

and the cook we last saw jumping on one of the numberless troop trains rolling south.

Our route from Naltshik lay *via* Rostov, Sea of Azof, Kertch, Feodosia, Yalta, Sevastopol, Odessa, Varna, Constantinople, Piraeus, Patras, Corfu, Brindisi, Venice. Richards and Tucker left me at Milan. Here I called to see Dr. Ronchetti and was pleased to find that, though he lost half his foot on Adai, he is still able to climb. From Milan I proceeded by way of Zermatt and Geneva to Paris, leaving that city and arriving in London on September 2 (Sedan Day).

The naval squadrons passed through were of nine different nationalities—Russia, Bulgaria, Turkey, Germany (*Goeben* and *Breslau*), Great Britain and France (outside Dardanelles), Greece, France again, Austria (four torpedo boats off Pola), Italy, and, finally, a powerful British squadron sliding into the sunset off Folkestone.

I have been asked several times with regard to my opinion of the healthiness and the climate of the Caucasus Mountains. On both these points our experiences have been most favourable. None of our 1913 or 1914 parties suffered from any form of illness whatever. A medical and surgical outfit was of course taken, and I occasionally dosed natives who asked medical aid with something strong and tasty, yet comparatively innocuous, such as quinine. We, however, never touched it ourselves. Some difficulty was experienced in 1913 with the terrible leather and putty scones which pass for bread in the more remote parts. In 1914 we always managed to obtain good Russian bread (raised) or made pancakes and dropped scones ourselves.

The weather in 1913 was heavenly and far superior to all my Alpine or Norse experience, while in 1914, though we had violent storms of rain, these never lasted long. As a rule, a wet day means that the next and perhaps the next again will be perfect.

THE HIGHEST PEAK OF THE ADAI KHOKH GROUP, CENTRAL CAUCASUS.

By HAROLD RAEBURN.

THIS is the peak called on the Russian 1-Verst Survey Map Adai (or Uilpata) and triangulated as 2177·7 sazhen (15,244 feet). It must be clearly understood that I only submit to the name Adai for this peak under protest. It appears on the Russian Government Map, and we must therefore accept

it. The original name of the mountain is, however, Uilpata. It is under this title that Dr. Vittorio Ronchetti describes it in his account of his climb from the Tsaya Valley, 'July 11-13, 1913.'¹

Along with other explorers in the group—Messrs. Freshfield and Tucker, Dr. Oskar Schuster, Dr. Vittorio Ronchetti, (probably) de Déchy—I have always found the natives applied the name Adai to one or other of the peaks, to the massif, in fact, on the S. edge of the group along and above the Mamison Valley and Pass. The highest peak, which is inside the group, was always styled Albat Tau or Uilpata, which is probably a corruption of the first name. The unfortunate transference of this outlying name of a massif, only the third in point of height of the group's ridges, to the highest point, has greatly assisted in obscuring the accounts of the explorations and ascents in the group hitherto published.

Adai (Uilpata) has been ascended three times. The first ascent was that of Messrs. Holder and Cockin with Ulrich Almer in 1890 from the Karagom Névé on the W.; the second in 1891 (?) by M. Kovtoradsé, of the Russian Survey, also from that side. The third, on July 11-13, 1913, by Dr. Ronchetti's party, from the Tsaya Valley on the E., was the first from this side.

The record hitherto in Alpine mountain literature stands, that the first ascent of the mountain was made by the Hungarian explorer M. de Déchy with Alexander Burgener and P. J. Ruppen in 1884.

De Déchy has indeed published in the *ALPINE JOURNAL* for 1885 an interesting and vivid narrative, written by himself in English, of his ascent, and how brilliantly Burgener got the party through the very difficult icefall of the N. Tsaya glacier and up the long and severe climb of the *double* peak beyond.

De Déchy also wrote an account of this ascent in German for *Petermann's Mitteilungen* in 1889.² This paper was accompanied by a map, of which I shall have something to say later on.

