

October 22, 1883, or the 'Globe' of the 7th of November following. This absurd effusion has been effectively dealt with in the 'Saturday Review' for January 12 last, and I should not think for one moment even of noticing it, were it not that the writer has attempted to shelter the incompetent vagaries of himself and his friend by most unfairly laying the blame upon his porter, Ed. Martin, better known in the district as 'Garibaldi.' This porter has been with me on various expeditions, and ascended the Aiguille Verte with Mr. Donkin and myself in 1882, and I think it is only due to him, under these circumstances, that I should take this opportunity of testifying to his courage, great strength, and general excellence, all of which qualities, I am certain, he must have been called upon to display in no moderate measure during this most eccentric of all expeditions.

Of those ascents which are not frequently made, I may mention Mont Maudit and Mont Blanc du Tacul as 'falling 'to my own gun.'

Nor can we forget that great 'social,' if not altogether quite 'mountaineering' event, the C. A. F. fête, which will be long remembered by all those who saw the unwonted spectacle of an ex-president of this Club, and one of our most popular office-bearers, parading about the streets of Chamonix behind a big drum.

But I must close this brief record of a most successful season—a season which many of us will always look back upon with pleasure, a season of some triumphs, of much keen enjoyment of all that makes mountaineering so fascinating a pursuit, of much good-fellowship and *bonne camaraderie*, which together invest each of those great peaks and their surroundings with many a pleasant recollection and association, making us look forward to seeing them once more, as we look forward to meeting again the friends we have made amongst them.

HINTS FOR CAUCASIAN EXPLORATION. BY DOUGLAS W. FRESHFIELD.

THE northern base of the Caucasus can now be reached by railway *via* Warsaw and Moscow, or Vienna, Kieff, Koursk, and Rostof, in a week from London; 48 hrs. from Vienna to Kieff, and three days from Kieff to Pätigorsk. The highroad through the Dariel pass will be traversed this summer for the first time by Messrs. Cook's tourists, who also propose to visit Mount Ararat. Is it not time for the Alpine Club to bestir itself? The high mountain districts can be explored without risk from the inhabitants, or from fever. Convenient bases

where an interpreter and portable provisions can be obtained exist at a day's journey from the mountains; the total cost of a journey of nine weeks from London and back was found in 1874, by a party of four, to be 110*l.* a head, inclusive of a share in a Swiss guide. Surely the appreciation of these facts ought to lead some of our young members who can afford thus much time and money to visit a country which has so many attractions, and from a mountaineering point of view is still almost a virgin field. The hardships they will have to put up with will not be greater (for Caucasian mutton is good and Caucasian tea cakes delicious) than those encountered by the first explorers of Dauphiné; their reward will be infinitely greater. Who will be the Caucasian Ball and the Svanetic Tucket?

Travellers bound for the Caucasus will do well to provide themselves—in addition to their duly visé'd passports—with letters of introduction to the chief authorities both of Cis- and Transcaucasia and to the chiefs of Uruspieh. The latter Mr. A. W. Moore would furnish.

The best season for mountaineering is, as in the Alps, July, August, and September. The proportion of cloudy weather on the southern slopes, west of the Suram chain, is probably greater than in Switzerland; north and farther east, I should fancy, less. Fever does not extend into the mountain valleys, and north of the chain is hardly an appreciable danger. In descending to the Black Sea coast, where it prevails, every precaution must be used against chills. Quinine should then be taken as a preventive in moderate doses. But the traveller is under no necessity to go down to the sea; and, if he wishes to return by the Crimea or Constantinople, the railway now open to Batoum enables him to avoid the old fever traps, the lower Rion and Poti.*

In addition to the usual mountaineering requisites, one of Whymper's tents (6 by 8 feet, one man's load) for every three men should be taken,† and a good supply of boot nails, an article unknown (and most exciting) to the natives of the Caucasus. Field glasses, pocket knives, and a small pistol or two will be found useful as presents in cases where money cannot be offered in return for hospitality.

Preserved meats, vegetables, and soups should be taken in moderate quantity. Many, if not the best kind, can be procured at Pätigorak. A small cooking apparatus, with tin plates and knives and forks, is essential. The Russian 5-verst map should be procured from St. Petersburg or Odessa before starting, as it is difficult to get in the country, except at Tiflis.

Revolvers are, perhaps, still serviceable, though rather as a protection against the loose characters about the highroads than in the mountains. Mr. Phillipps Wolley's 'Savage Svânetia' shows that the most unruly corner of the Caucasus is no longer dangerous. In 1882 he and his companion separated in the heart of that district and rode each his

* As to medicines, the pocket 'Hints to Travellers' published for the Royal Geographical Society (Stanfords, 5*s.*) may be found useful. It also contains Mr. Donkin's last hints on photography.

† If not, certainly sleeping bags and umbrellas; the latter saved us much discomfort on many wet nights in 1874.—A. W. MOORE.

several way without fear or molestation. He also retraversed from Koutais to Gebi the track of Mr. F. C. Grove; and thence to Pari, at the other end of Svanetia, that described in my 'Central Caucasus.'

