

**RIDE FROM LAND'S  
END TO  
JOHN O' GROATS**

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Ride from Land's End to John O' Groats by Evelyn Burnaby

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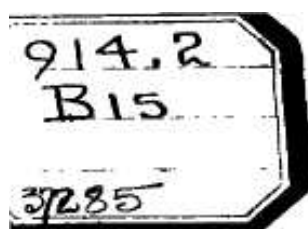
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**EVELYN BURNABY**

**RIDE FROM LAND'S  
END TO  
JOHN O' GROATS**





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**Dedication.**

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FILIAE UNICÆ ET DILECTISSIMÆ HOC OPUSCULUM

D. D. D.

EVELYN-HENRICUS VILLEBOIS BURNABY.

1893.

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## INTRODUCTION.

My brother's ride to Khiva suggested the idea of a ride from Land's End to John-o'-Groat's.

It has often been suggested to me, Why not write a book and publish some anecdotes of your reminiscences? My brother's ride to Khiva, and his experiences in the Khan's dominions, I suppose, had led people to believe that I too was gifted with innate literary talent. I am afraid I cannot hope to emulate his effort. The subject of his adventures on horseback from Russia in mid-winter across the frigid Steppes was a fascinating one. The objections offered by the Russian Government, the strange tactics of General Milutin, minister of war, who was always inconveniently "out" when my brother called to obtain the necessary permission for his journey, helped to intensify the interest of the public in the book. Novelty always has its charms, no matter whether it is a fresh religion, or a new dress. The "Ride to Khiva," from a political point of view, as regards the position of our Eastern Empire, possessed intrinsic value. I remember my brother telling me

that on a railway journey from Petersburg to Orenburg, the conversation of three Russians in their native tongue was most instructive. Being well acquainted with the language, he was able to learn much of the feeling of Russia towards England, and he found out that Mr. Gladstone at the head of affairs was regarded by the Russians as a powerful factor to assist their hopes of aggression in regard to our Indian Empire. A remark, however, made by my brother to them in their own language when he had learnt all he wished to know, brought the political conversation to an abrupt termination. Fred's fame as an athlete and his prodigious weight, to say nothing of his dumb-bells, and his favourite hobby of breaking the pokers of our domestic hearth, had secured for him a signal reputation. His pugilistic encounters with Heenan had gained for him the sobriquet of that champion with the gloves. His perils again by land, and his journeys in the air, with his exploits in Spain as a volunteer, in the Army of Don Carlos, had also made his name famous.

However I bethought myself, that though I could not expect to rival his literary productions, still, perhaps, a ride through England and Scotland might be interesting, and that a sketch of one's experiences on horseback from Land's End to John-o'-Groat's would help to fill up a few leisure moments for those who have visited the many lovely spots in which our island abounds. It is true the tour has often been

made before, and the bicycle has made it a matter of every-day occurrence; still there is always something original to be learnt, and a general election being imminent, it struck me I might be able to pick up a few wrinkles from the conversation in the various hotels *en route*, and also from the rustics by the wayside. Why is it that Englishmen are so reticent? The ordinary traveller, as a rule, does not care to unbosom himself, and a journey from Edinburgh to King's Cross will often provoke no further remark than some forced expression in reference to the weather, or it may be a request that the carriage window may be raised or let down.

I believe much of Fred's success was derived from the fact that he associated with all sorts and conditions of men. Before commencing an account of my adventures in the saddle, it has struck me that a few characteristic anecdotes connected with my brother's life, and which have never appeared in print, might interest my readers. Since his death a book has been written purporting to be a record of his romantic career; but inasmuch as the author could not have had the information at hand necessary to make the work perfect, the result was rather meagre and incomplete. "Lor', master Freddy, you have got a *contradictorious* spirit," was the oft repeated remark of the faithful old nurse who watched over our infancy days. This same spirit which induced him to contemplate his ride to Khiva, I fancy had

shown signs of existence in his early life; at the old rectory-house of St. Peter's, on the Green at Bedford, now rendered famous by the statue erected to the memory of Bunyan. There Fred gave evidences of pugilistic tendencies, when still of tender years, by proving himself the better boy in a stand-up fight with another lad who was a fellow-student at the famous grammar school and ancient seminary of learning, founded by the bounty of the late Sir William Harpur and Dame Alice, his wife. Little did this benefactor imagine when he bequeathed a few houses in Holborn which returned a small rental, to found a school on the banks of the Ouse, that the property would so increase in value as to produce an income little short of 20,000*l.* per annum, whereby Bedford Grammar School has become one of the foremost institutions in the country. Sunday after Sunday, Sir William Harpur and his spouse are remembered in the bidding-prayer. In reference to this curious custom, before an assize sermon preached at Saint Mary's at Oxford, the countenance of an eminent judge, who has lately retired from the bench, and who is famed for his knowledge of criminal jurisprudence, was an interesting study; especially when the sheriff's chaplain alluded to the bounty of some of Henry the VIIIth's wives, "Benefactresses of this ancient university." Fred was barely ten years of age when he was sent to the academy of that excellent divine, the Rev. Chas. Arnold of Tinwell, near Stamford, whose