

**THE COMING STRUGGLE FOR INDIA:
BEING AN ACCOUNT OF THE
ENCROACHMENTS OF
RUSSIA IN CENTRAL ASIA, AND OF THE
DIFFICULTIES SURE TO ARISE
THEREFROM TO ENGLAND**

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The Coming Struggle for India: Being an Account of the Encroachments of Russia in Central Asia, and of the Difficulties Sure to Arise Therefrom to England by Arminius Vambery

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ARMINIUS VAMBERY

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ARMINIUS VAMBERY.

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SG

RUSSELL SHAW, Esq.

BUDA PESTH UNIVERSITY,

July 2, 1885.

MY DEAR MR. SHAW,

You are a Liberal in your political views; I found you liberal in the hospitality you have bestowed on me; and I hope you will be liberal in judging these pages, which I dedicate to you.

In other countries an author would have hardly ventured to dedicate to his friend of Liberal persuasion a book containing a strong criticism upon the policy of the Liberal party. But in England, fair play is fully admitted in political opinions, even if they come from a foreigner. This is a fact, of which I have had ample opportunity to convince myself during my late lecturing tour in your country; and it is the substance of the various addresses which I then delivered, that I offer now to the public in the present book form.

Believe me,

Dear Mr. Shaw,

Yours sincerely,

A. VAMBÉRY.

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THE COMING STRUGGLE FOR INDIA.

CHAPTER I.

THE WAY TO TASHKEND.

GREAT events are casting their shadows before them; the unmistakable signs of historic revolutions silently progressing are thickening around us; and if, nevertheless, we refuse to give credence to facts irrevocably accomplished and full of significance, it must be ascribed not to the dulness of our senses, but to the prevailing rigidly conservative character of the great majority of politicians.

The rivalry between Russia and England must have become evident from the very moment when Spain, Portugal, Holland, and France, gradually disappeared from the field of conquests in Asia, and when that old mother-country was left open to the ambition of the first mentioned two great nations. England, entering into the arena of conquest from

the south, had slowly but constantly worked her way through India, until out of the small trading Company had grown a mighty empire; an empire founded upon the heroism, patriotism, and lust of adventure of those islanders, who, feeling themselves somewhat cramped in their narrow insular home, had started to the distant East in order to satisfy their curiosity, to couple their names with some glorious deed in the cause of humanity, and to reflect honour upon their own mother-country.

At the outset nobody knew the ultimate border of the new acquisition. Conquests necessitated fresh and new conquests, and when the State supplanted the simple trading Company, the Indian acquisition was as extensive as any of the former Mogul or Hindoo Rajahs had ever been able to unite under his sceptre. The conquest of India was and is undoubtedly the glory of our western civilisation; it is the best mark of the superiority of our indomitable European spirit, and of the strength of young Europe compared with old and crumbling Asia.

As to Russia, the causes and the course of her conquests were of quite a different nature. The whole structure of the Russian empire rests exclusively upon conquests and annexation; for it must be borne in mind that Russia is not an ethnical but a political nation. The Russians were at the beginning only a

small number of Slavs, grafted upon Ugrian, Turko-Tartar, and Finnic elements, but which in the course of time gradually enlarged, and would have had already a pre-eminent part in the historical events of the Middle Ages, if temporary revolutions and wars, produced by Asiatic conquerors, had not interfered, and delayed the growth of the national body. Among these drawbacks we reckon the irruption of the Mongols under Djenghis Khan, and the great war under Timur, both of them historical events which crippled and maimed the Grand-Duchy of Muscovy; but in the end Russian society, imbued with the spirit of Christian civilisation, nevertheless triumphed over the rude and barbarian representatives of Asia. The Golden Horde crumbled to pieces, the empire of Timur was scattered to the winds; and victorious Russia, by annexing one portion after another, not only found herself succeeding to the heritage of her Asiatic predecessors, but also possessing the best means of continuing in the path of ulterior conquests, and of consolidating her new acquisitions in a way quite superior to the means and modes at the disposal of Asiatic despots.

After having subdued the middle and lower Volga, Russia turned her attention partly to the East, partly to the West. In both directions she earned unexpected success. In the East she appeared as the

representative of Europe two centuries ago, and, armed with the superior arms of that time, she managed to conquer vast multitudes with a comparatively small number of men. Siberia was conquered in the sixteenth century, and when Kutchum Khan, after having been defeated by the daring troopers under the lead of Yermak, armed with firearms, and losing his crown and empire, was asked to surrender, the old blind man, discovered in the midst of the woods, said: "I am blind, deaf, poor and deserted, but I do not complain about the loss of my treasures, I only grieve that the Russians have taken captive my dear child, my son Asmanak. If I had him with me I should willingly renounce my crown, my riches, all my other wives and remaining children. Now I shall send my family to Bokhara, and I myself shall go to the Nogais. I did not go to the Czar in my more prosperous days, when I was rich and mighty; shall I go now in order to meet with a shameful death."

From the eastern Tartars in Siberia, Russia turned to the western Tartars in the Crimea, to those very Nogais with whom Kutchum Khan expected to find a shelter. Here the sway of the Sultan of Turkey had become loosened at that time, and the Empress Catherine plucked fresh laurels for her crown after a hard struggle, which sealed the fate of the Khans of Bagtche-Sarai for ever. From the Isker in Siberia