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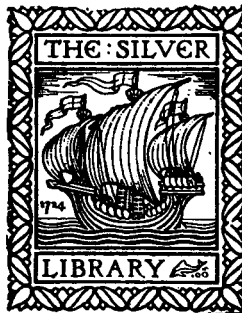
A NARRATIVE OF RECENT TRAVEL
IN KASHMIR, WESTERN TIBET, GILGIT, AND
THE ADJOINING COUNTRIES

BY

E. F. KNIGHT

AUTHOR OF 'THE CRUISE OF THE FALCON'
'THE CRUISE OF THE ALERTE' 'THE FALCON ON THE BALTIC'
'SAVE ME FROM MY FRIENDS' ETC.

WITH A MAP AND 54 ILLUSTRATIONS



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PREFACE

VARIOUS circumstances took me to Kashmir in the spring of 1891. I did not see much of the Happy Valley itself; but for the greater part of a year I was travelling among those desolate mountain-tracts that lie to the north of it, where the ranges of the Hindoo Koosh and Karakoram form the boundary between the dominions of the Maharajah and that somewhat vaguely defined region which we call Central Asia.

Great changes are now being effected in Kashmir: we are actively interfering in the administration of the country, and introducing much-needed reforms, which will produce important results in the immediate future. The affairs of this State are likely soon to attract a good deal of attention, and therefore a description of the country as it is to-day, and some account of the relations which exist between the Indian Empire and her tributary, and of the steps that are being taken to safeguard Imperial interests on that portion of our frontier may not be inopportune.

I have, so far as is possible, confined myself to a narrative of my own experiences, to a plain statement of what I myself saw, without attempting to theorise as to what ought to be done or left undone on the frontier. The Indian Government can be trusted to do everything for the best, as heretofore; and while it is foolish for people at home to airily criticise the policy of those highly-trained Anglo-Indian experts who have made the complicated problems of our Asiatic rule the study of a lifetime, it is still more foolish for one to do so who has spent but a year in the East, and who, therefore, has just had time to realise what a vast amount he has yet to learn.

In the course of my journey I was luckily enabled to accompany my friend, Mr. Walter Lawrence, the Settlement Officer who has been appointed to the Kashmir State, on one of his official tours, and saw something of his interesting and successful work; I visited the mystic land of Ladak with Captain Bower, the explorer of Tibet; reached Gilgit in time to take part in Colonel Durand's expedition against the raiding Hunza-Nagars; and fell in with other exceptional opportunities for observing how things are managed on the frontier, both in peace and war.

My thanks are due to the editors of the 'Times,' the 'Graphic,' and 'Black and White' for the permission they have kindly given me to reproduce in this book portions of articles which I wrote for those papers.

The illustration of the Devil Dance at Himis is a reproduction of a drawing (by Mr. J. Finnemore, from my photographs) which appeared in 'Black and White.'

The whole region included in the sketch-map which accompanies this volume is an intricate mass of mighty mountains cloven by innumerable ravines. In order to avoid confusion superfluous detail has been avoided; the principal valleys alone have been indicated, while the two great parallel watersheds of the Hindoo Koosh and the Western Himalayas have been purposely emphasised, at the expense of the no less lofty subordinate branches of either chain.

Kashmir has been called the northern bastion of India. Gilgit can be described as her farther outpost. And hard by Gilgit it is that, in an undefined way, on the high Roof of the World—what more fitting a place!—the three greatest Empires of the Earth meet—Great Britain, Russia, and China. Hence the title I have given to this book.

E. F. K.

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