The chapter in de Déchy's charmingly written and superbly illustrated work '*Kaukasus Reisen und Forschungen*' (D. Reimers, Berlin, 1905) on 'Adai Choch' does not materially differ from the 1889 account.

A considerable element of doubt has nevertheless always existed as to the correctness of de Déchy's identification of his

¹ *Rivista C.A.I.* vol. xxxiii. No. 7, 1914.

² 'Das Massiv des Adai Choch im zentralen Kaukasus.'

peak of 1884 with the triangulated mountain of the Russian Survey.

For this de Déchy was himself responsible, as he shifted his claimed ascent from a lower peak (Tshantshakhi), unmeasured, on the outside of the group, to the highest, triangulated, peak near the centre of the group.

I propose to show here that the peak de Déchy really ascended was neither Tshantshakhi (the Adai of Freshfield and Tucker) nor the Russian Adai, but an entirely distinct mountain lying between these masses and now called Mamison or the 'Curtain.' It is at least 1000 feet lower than Adai, and several hundred feet lower than Tshantshakhi, but is nevertheless a fine mountain. To make this clear it will be necessary to trace the climbing history of the group from the beginning.

When planning the Caucasian campaign for our 1913 party I was greatly interested by the 'mystery of Adai Khokh' and also by the fact that though the massif is one of the most accessible, owing to its proximity to the Mamison Road, yet very few of its peaks had ever been climbed.

It was therefore resolved that the first part of the time at the disposal of our party should be devoted to working in the group from a base camp at the upper limit of the Tsaya pine forest. This plan was repeated in 1914. We also visited and made ascents from the Upper Mamison, Rion, and Karagom Valleys.

I have now visited fourteen peaks or cols, none under 13,000 feet, and all new, and think I have traced almost the exact routes followed by every previous explorer in the group.

As all who have read Freshfield's classic on Caucasian exploration will remember, the pioneers in 1868 visited the Adai group. They made a raid N. over the Caucasian chain by the old native pass of the Gurdshivzek, which leads from Glola and Gebi to the Karagom Valley, returning up the grand ice cataracts of the Karagom icefall, across the wide snow-wastes of the Karagom Névé, and descending to their starting-point by the ridge above the Bokos glacier. They climbed no peaks.

In Mr. C. C. Tucker's account of the 1868 expedition in the *ALPINE JOURNAL* (iv. 243) for 1869, however, a splendid and formidable peak is therein described under the title of Adai Choch. (This was Tshantshakhi viewed from the S.) 'Adai Choch presented arêtes more formidable in aspect than those of the Matterhorn as seen from Breuil.'

Mr. Freshfield also describes this peak: 'The first and most

striking object of all the summits before us occupied the position assigned on the 5-verst map to Adai Choch. *Three long ribs of rock and ice ran up into a sharp point* and created one of the most striking mountain forms I ever saw, and the sides of the mountain were so sheeted with ice as to be, if not absolutely inaccessible, practically so for our party.' . . .

These descriptions are perfectly accurate and are enough in themselves to disprove de Déchy's first identification of this peak with his 'peak with two tops,' which he climbed from the Tsaya Valley on the N.E.

I now come to de Déchy's ascent. This I prefer to take from his work in German, as in the account in English in the *ALPINE JOURNAL* for 1885 there are certain mistranslations and omissions which have assisted in the befogging of English-speaking students of Caucasian mountain literature. We must remember that de Déchy was working with the old 5-verst map, whose omissions are very great and delineation very vague here. This hardly excuses the very fanciful additions and corrections in de Déchy's 1889 map, especially, as Mr. Freshfield points out, on the Karagom or W. side, which de Déchy never saw.

He only made a single expedition into the recesses of the group, during the last day of which he was not in a condition, on his own showing, to make any observations whatever. It is evident that with a less powerful and resolute man than Alexander Burgener as leading guide the party would probably have perished.

