

THE CHAIN OF THE CAUCASUS

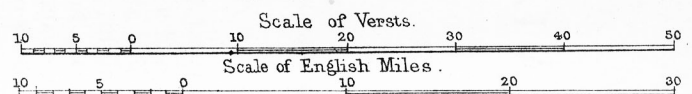
and spurs of Elbruz and Koshtantau

are indicated thus



KUTAIS

M^r D. Freshfield's Route



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A SKELETON DIARY OF SIX WEEKS' TRAVEL IN THE CENTRAL
CAUCASUS IN 1887.

BY DOUGLAS W. FRESHFIELD.

L EFT London by night mail on July 10, spent two days and a night at Vienna, a day at Charkoff, a night and morning at Rostoff on the Don. Otherwise travelled day and night, reaching Vladikavkaz on the afternoon of July 19. Russian first-class carriages equal to sleeping cars, and buffets excellent. Gaiters stolen from registered package. All goods registered in Russia should be under lock and key. At Vienna François Dévouassoud, his brother Michel, and his nephew, Joseph Désaillood, all guides on the Chamonix roll, met me. At Charkoff I was joined by M. de Déchy, of Budapesth, a member of the Alpine Club and Geographical Society, and a most skilful amateur photographer, who had made three previous journeys in the Caucasus, on the first ascending, with the guides A. Burgener and P. S. Ruppen, Adai Choch (15,244 feet) and Elbruz.

M. de Déchy undertook to provide his own tents and many other articles of equipment for the party. He also took on himself the labour of buying and forwarding our joint provisions of every sort, so that I only took out sleeping bags, saddle bags, and a few luxuries and instruments from England, some of which were kindly lent me by my friends Messrs. Tuckett, Blackstone, Dent, and H. Walker. Speaking Russian, and having acquaintances among the Russian officials, M. de Déchy was able to dispense with an interpreter, and to obtain some valuable facilities. But for these inducements I should hardly have revisited the country.

July 19.—Hills of Pätigorsk in sight early. Snows clouded. Caucasus meets steppe as Alps meet Lombard plain. Loftier

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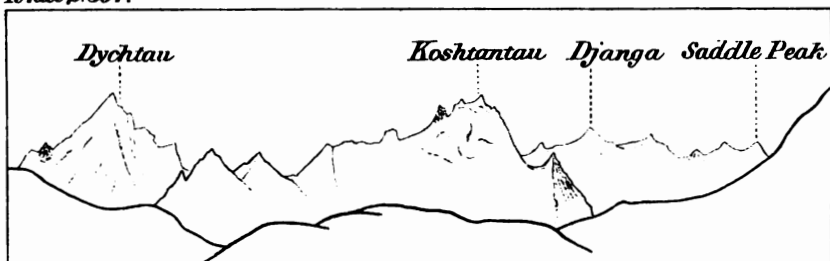
snows and bolder peaks, but no cultivation or campanili; only riverbanks with thickets of reeds, expanses of mallows and wild sunflowers, and here and there on projecting knolls the remains of a primitive hillfort or the tumulus of some forgotten warrior. So the Alps must have looked to the Romans when Gallia Cisalpina was still a new province. Met in train the son of Ismael, the Urusbieh chief, returning for the Long Vacation from the University of Moscow, where he is sent at government expense. Also Professor Kovalevsky, who was good enough last year to send me his work on the Ossetes, and was now returning to prosecute his researches into primitive laws and customs among the Chetchens. Reached Vladikafkaz in afternoon.

20th.—M. de Déchy visited officials. Sent off two cases *via* Kutais to Suanetia. This proved a mistake, as the impetus of the Vladikafkaz officials did not carry the cases beyond Kutais, and we might, as it turned out, have taken them across directly from Urusbieh. Shops generally well stored, but preserved meats scarce and dear.

21st.—Rail back to Kotlorevska, where guides had been left to sleep in the waiting-room. Drove (six hours, two stages) to Naltshik in *telegas*. Steppe smooth, and jolting only a faint reminiscence of old tortures on the Armenian roads and rocks. Lodged at Naltshik in a squalid room in the post station, a bad beginning, as we were comfortable here nineteen years ago, and Dent and Donkin were well lodged last year.

All the chiefs of the district in town. Hamzet of Urusbieh asked by name after Moore and Tucker. Since I last saw him he has been to the Oberland to study dairy farming at the expense of the government—not to much purpose, I fear! Here also is the chief of Tchegem and the seven-foot giant of Bezingi, with several of his retainers figured in Donkin's photographs, copies of which I have happily at hand to present them with. The *Nachalnik* promised to expedite our journey to Urusbieh, and to forward our letters and a case of provisions in due time to meet us at Bezingi. He also provided us with a Kabardan Cossack, a gentle, intelligent, and serviceable attendant, who remained with us for three weeks.

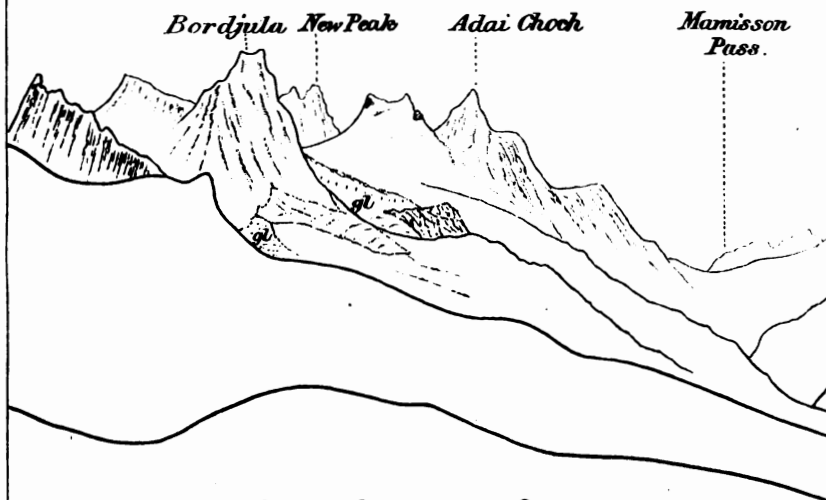
22nd.—Clear view of snowpeaks over forest range. Dychtau and another great peak ('*peut-être encore plus haut*,' says François) in foreground. Second peak must be Dent's Guluku, my Unknown Peak. Conclusion, Guluku is Russian Koshtantau, 17,096 feet. This explains much. (See sketch.)



THE SNOWS FROM NALTSHIK.



USHBA FROM DESCENT OF ADYRSU PASS.



ADAI CHOCH GROUP FROM GORIBOLO.

Morning spent in dividing and repacking provisions and paraphernalia—an enormous task, in which M. de Déchy displays great enthusiasm, perseverance, and ability; and I the reverse. Drive in the afternoon across steppe to Baksan station. Splendid distant view of Kazbek, a slender pyramid of pure snow rising far above its neighbours in the east. Luminous atmosphere; distances clear and soft in colour, remind me of the Roman Campagna. Drive on beside the river to the straggling village of Atashutan. Overtake local Priestav sent to aid us. Received coldly at first by Kabardan chief; subsequently invited to sleep in his house, and served about midnight with a heavy supper.

23rd.—Two peaks of Elbruz visible a hundred yards above house. Fail to get off until 9 A.M. Forty miles (sixty versts) to Urusbieh. Drive about ten versts to first bridge, where Urusbieh chiefs have a house, the best sleeping-place to divide the journey. Heavy shower in afternoon. I enjoy a solitary two hours' starlight ride, meeting many belated Tartars on the road. At last, at 11 P.M., we reach Urusbieh, and occupy the old guest-house, now somewhat dilapidated.

24th.—The chiefs of Urusbieh have not prospered. Of the three brothers Mohammed has been killed, and his murderers having denounced—falsely in all probability—Ismael as the instigator of the crime, he was kept for a time under arrest. The family lawsuit with the government as to the forests is still dragging on, though the chiefs have succeeded on a preliminary point. Their influence is far from what it was, and the village is under no control.

