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The Church of England clergyman Henry Lansdell (1841–1919) was an energetic traveller, both during his own leisure time and on behalf of the Irish Church Missions. He made many visits to Russia and central Asia, distributing bibles and tracts in the native languages of the many peoples he encountered, and focusing his attention especially on hospitals and prisons. He published this two-volume account in 1882, and it proved extremely popular (this second edition being prepared before the first was published), but it attracted some criticism for its favourable treatment of the Russian government. The anarchist Prince Peter Kropotkin was especially indignant at the accounts of Russian prisons: he alleged that Lansdell was either a dupe of propaganda or was deliberately distorting what he had seen. Volume 1 describes Lansdell's motives for making the journey, his travels across Russia, and his experience of the prison and exile systems of Siberia.

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Through Siberia

VOLUME 1

HENRY LANSDPELL



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

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Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781108071222

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This edition first published 1882

This digitally printed version 2014

ISBN 978-1-108-07122-2 Paperback

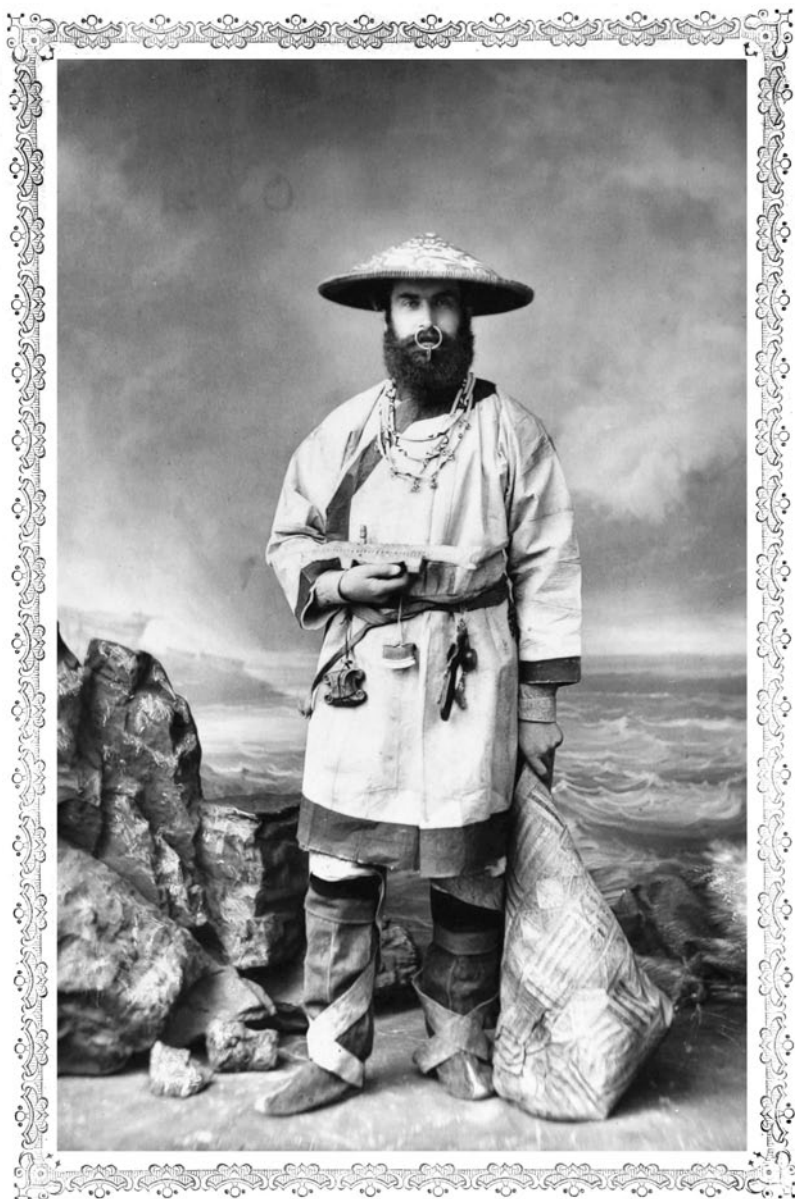
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THE AUTHOR

IN FISH SKIN COSTUME OF THE GILYAKS.

