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978-1-108-04983-2 - The Voyage of the Vega Round Asia and Europe: With a Historical Review of Previous Journeys Along the North Coast of the Old World: Volume 1

A.E. Nordenskiöld

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The Finnish geologist and Arctic explorer A.E. Nordenskiöld (1832–1901) spent much of his life in exile in Sweden, where he was made a baron. He served as Superintendent of the Mineralogical Department of the Swedish Royal Museum, and later became a Member of the Swedish Academy. Following a number of expeditions during the 1860s, he concluded that the North Pole could not be reached by ship, and in 1872 he tried unsuccessfully to reach it overland. A great historian of cartography, he amassed a huge collection of maps, now included in UNESCO's 'Memory of the World' Register. This two-volume work, published in Swedish in 1881, describes his most famous voyage, the first crossing of the North-East Passage. Volume 1 includes details of the flora, fauna, people and geology encountered on the journey from Tromsø to the Bering Strait, along with a review of previous exploration in the region.

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# The Voyage of the *Vega* Round Asia and Europe

*With a Historical Review of Previous Journeys  
Along the North Coast of the Old World*

VOLUME 1

A.E. NORDENSKIÖLD

TRANSLATED BY

ALEXANDER LESLIE



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WITH A HISTORICAL REVIEW  
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OLD WORLD

BY

A. E. NORDENSKIÖLD

TRANSLATED BY ALEXANDER LESLIE

*WITH FIVE STEEL PORTRAITS, NUMEROUS MAPS, AND ILLUSTRATIONS*

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TO HIS MAJESTY

KING OSCAR II.

THE HIGH PROTECTOR OF THE VEGA EXPEDITION

THIS SKETCH OF THE VOYAGE

HE SO MAGNANIMOUSLY AND GENEROUSLY PROMOTED

IS WITH THE DEEPEST GRATITUDE

MOST HUMBLY

*Dedicated*

BY

A. E. NORDENSKIÖLD.

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## AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

THIS popular account of the voyage of the *Vega* round Asia and Europe is herewith presented to the friends of geographical research in an English translation. Along with the sketch of the voyage itself, of the natural conditions on the north coast of Siberia, of the animal and vegetable life prevailing there, and of the races with whom we came in contact in the course of the voyage, the work contains a review, as complete as space permitted, of preceding exploratory voyages to the Polar Sea of Europe and Asia, from King ALFRED'S account of the first North-East voyage under the Northman, OTHERE, down to the expeditions for sport and hunting of the past decade. For it would have been too ungrateful, in an account of the voyage of the *Vega*, not to have referred at some length to our predecessors, who, with indescribable struggles and difficulties, and generally with the sacrifice of health and life, paved the way along which we advanced, made possible the victory we achieved. In this way, besides, the work itself has gained a much-needed variety, for nearly all the narratives of the older North-East voyages contain in abundance what a sketch of our own adventures has not to offer, but what many readers, perhaps, will expect to find in a book such as this—accounts of dangers and misfortunes of a thousand sorts by land and sea.

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## AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

May the prominent part which England and America have played in the history of Polar Exploration, and the lively interest that everywhere in these countries has been taken in the voyage of the *Vega*, secure for this work a friendly reception; and, above all, may the voyage of the *Vega* conduce to maintain the desire for Arctic Research till the veil which still conceals the lands round the North and South Poles be completely removed. Many a problem of great importance to mankind still waits for a solution from the ice-deserts of the Polar Seas and the Polar Lands; many a splendid victory in the service of science is still to be won in those distant regions.

A. E. NORDENSKIÖLD.

LONDON, *November*, 1881.

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## AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

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of a sea-going vessel, and conduce to dissipate a prejudice which for centuries has kept the most extensive cultivable territory on the globe shut out from the great Oceans of the World.

The work is furnished with numerous maps and illustrations, and is provided with accurate references to sources of geographical information. For this I am indebted both to the liberal conception which my publisher, Herr FRANS BEIJER, formed of the way in which the work should be executed, and the assistance I have received while it was passing through the press from Herr E. W. Dahlgren, amanuensis at the Royal Library, for which it is a pleasant duty publicly to offer them my hearty thanks.

A. E. NORDENSKIÖLD.

STOCKHOLM, 8th October, 1881.

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## TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

HAVING been honoured by a request from Baron Nordenskiöld that I would undertake the translation of the work in which he gives an account of the voyage by which the North-East Passage was at last achieved, and Asia and Europe circum-navigated for the first time, I have done my best to reproduce in English the sense of the Swedish original as faithfully as possible, and at the same time to preserve the style of the author as far as the varying idioms of the two languages permit.

I have to thank two ladies for the help they kindly gave me in reading proofs, and my friend Herr GUSTAF LINDSTRÖM, for valuable assistance rendered in various ways.

Where not otherwise indicated, temperature is stated in degrees of the Centigrade or Celsius thermometer. Longitude is invariably reckoned from the meridian of Greenwich.

Where distance is stated in miles without qualification, the miles are Swedish (one of which is equal to 6.64 English miles), except at page 372, Vol. I., where the geographical square miles are German, each equal to sixteen English geographical square miles.

ALEX. LESLIE.

CHERRYVALE, ABERDEEN,  
24th November, 1881.

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