

GENERAL GORDON'S LETTERS

FROM THE CRIMEA, ETC.

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FROM

*THE CRIMEA, THE DANUBE,
AND ARMENIA.*

AUGUST 18, 1854, TO NOVEMBER 17, 1858.

EDITED BY

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I DEDICATE,
WITHOUT HIS KNOWLEDGE,
THE FOLLOWING LETTERS
TO THE BROTHER OF THEIR AUTHOR,
SIR HENRY W. GORDON, K.C.B.
IN WHOM
THE QUALITIES OF A GREAT CHARACTER
ARE EQUALLY CONSPICUOUS.

"PAR NOBILE FRATRUM."

INTRODUCTION.

THE following letters represent the earliest correspondence of General Gordon with members of his family after the commencement of his military career in the service of the Queen. In point of time, it is not probable that they will ever be superseded. When the first note was written from Pembroke Dock he was only a few months over twenty-one; when the last letter was sent from Constantinople he was still two months short of his twenty-sixth birthday. During that period of four years and a half he was constantly employed, with one interval, in connection with events of dramatic character, and the correspondence covers the whole of an epoch important in history and famous in our national annals.

There is a certain appropriateness as well as use in supplying fuller details of the first part of a public career which was destined to reveal so many picturesque and heroic incidents; and those details cannot be supplied in a clearer or more ample manner than in the young engineer officer's own words, though they were set down in all the haste and weariness of bodily exertion and mental fatigue in the trenches of the Crimea, amid the innumerable difficulties and annoyances of rapid travel in such a region as the Danubian principalities were and still are, and on the desert heights of the Armenian border lands. The reader can feel sure that he receives the impression as it took form under the pen of General Gordon; and although there is never a pretension to style, the language is always clear and direct, and no one can doubt that the writer reveals his true mind.

These letters are not without their use also. When General Gordon arrived in the Crimea, in the first days of the year 1855, the more striking events of the campaign had taken place. The thin red line had carried the heights of Alma, the immortal charge of the light brigade had