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978-1-108-06685-3 - Notes on the Late Expedition Against the Russian Settlements in Eastern Siberia: And of a Visit to Japan and to the Shores of Tartary, and of the Sea of Okhostk

Bernard Whittingham

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Notes on the Late Expedition

Against the Russian Settlements in Eastern Siberia

In April 1855, Bernard Whittingham (*fl.*1850), a captain of the Royal Engineers, set off from Hong Kong aboard H.M.S. *Sibylle*. He had volunteered to join an Allied squadron attempting 'to discover the progress of Russian aggrandisement in North-eastern Asia, and to ascertain how far the reports of her successful encroachment on the sea frontiers of China and Japan were true.' In the context of the Crimean War's Pacific theatre, he was also keen to see avenged the Royal Navy's defeat by the Russians at Petropavlovsk the previous year. Whittingham's notes, published in 1856, give a personal and uniquely British account of an understudied time and place with far-reaching influence on later events. The book is also a rich source of anecdotes, not least that relating to the capture of crew members of the ill-fated Russian frigate *Diana*.

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University Printing House, Cambridge, CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

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www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781108066853

© in this compilation Cambridge University Press 2014

This edition first published 1856

This digitally printed version 2014

ISBN 978-1-108-06685-3 Paperback

This book reproduces the text of the original edition. The content and language reflect the beliefs, practices and terminology of their time, and have not been updated.

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LONDON:
Printed by SPOTTISWOODE & Co.,
New-street-Square.

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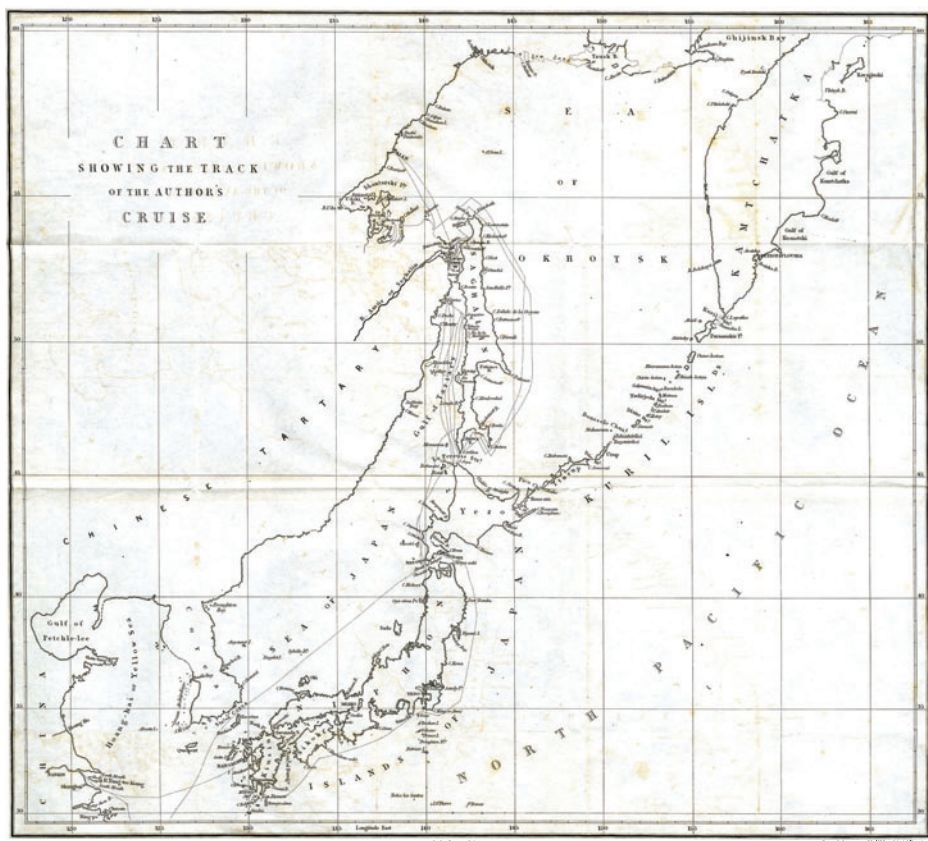
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AGAINST THE
RUSSIAN SETTLEMENTS IN EASTERN
SIBERIA ;

AND OF A VISIT TO JAPAN AND TO THE SHORES OF TARTARY,
AND OF THE SEA OF OKHOSTK.

BY
CAPT. BERNARD WHITTINGHAM,
ROYAL ENGINEERS.

LONDON:
LONGMAN, BROWN, GREEN, AND LONGMANS.
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P R E F A C E.

THE following rough notes were originally pencilled at intervals of a few days, to refresh the recollections of their writer, and they have subsequently been copied amidst the bustle of the saloons of crowded Oriental steamers; and as the duties of the writer's profession preclude any attempt to remould or amplify them, they are offered in their present unpolished form, in the hope that the slight and meagre information they afford of lands comparatively unknown—the Japan Islands, and the shores of Tartary and Eastern Siberia—may interest the public. The manners and customs of the Japanese are exhibited in the light reflected from several interviews with

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officers of high rank, and from numerous opportunities of unrestrained intercourse with the industrial classes.

The dominions of Russia have been silently and securely extended in Central and Eastern Asia, and it is impossible to converse with an intelligent Russian officer without perceiving the immense advantages these late conquests are acquiring for that Power; and the natural feelings of enmity and alarm of Russia, experienced instinctively by the tribes of Tartars and of Ainos, are easily visible to the traveller, whilst the covert hatred and dread entertained by the Japanese of their encroaching neighbours require more time to elicit.

The writer has attempted to bring out the different phases of an ill-directed expedition with candour, yet he can scarcely hope that the criticisms passed upon it will be deemed as respectful to the chief in command as he has striven to render them. The despatches

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have not been published, and, therefore, the materials for forming an opinion are such facts as are made patent by the positions of the squadron during the short season for operations.

London, Jan. 6. 1856.

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