In the morning I walked up hillside behind village; saw some earth-pinnacles and a waterfall. Landscape severe and arid but thoroughly alpine, snowpeaks in every direction promising fine excursions. Understood Grove's appreciation of Urusbieh, after walking over the low-level passes of the northern valleys in dull weather. M. de Déchy involved in intricate and interminable negotiations for the transport of our baggage across the chain. Settled at last that our Cossack shall cross the Dongussorun (Nakra Pass) to Betsho with donkeys, while we, with eight porters, cross the Adyr Su Pass, which is very seldom used and considered difficult by the natives.

25th.—Three hours' noisy wrangle in morning as to distribution of burdens. The porters seemed to me to have some reason on their side, and were most systematic in weighing and apportioning each man's load.

Steep ascent into glen of Adyr Su, which opens opposite

village. Picturesque pinewoods, and fine glacier views. Glaciers on both sides as well as at head of valley. Long plain below glacier. Pitch tents (we have two) beside Kosh (shepherds' bivouac answering to alpine chalet, but rarely provided with any permanent shelter) 200 feet below ice. Excellent *airam*, not sour, but like Devonshire cream.

26th.—Porters all eager to start. Off at 5 A.M. Instead of taking the best line along flowery slopes E. of glacier, porters lead up moraine (Caucasians love moraine!) Fine icefall right with waterfall bursting out of it. Five glaciers meet at head of glen. Easy pass to Adyl Su westward; * said to be one also eastward to Tchegem. Obvious links in high-level route of the future from Koshtantau to Elbruz. Our pass lies deep and high in a recess, and at the eastern base of the peak, compared by Moore to the Schreckhorn. Ascent by hard snowbanks, which I hurried up, as every step brought fresh peaks into sight, to projecting rock with stoneman, where we breakfasted and roped. Then long soft slopes of névé to pass, a broad snow-col, 12,700 feet by aneroid—seven hours from bivouac. I gave the laden porters a lead through the heavy snow. On reaching the top their leader slapped me on the back and shook hands warmly, ejaculating, 'Djighite! Djighite!'—a word familiar to me from Tolstoi's 'Les Cosaques.'† Fine view of precipitous range opposite (S.), enclosing an enormous glacier flowing S.W.; Leila chain in distance. After short descent Tetnuld and Dent and Doukin's peak seen over gap at head of glacier. This gap probably leads to Thuber névé; another nearer us seems to be known as a pass from Tchegem to Suanetia. On reaching main glacier, Ushba comes into sight (see sketch). Magnificent ice scenery. Great glacier pouring down from N., another meeting ours from W. Comparable to Mer de Glace at Couvercle. Porters thought they saw bouquetin on wonderfully green slopes N. of glacier. Left ice for flowery hillside just above junction of glaciers; the united stream breaks through a narrow valley nearly due S. White rhododendrons still in full bloom. Very rough barely indicated track on slopes, then a mile or two of moraine, re-

* The Adyl Su is the tributary of the Baksan flowing from the main chain next to the W. of the Adyr Su.

† 'Un véritable *djighite* doit avoir de belles armes. Quant à son uniforme il peut être usé et porté avec négligence.' I do not think it was my ice-axe won me the title! It was applied in old days to a successful warrior, Cossack or Tcherkess.

lieved at last by a bank gay with white and blush wild roses, yellow lilies, and strange blooms innumerable. Path cut off by lateral ravine; driven back to ice; recover track on further side. I run on and find good site for tents near a stream in hollow between old moraine and hillside, 200 feet above present end of glacier. Out fifteen hours, including many halts for photographing, &c. Two guides worse for *airam*; porters walked splendidly. Shower in night drove the porters for shelter into neighbouring pine grove.

27th.—End of our glacier, which I propose to call Gvalda Glacier (6,200 feet); of a second (Mestia Glacier) which has at one time joined it (6,000 feet), the lowest on the S. side of the Caucasus. This glacier is not so large, but steeper. It flows from two basins, one immediately under the N. peak of Ushba, the other leading to a pass to the Adyl Su valley, which our porters held worse than the one we had crossed. [This ice-stream is well seen from the Latpar Pass.] Fine view of Ushba from camp. The beauty of the descent into Suanetia more than realised my recollections. The enormous glaciers of the chain are met by the most luxuriant hillsides. There is no intervening zone of barrenness. Green things were growing even on the rubbish which covered the end of the glacier.

Below glacier path level and scenery tame to first houses on left bank; whence we crossed open sunny slopes, hay meadows and copses, with fine views of Ushba and the towered hamlets of Mestia, and the glaciers of the Leila in the distance. Met boy with dish of trout. Took up quarters (easy four hours) at Cancellaria (a small building used both as a court-house and travellers' bungalow. These shelters contain, as a rule, no furniture beyond a raised platform, though a bench and table are sometimes found). Starshina (village headman, appointed by Russians, and distinguished by wearing a chain), a huge wild man with a broad Babylonian physiognomy. A very small sharp boy interpreted for him. Bought a sheep and feasted the men of Urusbieh. One of them took a great fancy to me, and on parting shook hands most warmly, called me once more a 'djighite,' and offered to remain with us as long as we liked. I return to my old opinion that the Urusbieh hunters are the raw material of glacier guides. They are far better on a glacier than most Tyrolese were twenty-five years ago, and they are untiring walkers and weight-carriers. I strolled in afternoon to junction of Mestia and Mushalaliz torrents. Past school-house; room decorated with prints of

single Cossacks pursuing Turkish armies, charts of the heavens, and pictures of common objects of civilisation. Tetnuld's silver spear high in air over thickets of azalea and rhododendrons, now past bloom. D. and D.'s peak seen on N. flank of Tetnuld. Counted over seventy towers in neighbouring villages. Above Cancellaria is a very ancient birch tree, with several rude stone seats under it.

28th.—Rode or walked through Latal to Betsho (about 4 hours). Excellent path on right bank through the ripening barley-fields between neat wattled fences. Splendid scenery. Foreground of white towers, golden barley, and graceful birches. In middle distance slopes, on which the sombre groups of pines and firs show as shadows among the lighter foliage of the birch, beech, and poplar woods. Snow peaks brilliant behind defile dividing Mestia and Mushalaliz.

Curious church at Nendjar, built of carefully squared blocks of limestone. Bell (as in Corsica) outside on framework. Chancel hexagonal. Graves round church, others round an old pear tree some distance off. Seats under tree as at Mestia. D. and D.'s peak now becomes prominent. Lunched under great sycamore at Latal, under fire of the women's eyes, a most picturesque group. Two old churches or chapels here, one with arcade of arches round semicircular apse. All kept locked up and impossible to enter. Crossed well-remembered little pass to Betsho, whence Moore first caught sight of Ushba in 1868. On Betsho side, just below the top, there is a level shelf of hay-meadows, ringed with birches, poplars, and azaleas, one of the loveliest spots imaginable. Lost my way in the wood, and on coming out found myself above the government buildings, erected after the disturbances in 1875, and now half in ruins. Lodged in large, but comfortless, Cancellaria, and most hospitably entertained by the Russian Priestav and his wife. This is the centre of authority, and a post comes here, more or less regularly, every fortnight. Found our Cossack had arrived the day before by the direct Betsho pass (compared by M. de Déchy to the Alphübel), with the luggage on two donkeys! Prince Wittgenstein, an Austrian who has spent his life in the Russian service, and an Abkhasian noble, Prince Shervashidze, arrived with a numerous retinue in search for gold. Their train gave some idea of the picturesqueness of the ancient mode of travel. Prince W. speaks English fluently. He told me that there are horse-passes by the valley of the Dal, from Suanetia to the Kodor, but that the paths nearer the great chain, between the Neskra and the Kodor, used

formerly by the Baksan Tartars, are no longer passable except on foot.

Fireflies and glow-worms at night. Height 4,500 feet. Radde saw fireflies 2,000 feet higher, near Adish.

29th.—I started at 5 A.M. with Michel and Joseph to reconnoitre Ushba. Long grass walk up valley, then good steep horse-path through fir forest, and up flowery slopes to foot of Gul Glacier* (circa 9,000 feet). Loitered at first owing to doubtful weather. Sky clearing, pushed on fast up glacier, avoiding icefall by rocks on E. bank. Determined to make for rock peak opposite Ushba, forming E. end of ridge, descending from N. peak, and separating the small Betsho, or Gul, Glacier from the great Mestia Glacier. Steep upper slopes of névé in horrible condition. Took to rocks. 'Sped not our feet without the aid of hands.' Steep, but no real difficulty. More than two hours' hard climbing brought us to the ridge. Nasty ice-filled gully between first and second peak; three hours from glacier, ten hours from Betsho. Height about 12,500 feet (aneroid unluckily left behind), yet only the Hörnli, or footstool of Ushba.