The first aim of mountaineers will naturally be to explore the loftiest part of the chain. For this Pätigorsk affords undoubtedly the best starting point. Here, or at the next station, as Bradshaw remarks, we 'change for Elbruz'! The town has some good shops, and is in summer the resort of many of the higher officials, from whom useful aid may be looked for. Here too that all-important need, an interpreter, must be supplied. Besides some Western tongue in which he communicates with his employers, he must speak Russian, Georgian, and the sort of Turkish used by the Tatar tribes north of the chain. He must also be able to cook. Enquiry should be made by letter beforehand, but no engagement concluded until after arrival and personal inspection of the candidates.

The party may from Kislovodsk travel round the spurs of Elbruz—possibly ascending or even crossing the mountain on the way—to Uruspieh. Hence they will climb one or two minor peaks, commanding panoramas of the main chain. After they have established friendly relations with the villagers and their chiefs—an easy matter—they will obtain from them horses and guides to cross to Betscho, in Svanetia. This horse track, well known to the natives, was traversed by troops in 1876. It passes close to Uschba, which should be carefully examined and photographed from different points of view—and then left alone.

Betscho may serve as a centre for numerous expeditions. An ascent of Tau Leila, the glacier ridge south of Svanetia, would be topographically interesting. Tau Tetnuld would give a fine snow climb and reveal some of the secrets of the Kotschantau group. To lay down the main outline and relations of its ridges will be one of the tasks the travellers must set before themselves. To carry it out they must recross the main chain by the Thuber Pass, also known and used by natives, to Bezeenge. Hence they may endeavour to discover a glacier pass to Balkar (which is easy on the west side), and to find a route up Kotschantau (17,096 feet).

There is probably enough here for one party and one year. They may return to Pätigorsk, or take Mr. Grove's route from Balkar to Koutais. If, however, they are disposed to go on to the Adaihoch group, the N.E. flanks of which are entirely unexplored, they may easily do so, and leave the mountains on either side, travelling by the Mamisson road either to Vladikafkaz or Koutais.

Vladikafkaz will be the best starting point for the Kazbek massif and the two isolated glacier groups east of the Dariel and on the skirts of Daghestan, of which the principal peaks are Schebulos (14,781 feet) and Diklos. The former from the top of Kazbek is a noble object.

Those who desire a very wild and adventurous journey may turn their thoughts in the opposite direction, and endeavour to penetrate the solitudes of what was once the true Circassia, and to trace out the snows of the Caucasus westward, from Elbruz to their lowest point.

Utchkulan, at the western base of Elbruz, may well serve as a starting point, for its hunters make long expeditions into these wilds. They are, however, quarrelsome, impracticable, and extortionate,—that at least was Mr. Moore's experience in 1874,—and I should prefer Uruspieh men. Possibly some of them may in the future become familiar with the use of the rope, and serve as companions for ascents of moderate difficulty. But at present travellers must depend on themselves, or on foreign guides, for any expedition beyond the glacier passes known in the country.

I have confined myself to one point of view in these remarks. Needless to say how much work for science remains to be done in the Caucasus. The flora and entomology are imperfectly known; many geological facts, or features relating to glacial action, remain for investigation. Ibex and chamois and bears are to be slain, and happy will be the sportsman who first feeds on what was a frequent delicacy of the old monks of St. Gall, an aurochs' steak. Happier, I think, will be the photographer who enables us to compare the peaks of the Caucasus with Mr. Donkin's superb series of Alpine summits. May it be Mr. Donkin himself!

TRAVELLING IN SWITZERLAND HALF A CENTURY
AGO. BY C. MARETT.

THE systems of touring in Switzerland, and of travelling generally on the Continent, have been so completely changed of late that many even of the middle-aged members of the Alpine Club cannot have much notion of what it used to be, and may feel interested in the reminiscences of one who, as a boy in 1830 and 1831, and then in 1852, 1854, and 1857, made tours over a large part of Switzerland.

To begin with, the only means of reaching Switzerland were (except that part of the journey might be done on the Rhine or on the Saône and Rhone) by diligence or by private travelling carriage. The huge, lumbering diligence many can remember; but others who grumble at the pace of a French railway, which takes six hours from Paris to Dijon, may be amused to learn that in June 1830 I started from Paris in the diligence at 7 A.M. on Monday and reached Dijon at 4 A.M. on Wednesday—45 hrs. The pace was never above six miles an hour, and the horses, five to seven in number, were little better than the ordinary cart horses of the country. The horse collars had curious superstructures, which used to be alike for two or three stages and then changed, probably when we got into another commune or district. One thing I remember impressing me: that generally in the outskirts of a town or village, as we got south, there were empty houses, more or less ruinous, showing that the population had decreased and had not recovered from the effects of the Napoleonic wars. This, however, was not the case in Normandy or on the road between Paris and Calais, where new houses were sometimes to be seen. The diligence was of course not available for a largish party, who were obliged to take a travelling carriage, as the postmaster did not, to the best of my recol-