

**HERZEGOVINA AND THE LATE  
UPRISING: THE CAUSES OF THE  
LATTER AND THE REMEDIES  
FROM THE NOTES AND LETTERS  
OF A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**

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**W. J. STILLMAN**

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# HERZEGOVINA

AND THE LATE UPRISING:

THE CAUSES OF THE LATTER

AND THE REMEDIES.

FROM THE NOTES AND LETTERS OF A SPECIAL  
CORRESPONDENT.

BY W. J. STILLMAN,

AUTHOR OF "THE CRETAN INSURRECTION  
OF 1866-8," &c., &c.



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## PREFACE.

**I**F the numerous maps which the events of the past year and a half have called out, unfortunately, there is not one which, in the region particularly involved by the operations of the insurrection in Herzegovina, is trustworthy in its details. The best is that of the Austrian Staff; but even this, in the mountain region about Baniani, &c., is extremely inaccurate. That of Kiepert is in general clear and correct, but apparently has not been founded on actual survey in any of the sections bordering on Montenegro. The only entirely accurate one of this section is that made for the Montenegrin Government, but never published. For a general notion of the relations of Dalmatia and Montenegro to Herzegovina—the exposition of which has been one of the principal objects of my book—any of the maps will suffice, and the military strategy hardly requires explanation.

The question of pronunciation of Slav names is one which seems to create a confusion I cannot flatter myself I shall be able to clear up. For the final syllable of all patronymic, &c., names, ordinarily written as *ich* or *itch*, the latter method, clumsy though it seems, is the only one which leaves no doubt as to the approximate sound; but, as this combination represents three recognized sounds in the Serb language, we

can *only* approximate. In the Croatian these three are represented by the letter *c* with accents. This simple expedient is forbidden by our scholastic traditions; and in my spelling I have had recourse to a form which is as capable as the *ich* of being mispronounced—viz., *ics*; but the soft sound of *ch* qualified by *s* will give the nearest approach to the sound I can contrive. The triple *c*, represented in the Cyrillic alphabet by three letters, is incommunicable by English signs. The nearest idea I can give is as *cs*, as above, *jh*, and *ch* as in rich. The name of the town which I have written Niksics has thus been printed:—Nicksitch, Nicksitch, Nicsich, Nicsic, Nicsic, Nicksich, and Niksics. The “Illyrian” is Niksić. The final consonant is always soft, whatever may be the spelling.





## INTRODUCTORY.

**T**HE principal purpose of publishing this fragment of history is to place in clearer light certain motives and causes for the Herzegovinian insurrection which are not generally accepted by, or were not visible to, the general public, and which were hardly to be given in journalistic narrative while events were in progress, either because learned subsequently, or because they became known to me rather from regard for a certain reputation acquired in years gone by, during an insurrection in Crete, of being a sympathizer and active friend of the Rayahs, than because I was correspondent of an English journal; and in some cases were only open to me on the understanding that they were not to be alluded to in correspondence.

Having been in 1866-8 thoroughly conversant with the Turkish manner of making war under similar circumstances, and personally acquainted with many Turkish functionaries, civil and military, I had, naturally, formed very decided opinions as to the merits of that struggle between humanity and the desire for progress on one side and barbarism and an intolerable oppression on the other, which is the element of uncertainty in what is known as the Eastern question. If the



having entered the field with these opinions, so defined, disqualified me for the office of a candid historian, my readers must judge. I am conscious of no bias but that which my painful and costly experience of Turkish customs and character has enforced me to, and I have endeavoured in my narration to avoid all discoloration of the events; as to the sympathies with which I followed them, I imagine no really unprejudiced person could expect that they would not be on the side which was substantially right, and which had every claim to the sympathy of right-minded men.

As events are hurrying on, my story may be useless as a lesson before even it is printed—at least, it is to be hoped that the civilized world will never be called on again to adjudicate between the Rayah and his master; but even so, it may be worth while to see how completely the old despotism is responsible for its own downfall, and how little any outside agency had to do with a revolt which might have been developed at any moment into insurrection, by any circumstance that gave the Rayahs a hope, even momentary; and how many opportunities to allay it were thrown away.

The condition of the Christian Herzegovinian was the most intolerable of all the subjects of Turkey, for the poverty of the country gave little solace for his slavery, and the nearness of Montenegro and Dalmatia made the contrast between his condition and that of his near kinsmen the greater. Certainly in no country in which I have ever been was the state of life of the people so wretched as his, and the still not entirely tamed mountain spirit made the endurance of oppression more vexatious, and the eagerness to seize any opportunity or real encouragement to rise much more keen.

The visit of the Emperor of Austria to the Dalmatian

coasts (which are the coasts also of Herzegovina), and the marked interest thus for the first time shown in the Slav population of this section, stimulated the ferment continually going on there, and led the Catholic Herzegovinians to anticipate an Austrian intervention. The insurrection in its early stages was mainly amongst the Catholic population between Popovo and Gabella, not less oppressed than the Orthodox, but more controlled by the clergy (who have a lively apprehension of any movement which has its basis in Servian, Russian, or Montenegrin intrigues), but at the same time, far less individual and warlike by reason of this control. The insurrection spread because the whole country was ripe for it, and because the military conduct of the Turks was inefficient and unintelligent, and perversely directed, as far as it went, to provoke rather than subdue or allay the insubordination. Under governments which give no basis or motive for loyalty, insurrection is chronic even if latent; and under the rule of the Turks, there is never peace, only a truce between conqueror and conquered, in which no law has ever intervened to limit the right of the victor over his victim. It is only the law of force in its first and uncrystallized or uncodified state—an extended brigandage, a long time feared by all Europe, and since respected as a *fait accompli*, with the respect men pay to the work of four centuries, even when, as in this case, that work is in itself utterly evil. This truce is liable at all times to be broken by any individual Mussulman on his own responsibility,—a condition which naturally involves the corresponding one of a readiness of the Rayah to revolt at all times.

Every incident therefore which gives a hope of successful revolt, or which increases the normal injustice of the oppression, is at once followed by revolt. Those who have read

the interesting book of Mr. Evans on Bosnia and Herzegovina at the moment of the outbreak will know what was the ordinary condition of those provinces. The latter has never been long quiet—the interval of peace since 1862 is probably the longest which has obtained since the conquest, and this was probably due to the fact that in the repression of that year the Austrian Government took an active part, and so efficiently that the impression remained that nothing was to be done until Austria was favourably disposed. Montenegro even owed the only considerable defeat of the century past to the merciless blockade which Austria established along her whole frontier, cutting off entirely supplies of ammunition, so that in the last battles between the Turks and Montenegrins the latter had only five cartridges per man, powder was worth its weight in silver, and a single percussion cap cost tenpence ! and the men ceased fighting because they saw that to go into battle with only their handjars against rifled muskets and artillery, was an useless sacrifice of life. The Herzegovinian allies had been conquered by Austrian troops acting with the Turks—there was no sign of encouragement from any side, and Serbia, in spite of pledges given long before, had taken concessions from the Porte, and was hopelessly tranquil.

Turkey had therefore been victorious under circumstances which made her victory precarious ; she owed it to Austrian assistance, and achieved it, even at that, with forces demoralized to a great extent by several bloody disasters, which only the utter recklessness of human life, which characterized Omar Pasha's strategy, enabled them to retrieve ; and if the Montenegrins had been able to obtain, even at the last moment, supplies of ammunition, they would have turned the event of the war completely, for the Turks had