THROUGH SIBERIA

BY HENRY LANSDELL

With Illustrations and Maps

SECOND EDITION.

London

SAMPSON LOW, MARSTON, SEARLE, AND RIVINGTON

188 FLEET STREET

—
1882

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I inscribe these pages

TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE
HUGH McCALMONT, EARL CAIRNS, P.C., LL.D.,
CHANCELLOR OF THE UNIVERSITY OF DUBLIN, AND LATE
LORD HIGH CHANCELLOR OF ENGLAND, IN GRATEFUL
APPRECIATION OF OFFICIAL KINDNESS
MORE THAN ONCE ACCORDED ME
IN FURTHERING MY VISITS
TO THE PRISONS OF
EUROPE

PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION.

BEING unexpectedly but agreeably obliged to prepare a second edition before the day for the public appearance of the first, I can do little more than express my gratitude for the favour with which my book has been received, and repeat what has already been printed. The kind and too favourable reviews that have thus far come under my notice seem to call for little remark but of thanks. One journal, however—the *St. James's Gazette*—has stated, on the authority of a Russian informant, that ‘official orders were sent before me to the prisons to make things wear a favourable aspect for my visit.’ I venture therefore here to repeat what I wrote to the Editor (but which he did not think fit to publish), that if his Russian informant, or any other, thinks that I have been duped or misinformed, I am perfectly ready to be questioned, and shall be happy to discuss the question in the public press, provided only that my opponent give facts, dates, names, and places, and do not hide behind general statements and impersonalities. My own conviction is that in the overwhelming majority of cases, at all events, I saw Siberian prison affairs in their normal condition.

With the exception, then, of a corrected note which appeared on page 37, vol. i., a slight re-arrangement of the bibliography and appendices, a few verbal alterations, and a *new and improved index*, this second edition is the same as the first.

H. L.

THE GROVE, BLACKHEATH,
20th February, 1882.

PREFACE TO FIRST EDITION.

THIS book is a traveller's story, enriched from the writings of others. In San Francisco an American Bishop said to me, "I hope, sir, you will give us your experience, for Siberia is a country of which we know so little." Accordingly, on my return, two courses presented themselves—either to confine myself to an account of my personal adventures, or to supplement them from published information, and describe the country as a whole. I chose the latter course, and the result is in the reader's hands. At the end of the work will be found a list of books consulted, to the authors of many of which I must acknowledge myself indebted for much scientific and technical information.

My speciality in Siberia was the visitation of its prisons and penal institutions, considered, however, not so much from an economic or administrative as from a philanthropic and religious point of view. Much has been written concerning them that is very unsatisfactory, and some things that are absolutely false. One author published "My Exile in Siberia" who never went there. "Escapes" and so-called "Revelations" of Siberia have been written by others who were banished only a few days' journey beyond the Urals;

whereas it is only east of the Baikal that the severest forms of exile life begin. None, so far as I know, who have escaped or been released from the mines, have written the tale of what they endured, and very few authors have been in a position even to describe what the penal mines are like.

It has been comparatively easy, therefore, in England for writers to exaggerate on this subject almost as they pleased, because scarcely any one could contradict them. Comparatively few travellers cross Northern Asia to the Amur. I doubt if any *English* author has preceded me. Probably also I was the first foreigner ever allowed to go through the Siberian prisons and mines. Perhaps none before have asked permission. That I obtained such an authorization astonished my friends, though the open manner in which the letter was granted seemed to show that the authorities had nothing to hide. A master-key was put into my hand that opened every door. I went where I would, and almost when I would; and on no single occasion was admission refused, though often applied for at a moment's notice. Statistics also were freely given me; but this was "not so writ in the bond." An afterthought, in Siberia, emboldened me to ask for them in various places, and they were usually furnished then and there. All these are displayed before the reader. I have exaggerated nothing,—kept nothing back.

I speak thus in case I should be thought to have written with a bias; but I had no reason to be other than impartial. Of politics I know next to nothing, and so was not prejudiced in this direction. Nor had I anything to gain by withholding, or to fear from telling, the whole of the truth. I did not travel

PREFACE.

