

second only to Tirich Mir—consists of a horseshoe of peaks of over 24,000 ft., three of which were fixed by triangulation and the above name, = 'the Horse's Shoe,' given to the highest.

Following several reconnaissances, a bold attempt was made to scale Istor-o-nal on July 21, 1929. The party consisted of Major Dutton, Captains E. R. Culverwell and Coldstream, and Lieut. D. M. Burn. The party from Ataq mounted the Atrek Glacier and from a base camp at about 18,000 ft. climbed up a snow-gully, attaining the peak's main W. arête at a height of 20,200 ft. At the foot of the N. slopes of the said arête a very torn glacier, ignored by the Survey, was visible. One of the party, accompanied by a porter, proceeded 2 hours further up the difficult arête and had passed the most awkward steps before want of time compelled a retreat. Bad weather then set in, the party having spent nine nights at 18,000 ft. The failure was brought about largely by the superstitions of the Chitrali porters.—From the *Himalayan Journal*.

[In future HIMALAYAN NOTES will be suppressed, as with the advent of the *Himalayan Journal* all such are best left for publication in that excellent annual to which readers of the ALPINE JOURNAL are now referred.—*Editor*.]

CAUCASUS NOTES.¹

A NOTE from Professor Nikoladzé, of the University of Tiflis, recording the activities of the Alpine branch of the Georgian Geographical Society in the years 1924-5-6, will be found in Vol. 39, p. 162, of the ALPINE JOURNAL. He now sends us the further list of subsequent expeditions which is here analysed. It includes several ascents of both Kasbek and Elbruz in 1927 and 1928, made by large parties of men and women. In 1927 several climbers from Tiflis joined by five from Moscow visited the neighbourhood of ELBRUZ and climbed the western peak and the summit S. of Urusbieh known

¹ Such place-names as occur in the following note are printed as far as they can be identified in the form in which they are found in the map of the Caucasus published with Mr. Freshfield's *Exploration of the Caucasus*, the document most likely to be accessible for reference to our members. No uniform system of spelling has been arrived at for geographical nomenclature among the mountains. Turkish or Georgian place-names collected on the spot by the Russian surveyors have naturally been recorded in Russian characters on their maps. These in their turn are variously transliterated by French, English, and German authors, until they often, when pronounced, become unintelligible to the natives of the country.

as KURMICH (13,314 ft.). In August 1928 the 'Prison of Prometheus' was, 60 years after its first conquest, overrun by a mixed crowd consisting of 24 climbers, 2 guides and 15 porters. They all returned safely, having filmed the incidents of the climb, which was effected by the Ortsveri Glacier, while the Devdorak route was followed on the descent. In the same year an enthusiast, armed with a barograph and thermograph, reached the summit of KASBEK alone. He also was fortunate enough to return safely.

The doings of last year were more extensive. In August a party of five—three men and two women—attacked BRUTSABDZELI, a bold rock-peak of 12,040 ft. standing close to the watershed of the Caucasus near the sources of the Ardon. It proved a stiff climb of 8 hrs. The inhabitants look on it as a holy mountain; a pyramid 6 ft. high and the remains of a cell were found on the summit.

More ambitious in its aim and interesting in its results was a 'Scientific Expedition to the Central and Western Caucasus,' organized by Professor Nikoladzé in August 1929. Its objects were to climb in the Bezingi district and to study the little-known part of the chain immediately S. and E. of Elbruz. The expedition, consisting of 14 men and 7 women, travelled to Mestia, in Suanetia, where its members split into three parties. The first, after having climbed to the crest of the Upper Zanner Pass, made a bivouac there for 5 nights, while they climbed first the rock-peak immediately N. of the Pass (Salyinan Bashi, 14,366 ft.)—for which Professor Nikoladzé proposes the unpronounceable name of DEVASARGVEL-SOULBACHI! It was climbed in 1888 by Cockin and Holder. [See 'A.J.' 14, 92.] A section of the Georgian party subsequently repeated the ascent of LIALVER made by the Bavarians in 1928 ('A.J.' 41, 167). Descending the mountain by its southern slope, the climbers lost their way in a dense mist and found themselves involved by night in the Zanner icefalls, not reaching camp until 9 A.M. Through all these difficulties the Suanetian porters are said to have shown great energy, endurance, and courage.

From their lofty bivouac the party descended directly to Bezingi and Chegem, whence they regained Suanetia by the frequented Tuiber Pass.

The second company left Mestia for Mazeri, a village under Ushba, and crossed by the Betsho Pass to the Terskol huts at the head of the Baksan Valley. In crossing the Azau Glacier they climbed a peak above it before descending to the Ullu-ozen glen, one of the sources of the Kuban. Thence they made an attempt to climb Kiukurtli Kol (15,168 ft.), a southern spur of Elbruz, but were stopped by steep rocks about 1000 ft. below the top. Starting from a camp beside the Kitchkine Kol Glacier, three of the party climbed a summit on the watershed of 13,683 ft. On the top they found a stone-man. An easy descent brought them to the valley of the Nenskra which their companions had reached by the Jiper-Karatshai Pass. The reunited company crossed by the Bassa Pass to

the Nakra Valley and Suanetia, where sad news awaited them of the third detachment—composed of seven members—which had undertaken to attempt Tetnuld (15,918 ft.) under the leadership of Professor Nikoladzé. We leave Professor Nikoladzé to tell the story of his tragic adventure.

