

PREFACE

THIS book is the record of a journey in Central Asia, and its aim is to illustrate the geographic relation between physical environment and man, and between changes of climate and history. Most of the individual hypotheses advanced are already familiar, although the facts presented in support of them are new. If the book possesses any claim to recognition, it lies in the combination of various hypotheses, hitherto unrelated, into a single consistent geographic theory of history. The theory harmonizes a vast array of facts derived, not from one branch of science, but from the varied fields of geography, meteorology, archæology, folk-lore, and history. It will doubtless require modification, but if it shall advance the scientific as opposed to the empirical study of geography and history, the purpose of this volume will have been accomplished.

In the following pages, the name of Professor Davis, to whom the book is dedicated, appears frequently. He has raised geography from an empirical to a rational science. To him half the geographers of America, myself among the number, owe their instruction in the new science which, when it comes to its own, bids fair to be the most fascinating of all. I owe him far more than this, however, for it was through him that I had the opportunity to spend three years in Central Asia in addition to the four which I had previously spent in Asia Minor. Since my return to America, the liberal terms of a Hooper Fellowship in the Graduate School of