

REVIEW.

SCHLAGINTWEIT'S HIMALAYAN TRAVELS.*

AFTER reading this book, I laid it down with a kind of regret that I was not to be born some thirty years hence, when it is to be hoped railways will have made the Himalayas almost as accessible to us as the Alps have been before. In spite of the many feet that tread them, our love for the Alps will never leave us; but adventure and exploration and discovery have set up their prizes elsewhere, and stories of conquered peaks and fresh passes, of glaciers explored and problems of geography solved, must come for the future from the long ridges of the Andes and Rocky mountains, and the enormous chains of Central Asia. The volume before us is the second of a series of three containing an account of the travels of the brothers Von Schlagintweit during their scientific mission in India and Central Asia in the years 1854-1858. Vol. I. relates to the plains; Vol. II., with which we are now concerned, to the Himalaya proper; and Vol. III., yet to appear, will give an account of the almost entirely unexplored regions of Thibet, and the gigantic chains of the Karakoram and Kuenluen mountains.

It is a fact not generally known that the Himalaya proper is not the watershed of Central Asia, and is not even on the whole the highest mountain chain there, though it certainly contains the highest as yet measured summit in the world, the Gaurisankar, or Mount Everest. The Karakoram range, under which the Schlagintweits include the whole chain, called by various names, which stretches north of the Himalayas, and parallel to them between the 95th and 73rd degrees of east longitude, where it merges into the Hindoo Koosh, is not only the watershed, but, with the exception of Gaurisankar, contains the highest mountains in the world. At about the 73rd degree of east longitude the Himalaya Karakoram and Kuenluen chains meet in a gigantic knot or forest of mountains some six hundred miles long, and four hundred miles deep, in which are most of the highest summits and the highest passes in the world, and the greatest part of which is utterly unexplored. At about east long. 80°, the knot unties into three enormous strands, the most northerly, the Kuenluen, runs directly east and west; the other two, the Karakoram and the Himalaya, running parallel, bend to the south-east, and do not attain an east-and-west direction again till they have reached an average distance of six or seven hundred miles south of the Kuenluen. At about east long. 82°, a watershed runs across the deep trench dividing these two parallel ranges, east of which flows the Sanpu or Dihong, by far the mightiest feeder of the Brahmaputra, till at 95° it turns abruptly to the south, and cuts clean through the Himalayas in a gorge which, even till now, I believe no European has ever seen. In fact, the whole course of this river, for seventeen degrees of longitude, with the mighty peaks and passes on each side from which it receives its

* *Reisen in Indien und Hoch-Asien.* Von Hermann von Schlagintweit. Säkünlünski. Vol. II.

waters, are almost entirely unexplored. West of the watershed I have mentioned starts the Indus, like the Sanpu, still running in the trench between the Himalaya and Karakoram only in the opposite or westerly direction till about 75° east long., turns to the south-west, and cleaves the Himalaya through a gorge, where the mountain-sides rise 18,000 or 20,000 feet above the water. Such is a very general idea of the country which the three brothers Von Schlagintweit—Hermann, Adolph, and Robert—were sent out to explore. The natural difficulties, want of roads, want of provisions, and difficulty of transport, were increased by the abominable political condition of the country. Wars, suspicions, despotism, hierarchical intolerance and ‘protection,’ ignorance, and fanaticism do their best to keep Europeans from anything like free movement. Probably no frontier in the world, in spite of its enormous extent, is guarded more strictly than the Chinese, or the line of country which is governed by the Buddhist Hierarchy of Lasa in Eastern Thibet.

Hermann von Schlagintweit describes in this volume the Himalayas from east to west, as they were traversed either by himself or his brothers, Adolph and Robert. The most easterly state, Bhutan, was visited by him in January 1856. This country is inhabited by a race of Thibetan origin (*Thibet* and *Bhutan* having apparently the same derivation) under the dominion in some parts, and in all parts under the influence, of the Buddhist priest-prince at Lasa. Within the last hundred years Bhutan had only been visited on political missions, but Hermann von Schlagintweit obtained a sort of modified pass, and a Thibetan guide and interpreter, who interested himself in his plans, and a route was devised between them, following the trade road between Assam and Thibet, through Tavong, the chief town of the eastern part of Bhutan, through Narigun, and across the Himalaya to Lasa on the Sanpu in Eastern Thibet. On January 5 they left Udelguri, and crossed the Terai, or belt of swampy jungle, that extends in varying breadth along the south of the whole Himalayan chain, dividing it from the plains proper. It was a favourable time of the year to traverse it, for during the wet season, or immediately afterwards, the miasma, bred of heat out of decaying vegetable matter, is most fatal to Europeans. He found it dry, and at first sight less overgrown than he had expected, but a view from a small eminence disclosed a dense growth of jungle to a height of forty feet, with plenty of tall trees rising to heights of as much as 110 and 120 feet, among which they came across a laurel 85 feet high. Huge fallen trees, apparently sound, abounded, but, on being probed, a ramrod could be pushed into the wood the whole of its length without effort. In the wet season, the stream-beds are full, and the whole ground like a sponge. On passing the Terai proper, the ground gradually rises, and outlying abutments of the main chain come into sight, running north and south, in which direction almost the only lines of communication are found.