Wonderful and most interesting (to a climber) view of Ushba, its twin peaks, and the great snow-ladder between them. Snow avalanches constantly falling over the cliffs and sliding down the slopes. The whole mountain hissing with snow, like a snake surprised by an enemy. Wish I could stamp on its head. *Faciam per alium, spero*. On other side stones go bounding with a sulphurous reek down a very great precipice into the S. basin of the Mestia Glacier, a noble curve of ice. At its head, opposite us, rise two noble peaks, of steep writing-desk form, the sloping W. side being snow. Crests of Tetnuld and neighbours clouded. All upper Suanetia in sunshine. Leila opposite, higher than ourselves (13,500 feet?). Built stoneman.

Loose rocks and snow on ice treacherous in places. After one hour's careful descent took to névé, and slid down on young avalanche to foot of ice-fall. Found gold-digging princes building a birch-tree hut in the glen above Mazer. Got back to Betsho in four hours' sharp walking from top, just avoiding night and a thunderstorm. Friendly Priestav provided supper. Very stiff in the shoulders.

30th.—Rain or cloud most of the day. Glad to rest. Priestav ordered horses.

* I take this name from M. Iljin. See Petermann's *Mitteilungen*, vol. xxx.

31st.—Priestav provided us a Suanetian Cossack to act as interpreter. He proved almost useless. No horses until 1 P.M. Ushba coated with fresh snow. Examined carefully 'Burgener's route,' up southern peak. I and François went with luggage by Mestia and low pass to Ipari, the rest of the party by the route which I had followed in 1868. Baggage horse overloaded and much delay. One of M. de Déchy's barometers unfortunately broken. We crossed pass by splendid moonlight, arriving long after the others, at 11 P.M. Slept in rough Cancellaria.

August 1st.—Rode up narrow, but most picturesque, glen of Adish torrent, stream easily fordable. Glimpses of white crest of Tetnuld and one splendidly framed view of Ushba. Emerged suddenly (3 hrs.) upon barley-fields of Adish.

[This isolated hamlet is attached to Ipari, and has no Starshina, or priest. The people were pagans until 1865, when they were officially converted and baptised. In 1864 Dr. von Radde passed through the place by night to avoid dealings with its inhabitants. Ipari, Kalde, and Ushkul are the three wildest communes of Free Suanetia, formerly the wildest part of the Central Caucasus. This year I have visited all three.]

Halted by shed at top of village. Villagers asked high prices for provisions, and quarrelled noisily among themselves for our custom. All joined amicably in a photographic group. On parting, one man demanded money for our having rested on his land, and, when laughed at, had recourse to the traditional pantomime of fetching his gun. Another laid hold of my ice axe, which I had stuck in the ground and forgotten while mounting, and when the Cossack rode back asked money for its return. Kabardan Cossack was indignant; the Suanetian impotent. We got out our revolvers for the only time in the Caucasus. A few copecks, however, settled all difficulties, and before leaving our Cossack bought a sheep. The whole affair was nothing more than an attempt at extortion, enforced by traditional violence of tone and gesture. Compared to our encounters in 1868 this was but a petty wrangle. Of real passion on one side, of danger on the other, I saw no trace. The marked improvement in the people generally in Suanetia during the past twenty years is creditable to the government and its local officers. Even in the faces of many of the rising generation one sees traces of less violent habits and civilising influences. Adish in its remote recess is naturally the last spot to reform.

Camped in a birch copse, 1 hr. from village close to glacier. M. de Déchy found from marks made two years previously, that ice is sensibly advancing—11.30 mètres in two years. Purity and grandeur of icefall more than equal to my recollection.

August 2nd.—Pouring rain in night. Guides' tent pitched in hollow, and they consequently moist and miserable. Cossacks apparently quite dry under birch-bark shelter and bourkas. François opens tent and announces in a deplorable voice that the remainder of our sheep has disappeared. Further researches reveal that the waterproof cover over luggage pile has been disturbed; the lock removed from M. de Déchy's hand-portmanteau, and the clothes inside cleared out; the lid of the medicine chest lifted—and the contents left untouched. Some of the Steigeisen kindly procured for us by Viennese friends, a revolver and several minor objects stolen. No scientific or photographic instruments opened. Waterproof cover carefully replaced, so that we did not discover the more serious theft till long after we had missed the mutton. Thieves must have been daring and deliberate. The pile was not distant three yards from the Cossacks or our tent, and between the two!

[An exaggerated report concerning this theft and its consequences was published during my absence in some English newspapers ('Standard,' August 24). I regret it, not only because of the needless anxiety caused to many of my friends, but also on account of the mischievous effect the report is likely to have in spreading completely wrong impressions as to the difficulties or even dangers of Caucasian travel. It would be a misfortune if intelligent travellers were, on the strength of an exceptional act of theft, the prompt punishment of which will be the best security against its repetition, frightened off from a country which is, in my opinion, now ripe for the better sort of Long Vacation tourists and Alpine Clubmen. I wandered by day and night, often alone and unarmed, on both sides of the chain without the slightest difficulty, meeting with nothing but pleasant greetings. Mr. Peacock, H.B.M.'s Vice-Consul at Batoum, entirely confirms my opinion as to the general security of the mountain districts.* To readers of this diary it will not be needful to correct the statement that my journey was cut short by the

* This year there were five, or, counting my second visit, six, different parties of visitors in Suanetia, none of whom met with any difficulty that I have heard of.

'robbery.' In fact, an arrangement to go with M. de Déchy to Basardjusi was not concluded until a week after the robbery took place.]

Rain continues to pour pitilessly. Determine to descend to Mushal, and call up Cossacks from Betsho on the men of Adish. Struggle with wet ropes and canvas; and to preserve photographic cases from damp during packing. As we start sky clears. Village seems almost deserted as we pass. Beautiful afternoon stroll over the high path to Mushal. Tempted to camp at the exquisite spot where the view opens into the Mushalaliz. Luckily resist. Meet large party of haymakers (Caucasian hay-making seems independent of weather). Steep descent. Quarter ourselves on priest of Mushal, who has a good timber-house with a broad balcony running all round it, and a view of Ushba.

3rd.—Weather doubtful. M. de Déchy sends off Suane-tian Cossack with letter to Priestav at Betsho, and priest's son to Adish with fifteen roubles (28s.), to attempt to compound felony and recover stolen goods. He was unsuccessful. I with two guides make a false start for Tetnuld. We are soon brought to a standstill by a trackless forest and a rain-storm. Light a fire under an impenetrable pine, and wait until the rain rolls off. Return. Day of rainstorms and gleams, like English Lake weather.

4th.—More storms and rarer gleams. Day of arrivals. First, a grim old Cossack sergeant with three comrades come to look up the men of Adish. Then in many detachments, like a stage procession, the Bishop of Poti and suite, on an episcopal tour; a most picturesque cavalcade of mules, monks, and long-haired singing men. The Bishop has the best room, and we share the second with his secretary and chaplain, and a Mingrelian gentleman in his company. The ecclesiastics commence at dusk an interminable service. About 11 P.M. supper is served, to which all, except the Bishop, sit down. Cheese, mutton roast and boiled, fowls and pork, with very fair Mingrelian wine in abundance. The robes and long hair of the ecclesiastics make the scene a curiously vivid reproduction of a *Cena* by a sixteenth century master. Our host is exactly like one of Albert Durer's apostles.

5th.—The Bishop and his party ride off. I agree with M. de Déchy that I will start again for Tetnuld, undertaking to meet or catch him up on the Zanner Pass on the 7th, so that no chance of a fine day may be lost for the passage of the chain. He meantime kindly undertakes the very tiresome task of organising a band of porters

and getting them under weigh. There is only one man in the village who has ever crossed the pass, which has fallen into complete disuse for twenty years.