Such was the impression made upon Burgener by the experience that he refused to guide the party up any other Caucasian peak which involved any difficulty, and when confronted with Ushba peremptorily said 'The weather is bad ; we go home.'

De Déchy camped in the Tsaya Valley, not far below the glacier snout, on July 22, 1884.

At the foot of the valley the dominating visible peak is the eastmost of the Tsaya Aiguilles, Tsaya Khokh. From Rekom and the upper pine forest the real highest peak Adai or Albat or Uilpata takes without question the sovereignty of the visible summits. Few others are in fact visible, owing to the enormous S.W. spur of Adai behind which they lie hidden.

As one proceeds up the three hours' walk to the lowest icefall of Tsaya, Adai entirely vanishes ; the dominating mass which appears in its place is the great *double* summit (Adai is *not* a double summit) of Mamison or the 'Curtain.'

De Déchy took this for the highest peak. Looking from Tsaya upper village he describes the view (*Petermann's Mittheilungen*, 1889, p. 212): 'Albat Choch, den schöngeformten schneebedeckten Gipfel der aus der nördlichen Umrandung des Zeigletschers sich erhebt. Im Hintergrund jedoch . . . ragt die Pyramide des Adai Choch in die Lüfte . . . Felsgrat der in eisgepanzerten Wänden nach Nordwesten abstürzt und dann in eine scharfe Firnschneide übergehend sich südöstlich³ zum höchsten Gipfel fortsetzt.' (Albat Choch, the beautifully shaped snow-covered peak rising out of the northern boundary of the Zei glacier. In the background however rises in the air the pyramid of the Adai Choch . . . a rock arête which falls to the N.W. in ice-clad walls and then merging into a sharp snow arête continues S.E.³ to the highest point.)

This mass has been called many names, but it is the long ridge which, originating in the sharp peak of Wocley's rock on the E., runs for more than two miles towards Tshantshakhi and separates the great Tsaya glacier into two, of which the northern is considerably the larger. It has two widely separated summits, connected by a long arête, mainly of snow. The highest point is at its W. extremity, where it shows a steep buttress of rock at the head of the Tshantshakhi glacier, not the Mamison glacier. It is thus a near neighbour of Tshantshakhi. On the map there is only 1 verst, = $\frac{2}{3}$ of a mile, between the summits, but there is a very deep gap. The view of the Mingrelian valleys and lowlands to be got from it must be partly blocked by its higher neighbour Tshantshakhi. De Déchy describes his view of these low grounds as seen 'durch eine Lücke' in wildly 'zerrissen' rock ridges. This was undoubtedly Tshantshakhi's great S. ridge. This phrase of de Déchy's is a complete disproof of his Tshantshakhi ascent, as of course Tshantshakhi dominates the southern view directly, there is no 'Lücke' in question. It is also a strong argument against the Adai ascent, as from Adai, several miles due N. of this, no direct view of the Mingrelian lowlands can be got. (Dr. Ronchetti's Panorama from (Uilpata) Adai.)

De Déchy's party left camp July 23, at 7 A.M. (ht. 6552 ft.), passed first icefall by 'snowbed' on left and up glacier above. After a 'second icefall, easy,' merely the disturbance caused in the glacier by the inflow of the N. Tsaya séracs,

³ [Properly S.W.]

they attacked the difficult and dangerous N. Tsaya icefall. (The description does not fit the mild and reasonable icefalls of S. Tsaya.) Very great difficulty was experienced here, and I can well believe it. Defeated at first, Burgener tried the rock walls on the right, but failed to find a way. I have tried twice with no better success.

Returning again to the attack, Ruppen was pushed up some ice cliffs and the fall was at last conquered. The bivouac was placed a short distance above, at 10,985 ft. It took 10 hours to gain 3883 ft.