In the middle part of the Richu valley, before the high peaks came into sight, the views were exceedingly like the Alps, wide open valley-bottoms connected by bits of steeper ground, with closer narrowing of the bounding ranges, dense vegetation, rich green meadow-land, which

was found most strictly preserved—for cattle are kept here more generally than in any other part of the Himalayas—and groups of houses high up the hill-sides; and the Buddhist monuments and temples which appeared in many villages must have reminded the traveller of the shrines and heaps of skulls so often seen in Alpine valleys. The way became narrow beyond the first village, Amartal. In one day's march the main stream had to be crossed eight times, often by swimming, when all the loads would have to be taken off the horses. Narigun was reached in about five days' march. This is the seat of a Buddhist monastery, and though Von Schlagintweit was allowed to remain here a few days, he was absolutely forbidden to penetrate further, and returned disappointed to the plains in little more than three weeks after setting out. Sikkim he visited nine months earlier, from April to August, 1855. The Terai here and facing Nepal is the most dangerous in the Himalaya, principally on account of the enormous amount of rain, which in places reaches six or seven hundred inches in the year. The road to Darjiling rises gradually above the Terai to Pankabari, and all the hill-slopes are covered with the richest and most varied vegetation. Tropical plants are mingled with those of a colder climate, produced by the constant stream of germs from the higher region which have been brought down for thousands of years, and developed constantly fresh varieties. The road goes for some distance on the top of a ridge, and the views of the great chain are most glorious, especially from the shoulder of the Sinchal peak (about 8,000), or, better still, from its summit, where the great shining glaciers of the gigantic Kinchinjinga group, with Mount Everest far away to the left, contrast with the dark foliage of the middle distance, and the profound depths of the valleys below densely wooded to the water's edge. In Darjiling (6,900 feet) Herr Schlagintweit remained waiting for the answer to an application for leave from Tumlong to travel in the interior of Sikkim. After much patience, the reply arrived, containing, as in the case of Bhutan, an unqualified refusal. But on the advice of Dr. Campbell, whose well-known journey with Dr. Hooker ended in the imprisonment of both, he determined to follow till stopped the top of the ridge called the Singhalila chain, running north and south, which forms the boundary between Sikkim and Nepal, and to this determination we owe the drawings of Gaurisankar and Kinchinjinga which decorate our club-room. The weeks spent in waiting for a pass were employed in visiting the deep valleys, the Great Rangit, and others, and making many observations, much impeded by dangers from miasma, and some risk from tigers, which are found in the Eastern Himalaya up to 10,000 feet; proceeding westwards they diminish, and in Cashmir they have disappeared for centuries. Leeches too were a great annoyance, and the first question on waking in the morning used to be 'How many leeches have you got?' These valleys were found to be of enormous depth, a characteristic of Himalayan valleys over the whole chain, caused by the erosion produced by the tremendous rainfall.

On May 7, he started with a party of Lepchas (excellent fellows) as porters along the top of the Singhalila chain. The earlier days were constantly wet, and the winds and legs of all were severely tried by the long uphill marches in hot steaming air, surrounded by dense forest,