[M. de Déchy's account of the rest of the day. Early in afternoon some villagers came in from Adish. After them the Priestav arrived, having lunched at Mestia with the Bishop. The villagers were summoned. First the two men who demanded money of us. 'What do you mean by asking money from my guests—honourable persons who are escorted by Cossacks?' Their side-arms were taken away, and their hands tied behind their backs. Then came the turn of the fifteen heads of families. They protested that the village was innocent; that the robber must have been a chance traveller. 'That cannot be,' said the Priestav. 'You know perfectly there is no road, and there are no travellers in your valley.' They were given two hours to produce the property. Nothing being forthcoming, their side-arms were, after some pretence of resistance on the part of one or two, taken from them, and they were ordered to remain in custody at Betsho until the goods were returned. 'I am anxious,' said the Priestav, 'to show Mr. Freshfield as an Englishman that we can act with vigour in case of need.' And certainly no English officer could have come to the help of his countrymen with more vigour, good judgment, and (as the event proved) success than M. Aetovsky, the excellent Priestav, came to ours.]

I started with the three guides, and a Suanetian to show us the path to the glacier, about noon. Very rough, and in places entirely obliterated, track on right bank of torrent. Picturesque ravine. In two hours reached foot of glacier; about 8,900 feet. Two streams just join; one, the Zanner, coming down in an icefall from an invisible upper region; the other descending steeply from the base of the pyramid of Tetnuld. Find at 9,000 feet on right bank of Tetnuld Glacier an excellent spot for bivouac under an overhanging crag among rhododendrons. Discover horns and bones of bouquetin (*Capra Caucasica*), probably killed by avalanche, close by. Sky clears at sunset.

6th.—Woke at 12.30 A.M. Started at 12.45 by cloudless moonlight, after comfortable evening in sleeping-bag. Up avalanche *débris* and moraine to top of lower icefall. François, with old instinct, charged straight in the moonlight at the vast slope of séracs; and we got through without serious delay, though as much by luck as skill, the bridges corresponding curiously. Wonderful ice scenery at

sunrise on a great plateau. Streamers of light opposite sunrise from western horizon. Elbruz and Ushba flash out like beacons over the lesser mountains. Turkish ranges, still snow-streaked, far away to S.W. More crevassed slopes to little plateau, narrow but long, immediately under peak. This we have to traverse in its whole length. Snow heavy, despite cold. Very steep crevassed bank leads up to a last snow-plain only a few feet under the notch in the S. ridge we have been aiming at. Pushing our leader over a Bergschrund, we reach this saddle at 9 A.M. Glorious outlook. At our feet Adish and its glacier, at the head of its névé Djanga, and beyond it the five-crested peak I have hitherto called Koshtantau, the Shkara of the Russian map and Dr. Radde. Our height 15,000 feet. Very long ridge between us and summit. Snow in perfect condition for safety, but too soft for speed. Precipitous slopes all the way on the Adish side. View down like that on the Scheideck from the Wetterhorn. Successive steepens in the ridge hide summit. Leader has hard work, and is constantly changed. At last, four hours after leaving saddle, step on to top, a short level snow-ridge. Fronting us, beyond the hitherto unseen Zanner icefields, stands Dent and Donkin's peak, holding its own well, but I think a little (without having their measurement in my mind, I put the difference at 100 to 200 feet) beneath us. Aneroid marks 16,700 feet. A snowy ridge, moated by huge ice-cliffs, divides the Zanner and Adish névés, and connects Tetnuld with watershed. It abuts against the secondary summit, shaped like a Tartar saddle, between Djanga and D. and D.'s peak. Koshtantau looks well, but is almost completely snow-coated. Dychtau is comparatively ineffective. The most distant point of Shkara is the highest.

I put the peaks tentatively as follows:—Shkara, 17,200 feet; Koshtantau, 17,096 feet (5-verst map); Dychtau, 16,925 feet (5-verst map); Djanga, 16,900 feet; Tetnuld, 16,700 feet; Gestcla (D. and D.'s peak), 16,550 feet. At any rate, these are the six giants of the central group, and four, if not all of them, come between Elbruz (18,526 feet) and Kazbek (16,546 feet).*

* I use, without hesitation, the name Tetnuld for the peak I climbed. It is the peak conspicuous throughout Suanetia, and described by that name by the visitors to that valley, from Dr. Radde to M. de Déchy. It is also so called by the natives. It is a curious accident that, on the watershed almost in a line with it, and less than two miles distant, there should be another peak very similar in form and almost

Elbruz, as we rose, lifted itself higher and higher above all the rock-peaks of the main chain, and now stood up supreme, a great white throne. Absolutely impossible to detect with the eye any difference in height between its two peaks, or those of Ushba. As the E. peak of Elbruz is nearer it may well be lower, and I do not wish to throw doubt on the published measurements. I fancy the N. peak of Ushba is a few feet the higher of the two. Reach summit at 1.15 P.M., leave at 2. Descend to bivouac in five hours without difficulties, avoiding lower séracs by keeping to the left side of the glacier. No sign of our party on slopes beside Zanner Glacier. Sup on contents of one of Silver's admirable self-cooking soup-tins. Make guides pile up rhododendron branches, and sit beside the blaze watching Ushba fade into a shadow among the marvellously bright stars; but no answering signal according to agreement. Find guides sound asleep. Night cold.

7th.—Rouse guides, and get off by 5 A.M. Glacier surface hard-frozen, and hour's descent trying to stiff limbs. Succeeding steep ascent beside Zanner Glacier still more so for laden guides. François first discovers tracks of our party. At top of ascent (9,000 feet) find their camp. Fire had been lit behind a boulder where we could not see it. Huge glacier basin opened out, with Gestola N. and Tetnuld S.; the peaks both beautiful snow pyramids, their lower slopes cut off by tremendous séracs and icecliffs. After an hour and a half of level ice strike up rocks W. of lofty icefall, coming from higher basin N. Hard steep slopes, where a slip would be nasty. On reaching top, Joseph hails caravan, thirteen in number, sitting on snow on further side of icefall. They have mounted the opposite bank. Catch them up at

equal in height. It was natural that A. W. Moore should have thought that he recognised in the peak on the watershed seen from the Bezingi Glacier the Tetnuld of Suanetia. But the two mountains are quite as distinct as the Weisshorn and Dent Blanche. Whether the peak on the watershed should be called Gestola is a question of far more doubt. The name has no authority beyond that of the 5-verst map, and I use it provisionally, knowing no better. I have omitted the prefix Tau in the case of all the Suanetian mountains. I first used it through reading a G (Gora) as a T on the map. Tau is Tartar, and is applied by the Mohammedans N. of the chain to a high peak or pass, *e.g.* Minghi Tau, Adyr Tau. Compare the Tauern of the Tyrolese Alps. Mr. Donkin's map requires correction as to everything S. of the watershed, except the actual position of Tetnuld and the spur it stands on.

about 10.30 A.M., and fall on provisions. Porters, an absurd group with blackened faces and all sorts of apologies for veils. They decline—not unnaturally—to relieve guides of their heavy loads. Third steep ascent to the upper snow reservoirs; immense undulations; snow growing soft. Hours pass in slow advance; porters begin to wander uncertainly. I insist on making for gap at base of rocks far ahead. Mists pass over. Porters sit down and pray: seem to have by heart a form of prayer suitable to the emergency; hailing the sun when it begins to pierce with a jubilant hymn or howl. I go ahead, and try to force the pace. Snow dreadfully soft. We are all fairly bemisted for a time, but rocks on left keep us straight. At last, at 6 P.M., thirteen hours after leaving bivouac, we stand on crest of the Caucasus, looking across to the great peaks and down on the basin of the Bezingi Glacier. All the range from Gestola to Shkara clear in evening light. What a prodigious array of snowy cliffs and crests! Opposite Koshtantau (Guluku) a huge rock-peak with two high shoulders; no mountain view I have ever seen approaches this in sublimity. The hour, of course, added to its impressiveness.

