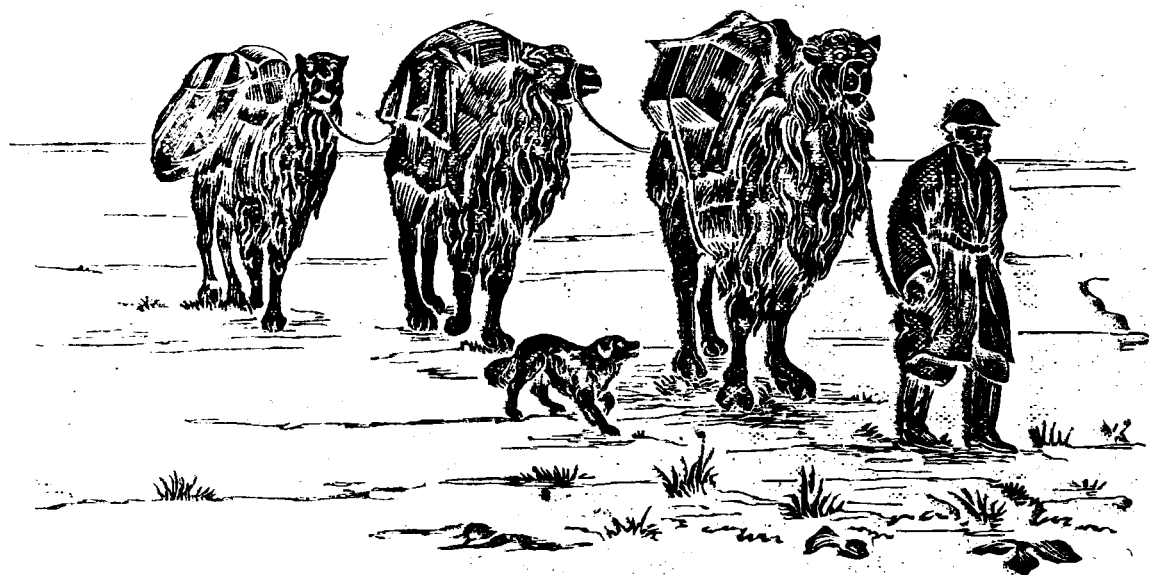


CENTRAL ASIA AND TIBET

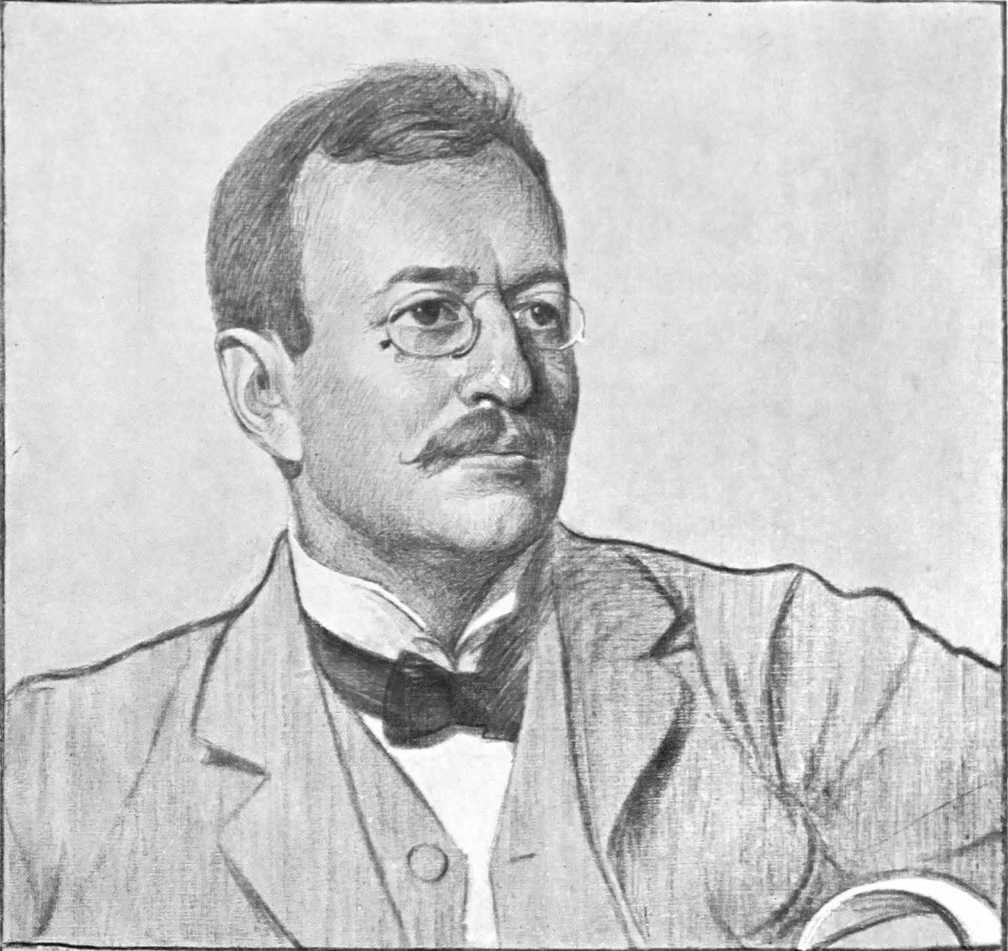
TOWARDS THE HOLY CITY OF LASSA



SVEN HEDIN

Central Asia and Tibet

VOL. I.



