

KHIVA AND TURKESTAN.

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TRANSLATED FROM THE RUSSIAN

BY

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

With a Map.

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P R E F A C E.

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