The Uprising of April, 1876,\(^1\) put the Bulgarian Question in the center of the Eastern Question. As Garibaldi wrote, the Bulgarian people won the sympathies of the world public thanks to their heroism and their sufferings. The Bulgarian insurgents indeed showed exceptional heroism when they fought with their mediocre arms the excellently armed Turkish forces; at a number of places the insurgents sacrificed their wives and children in the name of their vow and their motto: “Freedom or Death!” This phenomenal exploit, which was reported by the European newspapers, made a strong impression on world public opinion. As the biggest French newspaper, Le Temps, wrote, the fact that in their “utter despair” the Bulgarian insurgents were sacrificing their wives and children, “rather than to leave them at the mercy of the Bashi-Bazucks” (irregular troops, bands), was a “severe sentence on the political and administrative authority” of the Ottoman Empire.\(^2\)

However, the reports and dispatches on the April Uprising were sent chiefly from Constantinople, Bucharest, etc. There was not a single foreign newspaper correspondent in the insurgent Bulgarian provinces (the Plovdiv, Sliven, Turnovo, and Sofia Districts). In spite of this, the journalists’ reports revealed the truth about the horrible crimes perpetrated by the Turkish troops—massacres, arson, pillage, abduction of women and girls into slavery,\(^3\) forcible conversion of orphaned children to Islam, etc. A number of foreign newspapers, such as The Daily News\(^4\) (London), Odeski vestnik (Odessa), and others stressed that the uprising in Bulgaria had been suppressed with abominable atrocities, and that mainly women and children had been massacred.

Naturally, the Turkish government denied all this. What is strange is that Benjamin Disraeli’s British Conservative Government also denied it. In his speech on 26 June 1876, the British prime minister qualified the newspaper reports about the atrocities in Bulgaria as “coffee-house babble.”\(^5\) He described the Bulgarian Uprising as “disturbances” provoked by “foreigners”

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1. The April Uprising is also known as the May Uprising or the Bulgarian Uprising.
2. Le Temps, 23 May 1876.
3. The young women and girls who had been abducted were sold to Muslim leaders to “replenish” their harems.
4. The Daily News published dispatches from its correspondent in Constantinople, Edwenea Pear.
5. David Harris, Britain and the Bulgarian Horrors of 1876 (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1939), p. 191.
(Russians, Serbians, etc). Disraeli also spoke of a "Russian trap." In this way the British government expressed its full backing of the Porte. These statements were of a nature to undermine the political reputation of the liberal newspaper Daily News, and its editors decided to send a special correspondent of the New York Herald. MacGahan was entrusted with a special mission: to reveal the truth about the events in Bulgaria; to show the responsibility of the Porte for the atrocities it had committed; and to reveal the unsavory role of the British government which supported it. MacGahan carried out this mission in a brilliant way, not only defending the honor of the Daily News, but also making a very great contribution to the cause of Bulgaria's national liberation.

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J. A. MacGahan was the son of an Irish emigrant to the United States. His mother was German. He was born on 12 June 1844, near the small town of New Lexington, Ohio. Orphaned at an early age, MacGahan was compelled to work in order to be able to study. He studied law in Europe, but at the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War in 1870, he joined the New York Herald as a correspondent and this decided his future forever. Soon MacGahan became one of the greatest publicists of his epoch. As a reporter, he went everywhere that there was danger and where few of his colleagues dared to go: to the Franco-German front, with the Russian forces advancing into Central Asia, on the "Pandora" in the Arctic, etc. In July, 1876, MacGahan arrived in Bulgaria, the "country of horrors." Afterwards his path took him to Serbia, which was at war with Turkey. The following year he joined the advancing Russian armies in the Balkan theatre of war. His stormy life ended on 9 June 1878, in Constantinople; he was struck down by the typhoid fever which was raging in Turkey.

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MacGahan's reports about the atrocities of the Turkish authorities in Bulgaria immediately surpassed the framework of the Daily News and the New

7. Sir Henry Elliot, British Ambassador in Constantinople, was a zealous supporter of Turkey.