Unfortunately, de Déchy does not state on which side of the N. Tsaya glacier the bivouac was placed. From the further narrative, however, it is evident that they were too much *under* Adai to recognise it.

On July 24, at 5.30 A.M., the party again started. 'Climbed to the top of our spur and followed its snowy ridge. The ridge which fell towards us was now attacked.' Adai does not send down any definite ridges to the N. Tsaya glacier. It presents a snowy and rocky 'face.' The obvious line of attack which our 1913 party noted from the N.E. rock peak of the 'Curtain' is that followed by Dr. Ronchetti, and leads almost entirely up snow to the col between Adai and the 'Shoulder.'

The description accurately applies to the lower part of Mamison or the 'Curtain.' De Déchy continues: 'a steeply inclined snow ridge, broken here and there by rocks, and for the most part extremely narrow and corniced.' 'The top was reached at 1.30 P.M.'; 'the climb was very difficult.'

'Our ascent was made by the N.E. ridge.' Unless we assume that de Déchy's compass was absolutely unreliable, or that he utterly misread it, that positive statement is enough to disprove his ascent of Adai.

He, however, clinches it farther by the addition 'Our route of ascent did not look down upon the Karagom glacier.'

Now a glance at the 1-verst map will show that the N.E. arête of Adai does not really belong to the Tsaya glaciers at all, but to the Uilpata and Karagom glaciers. Anyone climbing it would have the great Karagom Névé spread before him all the time. The col of the N.E. arête is the Songuta.

To reach the N.E. arête of Adai from the N. Tsaya glacier it would be necessary to ascend the narrow and steep glacier which comes down between Adai and its great S.E. spur. Here the climber would find himself in the upper snow basin between Adai and Songuta. On the side of Adai and the col this is walled in and threatened by gigantic, overhanging ice cliffs and

cornices, and no guide or mountaineer would think of going there. Our party in 1914 gained the ridge, from the Uilpata glacier, by keeping well up on the Songuta side.

Assume de Déchy read the compass right, there is only one mountain which presents a N.E. arête to the N. Tsaya glacier : that is Mamison or the 'Curtain.'

Tshantshakhi, his first-claimed peak, presents a N.E. *face* and that of a severity greater than the N. faces of the Dent Blanche or Matterhorn, neither of which has been as yet climbed.

There is another point, perhaps a minor one, against de Déchy's ascent of either Adai or Tshantshakhi : that is, Burgener built a cairn on some rocks below the summit (snow). Holder, Cockin, and Almer found no cairn on Adai in 1890. Our party in 1913 found no cairn on the sharp rock spike of Tshantshakhi.

One final remark. De Déchy states there were 'no higher summits between him and the Ardon Valley to the E.' This is correct with the possible exception of Kaltber⁴ (S.E.). Owing to mist and his inferior height he was unable to see the ten, or more, higher peaks of the group, W. and N.W. of his point of view.

Nevertheless de Déchy's summit, Mamison or the 'Curtain,' is a fine peak, and our party of 1913 regretted that the enormous length of the ridge, the late hour, and the threatening weather prevented us getting further than its most eastern rock peak (18,800 aner.). The exact spot on which Burgener's cairn is probably placed can be seen on one of Mr. Young's photographs.