‘ Our party left Mestia on August 18. Avoiding Adish we reached the pastures above that village at a height of 7050 ft. There we pitched our tents for the night. Next day we continued in the direction of Tetnuld, and by night gained the foot of the long S. ridge that falls in the direction of Adish at a height of 9800 ft. and at a distance of 2 kilometres to the W. from the pyramid of Tetnuld. Here the radio-operator established his radio apparatus and sent out messages to different parts of the world. Next day the party (with the exception of the radio-operator, who remained behind) accompanied by three guides set off early in the morning along the top of the ridge and bivouacked at a height of 11,320 ft. on a rocky spur of the range overlooking the highest icefall of the Nageb Glacier. The following day we were to attempt Tetnuld, but during the night snow fell and a strong wind arose, making the attempt impossible. As the weather showed no sign of improvement, and we were completely drenched, it was decided to postpone the ascent and descend to Adish. On the following days the weather continued to be very uncertain and our time was spent in reconnaissance work; other ways leading up to Tetnuld were investigated, the Khaldé Glacier was explored, and, benefiting by the clear weather, an attempt was made to mount the rock-peak Lakutsa Laartkol, which rises east of the Adish Glacier. This attempt proved a failure, as the party took a wrong route. A second attempt was to have been made, but after some consideration we gave up this plan for the time being and returned to Tetnuld as the weather was becoming settled and conditions for an ascent were ideal. This time only three members, myself with Simon Djaparidzé and Pimen Dvali, attempted Tetnuld. We took no guides with us, as previous experience had proved that they were useless, as these regions were quite unknown to them. Two porters helped us to carry food and warm clothing as far as the last bivouac. From the side of the Adish Glacier we passed close to the foot of the mountain and climbed to the top of the southern spur at a height of 12,140 ft., where we bivouacked. At 7 A.M. next morning we set off for the ascent. The weather was ideal and we were in high spirits. Under given circumstances Tetnuld, it seemed, could hardly escape us; but what followed next proved that the unforeseen may occur. It was decided to ascend the southern slope of the pyramid which we would reach from the E. side. We descended on to the ice and attacked a very steep slope, where we had to use the axes. Simon Djaparidzé was leading and cutting steps in the ice. Next followed Pimen Dvali, and last myself. We had passed already three-quarters of

this difficult and dangerous portion of the ascent when Dvali slipped and began to slide down. Simon Djaparidzé, seeing him in danger, grasped him by his shoulders, but in so doing also slipped and both were precipitated headlong into a huge crevasse. Only after six days of continuous search were the disfigured bodies of my companions discovered by the Suanetian peasants and brought down to Mestia. I owe my life to the fact that at the time of the catastrophe I happened to be a little way behind my friends as I was busy adjusting my shoe.

‘The death of these two members of our Alpine Section is a severe blow, not only to their friends but to the Geographical Society of Georgia.’

We must hasten to express our sincere sympathy in the disaster which overtook Professor Nikoladzé’s party. It is, we believe, the first fatal mountaineering accident that has occurred in the Caucasus since that to Donkin and Fox, when they and their guides met their death in 1888 while attempting Koshtantau. TETNULD, in favourable conditions and with the usual precautions, is not a dangerous mountain, and it would be a pity should it get a bad name, for the view, owing to its situation, is probably the finest in the Caucasus. On a clear day its snowy spire is prominent even from the Black Sea.

D. W. FRESHFIELD.

Mr. Freshfield sends the following comment on a question of nomenclature referred to in his note, ‘A.J.’ 41, 168 :

In my note on the Bavarian ascents in the Caucasus in 1928, I wrote that I did not think it likely that the party had reached ‘the rocky spur of the Saddle Peak which in 1868 I called the Adish Peak.’ I now desire to make it clear that my ‘Adish Peak’ is the crag standing out on the E. side of the great Adish icefall, marked on my map of 1895, and referred to by Professor Nikoladzé as Lakutsa Laartkol.

The ‘Adish Tau’ climbed by the Bavarians is, from my point of view, the S. and higher summit of Katuintau. I am confirmed in this conclusion by the photograph on p. 7 of Vol. ii of my ‘Central Caucasus’ which shows the double summit as resembling what I first compared it to, *not* a flat English but ‘a Tartar saddle.’ Katuin Tau appears to have some authority as a local name for this double eminence (see ‘Central Caucasus,’ Vol. ii, p. 36), and the sooner my ‘Adish Peak’ resumes its uncouth designation of Lakutsa Laartkol the better. It had better disappear both from maps and common use.

[For the remarkable list of climbs achieved by a German party during the summer of 1929, see under ‘New’ and ‘Various’ Expeditions.]