

BY-PATHS IN THE BALKANS

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By-Paths in the Balkans by Frederick William von Herbert

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FREDERICK WILLIAM VON HERBERT

**BY-PATHS IN
THE BALKANS**

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THE DEFENCE OF PLEVNA. Written by one who took part in it.

THE CHRONICLES OF A VIRGIN FORTRESS. Being some Unrecorded Chapters of Turkish and Bulgarian History.

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PAMPHLETS, etc.:

CRITICAL REVIEWS OF HISTORICAL WORKS.

THE DEFENCE OF PLEVNA (Professional Paper of the Corps of Royal Engineers).

ENGLISH PUNCTUATION FOR BEGINNERS.



MAJI YUSUF DUELOUR'S FRONTIER CAFE. (See Chapter XI.)

Reduced by photograph, from a water-colour painting by the Author.

BY-PATHS IN THE BALKANS

BY

W. V. HERBERT

(CAPTAIN FREDERICK WILLIAM VON HERBERT)

AUTHOR OF

"THE DEFENCE OF PLEVNA," "THE CHRONICLES OF
A YERGEN FORTRESS," ETC.

"Since my young days of passion—joy, or pain,
Perchance my heart and harp have lost a string,
And both may jar; it may be that in vain
I would essay as I have sung to sing."

BYRON ("Childe Harold," Canto III.).

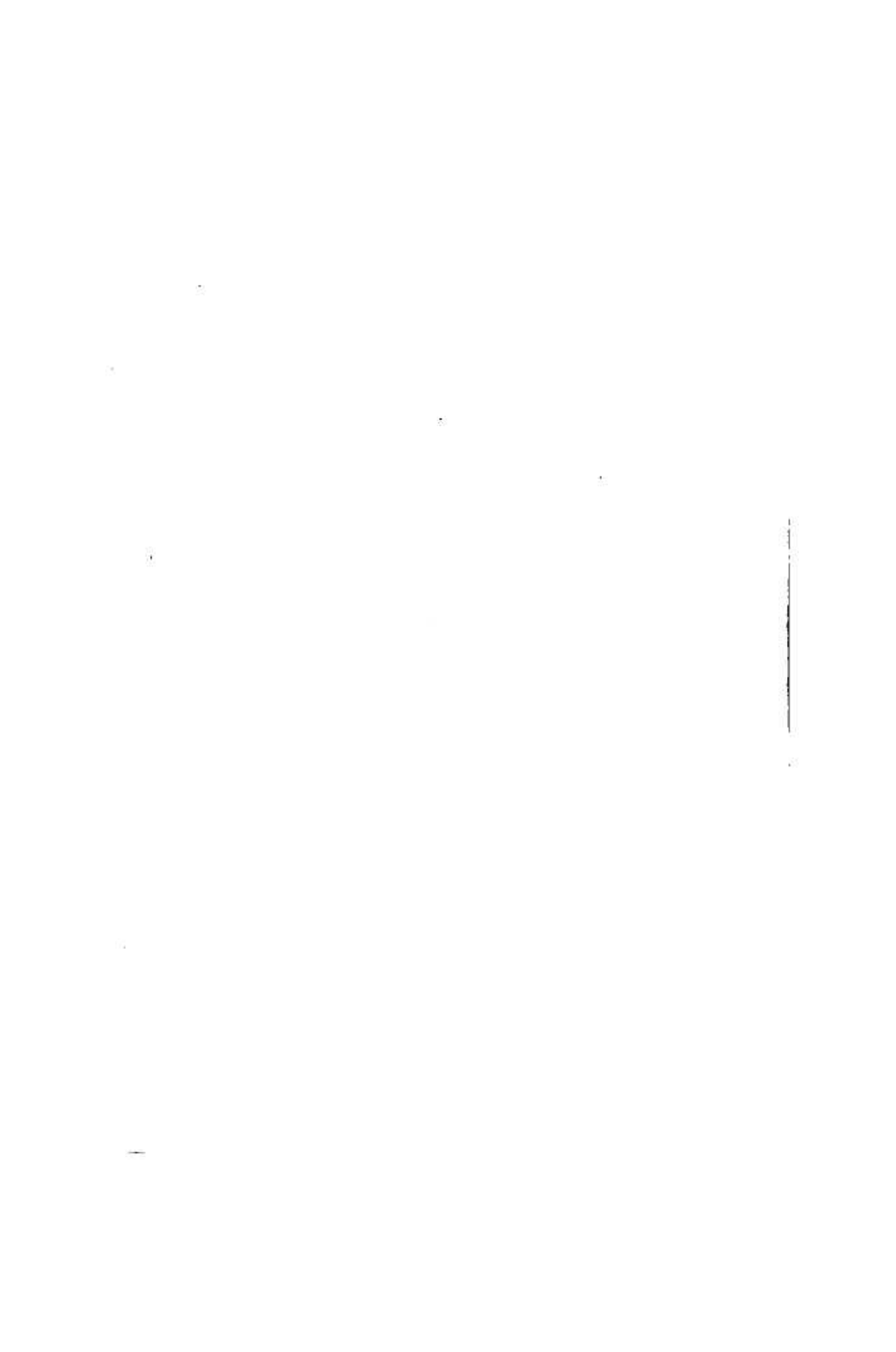
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1906

DEDICATION

I SANG of arms and men a merry story,
You loved to hear of war and well-fought fray ;
My tale once clashed like steel and smelt of glory,
There were not love nor kisses in my lay ;
The tints were crude and glaring, coarse and gory,
No mellow colours of a moon-struck May ;
When you would choose a song of gentler chiming
You thrust me off—in battle is no rhyming.

The blood flows slowly now ; no more wild gleaming
Of steel-reflected sun, in sport of kings,
Disturbs life's eventide—only a dreaming
Of dead ambitions, and the tears of things ;
What little war is left, is but a scheming
For bread and shelter, and the soldier sings
In stiller accents, worn and weary grown :
These are his songs—his very best, your own.



PREFACE

MANY of the impressions and incidents recorded in the following pages were not of my seeking—were, indeed, at the time unwelcome visitations. During a sixteen months' journey in the Balkan countries, 1903 to 1905, my money-supply suddenly and unexpectedly ran out, in places where a replenishment would have been impossible, even if I had been a Croesus, and owing to circumstances which not the most acute prophet could have foreseen. And when at last, as the result of a reckless adventure, I had obtained a sufficiency to continue my journey, I became the victim of a cruel robbery, which deprived me, for the second time, of all that I then possessed.

In this wise, the journey, to which I had trusted for succour to my finances, ruined by three years' military service in South Africa, 1899 to 1902, ended disastrously in a loss to me of