where the feet either sank deep into mud or slipped back as far as they advanced. The top of the Tonglo peak was reached on the evening of May 9, and huts or boughs were erected, where the party spent some days, enjoying daily the most glorious views over the whole chain, from the plains to the glistening distant summits, and down deep into the valleys, over rhododendron woods crimson with blossom. Leaving Tonglo on the 20th, they followed the range with the greatest difficulty, caused by the dense forest, which even on the top of the ridge could often only be penetrated by the axe, till, on the 22nd, they reached the top of Falut (12,042 feet), where the party spent several days of splendid weather, in full view of the great peaks, particularly Gaurisankar, for which Herr Schlagintweit found a height of 29,200 feet, 190 feet higher than the usual figure. A little beyond Falut they were turned back by a body of Nepalese troops; and in fifteen days were again in Darjiling, without once treading the upper snows. In February 1857, after his application had been considered for two years, Hermann obtained permission to visit Kathmandu, which has been the capital of Nepal since the Ghorka occupation—a small dirty town, remarkable for the fact that in about 1795 A.D. the Chinese reached it from the other side, and penetrated as low down as 1,641 feet; and in our own war with Nepal, in 1815, Sir David Ochterlony carried English troops into it from the plains: so that the crossing of the Himalaya is an accomplished military feat. Herr Von Schlagintweit remained some time in Nepal, during which he made many drawings of mountain panoramas, specially from the Karlia peak (6,977 feet). He had also to give and receive visits of ceremony from the Raja and the more than liberal prime minister, Jāng Bahadar, who had deposed one Raja and set up another, with unscrupulous removal of all obstacles, but who showed himself wonderfully interested in science and in everything European.

The Himalayan chain in Bhutan, Sikkim, and Nepal, has a character of its own quite distinct from the north-westerly portion which follows, in which the ranges deepen and groups of snow-peaks forming knots, from which other ranges radiate in all directions north and south of the watershed, are the characteristic of the country. On the contrary, the snow-range in Bhutan, Sikkim, and Nepal, is on the whole a simple one, reminding us generally of the Caucasus rather than of the Alps. Beginning from the east, the first important group of peaks, almost all of which have mythological names, is the Dal-la, a twin summit, of which the higher is 22,500 feet over the sea. It lies north of Tavong in Bhutan. The Themerri (20,500) and the Oam-la follow in a westerly direction; and then for a space of 150 miles no very conspicuous summit appears till Chamalari, about 24,000 feet, standing in front of the watershed, and something in form like the Finsteraarhorn from the Unteraar glacier; then follows the Donkia group (23,136); the Kinchinjav summits (22,750); and, following to the westward, the mighty mass of Kinchinjinga (28,156), forming from Falut the central point of the panorama; and only thirty-five miles distant, Kabru (24,015) follows on the left, but six miles nearer the observer; and the whole group is not unlike the Jungfrau from the north. Pāndim, still nearer than Kinchinjinga, and 22,000 feet high, showed on its western face an average incline

of 65°. Still further west comes the Sihsur peak (27,800), which is far overtopped by Gaurisankar (29,200) by Von Schlagintweit's measures. Gaurisankar is ninety-four miles from Falút, and looks not unlike the Mönch from Bern. It stands quite alone, towering far above its surroundings on either side. The group furthest to the west to be seen from Falút is the Sankósi, which reaches in its highest point 23,570. Seen from the Kavlia in Nepal, the next summit to westward is the Jibjibia massif, which reaches 26,306; then the Yássa peaks, the highest of which is 26,680; then Dhavalagiri (26,826); and six more Naráyani peaks, all nearly as high. The most westerly peak in sight in the Nepal panorama was only 19,413 feet high.

The views were specially characterised by the enormous extent of horizon occupied by the snowy range, and by impressions of depth and height far surpassing anything in the Alps. The south slope of the Himalaya is unusually steep, and the valleys very deeply eroded, so that from a summit like the Falút the eye seems to plunge at once from the glistening summit of Gaurisanka or Kinchinjinga into valleys whose depth is unexpected, and surprises one, as almost out of proportion. The plains of India are at times quite invisible, owing to the dust-clouds which rise from them and remain suspended in the air, and when they are seen, the apparent horizon line changes as much as six or seven degrees during the day. In every case in the Eastern Himalaya, Hermann von Schlagintweit failed through political obstacles to reach the regions of ice and snow. His brothers Adolph and Robert were more fortunate in the west, in which direction Kamaon joins Nepal, and is followed still more to the west by the State of Gharvál. Adolph and Robert were in Nainatál from the middle of April to the middle of May, during which time they took panoramas from the Chiner (8,737) and the Laria Kanta (8,342), both of which gave splendid views over the Nanda Khát and Nanda Devi (25,600).

