

THE SOUTHERN SLAVS

At the outbreak of this war one often heard the question, 'What have we to do with Serbia?' and to such a question it could until the end of July 1914 with a considerable amount of truth have been answered, 'Nothing.' There is scarcely any race in Europe of which most people in England know less than they do of the Serbs, and there is no European country with which we have had less intercourse. This ignorance is not altogether our own fault; it is the result partly of geographical, partly of historical facts which have till now contributed to distract our attention from the western half of the Balkan peninsula.

There never has been any vital historical, political, commercial, or sentimental reason for England to be interested in Serbia, at any rate no reason obvious enough to outweigh the difficulties which have until now prevented closer acquaintance. But the war has changed all that. The Serbians have suddenly become our allies. Our old attitude of ignorance and indifference, which even the bravery of the Serbians during the two Balkan wars of 1912 and 1913 was only able to turn into one of qualified approval, is now no longer possible, and it is gratifying to notice that the endurance and valour of this brave people are now thoroughly appreciated in this country. But at the same time it is absolutely necessary that more light should now be thrown on the race whose ultimate destinies formed the