We now found cause of disuse of pass. High cornice and Bergschrund on further side. Perfectly easy descent, however, from point 150 feet higher to our left by a rib of rocks and snow-slope. We descended. Porters refused to stir. They sat on the crest and screamed like pigs being put on board a steamer. The poor Cossack and we got hoarse in adjuring them. At last three tied themselves with the Cossack and ventured. They got down the rocks, and then tumbled all of a heap over the Bergschrund, which was not open enough to engulf a stick, much less a man. Cossack lost his dagger. The remainder followed with ludicrous precautions. I never saw men in such terror at so little. I should have liked some of the ignorant critics who think mountain people are necessarily mountaineers to have seen our Suanetian troupe. More than an hour was consumed in this five minutes' descent.

7 P.M.—Hastened across small soft névé to ridge of rocks marked by stonemen. Here, as it was already growing dark, we proposed to halt. Fortunately the porters insisted on going on, and as the wind was blowing bitterly we agreed. Ran down 1,000 feet over slopes of soft slate to the first level, about 1,800 feet below pass, and as much above Bezingi Glacier. Pitched tents rapidly in the dark, and warmed Silver's soups. Porters chanted triumphantly a ballad of Queen Tamara,

borrowed our ice-axes to dig themselves beds, rolled themselves up in their bourkas, and were soon asleep.

8th.—Koshtantau clear early, but cloud on Shkara. Walk back to stonemen with Joseph to recover aneroid, see panorama once more, and in hopes of seeing a bouquetin. None visible, though fresh tracks abound. For the second time I saw no wild animal during my whole journey. Showers begin. Return to camp and determine to descend towards Bezingi. Grass slopes to great glacier. Find flocks and shepherds. Porters take to ice. Long laborious walk in drenching rain over a geological museum of boulders of every kind of gneiss, granite, and slates. Pick up small fragment half slate, half granite. We make a mistake in leaving glacier on left bank of torrent, and descending a long hour over stony ground, instead of camping on right bank at opening of Mishirgi glen. Pouring rain, no fire possible; two porters sent on to Bezingi to order horses for next day. Michel confesses to suffering from a frostbitten foot since Tetnuld. Cossack nearly snow-blind, and in great pain.

9th.—At 7 A.M. mist; an hour later blue sky. I started at once back to Mishirgi Glacier with François. Crossed front of Bezingi Glacier; snowpeaks glorious. Left François opposite Kosh. Went on alone up grassgrown moraine on S. side of Mishirgi Glacier, a pleasant path, to spot where this abuts against the mountain-side. Then walked out and on into centre of glacier (10,000 feet). Full view of N. face of Koshtantau and extraordinarily steep range connecting it with Dychtau; latter peak out of sight at the end of a further bay of the glacier. Very warm; enjoyed invigorating bath in glacier pool, and returned delighted with my solitary ramble in this wonderful mountain recess. (See M. de Déchy's excellent photographs of Mishirgi Glacier; he has just not got a view of Koshtantau among them.)

The glaciers of the central group are generally advancing, after a period of retreat. Their advance is demonstrated in this way. In the Caucasus moraines grow quickly green. Fresh piles of rubbish have been shot in many places down the grass quite recently. This greenness—one of the characteristic beauties of the Western Caucasus—is, I fear, conclusive proof of a moist climate. However, I only had four wet days and two half wet days in six weeks.

Returned to camp. Grateful to find M. de Déchy with lunch and horses all ready. Strode and rode down to Bezingi over flowery pastures in little more than two hours (3 hours 15 minutes from Bezingi Glacier). Guest-house damp and

squalid. Seven-foot chief produced a bundle of letters for me out of his sheepskin coat, and the box of provisions from Naltshik.

Looked at Michel's foot and did not like it. Foot generally inflamed.

10th.—Have to speak decidedly as to prices of provisions. Bezingi is in a transitional state. Old custom of hospitality breaking down, and new tariff very elastic. Chief sends us one loaf broken into fragments to make it look larger. Michel left in charge of chief's son. We take horses and go up side valley, which according to Russian map ought to lead to the noble peak the map-makers call Dychtau. [The Dychtau of the natives is probably the range over the Dychnu glacier; otherwise Shkara.] Dull scenery. Many pasturages. Buy sheep. Camp near good-sized glacier in E. branch of valley.

11th.—Ascend glacier to point commanding view of its head. Upper ridges of Dychtau apparently fenced in by icefalls and cliffs. M. de Déchy photographs. I suffer from a preconceived idea that the W. glen will furnish a way to Dychtau. Top of peak visible at its head I assert to be Dychtau, against the opinion of François and M. de Déchy. Main source of my delusion was not sufficiently disregarding topographical details of 5-verst map. I resolve anyhow to climb the peak.

M. de Déchy proposed that, in order to send back Michel by next steamer, and visit Basardjusi in Eastern Caucasus (which he had long been urging on me), we should give up Balkar; and offered to return himself at once to Bezingi, ride down to Naltshik and devote a day to repacking, so that on my arrival, twenty-four hours later, we might go on at once to Vladikafkaz. This arrangement I agreed to, mainly influenced by Michel's condition, which was a blow to my hopes of further climbing, and also a source of some anxiety.

François, Joseph, and I proceed up glen with small tent, camp on rock-strewn plain (10,000 feet), at junction of torrents from two glaciers. Cold night, guides not having brought enough wraps.

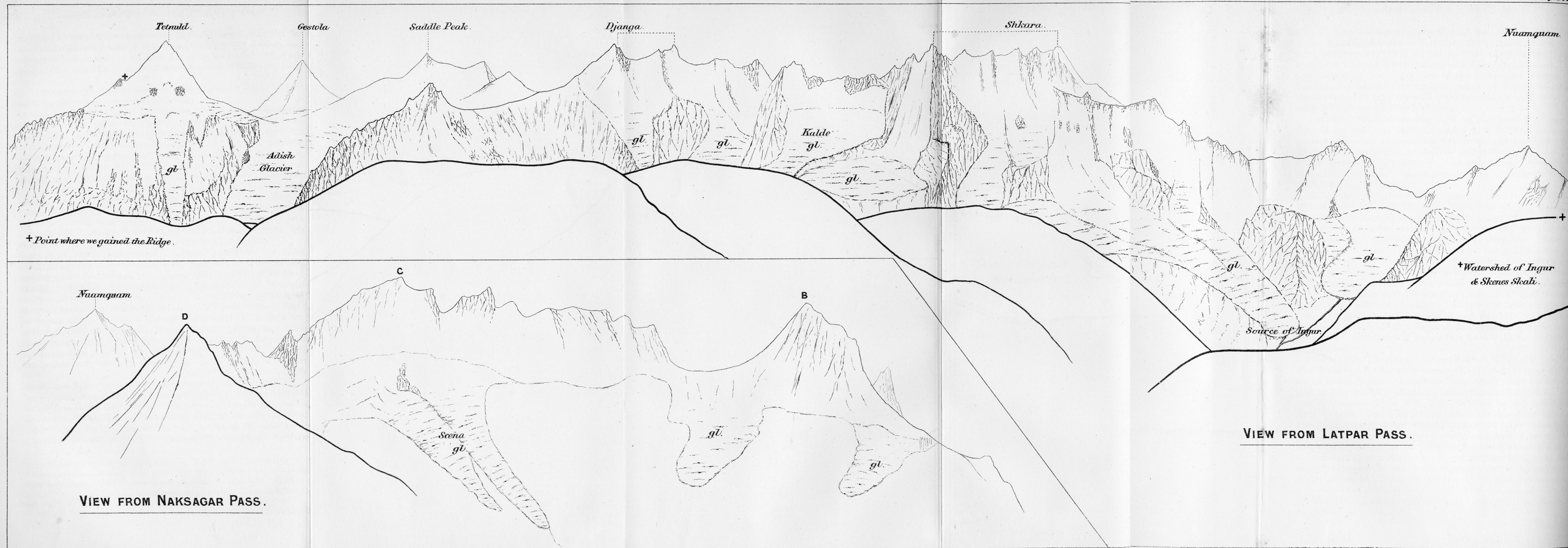
12th.—Start at 2 A.M. on glorious morning. François finds his way admirably, in the light of a waning moon, up steep rocks, over very rough ground, and across hard snow-slopes. By a golden dawn we enter a charming little glacier cirque, as flat as a cricket ground; ascend steep snow between green crevasses to northern ridge of peak ($3\frac{1}{2}$ hours). Large glacier on further side with broad snow-peak beyond

