



Travels in Russia, Tartary and Turkey (Classic Reprint)

Edward Daniel Clarke

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Excerpt from Travels in Russia, Tartary and Turkey

Rev. Edward Clarke, author of Letters on the Spanish Nation, and was born in 1767. He received his education at Jesus College, Cambridge, of which society he became a Fellow, having taken the degree of A.M. in 1794. Soon after, he accompanied Lord Berwick to Italy; and in 1799, set out on a projected series of travels in Europe and Asia, in company with his friend Mr Cripps. The first countries visited by Mr Clarke were Russia, Tartary, and Turkey; he next visited Greece, Egypt, and Syria; and, finally, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Lapland, and Finland which formed the subjects of three separate descriptive works. On his return, he obtained from the university to which he belonged the honorary degree of LL.D., as a distinguished mark of its approbation, and in consideration of the services rendered to its public libraries and institutions by his liberal contributions, among which the greatest, perhaps, in value, is a manuscript of Platos works, with nearly a hundred others, and a colossal statue of the Eleusinian Ceres, the whole brought from eastern countries. In 1806, Dr Clarke commenced a course of lectures on mineralogy, having brought a splendid collection of specimens to Europe; and, in 1808, a professorship being founded purposely for the encouragement of that branch of knowledge, he was elevated to the chair. From this period he continued to occupy himself in the diligent pursuit of science, and in the preparation of the narrative of his travels, the first part of which, devoted to Russia, Tartary, and Turkey, was given to the world in the form of a large quarto volume in the month of May 1810. Dr Clarkes valuable life was closed, however, before the last part of his travels made its appearance he died March 9, 1821. Few works of travels have been more successful in gaining pubh capprobation than those of Dr Clarke. On his qualifications as a writer, a critic in the Edinburgh Review has made the following remarks: Dr Clarke possesses much general knowledge, which he employs without pedantry, and displays without ostentation; nor does he often fatigue attention, by dwelling too long, or too minutely, upon any subject. We have, indeed, seldom met with a traveller, whose descriptions are more lively, or who presents objects more distinctly to the mental eye. His pictures, it is true, are generally spirited compositions, full of character and animation; and he paints with the ease and the rapidity, if not always with the skill and the grace, of a master. But (to continue the metaphor) his colouring is occasionally too gaudy his lights too glaring and his shadows too dark. Before making any special remark on the manner in which Dr Clarke has drawn up the most popular of all his productions, the Travels in Russia, c., of which the present is a reprint, it will be necessary to allow a place to the authors prefatory observations, appended to the first edition of the work. These are as follow: Under circumstances of peculiar anxiety, the author presents the First Part of his Travels to the public. A sense of unearned praise, already bestowed by too eager anticipation, weighs heavy on his mind; and some degree of apprehension attaches to the consciousness of having obeyed a strong impulse of duty in the unfavourable representation made of the state of society in Russia. The moral picture afforded of its inhabitants may seem distorted by spleen, and traced under other impressions than those of general charity and Christian benevolence: on which account the reader is doubly entreated to pardon defects, which experience, chastened by criticism, may subsequently amend; and to suspend the judgment, which more general acquaintance with the author may ultimately mitigate. The present publication is not the only one on which he will have to form an opinion: it is merely an introduction to his future notice. The plan under contemplation is to complete, in three separate parts, a seri.

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