of monomaniacs as he has imagined? A reference to the preface to the first number of this Journal, or to any other volume in alpine literature, would have shown that his fellow-clubmen take a wider view of their relations to mountains than that into which his argument has for the moment betrayed him.

Happily for ourselves and for posterity the love of the Alps has its root in cravings other and higher than that which Mr. Middlemore is at present alone disposed to recognise. As an expression of these cravings it will endure when all passion for novelty has been taken from it; and, while it endures, the body to which we belong will scarcely consent to commit suicide at the bidding of a prophet who has confessed himself so little of a seer. But if the day ever comes when the mountains are looked on by our members simply as 'acta' and 'agenda,' when a 'feeling for novelty alone' inspires the feats recorded in these pages, the Alpine Club will deserve, and more than deserve, all that has ever been said against those who make 'greased poles' of the noblest objects in Nature—and the sooner it is dissolved the better.

The discussion here concluded has excited much interest abroad among the numerous bodies which look up to the English Alpine Club as in some way their parent. It seemed well, therefore, that all who have taken part in it should say their last word at the same time.]

REVIEW—'THE FROSTY CAUCASUS.'*

We endorse to the full the unanimous verdict of the reviewers that Mr. Grove's book is a most entertaining sketch of the life and manners of Caucasian mountaineers, and we can add from personal experience that it is as truthful as it is entertaining. The volume has doubtless already been in the hands of every member of the Club, and it is needless here and at this time to follow Mr. Grove step by step in his journey, or to make a selection out of the many amusing incidents which he has so well told.

It only remains for the 'Alpine Journal' to consider from the professional point of view, whether Mr. Moore and his followers did all the things they ought to have done, and omitted only those which, under the circumstances, they ought not to have done.

It must be confessed that, when first reported, the mountaineering, we do not say the travelling, performances of the second Caucasian expedition scarcely came up to the expectations of those who had calculated on the strength of the party, and the energy and experience of their leader. But it was no fault of the climbers that the persistent indisposition under which Caucasian weather seems too often to suffer in June and July frustrated to a considerable extent their plans and our hopes. Mr. Grove might well have applied Mr. Tennyson's denunciation of the Lombard plain to Caucasian localities, and have exclaimed, 'At Gebi, at Kutais, rain! At Chegem, rain! Bezingi, rain,' and still

* *The Frosty Caucasus.* By F. Craufurd Grove. London: Longman & Co. 1875.

have fallen short of the sad reality. It is possible that this plague of waters might hamper the traveller less later in the year, and if, as seems likely, another A. C. party should before long seek the Caucasus, it would be at least worth while to try the experiment. In 1868, the weather throughout August was, with only one short break, all that could be desired for mountaineering, and the beginning of September was equally fine. It is true that long days are required for Caucasian peaks, but half a loaf is better than no bread, and every mountaineer knows that more can be got out of a few sunshiny hours than out of days when rain only ceases to be replaced by impenetrable mist.

It would be a mistake to suppose, however, that, even when judged by the standard of the straitest sect of mountaineers, the expedition of 1874 was barren of results. The exploration of 1868 had indicated the tasks the accomplishment of which was most urgently required. They were (1) the definition of the group in which the Rion finds its most important sources, and of which Adai Choch (a peak of about the height of Mont Blanc) is the culminating point; (2) the examination of the western flanks of the central mass of the Caucasus, dominated by Kotchantau, Dychtau and Nuamquam; (3) the investigation of the main chain between the Thuber and Nakra passes, and in particular the portion of it lying round the base of Usch Ba; (4) the clearing up of the doubt suggested by the different appearance of Elbruz during the ascent of 1868 from that which it presented when viewed from Pätigorsk. Mr. Grove and his friends started at a point somewhat to the west of the Adai Choch group, and our knowledge with respect to it remains consequently unaltered. With regard to the second subject of investigation above mentioned most valuable information has been supplied by the new expedition. The position of the great peaks has been approximately fixed. A huge mountain block (Djanga) unknown to the Russians has been added to the map, and a basis of operations of surpassing interest (Bezingi) has been opened to travellers. The perplexities left in this group are such as a single day's fine-weather exploration would suffice to clear away. With respect to the third subject for discovery, weather interfered with Mr. Moore's well-laid plans. The solution, however, of the last problem arrived at by the party of 1874 is complete and final. The travellers established the existence of and (with the exception of Mr. Moore) ascended a summit of Elbruz, lying to the west of, and in all probability, a few feet higher than that ascended in 1868. Beyond Urusbieh, Mr. Grove has added to our knowledge by a vivid description of the flanks of Elbruz, Utchkulan, the Nakhar pass, and the splendid valleys of the Klütch and the Kodor.

