

R.T. Shannon, *Gladstone and the Bulgarian Agitation 1876*, Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., 1963, pp. xxviii+308.

This important monograph deals with the effect upon British opinion and politics of the reports (sent to the *Daily News* between 12 and 23 May 1876 by Edwin Pears) on the atrocities perpetrated by the Turks upon the Bulgarian Slavs. More particularly it traces the growth of the "Bulgarian Agitation" in England and its effect upon Gladstone, whose return to British politics as a result of the agitation was a momentous event in English history. This growth of the Bulgarian agitation and its decline during a period of some six or seven months Dr. Shannon describes vividly and skilfully, drawing upon materials from extensive unpublished and printed sources. He treats the subject as an entity in itself—as a piece of history existing in its own right. He shows how, on this particular issue, opinion was formed, exactly what it was (including its variations and subtleties) and the devious ways in which it became entwined with English party issues. To these issues the background is provided in a masterly introduction by Dr. G. Kitson Clark.

Dr. Shannon takes up the story in January 1876 when Gladstone, then in his sixty-fifth year, formally resigned the leadership of the Liberal Party. This event he discusses in some detail, bringing out its implications in the light of Gladstone's complex character, of his earlier career and of his political, moral and philosophical ideas. All this is excellently done and the reader is admirably prepared for the main theme of this monograph, which is that the "Bulgarian atrocities" had no direct bearing on Gladstone's decision to return to the arena of the party struggle. In passing, Dr. Shannon explains how the agitation grew as a result of the susceptibilities of the Victorian public conscience and how little, if at all, Gladstone himself contributed to it. That it was not Gladstone who caused the agitation has indeed for some time been suspected, for it is generally known that the *Bulgarian Horrors* did not appear until the 6 September when the agitation had already reached its height. It is also common knowledge that when on 31 July Gladstone spoke condemning the Government's Near Eastern policy, he made no reference to the Turkish atrocities in Bulgaria. Nevertheless the old legend has tended to linger in many places and here, for the first time, we have a thorough and highly scholarly examination of the problem—a study which moreover goes beyond this since it provides, at the same time, an illuminating example of those pressures

which can often affect English foreign policy. Hence, although this book has no direct bearing on Balkan history, it well repays study by Balkan historians since it gives valuable clues to the formulation of British Balkan policy.

Dr. Shannon ends his detailed study with the meeting of the National Conference on the Eastern Question in December 1876, from which time the agitation rapidly subsided. He then explains that neither the agitation itself nor questions of foreign policy generally affected to any great extent the electoral issues of 1880. In the meantime Disraeli and Salisbury had conducted British policy and had left their mark upon the Treaty of Berlin of 1878, having refused to be stampeded by vociferous and hostile opinion. Into all this it is not Dr. Shannon's purpose to enter. His interest is directed mainly to the Irish problem, to which, in terms of Gladstone, the *Bulgarian Horrors* forms a background.

Students of Balkan history would be interested to know what, if any, was the long-term effect of the agitation of 1876 upon British opinion and policy. Quite clearly by the end of the century, and particularly in the first few years of this century, when the Macedonian question assumed serious dimensions, there was a pronounced tendency in England to accept uncritically Bulgarian propaganda. It is possible that memories of the *Bulgarian Horrors* lingered. On the other hand the agitation of 1902-3 (which continued for some time after that date) may have been a fresh manifestation of the English conscience and therefore similar to the agitation of 1876. What is needed to answer these questions is a study of such good quality as this monograph of Dr. Shannon's.

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Carte românească de învățătură. 1646. Editura Academiei Republicii Populare Romine, București, 1961, 431 pages. (Volume VI in the "Collection of Sources of Old Rumanian Law").

This work is a critical edition of the first official law code of Moldavia. It was published in Iași in 1646 at the behest of Vasile Lupu, Prince of Moldavia from 1634 to 1653. The compiler and translator was the Logofăt Eustratie, a secretary in the Prince's chancellery who possessed a knowledge of Byzantine law and of classical languages.