SVEN HEDIN

J. G. P.

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CENTRAL ASIA AND TIBET

Towards the Holy City of Lassa

BY

SVEN HEDIN

Author of "Through Asia," etc.

With 420 Illustrations from Drawings and Photographs,
Eight Full-page Coloured Illustrations from Paintings,
and Five Maps, mostly by the Author

VOL. I.

HURST AND BLACKETT, LIMITED

LONDON

1903

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List of Editions.

AMERICA:	Charles Scribners Sons	-	New York.
GERMANY:	F. A. Brockhaus	- - -	Leipzig.
FRANCE:	Félix Juven	- - -	Paris.
RUSSIA:	A. Devrien	- - -	St. Petersburg.
ITALY:	Ulrico Hoepli	- - -	Milan.
HUNGARY:	F. Wodianer & Sons	- -	Budapest.
SWEDEN:	Albert Bonnier	- - -	Stockholm.
NORWAY & DENMARK:	Alb. Cammermeyer	- - -	Christiania.
BOHEMIA:			
AUSTRALASIA:	G. Robertson & Co. Proprietary, Ltd.	}	Melbourne.

AND

GREAT BRITAIN: Hurst and Blackett, Limited London.

Dedication.



THE ENGLISH AND AMERICAN EDITIONS
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TO

HIS EXCELLENCY
LORD CURZON OF KEDLESTON,
VICEROY OF INDIA,

WITH GRATITUDE AND ADMIRATION
BY THE AUTHOR.

PRINTED BY KELLY'S DIRECTORIES LTD.,
LONDON AND KINGSTON.

P R E F A C E.

IN offering, as I do in the following pages, the results of my latest travels in Central Asia to the English-speaking world, my first duty must be to thank all those who have in various ways contributed to the success of the journey. In the first place, my sincere and earnest thanks must be tendered to His Majesty King Oscar of Sweden and Norway. With his accustomed generosity and enlightenment he made possible the inception of an undertaking, the success of which was in no slight degree due to his valuable assistance and his distinguished patronage. During the many years which I have devoted to the exploration of the little-known interior of Asia His Majesty has always followed my movements with the warmest interest and sympathy, graciously encouraging me to fresh efforts, and honouring me in the most flattering way after each new success. To him, therefore, I desire to express my deepest and most heartfelt gratitude.

To His Imperial Majesty the Czar of Russia I also owe a heavy debt of gratitude for the invaluable support he was pleased to afford me. The services which his Cossacks rendered me were such as money alone could not repay. In my caravan there was not the faintest echo of those bloody and hostile passages which in the past have more than once clouded the relations between Swedes and Russians. Seldom have I been served with such signal devotion and zeal as I was during the three years I had the good fortune to have associated with me these four Cossacks of the Czar's great army. At the same time may I also express my heartfelt thanks to His Excellency, General Kuropatkin, Russian Minister of War, for the valuable assistance he so kindly rendered me? After the very substantial help which King Oscar so generously gave me by way of a start, I experienced no difficulty in raising the funds necessary for my journey, long and important though it was. I had no need to appeal to any except my own countrymen; and amongst them I had on this, as on former occasions, no more liberal friend than M. Emanuel Nobel, of St. Petersburg.

The Swedish edition of this book I have dedicated to my deeply revered parents, as a slight token of the love and affection I owe them

for all they have done for me in the past. By a happy inspiration, I have asked, and obtained, the kind permission of His Excellency, Lord Curzon, Viceroy of India, to dedicate to him the English-American edition. It affords me the sincerest pleasure thus publicly to thank him for the truly magnificent hospitality which he and Lady Curzon showed me when I was in Calcutta and Barrackpur. It was owing to Lord Curzon's influential favour that my visit in India turned out so exceedingly pleasurable, in fact, I shall never forget it. But whilst thus tendering the evidence of my gratitude to the able and successful administrator, I desire also, by my dedication of the book to Lord Curzon, to express my admiration for the learned geographer, and, at the same time, render my homage to one who is counted amongst the profoundest of living students of the geography and politics of Asia. I congratulate the powerful empire which has such posts as the Viceroyalty of India to bestow upon the noblest and best of her sons; I congratulate her still more in having sons like Lord Curzon to whom she can entrust the rule of a dependency compared with which most of even the Great Powers of Europe are but as pigmies beside a giant.

