WILEY

Review: Russian Turkestan

Source: *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. 45, No. 3 (Mar., 1915), pp. 243-244

Published by: geographicalj

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1779801>

Accessed: 22-06-2016 20:52 UTC

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at
<http://about.jstor.org/terms>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Wiley, The Royal Geographical Society (with the Institute of British Geographers) are collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to The Geographical Journal

have been more eloquently and vividly described, and a number of admirably selected photographs not only illustrate the narrative, but give an accurate picture of the structure and fantastic details of the conquered crags and buttresses, of the contrast between granite wedges and dolomitic blocks and spires.

It would be ungrateful and out of place to repay an author who has been the first to write a readable volume on acrobatic adventure (Mummery's work included snowcraft and exploration) by an argument against the particular brand of mountaineering he has taken up with conspicuous success both as a climber and a writer. It has its place; and for its criticism it is enough to quote M. Rey's own reflections on the one occasion recorded here when he returned to one of the great peaks—the Aiguille Verte. He writes (p. 110): "That day and that mountain have left in me a memory of perfect peace. . . . I found here a new example of the peaceful beauty that belongs to the greatest peaks, and the enjoyment it afforded me seemed to have gained in serenity and in dignity. My mind, weary of the ceaseless secret conflict between its pride and its weakness that is inevitable during the struggle against unending difficulties, opened out to receive wider impressions and clearer visions.

"Lawful and reasonable climbs such as these delighted the great pioneers, who were wiser than we, and who taught us how the Alps should be loved."

It is well for a man to rejoice in his legs and his muscles and his nerves so long as he can keep his mind open to the larger lessons of the mountains. M. Rey has shown he is able to do this. He is to be congratulated on a translator who has done a difficult job with altogether exceptional ability and success.

D. W. F.

ASIA.

RUSSIAN TURKESTAN.

'Le Turkestan Russe.' Par A. Woeikof, Professeur honoraire de géographie physique à l'Université de Saint Pétersbourg. Paris: Colin. 1914. *Maps and Illustrations*. 8 fr.

The author, who by associations and long study had qualified himself thoroughly to deal with the subject, took the opportunity in 1912 to visit Turkestan, and spent four and a half months in the province, in the course of which period he clearly made the very best use of his time, and collected a considerable amount of information which a non-Russian visitor would have had difficulty in acquiring. As is well known, the variations of temperature, geological and geographical features of Turkestan are considerable, ranging from the sands of the trans-Caspian deserts and the plateau of the Ust Urt to the highlands of the upper Oxus, where mineral resources are varied and fairly plentiful. Among the more important minerals are valuable marble quarries near Fedchenko, not far from Andijan, sulphur and deposits of petroleum in the Aralo-Caspian basin and in Ferghana. So far, however, much has not resulted financially from the attempts to develop these resources, but the scanty topographical knowledge of the country is chiefly responsible, no doubt, for the small progress hitherto made. Forests, too, have not yielded much, as Ferghana is, like England, rich in trees, but not in forests. The acquisition of the regions that go to make up Turkestan has been made necessary by the raids and incursions of the nomad aborigines, and has placed its masters in possession of a sunny and highly agricultural country yielding products which could not be cultivated in Russia in Europe or Siberia. At present Turkestan supplies nearly half the cotton used in Russian factories, as well as many other raw products, and forms an important market for the

manufacturers of the country. Moreover, since railways have been opened and brigandage abolished, adjacent countries such as Khorasan, northern Afghanistan, and Kashgaria have opened up a thriving trade with Turkestan, while Russian administration has given the land peace, security, and if not ideal government, at all events one vastly superior to that which preceded it. One conspicuous defect, in M. Woeikof's opinion, is that the upper government officials have a very imperfect acquaintance with the native languages, while their subordinates have no regular defined or permanent employment, with concomitant advantages as regards pay and annual leave, such as are enjoyed in the British and Dutch East Indies.

AMERICA.

THE UPPER AMAZON BASIN.

'The Upper Reaches of the Amazon.' By Joseph F. Woodroffe. London: Methuen & Co. 1914. Pp. xvi., 304. *Map and Illustrations.* 10s. 6d. net.

This book is the record by a young Englishman of between seven and eight years' residence in the upper Amazon basin, during which period he experienced many vicissitudes, at one time working his way up to the command of a prosperous business, but for the most part serving as an employé in the rubber-collecting industry. He ranged from Manaos to beyond Iquitos in the one direction, and to the Madeira-Mamoré railway in the other. In the course of his varied employment he became associated with the notorious company exploiting the rubber resources of the Putumayo. His participation in the business after he became aware of its character he excuses by explaining that he himself was "a victim of peonage," being accounted heavily in debt to his patrons.

Having this basis of experience, he has written this book with a twofold object—to warn other young Englishmen of the dangers of employment in the outlying parts of the Amazon basin, and to expose the evils attendant on the collection of rubber, not only in the Putumayo, but, to a greater or less extent, throughout the area which came within the range of the author's observation. About two-thirds of the book is occupied with the personal narrative; the rest is devoted to a generalized account of the conditions under which the rubber industry is carried on, natural history notes, and a few hints for travellers. Particularly instructive is a detailed description and estimate of the cost of starting and working a "seringal," or rubber estate, in the Amazonian forests. From this it appears that the workers are not the only sufferers from a vicious system, under which the masters themselves are often in a sorry position.

Apart from its main theme, the book is interesting for its ingenuous details of life and travel in the upper Amazon basin. Without literary graces, and lacking the scientific value of the record of a trained observer, it presents in popular form a good deal of information, and should do much to spread knowledge of a region which, in the ordinary way, comes little into the light, but which has already attained economic importance and has potentialities of vast development.

POLAR REGIONS.

ANTARCTIC DOMESTIC ECONOMY.

'Antarctic Adventure. Scott's Northern Party.' By Raymond E. Priestley. London: T. Fisher Unwin. 1914. *Map and 150 Illustrations.* 15s. net.

Mr. Priestley's detailed account of the life of the members of Scott's Northern Party, under the command of Lieut. Campbell, presents many features of great