

## PREFACE

THE reader need not fear that he is here invited to traverse the weary marches of a traveller's diary. In the following pages, incidents have been subordinated to the things suggested by them.

The journey herein recounted was made in the latter half of the year 1903. As I have many other duties in life than those of travel and writing, the preparation of this book has been of fitful and slow process.

Although originally undertaking the expedition alone, it was by happy chance that I met in Tiflis Captain Fernand Anginieur of the French Army, who became a companion for the journey and a friend for life. He shared with me the responsibilities of every kind that were to be met after a telegraphed authorisation from his War Minister permitted him definitely to cast his lot with mine.

I wish more of my compatriots could meet and know such Frenchmen as are typified in Anginieur. "Brilliant but superficial and frivolous" is a hasty judgment which one often hears from English-speaking critics of the French. "Brilliant, loyal, and earnest"—such is the type whom one finds in making the acquaintance of my friend Anginieur.

As to the route followed by us: starting at the Caspian Sea, we went by rail eastward through Russian Turkestan to Andijan; thence by caravan, over the Trans-Alai Mountains to Kashgar in Chinese