms the complex issues that the English colonial metropolis was facing at the time: the uneasiness about Ireland was translated into uneasiness about Macedonia; the vogue about the poor was transformed into a vogue for suppressed nationalities; the feminist movement focused on life in the harems; the remorse about India or the Boer war was translated at the turn of the century into guilt about Turkish atrocities.<sup>55</sup> When Harry Thomson lamented in his journey through Bosnia, Hercegovina, and Macedonia that “England has been justly looked upon all through the Balkan States as the friend of the Turks and the enemy of their Christian subjects,” he concluded that because of the obsession with its Indian possessions and its jealousy of Russia, “England, more than any other of the European powers, is responsible for the desolation and misery of those portions of the Balkan peninsula which have not yet shaken off the Turkish yoke.”<sup>56</sup> Or, as another Englishman summarized England’s emotional engagement with different Balkan groups:

[T]he minority staff was invariably a winner. It appealed to two instincts in the English character, one quite worthy, the other not so worthy. The first was our quite genuine, if unduly sentimental, desire to help the underdog, without first enquiring if he were a nice dog. The other was the capacity of some of us to salve our consciences for neglecting the unpicturesque poor of the East End of London by taking an interest in the picturesque poor of the East End of Europe.<sup>57</sup>

While public outrage, Gladstone's in particular, did not bring an involvement of British policy in Bulgarian or Bosnian affairs, it did bring to power his Liberal Party in 1880, following the Midlothian election campaign that recognized the importance of the new mass electorate and the power of newspaper reported political speeches. Deftly exploiting the Balkan question (while genuinely and even obsessively empathizing with the remote populations), Gladstone focused on the necessity for a moral foreign policy.<sup>58</sup> The savageness of the diatribes of Gladstone's supporters against Disraeli perfectly matched the equally savage accusations of the Turcophile public and press (Gladstone was even accused of being a Russian agent). If there is any lesson to be drawn from the Bosnian crisis of 120 years ago, it is more about the domestic imperatives in great power foreign policy than about "ancient enmities."

Aside from political expediency, there existed an evolution in the perceptions of the Balkans, and often observers espoused opposing views. Yet, despite the presence of such influential figures as Mackenzie and Irby, Gladstone, Viscount and Viscountess Strangford, and a few others on the political scene, theirs was not the dominant discourse. As a British journalist summarized his attitude before his pro-Bulgarian conversion: "I went out to Bulgaria prejudiced—if at all—in favour of the Turks, and that is the leaning of the average Englishman."<sup>59</sup> Even fewer were actually converted: "Indeed, the conviction of the English that all the South Slavs were inferior and semi-barbarous was a stumbling block for any solution of the problem of Turkey and her European provinces."<sup>60</sup>

Two years after Mackenzie and Irby's book, a passionate counteraccount appeared, authored by Captain Stanislas St. Clair and Charles Brophy. Its purpose was to show the falseness of accusations of Turkish misrule and to appeal to Europe to first study Turkey, and only "then judge it, but not on the evidence of Philhellenic tourists and newspapers." American missionaries were added as perpetrators of disinformation in the revised edition published some twelve years later.<sup>61</sup> Christian discontent was represented as the sole result of Russian machinations. Russian emissaries were ubiquitous, and even the Bulgarian-Greek schism, strongly opposed by Russia, was seen as a Russian manipulation. Christianity in the East had degenerated from a religion into a secret society comparable to Fenianism. But even the Fenians fared better than the Balkan Christians, who were denied any history: "the aspirations of the Irish are certainly more legitimate than those of the Rayah, who has no history and therefore no fatherland."<sup>62</sup> The Bulgarians, "the immaculate pets of Russia," became the object of particular hatred:

Strongly but heavily built, with broad shoulders and round back, a walk like that of a bear, coarse and blunted-looking features, a heavy moustache covering the sensual lips, a beard shaven once a week, and little twinkling eyes, which, whilst always avoiding to meet your own, give a general appearance of animal cunning to the