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# THE DUAB OF TURKESTAN

A PHYSIOGRAPHIC SKETCH AND  
ACCOUNT OF SOME TRAVELS

BY

W. RICKMER RICKMERS

WITH 207 MAPS, DIAGRAMS AND OTHER ILLUSTRATIONS



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# THE DUAB OF TURKESTAN

## NOTE

In this book the author has attempted to combine a record of exploration with the teaching of a little elementary physiography. Mr Rickmers has specially devoted himself to the exploration of a little-known region, namely, the wide mountain expanse of the Alai-Pamirs or Upper Bokhara. But the scope of his work also includes the more familiar portions of Russian Turkestan, such as Ferghana, Samarkand, and the Sea of Aral, as well as the great steppes and deserts. These various geographical elements are grouped together in the natural organic system of the Duab of Turkestan (or Land between the two Rivers) between the Oxus and the Jaxartes. This part of Asia is conceived of as a grand physical individual under the uniform sway of pronounced topographical and climatic conditions. The action and interaction of natural forces, the battles between the mountains and the plains, between moisture and dryness, and their influence upon organic life, and upon humanity and history are described under the guidance of a fundamental theme. Everywhere the connections between the parts and their relation to the whole are kept in mind.

Apart from a few systematic introductory chapters the information is strung upon the thread of an interesting story of travel and mountain exploration. The author has endeavoured to keep the reader's attention alive by making the contents as varied as possible without detracting from the serious treatment of geographical problems. Thus the unavoidable business of explanation is relieved by descriptions of sport and landscape, scenes of native life, humorous sidelights and a few adventures. The mere diary of events has been cut down, in order to leave room for the contemplation of surroundings or for philosophical reflections on man, nature and science.

The more theoretical questions are treated in an appendix chiefly concerned with climate in its relations to the features of the country, snow line, forest, glaciation, desiccation, loess and desert, winding up with an inquiry into climate as cause and effect. Here the author has laid down some theories of his own, the most important of which grapples with the great problem of the desiccation of Central Asia.

Instructions on the pronunciation and the spelling and meaning of native names, a scientific glossary, a bibliographical list, and classified as well as alphabetical indexes meet all the reader's needs. During his travels Mr Rickmers has taken the greatest trouble in securing instructive photographs and panoramas, aiming less at beautiful pictures than at typical views of physical features

## *The Duab of Turkestan*

such as mountains, deserts, valleys, meanders, glaciers, moraines, mudspates, and also vegetation, cultivation, village life, architecture, and so on. These illustrations have been printed on specially prepared paper so as to produce the best possible effect. Many diagrams, together with a map of the highly interesting Zarafshan river from source to mouth, help towards a better understanding of the text.

The book is specially suitable for colleges, institutes, public libraries, societies, schools, and for all students or teachers of physical geography and natural science; and it is hoped that it will appeal to everyone interested in geography in general, and Middle Asia in particular.

Thanks are due to the Royal Geographical Society for assistance rendered throughout the work.

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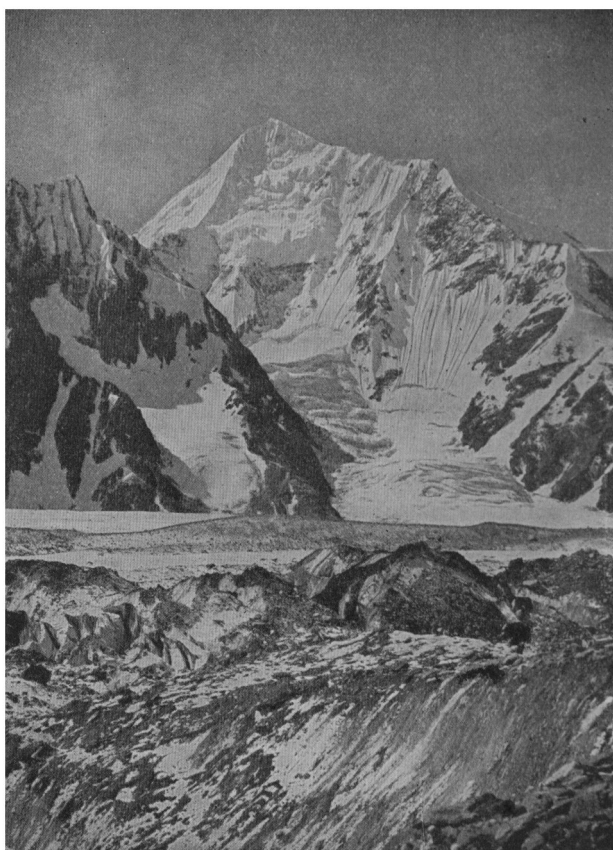
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