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In August 1913, the explorer and scientist Fridtjof Nansen (1861–1930), who later received the Nobel Peace Prize for his humanitarian work, set off from Norway to find a sea route across the north of the Eurasian continent. This 'north-east passage' had been the goal of explorers since the sixteenth century, but Nansen's object, as he puts it, was 'to open up a regular trade connexion with the interior of Siberia, via the Kara Sea and the mouth of the Yenisei'. By the time the book was published in English translation in 1914, the First World War had begun, and the need for ways to keep supplies and troops moving between Russia and her western allies made it even more timely. Nansen's delightfully written account of 'the land of the future' remains of value to anyone seeking to find out more about the geography, resources, and native peoples of Siberia.

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**THROUGH SIBERIA  
THE LAND OF THE FUTURE  
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### PUBLISHER'S NOTE

**A**T the present time, when the thoughts of all are centred on the early and critical phases of the European struggle, it may seem a hazardous enterprise to claim attention for a subject which appears at first sight to have only a remote connexion with that struggle; but as Dr. Nansen's narrative gives the most recent account of the vast Asiatic resources of our Ally, and of the attempt, by opening up the Kara Sea route, to make those resources available for the benefit of Western Europe, it will be seen that the questions of which he treats may before long become of direct interest to ourselves and our Allies nearer home.

At a moment when the possibility of transporting troops from the White Sea to the Western theatre of war has been widely discussed, the whole question of opening up the North of Russia and Siberia to European trade, is of more than academic importance. The country traversed by the Yenisei and its tributaries is a very fertile region, including wheat-lands far greater in extent than the combined territory of France and Germany. If these wheat-lands can be made to yield their produce to Europe, they may even prove a vital factor in the decision of the struggle which is now absorbing the attention of the world. For this reason, Dr. Nansen's journey is of paramount interest, not only as revealing the future possibilities

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of Siberia, but because it shows a possible way of increasing in the present emergency the resources of the enemies of Germany. The railway route from that country westward to the Baltic and eastward to the Pacific is so long as to render the freight prohibitive, even if the overland route were not anyhow hopelessly congested in war time.

It may be hoped, therefore, that efforts will be made next season to take advantage of the experience of Dr. Nansen and his companions and to establish regular communication between the Kara Sea and Western Europe, during the months in which that sea is available to navigation.

While everything that leads to a better knowledge and understanding of our Russian Allies and their country cannot fail to interest us, it is in particular the practical consideration referred to—namely, the possibility of increasing our food-supply by a new route—that has led the publisher to issue this book at the present juncture.

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