In the middle of May they set out by different routes for Milum, from which place they intended to cross the watershed and penetrate into Thibet. Robert followed the usual trade-road by Almora, which was a constant succession of crossing transverse ridges, swimming rapid rivers, and traversing steep slippery slopes of *débris*, and occasionally patches of hard old snow, which caused the horses the greatest difficulty and danger. Adolph turned away from the main road up a side valley, the Pindari, in order to cross Traill's passes to Milum, which would be like going to Zinal by entering the Zermatt valley, and then crossing the Trift, Italy being Thibet. This is the first glacier expedition mentioned in the book. The old difficulty about guides was increased by the fact that Nanda Devi, the great mountain close to the pass, was a goddess, and would resent any violation of her pure snow home; but the promise of liberal offerings obviated this difficulty; and on the night of May 29, Adolph found himself bivouacking on a beautiful green meadow at the foot of the Pindari glacier (11,492). The next day the party reached another lair (14,180), on a ridge separating the main glacier whose lower ice-fall was too steep to traverse, from a side affluent which they had followed, and the névé of which was connected above with the névé of the main stream. Towards evening, the view

from their lofty perch was most glorious, the mists which always cloud the lower ranges of the western Himalaya after mid-day had all disappeared, and the bright peaks of the Nanda Khât range on one side, and the brilliant colouring of the long Pindari valley on the other, held them long entranced. At two o'clock next day they started. Crevasses prevented their crossing the actual head of the glacier, but a succession of couloirs up the rocky ridge to their left landed them, after several hundred steps had been cut in hard snow, at 8 o'clock, on the summit (17,770). The Nanda Khât peak was still 5,000 feet above them, but more than twelve miles off. Another great bay of névé, which took two hours to cross, lay between them and the real descent to Milum. The sun was burning hot, and the snow deep and soft. From this second pass the great Nanda Devi peak came into sight, and the offerings to her were solemnly made by the natives. The way down by the Loan glacier is easy, and after two days Adolph arrived at Milum (11,265), still on the Indian side of the watershed, where he met his brother Robert. Here they stayed some time, making various excursions in this magnificent neighbourhood.

The first excursion was the ascent of an isolated peak east of the Nanda Devi range, to which they gave the name Paju-horn (17,601). They slept out above the village, reached the top over steepish rocks and long snow slopes at 10.30. The Milum glacier, about eleven miles long, was their next expedition. They climbed a Râta Dak, or Roth-horn (16,744), which, like the Roc Noir in the Zinal glacier, rose out of the middle of the ice, and erected a tent near the top. The next day they reached the head of the glacier, about 19,000 feet, having to pass a broken ice-fall 1,000 feet high, which cost them much time and hard work at this great height, and did not reach their tent on the Roth-horn till nearly 9 o'clock, long after dark. Here they spent another day, and then returned to Milum. The views in the whole of Kamaon were very fine, the gorges and valley scenery quite equal to the finest parts of Savoy or the Oberland, and the contrast between height and depth far greater. From Milum the two brothers penetrated into Thibet by passes averaging 18,000 feet, which will be described in the third volume. On their return, they recrossed the Himalaya chain, close to the Ibi Gâmin peaks, and made a new pass, the Ibi Gâmin, the highest as yet crossed in the world (20,459 feet). On August 16 they started up the Ibi Gâmin glacier from the north. It reminded them most of the Aar glacier, but was much larger, and on the night of August 18 they pitched their tent on the moraine at a height of 19,326 feet. The night was excessively cold and stormy, but as the next day was fairly fine, they started to try how far up they could reach on the higher of the two Ibi Gâmin peaks. They started early, and climbed till nearly 2 o'clock, but immense crevasses wasted much time, and owing to the enormous height, the work was very severe. They were stopped at last by a tremendous north wind, which suddenly dashed upon them, and by a gush of blood which burst from one of their people, and took away all his strength. They had however reached the astounding height of 22,259 feet, by far the highest point attained as yet by man. The Ibi Gâmin still towered more than 3,000 feet above them, but then

it is about the tenth in height of the Himalayan peaks proper. Their view was spoilt by dense clouds, which concealed all but the immediate neighbourhood. The descent was rendered more difficult by the gradually increasing wind, but by sunset the clouds had all disappeared, the great peaks were perfectly clear, and every step of their track, owing to the transparency of the air at these enormous heights, as sharply marked as if it were close at hand. On August 21 they climbed a tributary glacier on the left, and slept again upon a moraine, at a height of 19,094 feet. The top of the pass, after several unsuccessful attempts, they reached at 2 o'clock, and found it 20,459 feet. Two days later they were in Badrinath, a celebrated place of Hindu pilgrimage. Adolph then, on September 5, turned back again to Thibet. Robert travelled from east to west, crossed several passes into the Jumna valley, which he followed down till he reached Mussuri, where Adolph had arrived a day or two before him.