This is much, and the Alpine Club may look with some pardonable satisfaction upon the work which has been already accomplished by its members, who in ten or eleven weeks have done more than the Russians in as many years. As regards the future, however, it may be with some confidence predicted that mountaineering in the most ambitious sense of the word—in that sense in which it concerns itself with the ascent of the highest and most difficult peaks—will not immediately play an important part in Caucasian exploration. Owing to defects

of transport, the absence of trained native guides, and the inherent difficulties of the peaks themselves, it seems probable that the work of the traveller for the next few years will partake more of the nature of a survey than of a mountaineering tour. The lower and easier peaks in the Caucasus—Tau Tetnuld's 16,000 ft. do not save it from falling into this class—only will be climbed; lines of communication will be established by the passage of the most obvious gaps in the chain; the most available starting-points for mountaineering enterprise will be determined, and then, and not till then, will Kotchantau and Usch Ba have to look to themselves. For the next few years Bakoua Pipia will be of more service than half a dozen step-cutters.

And yet for the humbler and comparatively unexciting work here indicated mountaineering knowledge is indispensable. The tyro, however bold and intelligent, is in the snow-world—to reverse a comparison of Professor Tyndall—as helpless and as liable to error as an untrained experimenter in a laboratory. It may be stated with the certainty of an axiom that no one can satisfactorily explore a mountain country but a practical mountaineer. Besides the superior insight he has acquired into the intricacies of mountain perspective and the greater accuracy with which he judges the scale and proportion of the ranges among which he is making his way, he is wholly devoid both of the fear and the rashness which in such a region paralyze or imperil the inexperienced traveller. He is not likely to be deterred from visiting an unknown valley by the fact that ice and snow, and possibly steep and rocky ridges intervene between him and it, nor will he on the other hand start on such an enterprise without every appliance which may enable him to conquer chance difficulties. Being able to foresee, he is also able to conquer. To the absence of trained enterprise we may probably trace the comparatively trivial results as yet obtained in the New Zealand Alps, and even in the Himalaya. Of its value ample proof is afforded by the history of the two Alpine Club expeditions to the Caucasus.

Mr. Grove's book can be charged, so far as we are able to judge, with but few inaccuracies. The spelling of Caucasian names (until our knowledge of the source and meaning of the words is more complete) must be pretty well a matter of taste. The great forest spoken of by the Urusbieh hunters, and believed by Mr. Grove to lie between the Ingur and Kodor, has been traversed and described by an Englishman, Mr. Spencer, in a now little-known work, 'The Western Caucasus,' published in 1838. He speaks of the scenery with enthusiasm, and of the amount of game—bears, wolves, chamois and bouquetin, with astonishment. There is one awkward confusion at the bottom of p. 99, where North-East has been substituted for West or North-West. The mistake is repeated on the next page.

We cannot conclude without expressing our hope that the self-sacrifice for which Mr. Moore was so ill-paid in 1874, may be fully rewarded in 1876, and that the editor of the 'Alpine Journal' may have next November a long list of 'New Expeditions,' which he may be able to chronicle without any conscientious scruples as to their morality.

C. C. T.