AN APPEAL TO THE BRITISH NATION IN BEHALF OF COLONEL STODDART AND CAPTAIN CONOLLY

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An appeal to the British nation in behalf of Colonel Stoddart and captain Conolly by John Grover

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JOHN GROVER

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AND

CAPTAIN CONOLLY.

BY

CAPTAIN GROVER, F.R.S., F.R.A.S.

AN

APPEAL TO THE BRITISH NATION

IN BEHALF OF

COLONEL STODDART

AND

CAPTAIN CONOLLY,

NOW IN

CAPTIVITY IN BOKHARA.

BY

CAPTAIN GROVER, UNATTACHED,

FELLOW OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY, AND OF THE ROYAL ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY; MEMBER OF THE ROYAL INSTITUTION OF GREAT BRITAIN, AND OF THE CONGRESS OF THE SCIENZIATI ITALIANI.

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1843.

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LEICESTER SQUARE.

AN APPEAL,

&c. &c.

THE object of the following pages is to endeavour to excite the public sympathy in favour of two British officers, Colonel Stoddart and Captain Conolly, who were seized by the Ummeer of Bokhara, while employed in the service of their country on a diplomatic mission, and who (if alive) are still retained in captivity, and to call the public attention to an Address to the Officers of the British Army, from the celebrated missionary the Reverend Dr. Joseph Wolff, which appeared in the *Morning Herald* newspaper of July 6th, in which the reverend doctor states his belief that these gentlemen are still alive, and proposes to start immediately for Bokhara, if furnished with the necessary funds, without seeking one "*single farthing as a compensation,*" even in case of complete success.

The fate of these brave men, I am sorry to say, has excited far less interest in *England* than on the Continent. This may, perhaps, arise from the very natural supposition of Englishmen that their Government has left no means untried to save those who are suffering in their country's cause. I think, however, that the perusal of the following pages will convince the reader that the British Government, far from attempting the release of these gallant fellows, has not even taken the trouble of ascertaining the simple fact of their existence.

I feel that I am making a grave and serious charge against the Government; but I can really draw no other inference from the facts, which I now lay before the public, as the only means I see left of rescuing my friend and his fellow-sufferer from their dreadful state of captivity, brought upon them by the faithful discharge of their duty.

With Captain Conolly I have not the pleasure of being acquainted.

Colonel Stoddart was formerly in the Royal Staff Corps. In the year 1833 he was placed on half-pay by reduction, and became Secretary to the United Service Institution, in Scotland Yard; I was on the council of that institution, and thus my acquaintance with him began. He was also Secretary to the Society of Civil Engineers. These two posts he continued to occupy, with credit to himself and benefit to those institutions, until the year

1835, when, the Government having resolved to despatch Mr. Ellis on a mission to Persia, it was thought advisable to attach an intelligent military officer to the embassy, as military secretary, and my friend Stoddart was fixed upon for that highly important office.

When Mr. Ellis returned to England, Colonel Stoddart was sent on a special mission to the Ummeer of Bokhara.

Shortly afterwards intelligence reached England of his imprisonment, then a rumour was circulated of his execution; and the overland mail of June last brought an account that both these distinguished captives were still alive.

Of their captivity there can be no doubt; but I totally discredit the rumour of their assassination, for reasons that will be given at length in the course of this narrative.

I had long suffered great uneasiness about my poor friend, and had often thought of proceeding to Bokhara to ascertain his fate; this feeling was, however, checked by the reflection that, of course, Lord Aberdeen had done, and was doing, every thing that was possible. When, however, the intelligence was brought by the June overland mail that my friend was still alive, I began to suspect that Government had really no precise information on the subject; and, on the 18th June, I attended the levee of Lord Fitzroy Somerset, the Military Secretary, and handed to him a letter, in which I informed him that it was my intention to start immediately