In the spring of 1856 the three brothers were together at Simla, making plans for journeys in the western Himalaya and the protected Hill States. They arranged their routes so as to visit Kanawar, Balti, Spiti, Lahoul, and Cashmir, and, if possible, to penetrate across Thibet still further to the north. Want of space forbids a detailed account of their travels here, which, at least in the Himalayas, passed over ground which has been the subject of several papers in the 'Alpine Journal,' and is better known than any other part of the chain. The contrasts of depth and height are here not so marked as they are further east, and the ranges of the middle region assume a more prominent character. The wood is not so dense, but the slopes are very steep, and in places clothed to the summits with deodaras. The effects of erosion are, as in the east, tremendous; the consequence is that the walls of the principal rivers are often absolute precipices for an immense height above the water, and the road up the valley may be traversed for miles without catching sight of the roaring stream below. The brothers met once more in Cashmir, at Srinagar, reaching it from Ladak by different passes, one of which is the Suru, passing the Nun-Cun peaks. The celebrated valley of Cashmir is the bed of an old long-departed fresh-water lake. The greatest length of the flat is over seventy miles, and the breadth in places forty. The surface consists of more than 2,000 English square miles. (The surface of Lake Constance is only 200.)

They narrowly escaped unpleasantness at Srinagar, as their collector, knowing the value to them of a real native skeleton, cut down in his zeal for science a man who was hanging on a gibbet for a warning to evildoers; and when suspicion fell upon him, and the police came to search, he put the body to sleep in his own bed, and escaped discovery. The Raja was old, and his discourses turned principally on the moral justification of extortion, which he had greatly practised, and now in the evening of his days he seemed to delight in inventing ingenious pleas for its defence. This was, I think, the last time the three brothers were ever together. Shortly afterwards, Adolph set out again alone to cross the Karakoram and Kuenlun, and penetrated as far as Kashgar, where he was foully murdered, in the full prime of health and strength.

There is much in the book which in such a notice as this must be left untouched upon—discussions on Buddhism, on the complex nationalities and language affinities, on the race, characteristics, history, and political relations of all the countries visited. Then the geology and climate and meteorological phenomena of every kind are never left unnoticed. On one important point of interest, the rapid rise of the peaks surrounding the Indus gorge, where the summit of Nanga Parbat towers nearly 23,000 feet above the river bed, at a distance from it of scarcely thirty miles, I find no satisfactory information. Such an enormous difference of height in so short a distance can scarcely be paralleled elsewhere; but we shall perhaps have a description in the third volume, which is yet to come. Meantime, I can only hope that many of us will be induced to read the book for ourselves, and that real interest will be awakened, which may lead to definite glacier exploration of the whole country, and, it may be, to the ascent of many of the peaks. The knowledge that there are in the same world with us glaciers fifty or sixty miles long, as indeed there are in the Karakoram, surrounded with peaks of 25,000 to 28,000 feet and more, is enough to make us long for the unconditioned, and chafe against the barriers of time, space, and—must I add so sordid a check?—pocket, which keep us from their glories. We must hope better things for our children, or even for ourselves, if in another state of being we are ever permitted to fulfil some of the longings we have formed in this. J. STODON.

ALPINE NOTES.

THE PICO DI NAIQUATÁ, VENEZUELA.—Mr. J. Spence, a British resident in Venezuela, in company with several *savants*, accomplished in April last the first ascent of a mountain in the neighbourhood of Caracas, known as the Pico di Naiguatá. The expedition appears to be looked on in the country as a considerable feat. Not having as yet succeeded in obtaining a translation of the Spanish account, kindly forwarded by Mr. Spence, we must for the present content ourselves with a quotation from a letter, in which a member of H. B. M.'s Legation at Caracas expresses his opinion of the difficulties and importance of the ascent in the following remarkable terms:—

‘In again welcoming you back from the dizzy peak, and from the thickets amidst which the tiger prowls, and the rattlesnake, the scorpion, and many another hideous reptile lurks, I cannot but express to you my belief that it must have been most satisfactory to you, as it most certainly would have been to me, to behold the Venezuelan friends who accompanied you, devoting that intelligence, energy, power of endurance and other great qualities, which so eminently characterise their race, to the achievement of a really noble object and to the attainment of a useful end, amidst the invigorating, healthy allurements of nature’s handiwork—nowhere more successfully carried out than here—and forgetting, if but for a moment, the enervating, exhausting, poisonous allurements of civil warfare.’