It also affords me great pleasure to offer my respectful thanks to the *Royal Geographical Society* for the distinguished and flattering reception it has always accorded to me, for the unique and highly valued honours it has bestowed upon me, and for the proofs of hospitality, sympathy, and kindness with which I have been overwhelmed by those of its members with whom I have had the good fortune to be brought into contact, but more especially to Sir Clements R. Markham, its esteemed president, and Dr. J. Scott Keltie, its valued secretary. By both the officers and members of the Royal Scottish Geographical Society I have been no less honoured and encouraged; and herewith I tender to them also my heartfelt thanks.

This book cannot claim to be anything more than a digested and ordered diary of my latest travels in Asia, together with a description of the regions which I have crossed and recrossed to an added total of some six thousand English miles. If the narrative should be found somewhat heavy and lacking in variety—it will be an exact counterpart of the regions I have travelled through. Travel in Asia is not a dance upon the dropping petals of the rose. Life, with the slow-moving caravans of its boundless deserts and untrodden mountain solitudes, cannot help being monotonous. I have, however, tried to convey an impression of the manner of life, and of how the days pass, amid the lonely desolation of those illimitable wastes. And in any case my labours bring their own reward, in the consciousness that they have contributed, in some degree at least, to the advancement of human knowledge.

In this book I have contented myself with merely an occasional

glance at the scientific results of the journey. The fuller and detailed account of them is reserved for a separate work, to which I would like to be allowed to refer the reader who is interested in the geography of Central Asia. The work in question will appear in the course of the next three years, and will be accompanied by an atlas in a couple of folio vols. I shall be happy to answer any inquiries about the *Scientific Results*, as well as to enrol the names of subscribers; for the production of the work must necessarily be costly, and its success will, of course, depend upon the number of subscribers who come forward.

As I can make no pretensions to being either a historical or an archæological scholar, I have seen fit to quote the opinions of two gentlemen, who are well conversant with such subjects, with regard to the ruins of the ancient towns that I had the good fortune to discover beside the ancient lake of Lop-nor. I allude to Professor Himly, of Wiesbaden, and Mr. Macartney, Agent of the Government of India at Kashgar. Dr. M. A. Stein's *Sand-buried Ruins of Khotan* did not, unfortunately, appear in time for me to refer to it in the text. Nevertheless it cannot be overlooked. It is a work which is as admirable in execution as it is important for the valuable matter it contains. Indeed, it would not be easy to conceive an abler survey, at once clear and full of the keenest insight, of the historic and archæological problems connected with Central Asia. It is certain to mark an era in the investigation of that part of the world. This classic production—for such it is bound to become—cannot be too warmly recommended. The great admiration I have for it must be my excuse for dwelling for a moment upon one or two of the numerous fascinating topics it suggests.

In the first place I desire to acknowledge the loyal spirit in which Dr. Stein has recognised my claim to be the first discoverer of Dandan Uiliq (though I confess I never heard this name applied to the site), and of Kara-dung. With regard to the shifting of the Keriya-daria towards the east, I would refer to my paper in *Petermann's Mitteilungen*, Ergänzungsheft, No. 131, p. 37 (1900). The following pages will afford abundant proofs of the tendency of the rivers of East Turkestan to shift their beds. Had Dr. Stein enjoyed the same opportunities that I have had for studying their courses, and the rapid alterations they undergo, he would have found nothing surprising in the fact that the Keriya-daria has shifted its course $23\frac{1}{2}$ miles further to the east. That is a movement which would require for its accomplishment neither centuries nor thousands of years. Once the bed of an East Turkestan river gets choked with mud, it is only a question of a comparatively few years for it to alter its course.

The detailed results of my investigations on the Mus-tagh-ata, and the Eastern Pamirs generally, are not yet published, but they will, I trust, be published ere long. The materials which I collected for

PREFACE.

a map of the region are at this moment in the hands of the geographical firm of Justus Perthes in Gotha; in fact, I have made an arrangement with them to publish the whole in another separate monograph of the well-known *Petermann's Mitteilungen*.

Dr. Stein is to be congratulated upon having exposed the scandalous fabrication of "ancient MSS." which for a time went on wholesale in Khotan. Fortunately he discovered it before more serious or more mischievous results were able to ensue.

I ought perhaps to state that the reasons why I so seldom advert to the travels of my predecessors and contemporaries in the same parts of the world have not been either forgetfulness or want of due recognition of them; but simply because my own materials have been so voluminous that the requisite space has been wanting.

Finally, I must thank my publishers, Messrs. Hurst and Blackett, for the generous and obliging spirit in which they have met me throughout. They are issuing the book in what I can only describe as a first-class manner, and I trust the result will amply compensate them for the trouble and sacrifices they have made.

The present book has been translated by Mr. J. T. Bealby, the same gentleman who so ably translated *Through Asia*. To him also I desire to offer my sincere thanks for the painstaking and diligent care he has bestowed upon the English rendering. Unless I am mistaken, it is an excellent piece of work.

SVEN HEDIN.

Stockholm,

21st August, 1903.

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