it. Ridge barred by a rock-tower. Obvious breach blocked by boulders. Joseph tries right, and finds rocks difficult; I left, and discover practicable ledge. The crest beyond is long and steep, but nowhere difficult. Keep to rocks as much as possible, owing to detestable condition of snow. Reach summit 9.30 A.M. in about three hours' climbing from foot of ridge. Fine top and glorious panorama—Mishirgi Glacier at our feet; magnificent N. face of Koshtantau, seven thousand feet of Caucasian snow-cliffs, immediately opposite—a sight never seen before by mortal eyes—top of Dychtau only visible over shoulder of broad intervening snow-crest. Saw several avalanches fall from cliffs E. of Koshtantau. Ushba, Tetnuld, and Gestola in sight; Shkara and Djanga hidden; Kazbek in the E.; beautiful far-away views of the steppe beyond Vladikafkaz and Pätigorsk. Glacier group N. of Uruch makes a grand show, seems to have several peaks of about 15,000 feet. Elbruz enormous as usual. Complete and interesting sight of the long lofty spur between Tchegem and Urusbieh. Its peaks are, for the Caucasus, tame, and there are at least three practicable passes over its glaciers.

Our peak may be the Mishirgi Tau of Mr. Donkin's photograph. Aneroid gives it over 15,200 feet. M. de Déchy thinks the villagers at Bezingi (it is the highest summit on the E. side of the valley visible from the village) call it Uku.

Rested a long time on the top and on the ridge, enjoying the view, the beautiful colours of the distances, and the magnificent snowcliffs opposite. Descended easy but long tiresome slope to the E. glacier. 'Tire' perhaps in ourselves partly, for we had done a good week's work. Glacier sloshy or stony. Bread ran short. Were successful in getting horse left at Kosh recaptured and loaded. Got back easily to Bezingi by 7 P.M. Found provisions left out for us, asked for samovar, and cooked our supper. Chief's son distinguished himself by making me understand that if he 'sped the parting guest,' M. de Déchy had promised that I would give him an English knife.

13th.—Up at 4 A.M. Horses caught and saddled by 6, so young chief got his knife. Beautiful day and pleasant ride. Valley scenery in morning lights an agreeable surprise. Castle on opposite hill, above upper end of defile. Beautiful glimpses of our peak, then of Djanga and Koshtantau from gorge; lunch by stream at foot of ascent—four hours. Splendid views all the way up of the lawns and forests to



the E., and the snow-peaks behind us. Cross ridge and enter Naltshik forest; halt on its edge in glade paved with wild sunflowers; wood romantic but interminable; path execrable at first, then improves and follows stream bed. To avoid wetting his boots one of our horsemen jumps up behind me; becomes a nuisance when he begins to chant Tartar melodies into my ears; shake him off and wind up with a brisk canter into Naltshik.

I suffered from streaming cold in the head for twenty-four hours, the only indisposition I had in the Caucasus; guides also were in excellent health except on first pass. Mountain climate is most healthy and invigorating.

On arrival M. de Déchy announces that, owing to a change in his family arrangements, he intends to return next morning to Odessa.

14th.—No sleep, revolving plans. Decide, chiefly on Michel's account, still to go to Tiflis, and thence either to Basardjusi or back by the Mingrelian valleys to Suanetia—if I can find an interpreter. There is no one at Naltshik this year who speaks any tongue but Russian. Start in telegas at daybreak. At station I and the guides leave for Vladikafkaz, and M. de Déchy for Rostoff. Out of thirty-five dozen plates he brought out he takes home nine dozen negatives of Caucasian glaciers and groups. Thanks to M. Boichevsky, the governor's secretary, arrangements for crossing Dariel are speedily made. Diligence tickets for guides. I find at hotel a Russian colonel and his wife, with whom I share a carriage. Doctor sees Michel, and advises complete rest. Comfortable bed, after twenty-three nights of substitutes.

15th.—Over Krestowaja Gora to Mleti, 10 hours' posting. The scenery of this road—even the Dariel gorge—struck me as insignificant. Travellers who think that by driving over it they see 'the Caucasus' are grievously deluded.

16th.—Reach Tiflis 3.30 p.m., in time to pay calls and visit bazaar. Dr. von Radde dissuades me from Basardjusi, on the ground that the mountains are more interesting geologically than for their scenery, and hardly worth the long journey except as part of a Daghestan-Kakhetia circuit.

17th.—Despatch Michel home *via* Batoum and Constantinople.* Inspect Dr. von Radde's most interesting and artistically arranged Caucasian Museum. In the afternoon one

* He got home without difficulty, and has completely recovered the use of his foot.

of the thunderstorms Tiflis is famous for burst. I was imprisoned while making purchases in the Persian khan and forced to take refuge on upper floor. Extraordinary sight; shops turned into waterspouts and streets into raging torrents.

18th.—Train to Kutais; Bakou line broken by storm.

19th.—Interview three interpreters; showy Mingrelian, apathetic young Swiss, and wiry middle-aged German. Secure the German. Capture in government offices two boxes sent off from Vladikafkaz. Set up in provisions. Cloudless weather sets in. Two young Germans in the hotel with a Kals (Tyrolese) guide and an interpreter, slowly preparing to start for Betsho and Urusbieh.* Get off in light marching-order without tents in afternoon, and ride 20 versts up Rion on the Mainisson carriage-road.

20th.—By Rion valley and low sunny pass to Zagiri. Sleep at Duchan (wine-shop). Meet our Suanetian Cossack and hear of the recovery of M. de Déchy's effects stolen at the Adish Glacier. The culprit was a native of the village.

21st.—Difficulty in getting horses owing to desultory officials. Nachalnik absent. Picturesque parties of church-goers pour in. Fine ride up narrow valley of Skenes Skali to Lentechi. After further delay our interpreter distinguishes himself by engaging fresh horses to Ushkul. Above Lentechi superb forest scenery. Pines and beeches of an 'unbelievable height.' Night falls and the woods are lit up with multitudes of fires, and noisy with the sound of small gongs and answering shouts. All the male population are afield to keep off the bears from the maize crops. Halt at the first house in Tcholor. The female garrison refuse us admission in the absence of their protectors, and we sleep under an open shed.

22nd.—The ascent to the Latpar pass is long and steep but picturesque. On the pass we find Herr Zumstein, of Gressoney, and Mons. R. Lerco, with an Oberland guide and an interpreter, bound for Elbruz, Kazbek, and Ararat.† Glorious panorama of southern side of central group (see sketch), with all its peaks and glaciers. The path descends along a

* I learn from the *Æster. Alpenzeitung* that this guide reports that his party were driven back by storm from Elbruz on September 1 'without being able to ascertain whether they had reached the top,' and that they also failed in two attempts on Kazbek.

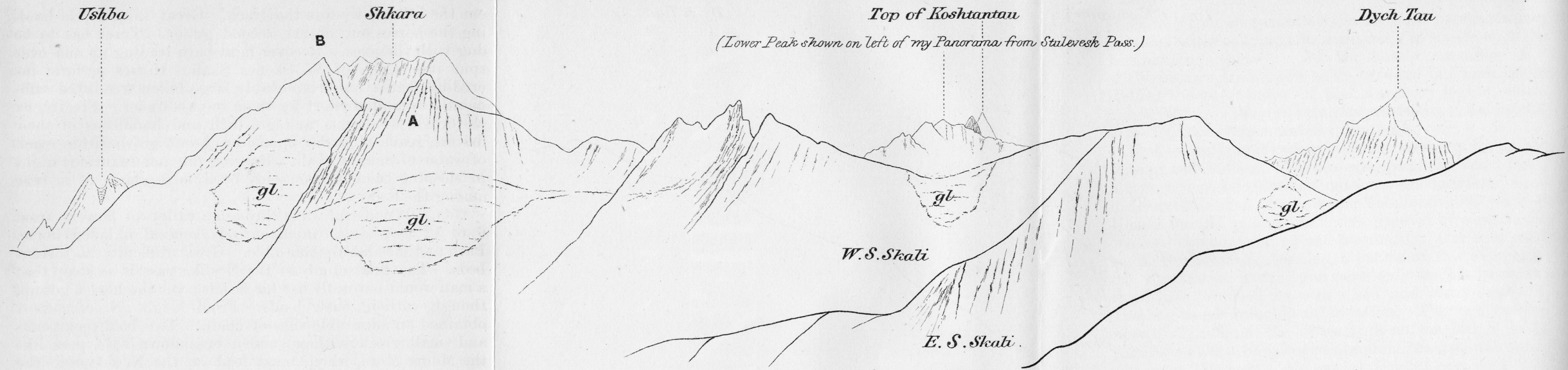
† According to a letter of M. Lerco (*Rivista* of the I. A. Club for Sept., p. 292), this party succeeded in ascending Elbruz and Kazbek.

projecting spur commanding the loveliest prospects over the hills and valleys of Suanetia, swimming in sunshine, to Ushba, Tetnuld and Shkara. Tetnuld closely resembles N. face of Weisshorn, and looks noble between the birch branches. Halt at the guest-house of Kal, a solitary loghut, clean and comfortable. Villagers bring us provisions. Ushba clear at sunset. Day of memorable splendours.