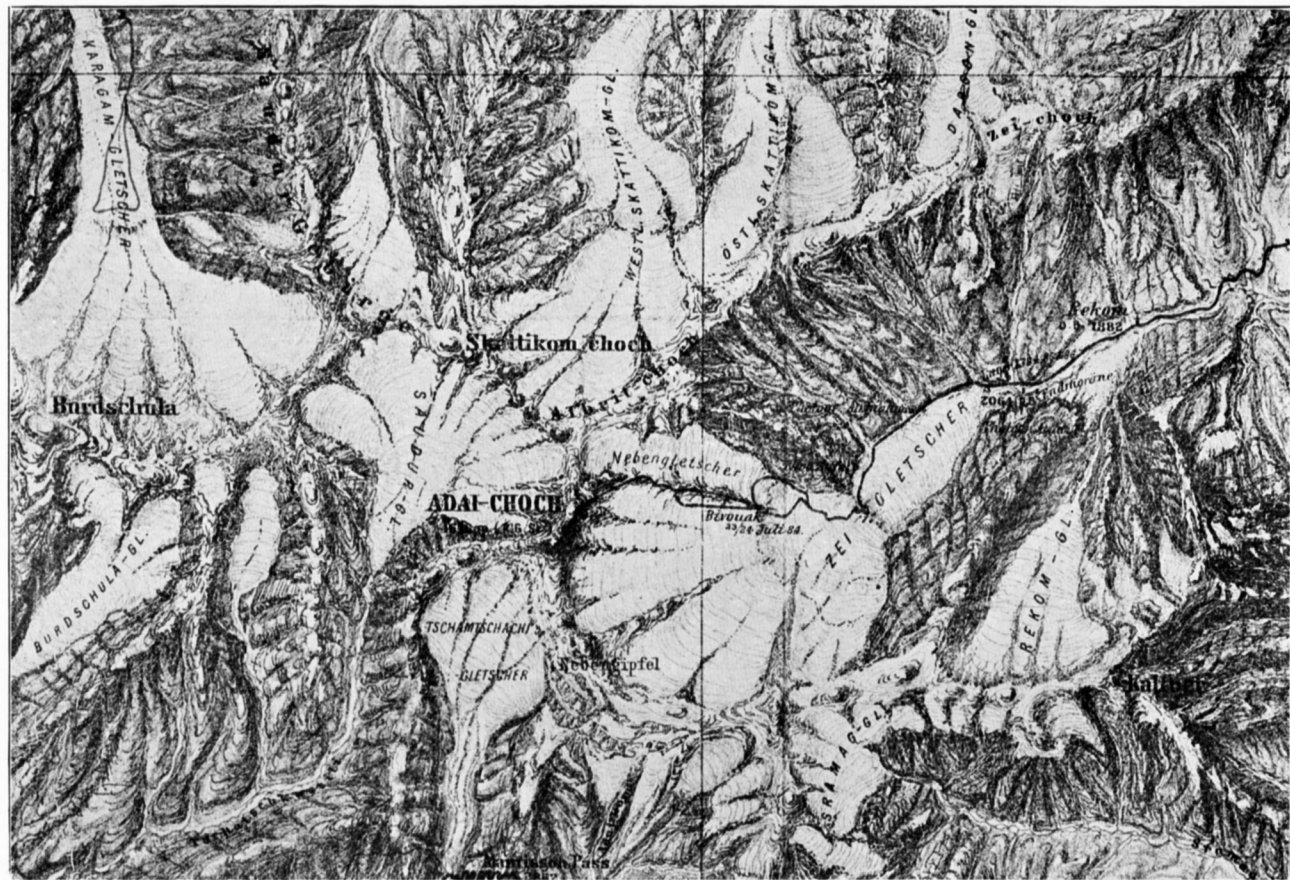
NOTE ON THE MAPS.

The photographic reproduction of a part of de Déchy's 1889 map and my map of 'The Adai Khokh Group,'⁵ which is founded on the new Russian 1-verst map, will exhibit the difference between the supposititious and true orography of this intricate group. The question of nomenclature is a difficult one ; there are very few names on the 1-verst map. I have tried to give the most orographically suitable names, or names got from natives on the spot.

H. R.

⁴ Ascended by Dr. Oskar Schuster's party in 1910 (*A.J.* xxv. 464).

⁵ The Alpine Club is indebted to the Royal Geographical Society for the map 'The Adai Khokh Group.'



Swan Electric Engraving Co., Ltd.

M. DE DÉCHY'S MAP.
(Same scale as 1914 Map.)