Mountain Exploration in Bokhara.

In March last our member Mr. Rickmer Rickmers read two papers—one before the Research Committee and one at a general meeting of the Royal Geographical Society—on his recent travels in Central Asia in the range enclosed between the sources of the Oxus and Jaxartes. Both papers were amply illustrated with excellent photographs. In these journeys Mr. Rickmers was accompanied by two ladies and a Tyrolese guide. The party explored the great Zarafshan Glacier, reaching the gap at its extreme head, and subsequently climbed a peak of 20,000 ft. The snow was in good condition and the climb with crampons easy. Nobody suffered from the rarity of the air. Mr. Rickmers corrected in some respects Monsieur Mushketoff's description of the Zarafshan Glacier * and gave many curious particulars as to the action of torrents and rain on the dry soil of this treeless region. Mr. Rickmers's paper will be published in the June number of the 'Geographical Journal.'

In introducing the lecturer at the general meeting Mr. Douglas Freshfield, who as a Vice-President of the Society was in the chair, made the following remarks:—

'I am glad to have this opportunity formally to acknowledge on my own part and on that of the Society and the Alpine Club the unfailing courtesy and substantial privileges extended by the Imperial Russian Government to all accredited scientific travellers, of whatever nationality. I have myself profited by these privileges three times in the Caucasus. Not only has every help been given to my party by local officials; government surveys—even when in progress, and sometimes when still in manuscript—have been put at my disposal. It was through such help that I was able eleven years ago to produce the first accurate map of the physical features of the Central Caucasus published in this country. At an earlier date, when one of your Honorary Secretaries, I had frequent occasion to observe the ready aid granted to our travellers who were seeking the further parts of Asia by the Russian authorities. To take only one instance, it was from Russian territory that Mr. and Mrs. Littledale started on the adventurous journey that brought them almost to the gates of Lhasa.

'We geographers and men of science are indebted to the

* See *Supplementary Papers of the R.G.S.* vol. i. pp. 246–263.

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Russian Government for having recognised that it is not to the advantage of a great and civilised State to put obstacles in the way of the pursuit and progress of geographical knowledge; that, on the contrary, such a policy would be unworthy of a wise and philosophical and liberal-minded statesman.'

A Day and Night on the Nesthorn.

By WM. T. KIRKPATRICK.

WE—that is, R. P. Hope and myself—usually begin our mountain season by making straight for some fairly comfortable hut, with provisions for about a week, so as to do two or three days' training in good air and fine surroundings, and if possible get in one or two longer expeditions during the latter part of the time.

In 1905 we selected the Ober Aletsch hut, and reached the Bel Alp at 11 P.M. on a beautiful moonlight night. The walk thither was very different from one I remember in the early morning, and we came to the conclusion that moonlight is very preferable to sun on that toilsome path. We spent a lazy forenoon chatting on the terrace, and mentioned the fact that we had intentions on the Nesthorn. To our surprise this seemed to create quite a stir, and we learnt that though this mountain vies with the Aletschhorn as the best snow-climb in the district, besides affording one of the finest views in the Alps, only about two ascents are made from the Bel Alp each season.

Clementz Ruppen heard of our intentions. 'They won't get up,' he said to a common friend. 'We should not have got up the bergschrund two days ago but that we had a six-foot man in the party; only don't tell them.' Our friend of course promptly told us, and although we both fell short of the required stature by several inches we only smiled and said nothing, as we had no notion of trying to construct a living bridge over that particular bergschrund.

The previous year Hope had been at the Ober Aletsch hut, and strolling about on the glacier had been struck by the fine buttress which forms the N.W. arête of the Nesthorn. In prospecting it he crossed the bergschrund and climbed up some few hundred feet, till thirst, prudence, and slabs together counselled a retreat to *glacies firma*. On returning to the Bel Alp he did not give a very accurate account of what he had been doing, but reserved it for me; and our principal object in visiting the Ober Aletsch hut in 1905 was to try

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