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as the agent or representative of any religious body. Two societies, indeed, at my request, made me grants of books, and a generous friend provided the cost of travel; but the expedition was a private one, and implicated none but myself. I could not, of course, see matters as a prisoner would; but I wish to state that, having visited prisons in nearly every country of Europe, I have given here an unprejudiced statement of what I saw and heard in the prisons and mines of Siberia

That a foreigner, flying across Europe and Asia, as I did, is exceedingly likely to receive false impressions and form erroneous conclusions, is obvious to every one, and I claim no exemption; for though I have journeyed in Russia, from Archangel to Mount Ararat, yet my experience is that of a traveller only, and not of a resident. I do not even speak Russ, but have been dependent on interpreters, or information received in French. I trust, therefore, that no one may be misled by taking my testimony for more than it is worth. I have tried to be accurate, and that is all I can say.

Perhaps I may add, however, that my proof-sheets have been revised by Russian friends among others, and that most of the chapters concerning exile life have been submitted not only to a Russian Inspector of Prisons, but also to released political exiles who have worked in the mines. The latter endorse what I have said, and (with reference to the chapters on "Exiles," "Political Prisoners," and the "Mines of Nertchinsk") the Inspector has done me the compliment to write, "What you say is so perfectly correct that your book may be taken as a standard, even by Russian authorities." I have good hope, therefore, that in this

feature of my work, at all events, I have avoided misrepresentation.

On scientific subjects I cannot speak with authority; but I have been allowed to submit the proof-sheets to various friends, who have kindly read them with an eye to their particular studies. My thanks, accordingly, are due to Sir Andrew Ramsay, LL.D., F.R.S., Director-General of the Geological Survey of the United Kingdom; to Mr. James Glaisher, F.R.S., formerly of the meteorological department of the Greenwich Observatory; and to Mr. Trelawney Saunders, Geographer to the India Office. Mr. Henry Seebohm, F.L.S., F.Z.S., has read such paragraphs as relate to zoology and ornithology; and Mr. Henry Howorth, F.S.A., author of "The History of the Mongols," has afforded suggestions from his extensive reading in Siberian ethnology. I am also indebted for information concerning many Sclavonic words, manners, and customs to Mrs. Cattley, formerly of Petersburg, and a great traveller in Russia; and to the Rev. C. Slegg Ward, M.A., Vicar of Wootton St. Lawrence, for literary help. It is difficult to restrain my pen from mentioning others—the scores of friends who gave me introductions, the scores of others who received and honoured them—but if I once begin in this direction, where shall I end? I can only say that, for hospitality to strangers, Siberia carries the palm before every country in which I have travelled, and that from the day I crossed the Russian frontier till I reached the Pacific I met with nothing but kindness.

H. L.

THE GROVE, BLACKHEATH,
20th December, 1881.

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Cambridge University Press
 978-1-108-07122-2 - Through Siberia: Volume 1
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* *Most of which have been engraved from the Author's Photographs, and have appeared, as have some of the following chapters, in the "Leisure Hour," the "Welcome," "Sunday at Home," "Contemporary Review," and other periodicals.*

OBSERVANDA.

IN proper names the letters should be pronounced as follows:—
A as in *father*; *e* as in *there*; *i* as in *ravine*; *o* as in *go*; *u* as in
lunar; and the diphthongs *ai* and *ei* as in *hide*. The consonants
 are pronounced as in English, save that *kh* is guttural, as in the
 Scotch *loch*.

The dates are given according to the English reckoning, being in
 advance of the Russian by twelve days.

All temperatures are expressed according to the scale of Fahrenheit.

The ordinary paper rouble is reckoned at two shillings, its value
 at the time of the Author's visit; but before the Russo-Turkish war
 its value was half-a-crown and upwards.

English weights and measures are to be understood unless other-
 wise stated.

The Russian Arshin	equals	28 inches	English
„ Sajen	„	7 feet	„
„ Verst	„	$\frac{2}{3}$ mile	„
„ Pound	„	14.43 ounces	„
„ Pud (or Pood)	„	36 lbs.	„
„ Rouble (or 100 Kopecks)	„	2 shillings	„
„ <i>Silver</i> rouble	„	3 „	„