

LIFE WITH TRANS- SIBERIAN SAVAGES

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Life with Trans-Siberian savages by B. Douglas Howard

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B. DOUGLAS HOWARD

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SIBERIAN SAVAGES**

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BY
B. DOUGLAS HOWARD, M.A.

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PREFACE

THIS little book is an account of a few of my recent experiences, illustrating some of the manners and customs of the most ancient, distant, and least known savages surviving in Asia. So ancient is this race, that some of them who had long before emigrated to Japan, were described by the earliest historian of that empire nearly three thousand years ago.

So little known is this people as they still survive in their original home, that I find only two observers who have written about them, and that was nearly three hundred years ago.

The obscurity of this people has been largely due to the extreme distance of their sub-arctic island, and to the comparative inaccessibility of

their villages within the interior forests of which they continue to live.

Their inaccessibility, which till recently was only comparative, has now been made absolute, by the conversion of the entire island into the ultimate penal colony to which are now drafted and sent the more dangerous of the life exiles, double murderers and others, from the various less distant prisons of Russia and Siberia. The only possible way in which these people could be reached was opened up to me in Siberia proper, where I had the good fortune to meet with the Russian officer, who is governor of that part of the island within which these people live ; and at his urgent invitation I accompanied him on his voyage to his distant home, where as his guest, I had, what I was there informed, were opportunities no foreigner or other visitor, had ever before enjoyed.

The uniqueness of my unprecedented experiences when afterwards I went and lived their life with these savage people, and the larger questions my

observations suggest, may, I trust, be found both interesting and instructive to the general, as well as to the scientific reader.

The Author takes this opportunity of expressing his thanks to his friends, the Rev. H. F. Nixon, M.A., and the Rev. A. Robbs, M.A., for their kind help during the passage of this little book through the press, as also to the Messrs. Longmans the publishers, for their uniform courtesy on all occasions.

Erratum

Page 42, line 3 from bottom, for forty degrees read fourteen degrees.

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