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THE
CHARLES WILLIAM WASON
COLLECTION ON CHINA
AND THE CHINESE

THE
AMERICAN WORLD IN THE EAST

THE
BRITISH WORLD IN THE EAST.

—
VOL. I.

BRITISH WORLD IN THE EAST

BRITISH WORLD IN THE EAST

VOL. I

To the Editor of the
"Standard."

THE
BRITISH WORLD IN THE EAST:

A GUIDE

HISTORICAL, MORAL, AND COMMERCIAL,

TO

India, China, Australia, South Africa,

AND THE

OTHER POSSESSIONS OR CONNEXIONS

OF

GREAT BRITAIN

IN THE

EASTERN AND SOUTHERN SEAS.

BY

LEITCH RITCHIE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I

Chas. H. Mason

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LONDON:

W. H. ALLEN AND CO., 7, LEADENHALL STREET.

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A GUIDE

TO THE

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LEITCH WITFIELD

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I

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LONDON:

W. H. ALLEN AND CO., 1, BUNYARD STREET

1911

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W. B. B.

PREFACE.

"As one saith in a brave kind of expression, the sun never sets in the Spanish dominions, but ever shines upon one part or other of them." So remarked Bacon of a country which is now one of the least considerable of the powers of Europe, ignorant that one day the "brave expression" would be a simple truth when applied to his own. In like manner, it perhaps never occurred to Gibbon that the phrase he seems to delight so much in repeating, "the Roman World," might be adopted and modified with more than equal propriety by future historians of the British empire. Rome was great and powerful at a time when the rest of the world was mean and weak, but England is a giantess even among the proudest nations of the earth; and as for the extent of her territory, to use the felicitous language of Webster, "her morning drum-beat following the sun, and keeping company with the hours, circles the earth daily with one continuous and unbroken strain of its martial airs."

When the author of these volumes was invited to prepare a Survey of the British world in the east, he was at first of opinion that the comparative smallness of the space to which he was restricted would prove a disadvantage. But so far from this being the case, although it has unquestionably added to his labour, it has saved him from the imprudence of entering into competition with better writers, and enabled him to produce a work which will not be subjected to invidious comparison. The intelligent publishers saw that, at least in so far as the two principal countries to be treated of were concerned, a History, in the usual sense of the word, was not wanting: they desired rather to have the spirit and results of history in a form at once popular and practical. They knew, likewise, that meritorious Abridgments already existed; but at any rate they were desirous of avoiding the details of such indices which, by crowding the memory, render it difficult for the reader to grasp and comprehend the subject. The present work, therefore, aspires only to give the heads of knowledge; and the author trusts that there will be found in it the materials for correct thought even where he has been unable to use them aright himself, and that it may thus serve to stimulate the curiosity, expand the mind, and invigorate the judgment.

Thus much it has been considered necessary to say, in order to explain any paucity of names and other details which may be observed in the following pages. Few *events* of any importance have been voluntarily

omitted; but the reader is referred to other works for a personal account of the actors.

The same restriction must be applied to the commercial information; which is intended to give the merchant and economist an idea of the nature, value, and resources of the various markets, and thus to serve as an introduction to the circular and price-current that are to be found elsewhere.

In spelling proper names, the author has had nothing in view but the practical nature of his book. He has adopted, therefore, that mode of spelling to which he supposed his readers to be most accustomed; although in doubtful cases he has of course assumed the privilege of a casting vote. The Arabian prophet, for instance, he has called Mahomed by way of a compromise; although, if his own ear is to be trusted, Mühummud would be nearer the sound. As for the French Mehemet, it resembles nothing in nature but the bleat of a goat.

It needs only be added on this subject, that at the request of the publishers he has refrained from encumbering his pages with those notes and references, which, in the case of a book of greater pretensions, might be reckoned indispensable.

"Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, Bermuda, and the Bahamas," says an American writer, "overawe and command the entire stretch of our Atlantic coast; while the West India Islands guard the entrance to the Gulf of Mexico, and Canada environs us upon our northern border:"—to which he might have added

that the Hudson's Bay territory extends backwards to the pole. But the eastern march of England is by far the most remarkable. Not to mention Gibraltar and Malta which dominate the Mediterranean, the whole outer coast of Africa is dotted with her settlements and fortresses; Ascension—Saint Helena—Mauritius—guard the intercourse of the two hemispheres; Hindostan is her own; along the shores of the Burman dominions, Siam, and the Malay peninsula are her ports and her cities; from Singapore she commands the Indian Archipelago; and in China her colony of Hong-Kong, with a magnificence of spirit worthy of her destiny, throws open to the world that commerce which her arms had made her own. But this is not all. A new continent spreads its prodigious expanse on the ocean between India and America; and there this modern mother of empires has already planted her standard round the coasts—east, west, north, and south—and the ceaseless hum of English industry mingles with the voice of the Pacific.

To describe the progress of this eastward stream, and the countries it fertilizes, together with those that lie near its course, is the object of the work now submitted to the public; and the author can only regret that the execution of the task is not likely to harmonize so well as he could wish with the greatness and utility of the design.

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