

KHIVA AND TURKESTAN

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Khiva and Turkestan by H. Spalding

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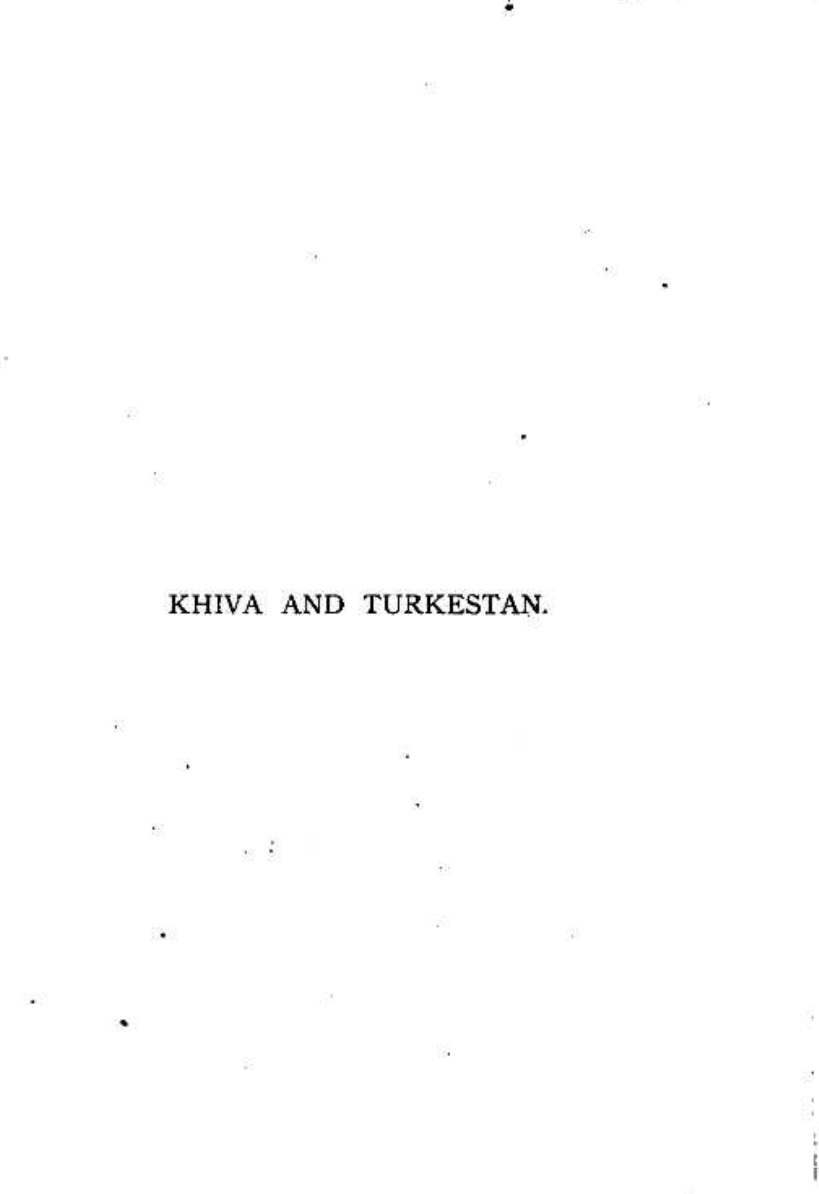
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H. SPALDING

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KHIVA AND TURKESTAN.

TRANSLATED FROM THE RUSSIAN

BY

CAPTAIN H. SPALDING, F.R.G.S.

With a Map.



LONDON.

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1874

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PREFACE.

IN bringing this work to the notice of the public, the translator trusts that it will, in some measure, answer a twofold purpose: firstly, by affording exact and reliable information regarding the remote region of which it treats, a region all the more interesting to Englishmen that it lies in comparative proximity to Hindostan; and secondly, by representing this subject from a Russian point of view, and enabling us to judge the question from their stand-point. There are always two sides to a question, and never is this truth more indisputable than in cases of international rivalry or disagreement. Without wishing to be the apologist of the entire policy of Russia, the translator believes that an impartial study of her history will considerably modify the unfavourable opinions constantly expressed regarding her.

The great difficulty which Russia, on emerging

from barbarism, has had to contend against is her geographical situation with regard to the sea. It is true that she has, though only in modern times, access to numerous inland seas, such as the Caspian and Black Seas and the Baltic; but the ocean itself is only open to her, in an unrestricted sense, on the frozen shores of her northern coast, or the likewise frozen shores of Eastern Siberia. It is thus that, since Russia took her place in the conclave of civilised nations in the reign of Peter the Great, her existence has been an almost uninterrupted contest for a sea-board. Peter himself occupied Azoff, established himself on the Caspian, and annexed the Baltic provinces of Livonia, Esthonia, and Ingria; next came the conquest of the Crimea by Potemkin, under Catharine the Second, whilst finally, the absorption of Finland during the reign of Alexander the First completed the coast-line of the Russian Empire on the Baltic.

In this series of conquests and annexations, and in others, we see the natural struggles of a rising nation for unity, and access to the coast, not altogether through the impulsion of ambitious autocrats, but, we submit, chiefly through natural causes. Doubtless great wrongs were committed, and gallant nations, such as the Finns and Poles, cruelly trodden under foot; but such are the scenes

which usually accompany the development of a people's history, and we must never forget, when considering them, to look at the reverse side of the picture; at Russia herself, for instance, trodden down and ravaged for centuries by the armed heel of the restless and warlike Polish aristocracy. It would seem as wise to regret the Saxon Heptarchy as to allow ourselves to be prejudiced against Russia on account of her past annexations.

As regards the extension of the Russian Empire in Asia, we, as the Russians themselves truly remark, are the very last people who ought to condemn them, since the analogies between our empire in Asia and theirs are both numerous and striking. Both founded by private enterprise, both have proceeded from conquest to conquest and from annexation to annexation, owing to the operation of similar causes, till both are at length in what, in that vast continent, is comparative proximity, a proximity so close as to call forth the quite unreasonable fear of a Russian invasion. But the reader who peruses this volume will be able to judge for himself; he will see that Russia has been impelled, by the same causes as ourselves, in her career of conquest in Asia, and, what is more, that the same jealousy, the same vague suspicions of hostility which we are accustomed to harbour against Russia, influence the Russian mind to an