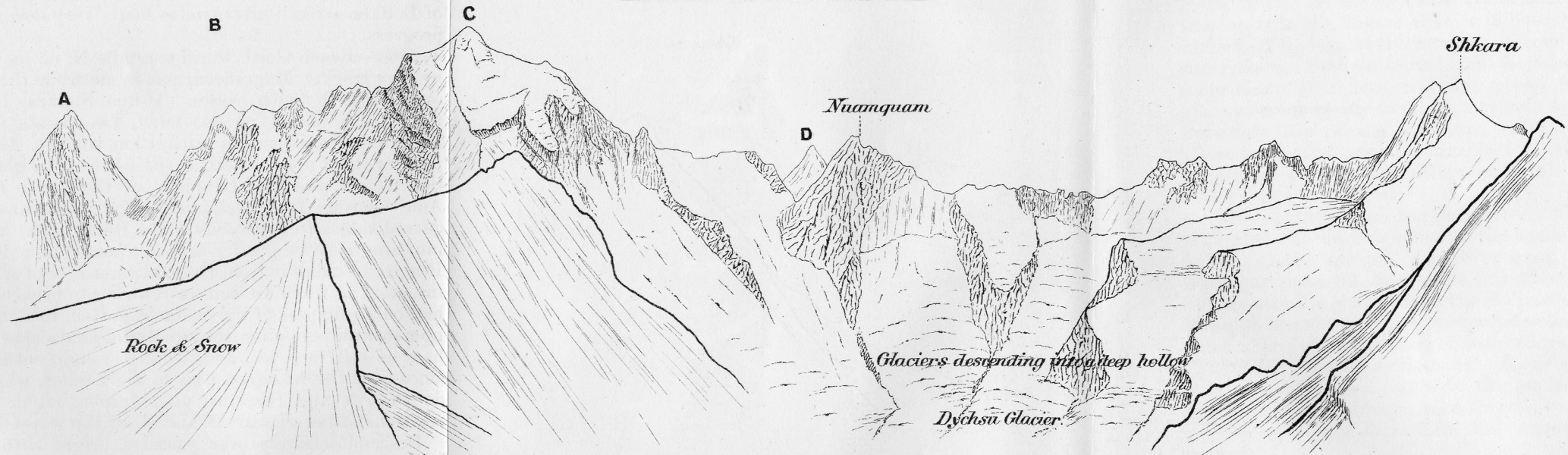
23rd.—Glorious morning. Noble view up Kalde glen of Djanga and Shkara. See the stumps of the razed towers of Kalde, where two Russian officers were murdered in 1876. Ride up to Ushkul. On entering Tshubiani (300 yards below Jibiani, our old quarters in 1868), greeted by a gentleman in civilised costume and offered hospitality. Our host proves to be M. Bussarion Nichoradse, a native of the village, now a schoolmaster at Kutais, and here only for his summer holidays. He provided me with a bed and many comforts, and gave me much valuable information. The two castles, one close to Tshubiani, the other high on the hill S. of it, are popularly held to have been the summer and winter residences of Queen Tamara. No one at Ushkul can read Russian, and the Starshina keeps all the official papers unopened in a locked chest. There is a priest paid 40*l.* a year by the government; he enjoys a sinecure. Rode on to the source of the Ingur in the Shkara Glacier (2 hours). My horse nearly carried off its legs in the torrent. Climb grassy ridge opposite Shkara. Find on brow (9,500 feet) two stonemen. The stupendous precipices and five peaks full in front; two glaciers meet at my feet. A tiny blue tarn close by. The Belvedere Alp of the Caucasus. Reluctantly turn back. There is no direct way practicable for native porters, either from here or the next valley eastwards to the Dych Su Glacier, as I had hoped.

24th.—Engage fresh baggage horses, which are not ready till 9 A.M. Spend two hours on the castle hill of Tshubiani in view of the snows. Path over great hay downs to the Naksagar pass. A few yards left there is a grand view of Shkara and the peaks round the Scena valley. (See sketch.) Pleasant descent through rampant flowers. Scenery culminates where, at the meeting of two valleys, four families from Ushkul have made a settlement. Their barleyfields and loghuts give life and a centre to the landscape. Magnificent woods of various foliage, pine-forests, rock-peaks. Shkara, resembling Monte Rosa from Val Anzasca, fills the background.

Good path ceases. Where two ravines deepened by rains



VIEW FROM GORIBOLO PASS.



CAUCASIAN CHAIN ABOVE DYCHSU GLACIER. (1868)

cut the hillside we lose the track. Great difficulty in hauling the horses out of the second gully. Track has to be dug with the axes. Recover faint path leading up and over spur into valley of W. Skenes Skali. Horses perform incredible feats; one irremovably large fallen tree lifted sufficiently by united effort for them to pass under. Finally, by cleverness of beasts and goodwill and handiness of their drivers, reach at dusk commodious beech grove within reach of water of Skenes Skali. Roaring fire and luxurious night in sleeping-bags, broken only by a false alarm of a bear among the horses.

25th.—Wonderful wade through a valley of flowers from 6 to 12 feet high, which entirely conceal a laden horse. Path at times hardly traceable. Great difficulty in torrent beds. The final climb to the Noshka pass is so steep that a man would naturally use his hands; yet the horses got up, though without their loads. From height N. of pass I obtained an admirable view of chain. Two bold rock peaks and small glaciers, then sudden breakdown to a pass like the Monte Moro, which must lead on the N. side onto the glacier in front of my sketch of view from the Stuleveesk pass (see 'Central Caucasus,' p. 381). Descent short and comparatively easy; reach at 6 P.M. birch-bark shelter on bank of E. Skenes Skali after twelve hours' very slow and toilsome progress.

26th.—Reach Goribolo ridge a mile N. of its lowest point by easy track. Magnificent panorama from the grass crest over which the path passes. Ushba, Shkara, Dychtau, and top of Koshtantau on one hand, two passes (Edenis Mta and Pass Mta) opposite with Rion sources. E. the great peak of the Upper Uruch, at the head of the glaciers of the Sopchetura, the first tributary of the Rion; Burdjula and Adai Choch. (See sketches.) The mountains descend in curved ridges to the woods of the Rion basin. Shoda, a very imposing isolated glacier-capped summit in S. lateral chain. Resolve to climb it from Gebi, in pursuance of A. W. Moore's intention in 1868. In that year, owing to broken weather, we had only glimpses of the chain from Gebi to Betsho. I have now seen in perfection the wonderful landscapes I thought I had missed for ever, and secured rough outlines of both sides from the Karagam pass to the Zanner, which, with M. de Déchy's and Donkin's photographs, ought to settle the relations of the glaciers S. and N. of the watershed.

Descend leisurely over pastures bright with golden crocuses to the Rion. Herds of horses and cattle from the

N. side feeding. One Karatchai Tartar, on being asked how many horses he had brought over, replied '*Sto*'—a hundred. Four hours down valley from Sassagonelli to Gebi; thirteen hours in all from bivouac.

