

THE FIRST ASCENT OF ADAI KHOKH.

BY DOUGLAS W. FRESHFIELD.

IN the 'Rivista Mensile' of the Italian Club (April 1911 and 1912) Dr. Ronchetti, who contributed a paper to our pages (*ALPINE JOURNAL*, vol. xxiv. p. 218), has recorded an ascent of Kazbek and further explorations of the basin of the Zea Glacier. In the course of his narrative he mentions that he noticed what he deemed a possible route from the névé of the Zea up the loftiest peak of the Adai Khokh group, known hitherto in this country as Adai Khokh, but recently renamed in Russia Uilpata Tau. Dr. Ronchetti suggests that this route corresponds fairly in its details with the climb described by M. de Déchy in his 'Kaukasus' (1905), as taken by himself and his guides in 1884. It may be remembered that at the time, writing in these pages (*ALPINE JOURNAL*, vol. xii. p. 317 : 1885) and for some years afterwards, until, in fact, the Russian surveyors determined the altitudes of the various summits of the group, M. de Déchy identified the peak he had climbed with that conspicuous from the upper Rion and the Mamison Pass, which was then believed to be the loftiest in the neighbourhood and is now known as Khamkhaki Khokh.

When, however, at a later date it had been ascertained that this conspicuous peak was inferior to several of the more modest summits in the heart of the group, M. de Déchy claimed that he had gained that which the triangulation had proved to be the loftiest. One of the chief grounds of his claim, as I understand, was that he felt confident that there was no neighbouring peak loftier than his own.

Dr. Ronchetti has traced for me on one of his photographs the possible line of ascent he refers to in his text. It lies up the south-eastern face and then along the S. or S.E. ridge of Adai Khokh. He further informs me that in identifying it with that described by M. de Déchy he had gone on the narrative contained in Déchy's 'Kaukasus' and had not referred to the more detailed contemporary account in Déchy's article in the *ALPINE JOURNAL*. This contains the following sentences, which do not appear in the later work : 'Our ascent of Adai Khokh was effected by the N.E. ridge, which culminates in the summit we first attained. From this first peak we climbed in a southerly direction to the highest peak.' It seems to me, therefore, impossible to

connect Dr. Ronchetti's hypothetical route with M. de Déchy's climb. It may be added that M. de Déchy describes the ridge he climbed as very formidable and more difficult than that of the Weisshorn, while Mr. Holder's party found the S. ridge perfectly easy.*

In this state of the case I appealed to M. de Déchy for further information. In doing so I pointed out that in the photographs taken by Dr. Ronchetti there was some indication of the mountain having a more or less pronounced eastern ridge, or buttress, projecting into the Zea névé and not forming part of the watershed between that glacier and the Karagom; and that S. Sella's view from Shada showed that the summit-ridge had two points lying approximately E. and W. of each other.

In his reply M. de Déchy states that his line of ascent did not overlook the Karagom Glacier, and that he may not have been exact as to the relative bearings of the two points on the summit-ridge. He also calls my attention to the words 'durch eine Lücke der sich vor uns erhebenden wildzerissenen Gebirgskämme' which occur in his 'Kaukasus' in the description of the view towards the Mingrelian lowlands, which he had from the summit he climbed. These words, he assures me, are copied from his original notes. The unlucky omission of this, or any similar phrase, in the earlier account published long ago in these pages (vol. xii.) confirmed those who were acquainted with the local orography in accepting M. de Déchy's former identification of his peak with Khamkhaki Khokh. For from the true Adai Khokh no general view of the nearer southern valleys can be obtainable. That peak, like the Finsteraarhorn, is ringed by a circle of lofty summits and is wholly invisible from the upper Rion Valley. It seems to me, therefore, that

* Mr. Holder's account of his and Mr. Cockin's ascent of the highest peak of the Adai Khokh group from the Karagom Glacier will be found in the *Alpine Journal*, vol. xv. pp. 317 and 513. In the earlier record it is called Skatikom Khokh, a name properly applied to another summit. Caucasian nomenclature has been complicated rather than improved by successive travellers. There is a good map and a bibliography up to 1892 of the Adai Khokh group in the *Alpine Journal*, vol. xiii. p. 31. The 'Double-peak,' 14,812 ft., was accidentally passed over in the Appendix to my 'Central Caucasus.' Copies of this Appendix can be procured separately from the Secretary of the Club at Savile Row, price 2s. 6d.

M. de Déchy may be held to have shown that the incidents of his climb, as now elucidated, on the whole fit better with Adai Khokh than with any of the neighbouring and lower peaks.

It is to be hoped that some strong party will before long camp on the upper Zea Glacier, climb the two still maiden peaks between Adai Khokh and Khamkhaki Khokh and attempt to traverse Adai Khokh by a combination of M. de Déchy's and Mr. Holder's routes. There is much besides in this noble group that awaits the explorer. I may add that in Dr. Ronchetti's photographs the N. side of our 1889 pass, now called the 'Freshfield Pass,' looks very awkward, and any party who may wish to repeat it will be well advised not to take it—as early in the season we did—from the South.

Dr. Ronchetti's article is illustrated by a very instructive panorama of the Zea summits, and details of the eastern face of Adai Khokh may be studied in the telephotographic view on p. 39 of vol. i. of Déchy's 'Kaukasus.'

THE EAST OR MACUGNAGA FACE OF THE NORDEND.

By J. P. FARRAR.

It may be interesting to record here all the ascents of this face so far as I can trace them. The article in 'Bollettino del C.A.I.' vol. xxvii. 1894, 'Il Nordend,' should be studied, as it is accompanied by a sketch map of the routes, while the frontispiece to the volume is one of the finest pictures of this almost unrivalled face which I have seen.

1. July, 1876.

Signor Luigi Brioschi. Guides, Ferdinand Imseng, Abram Imseng.—They camped at x shown in 'Bollettino,' xxvii. p. 51, following the *right-hand* route. Left Macugnaga 2 A.M., arr. bivouac 7 P.M. Left bivouac 2 A.M., reached summit 7 P.M. They always kept to the right. No original account of this great expedition appears to have been published.

2. September 11, 1893.

Signor Carlo Restelli. Guides, Mattias Zurbriggen, Luigi Burgener.—This expedition is fully described in the 'Boll.' above referred to. They left the Marinelli hut 2.30 A.M., arr. summit 6 P.M. Forced to bivouac on the way down. Their line is the *left-hand* route in the sketch, and this line was invariably followed by Zurbriggen in his later ascents. It appears, however, much the more exposed to stones.