

pretext for Austria-Hungary to initiate the present war. Serbia's share in the European crisis which preceded the war has been admirably described by Sir Valentine Chirol in his pamphlet published by the University Press. Our object now is to examine the Serbian problem from the historical and ethnographical points of view. The Serbian or Southern Slav question was undoubtedly one of the subsidiary causes of the war, and it will be one of those most difficult of solution at its close ; it is, therefore, important that public opinion in England should be better informed on this question than it is at present. There is abundant and excellent literature on Serbia and the Southern Slavs in English ; I need only mention the names of Mr. Seton-Watson, Mr. Mijatović, Mr. Vivian, and Miss Durham. But even these have not been able to make their subject really familiar to the English public. The reasons why Serbia has never been able vitally to interest the English are plain enough, and are worth mentioning before going any further into the subject.

The early history of independent Serbia is so remote that it cannot thrill us, and seems almost mythical. Then throughout the Middle Ages right up to our own times, from the end of the fourteenth century to the beginning of the nineteenth, the country was an obscure province of the Ottoman Empire. During the national revivals which characterized the nineteenth century the Serbs fought as bravely for their freedom as any other of the oppressed nationalities ; but their past had not been sufficiently brilliant to provide a Byron, nor their sufferings at the hands of the Turks sufficiently notorious to find a Gladstone to champion their cause in this country ; in this respect they have always been at a disadvantage compared with Greece and Bulgaria,