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Fred Burnaby

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# A RIDE TO KHIVA:

*Travels and Adventures in Central Asia.*

BY

FRED BURNABY,

*Captain, Royal Horse Guards.*

WITH MAPS AND AN APPENDIX,

CONTAINING, AMONGST OTHER INFORMATION, A SERIES OF MARCH-ROUTES,  
TRANSLATED FROM SEVERAL RUSSIAN WORKS.

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THIRD EDITION.

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To

HENRY VILLEBOIS, Esq.,

OF MARHAM HOUSE, NORFOLK,

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BY HIS NEPHEW,

*The Author.*

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## P R E F A C E.



THE title explains the nature of this work. It is merely a narrative of a ride to Khiva. I have added a short account of Russia's Advance Eastward.

In the course of my journey I had the opportunity of conversing with many Russians in Central Asia. India was a topic which never failed to produce numerous comments.

A work has been lately published in St. Petersburg. The author dilates at considerable length on the Russo-Indian Question. His opinions on this subject are similar to those which I have heard expressed. The author's remarks are as follows :—

“Another advantage which we have gained consists in the fact that from our present position our power of threatening British India has become real, and ceased to be visionary. In this respect our Central Asian possessions serve only as an *étape* on the road to further advance, and as a halting-place where we can rest and gather fresh strength. If in the time of Paul I. an overland expedition to India was considered feasible, it is certainly much more so at the

present time, when we have shortened the interval by such an immense stretch of country.

“Asia will not of course ever form the avowed object of dispute between England and Russia, but in the event of a war produced by European complications, we shall clearly be obliged in our own interests to take advantage of the proximity to India which is afforded by our present position in Central Asia.

\* \* \* \* \*

“Besides the English,” the author continues, “there is another nation whose attitude is also one of expectancy for the Russians—namely, the natives of India.

“The *East India Company* is nothing less than a poisonous unnatural plant engrafted on the splendid soil of India—a parasite which saps away the life of the most fertile and wealthy country in the world.

“This plant can only be uprooted by forcible means; and such an attempt was made by the natives of the country in 1857, though it failed for want of sufficient skill.

“Sick to death, the natives are now waiting for a physician from the North. Some time will naturally elapse before they care to repeat the experiment of 1857; and, as far as can be foreseen, the English will have to deal only with disconnected outbreaks; but it cannot be said with any certainty that such small sparks of rebellion may not, if supported by an impetus from without, produce a general conflagration throughout the length and breadth of India. In this case the



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British Government will be unable to reckon on the support of the native troops, numbering 124,000 out of a total of 200,000, and the small remnant will barely be sufficient to guard the most important points."

Such are the observations of Captain Terentyeff in his recent work called "Russia and England in the East."

In my own opinion Russia, from her present position, has not the power of even threatening British India. However, she has the power of threatening points which, should she be permitted to annex them, would form a splendid basis for operations against Hindostan. Merve, Balkh, and Kashgar would make magnificent *étapes*. The former locality is richer than any of the most fertile corn-growing countries in European Russia. Merve is close to Herat; and should the Afghans join with Russia, a direct advance might be made upon India through the Bolan Pass. If Kashgar were permitted to fall into the Tzar's possession, we should lose our *prestige* with the Mohammedans in Central Asia; whilst the occupation of Kashgar would prove a disagreeable thorn in our side, and give rise to endless intrigues.

Balkh, from Bokhara, is only a twelve days' march, and from Balkh to Cabul, through the Bamian Pass, it is the same distance. This road, though blocked by the snow in winter, can be traversed by artillery in the summer and autumn months; whilst Bokhara could supply Balkh with any quantity of provisions which

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might be required. Should Russia be permitted to annex Kashgar, Balkh, and Merve, India would be liable to attack from three points, and we should have to divide our small European force. We have learnt how much trust can be placed in a Russian statesman's promises. Russia ought to be clearly given to understand that any advance in the direction of Kashgar, Balkh, or Merve, will be looked upon by England as a *casus belli*. If this is done, we shall no longer hear from the authorities at St. Petersburg that they are unable to restrain their generals in Turkistan. At the present moment Great Britain, without any European ally, can drive Russia out of Central Asia. If we allow her to keep on advancing, the same arms which we might now employ will one day be turned against ourselves.

THE AUTHOR.

*Somerby Hall, Leicestershire,  
September, 1876.*

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