

Advisory Editors

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PREFACE.

IN the reviews of my "Travels in "Central Asia," which have issued from the European and American press, I have generally been reproached with scantiness of details and scrappiness of treatment;—in a word, with having said much less than I could have said about my journey from the Bosphorus to Samarkand,—so rich in varied adventures and experiences.

Now, I will not deny that such a charge has not been quite unfairly levelled against me.

While I was writing my memoirs, during the first three months of my stay in London, after my year-long wanderings in Asia, I had very great trouble in accustoming myself to the idea of being firmly settled down. I always kept fancying myself bound on the morrow to pack up and extend my travels with the caravan: hence my irresolution and hasty procedure. Moreover, I was quite a stranger in the domain of travelling, and deemed it my duty now to keep some-

thing back for mere decency; anon to leave out something else, as of inferior interest. Hence many an episode was left untouched, many a picture remained but a feeble sketch.

To make up for this defect—if sparingness in words be really a defect—I have written the following pages. They contain only supplementary papers, partly about my own adventures, partly on the manners and rare characteristics of the Central Asiatic peoples, linked together in no particular connection. It would naturally have been better to offer these pages in the place of the former volume; and yet the slightest notice of a country so little known to us as Turkestan, which political questions will soon bring into the front of passing questions, will always have its uses; and “meglio tardi che mai.”

A. V.

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