At Gebi new church and guest-house, but old, inquisitive crowd; count over fifty in close circle in small room, and then employ François and Joseph as 'chuckers out.' A ragged ancient is discovered in inner room, and his cloak on the sleeping-bench. He asserts his right to stay there as guardian of the local archives, which are deposited in a padlocked cupboard. Forward his cloak out of window and himself out of doors, and send a decided message to the Starshina that I mean to be left alone. These measures succeed. An intelligent villager is appointed our purveyor, and procures meat, poultry, good wine, potatoes, and even sugar. Parted the best of friends with our Jibiani horsemen and their admirable beasts. Two of the men were thoroughly good fellows, and their pink tunics, black bashliks tied up in turbans, and handsome faces, will remain a pleasant foreground in my memories of our forest wanderings and camp-fires.

27th.—Festival. Village green bright with groups of women in red or blue robes, with long white scarves falling from the head over the back, and many rows of amber beads. Where do they get the amber? Some very handsome girls. Found churchyard full of basketfuls of eatables—the fruit of the earth. Priest blessing them inside. Recognised and shaken hands with often, which shows that if the Gebi folk stare hard it is to some purpose! One of our old porters inquired after 'Paul and Franski.'

Set off in afternoon to sleep out for Shoda. Pleasant path through beech forest to pasturage at foot of limestone crags in glen on E. side of mountain. Grand sunset view of Adai Choch group. Two peaks new to me visible N.W. of Adai Choch; probably near head of Skatykom valley—one a doubleheaded rock-peak, the other a blunt snowy crest, which holds the sunset last of all. They appear to be as high as, if not higher than, Adai Choch itself. Cold wind drives us into well-built birch-bark hut; but we pay dearly for our shelter.

28th.—Morning doubtful. Up steep freshly-mown slope to ridge springing from Shoda; traverse rough ground under crags to base of chimney between them and the peak. Crumbly shale chimney to ridge, and easy climb along it up to the glacier-cap. The ice falls in avalanches down inaccessible cliffs

into the glen W. of ours. About 600 feet of snow-slope to the top. Mists unluckily prevail, and the panorama is lost—the only view lost in this year's journey! The Russian measurement, 11,128 feet, seems to me low. The aneroid showed 7,400 feet of difference between the top and Gebi, which would make the peak what it looks—11,900 feet. It has, I believe, been reached by natives. We found hay, obviously from a hunter's shoes, on the ridge below the glacier. Descend directly steep slopes from ridge to head of glen. Fine views as mists clear; seven hours up from Gebi, five from Kosh.

29th.—Ride to Oni. Great, but light sun-heat in middle of day. No horses at Oni. Arrange with an old Shylock-like Mingrelian to bring them next morning at daybreak. Fine view of our old Karagam Pass from bridge. Warm night. Sleep in balcony of wretched Duchan. Disturbed by dogs.

30th.—Horses not collected till 7 A.M. Down Rion valley for four hours. Large gangs of natives at work on road. Carriages are to pass the Mamisson next year! They will not continue to pass it for many months unless the engineers pay more attention to the protection of the road from floods. Long dull ascent to Nikhortsminda. Farewell view of Adai Choch group, followed by a delightful ride through the romantic Nakarala forest; gigantic pines and planes and beeches, with an undergrowth of bay, box, laurel, and azalea; rocks and pools, like Fontainebleau. Sudden view of the lowlands and mists under sunset glow from gap at the south-western edge of this great limestone plateau. Steep and long descent down a streak of boulders called a road; then by zig-zags in forest. 'Gostinitza London' and railway station of Khibouli at 9 P.M. Gale at night rocks house.

31st.—Line made for coal traffic; not yet open for passengers. Ride of 35 versts over hills and commons to Kutais. Visit monastery of Ghelati. Farewell view of Shkara and Tetnuld from last hill above Rion. Through pomegranate hedges and dusty streets of Kutais to Hôtel de France. Part from our interpreter, who had served me admirably throughout.

In this second portion of my journey I fairly tested the chances of the traveller with no government papers or special advantages. We got on excellently. I come to the conclusion that the prospect of pay, something in excess of Russian prices, is often quite as efficacious as official documents in procuring speedily horses or provisions; and that *as a rule* the private traveller with a competent interpreter is under no

disadvantage. The exception is in such a journey as that from Naltshik to Urusbieh, where official help doubtless saved us delay. In *fine weather* sleeping bags are an excellent substitute for a tent.

Left, in a thunderstorm, by the evening train for Batoum. *September 1st.*—Mists low on hills. Hothouse atmosphere. Embarked on Austrian-Lloyd steamer for Constantinople. Guides went on by sea to Venice. I returned by Varna and the Orient Express.

I have left myself, I find, too little room for the generalisations from my recent experiences with which I had meant to conclude. I can state but a few. I do not think much of the necessary difficulties and hardships of Caucasian travel. M. de Déchy has conclusively shown the possibility of transporting backwards and forwards, even across the most icy and formidable portion of the great chain, baggage largely exceeding in bulk that necessary to the ordinary mountaineer. We found the natives, on the whole, good travellers when once on the road. I believe, and Mr. Peacock, H.B.M.'s Vice-Consul at Batoum, who knows the mountains of the Caucasus better perhaps than any Englishman, entirely confirms me, that most of Dent and Donkin's difficulties were owing to their worthless interpreter. And my enquiries in the country all lead me to the conclusion that the attack of fever, from which the second party of Alpine Clubmen in 1874 suffered, was an unfortunate accident, due mainly to their having been entirely off their guard. This was A. W. Moore's own opinion. Soukhoum Kaleh is, no doubt, the most dangerous point of entrance and exit; but my German interpreter had made several journeys from that port into Abkhasia in which neither he nor his companions had suffered.

The Caucasus, in my opinion, has in many ways advanced in the last twenty years, and is now ripe for Alpine Clubmen. *Alpine Clubmen* I have written; but I mean men of the stamp of the early explorers of the Alps, accustomed to rough lodging and living—travellers as well as mountaineers. To climbers who have seldom been beyond the 'three centres,' who consider Cogne and Pontresina far off, who delight in *tables d'hôte* and depend upon huts, who have made a 'recrd' by being nursed by two great guides up some twenty great, and perfectly well-known peaks, it would be cruel to recommend the Caucasus. Caucasian explorers must, like the early explorers of the Pennine Alps, the Tyrol,

and Dauphiné, be men able to take care of themselves in difficulties, ready to take their share of petty privations and of hard work, even to exercise their own judgment in critical moments. I lay stress on the last point, for I feel sure that the majority of guides will at first be inclined to reason from their past experience without making sufficient allowance for the altered conditions of a new field of action, and that their decisions will need the revision of men on their guard against the possible danger of trusting to what Mr. Dent has called 'acquired instinct,' where it is no longer applicable.

I had great good fortune in weather and health. Ill luck, first and worst, in the condition of the peaks and passes, owing to an abnormal winter and unsettled early summer; next, in my strongest guide being frostbitten, and in the want of a climbing companion.

The winter, I was assured by good observers, such as Dr. von Radde and Mr. Peacock, had lasted two months longer than usual. There had been no heat in Tiflis up to the middle of August! The consequence was that the glaciers were coated, and the rock-peaks laden with snow in the worst possible condition, such as one sometimes finds in the Alps in June. In an ordinary season and with the support of all my companions, we might have fairly hoped to conquer not one but three of the great peaks. As a climber (and among virgin snows I found the old passion as strong as ever) my share of success does not satisfy me; but, on the other hand, I saw more scenery in perfection, acquired more topographical and general information, and suffered less from fatigue or hardship than I had imagined possible. My first object was to enjoy myself. In that I succeeded. My second was to remove some bugbears, and to show the younger members of the Alpine Club where, if they have the same tastes and energy as its founders, their work now lies; and how they should set about it. Whether I shall succeed in this or not it is for them to decide.

The imperfections of the illustrations will be obvious. They are literal reproductions of rough sketches of my own of scenes not included among M. de Déchy's photographs. With the view published in this Journal (vol. xii. p. 318), they afford an almost complete panorama of the southern side of the main chain from Tetnuld to Adai Choch. In a subsequent number I hope to give a sketch-map, showing, with some approach to accuracy, the relations and dimensions of the peaks, passes, and glaciers of the great central group.