



The Archer and the Steppe, or, The Empire of Scythia

F.R. Grahame

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F.R. Grahame's comprehensive history looks at the conquests of the Mongols and other groups in Central Asia and Eastern Europe during antiquity and the Middle Ages. From the introduction:

"From the depths of Tartary, or Asiatic Scythia, has originally issued every torrent of invading barbarians that have overrun Eastern Europe for the last nine hundred years. Cradled on the gloomy steppes of Mongolia, where the earth for nine months remains buried under a thick bed of snow, and where the Sole vegetation consists of short grass, and a few scanty tufts of heath, these hordes of martial shepherds have periodically poured down in search of a richer country and more grateful soil, and, spreading over the barren plains of Tartary and Russia, have formed themselves into moving empires, who for a few years have domineered over the surrounding trembling nations, and then vanished and melted away; leaving little other trace of their existence than the record of destruction. Such were the monarchies of the Huns, the Igoura, and Avars; the Chazars, Polotzi, and Monguls; while the Ottoman Turks, who are also Scythian in origin and descent, more fortunate than their predecessors, have maintained a position in one of the finest countries of Europe for the last four hundred years.

As the most enduring, most powerful, and the most known, both in ancient and modern times, of these turbulent nations of the north, Russia occupies by far the most prominent part in the history of the Scythian empires; and I shall therefore make the annals of that country my principal subject. After tracing the origin of her people, I shall glance at the progress of the Huns, the Chazars, and the numerous other Tartar tribes, whose names were only known, by their inroads in the middle ages, to the countries and inhabitants of eastern, Europe. Then, sketching the rise of the Russian monarchy, I shall proceed to the conquests of Zingis Khan and the Monguls, and the wars of his descendant, and still; more formidable countryman Timur, with the short-lived domination of Samarcand."

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