victims to a band of 'Bohemians' who were lurking 'in the forests of the Alps.' These outlaws had been bold enough to enter villages and plunder houses in open daylight. 'The Chamoniards had turned out in a body to hunt them as if they had been wild beasts.' Fortunately for the Bohemians they had escaped, for if caught they would assuredly have been put to death without any form of trial. Saussure concludes by lamenting that he shall have henceforth to give up his solitary rambles on the heights round Geneva. DOUGLAS W. FRESHFIELD.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES.

Kaukasus. Reisen und Forschungen im kaukasischen Hochgebirge. Von Moriz von Déchy. (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer. 1905.)

IF it is difficult for a mountaineer to explain the fascination which draws him year after year to the Alps, it is even more difficult to define the subtle influence which seems to exist in the very air of the Caucasus, which fixes scenes, sounds, impressions, and experiences so vividly and deeply in the memory and which has led so many travellers to repeat their visits to that magnificent mountain region.

Herr von Déchy must have felt the power of this mysterious charm in an exceptional degree, since he has made no less than seven expeditions to various parts of the chain, and his enthusiastic admiration for the great range has impelled him to take an important part in its exploration.

It is not easy at the present day to realise that only forty years ago so very little was known, even by geographers and scientists, about the mountains and glaciers of the Caucasus, nor is it easy to understand why this ignorance died so hard and why, even for years after Mr. Freshfield's party of 1868 had drawn aside the veil, the old legend about the insignificance of the Caucasian glaciers lingered on with a vitality which seems to be characteristic of geographical myths.

In the course of the last twenty-five years, however, the ice-axe and camera have again been at work in the mountains, and it is in no small measure owing to the improvements made during the same period in photographic methods and processes that the magnitude of the Caucasian glaciers and the grandeur of the scenery have now become subjects of common knowledge. The modest octavos of the sixties and seventies have been succeeded by Mr. Freshfield's splendidly illustrated 'Exploration' in 1896, by Dr. Merzbacher's comprehensive 'Kaukasus' in 1901, and now Herr v. Déchy gives us two lavishly illustrated quartos with the promise of a third to follow.

The author's method differs somewhat from that of the two previous writers, inasmuch as he does not devote special chapters to orography, ethnology, &c., but deals with these subjects in the

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narratives of his successive journeys. The plan of describing so many as seven expeditions independently has the disadvantage of taking the reader two or three times over the same ground in certain districts; on the other hand, it enables him to follow more clearly the various stages in the opening up of the Caucasus. The result, at all events, is a most readable book which, in respect of excellence of type, quality of illustrations, and general finish leaves nothing to be desired.

Volume I. contains the records of the author's first four journeys made in 1884, 1885, 1886, and 1887, and the first of these journeys marks the commencement of an important era. Since Mr. Grove's expedition ten years before no experienced mountaineers had visited the Central Caucasus, and to Herr v. Déchy belongs the credit of having inaugurated a new period of climbing activity by his ascent of a peak in the Adai Khokh group, of which a description was given in vol. xii. of the 'Alpine Journal.'

The account of this ascent is rather difficult to follow on the map; but the author has satisfied himself that the summit he climbed is the true Adai Khokh, the culminating point of the group, so that the splendid peak, Chanchakhi, which towers above the western approach to the Mamison Pass, must now be classed amongst the still numerous virgin Caucasian summits. Indeed there is still so much to be done in this interesting group, and it is so easily accessible by means of the Mamison Road, that it deserves more attention than it has hitherto received from mountaineers.

It was during this expedition that the second ascent of the N.W. peak of Elbruz was made. On this occasion the snow was in bad condition and the weather most unfavourable, and a graphic account is given of the arduous struggle with storm, cold and darkness before the party succeeded in regaining the bivouac. The author agrees with Mr. Freshfield in dismissing as incredible the story of the native Killar's ascent of the mountain in 1829. Another local tradition for which he failed to discover any substantial foundation is that of the alleged Hungarian origin of the Urusbieh family.

On this first visit Herr v. Déchy was accompanied by the Swiss guides A. Burgener and P. Ruppen; the following year, being intent chiefly on photographic and topographical work, he travelled without guides or interpreter, and relied solely on the assistance of the natives. After the usual difficulty in obtaining porters, and at the expense of much trouble, worry, and anxiety in managing them, he broke entirely new ground by crossing the main chain from the Baksan Valley to Suanetia by the Jiper-Azau Pass, and later returned to the N. side of the watershed by the Tviber Pass. Although the natives frequently drive cattle over this splendid glacier pass, Herr v. Déchy was the first traveller to accomplish the passage. Since that time the pass has been crossed on two occasions with laden horses, but not without difficulty and risk which no Swiss peasant would nowadays think of incurring in the Alps.

The object of the author's third expedition was to explore the

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main chain W. of Elbruz; but his plans were thwarted by the indolence and want of enterprise not only of the Teberdans but also of the Karachai Tartars, with whom he fared no better than Mr. Grove's party in 1874. Eventually he reached Urusbieh by making the circuit of the N. side of Elbruz. In 1885 and 1886 he devoted much time to glacier measurement in the Adai Khokh and Elbruz groups; his observations proved that the Azau Glacier had advanced, while during the same period the neighbouring Terskol Glacier—also fed by the snows of Elbruz—had slightly receded.

The story of the fourth journey made in 1887 in company with Mr. Freshfield is already familiar to English readers of Alpine literature. Moreover, Herr v. Déchy pays the author of 'The Exploration' the compliment of describing the crossing of the Zanner Pass, for the most part, in the latter writer's own words. After this expedition—with which volume I. concludes—the author abandoned the Central Caucasus to climbing specialists and to the government officers then engaged on the new survey, and ten years elapsed before he returned to the country to devote his attention henceforth to the less known Eastern and Western Caucasus.

The opening chapter of volume II. brings us to the year 1897, when Herr v. Déchy, accompanied by two Zillerthal guides—H. Moser and G. Kroll—repaired to the Chechen country, E. of Kazbek, explored the N. side of the Donos Range and ascended its highest peak, Datach Kort or Komito (4,272 mètres), not knowing at the time that it had been climbed in 1892 by Dr. Merzbacher, the explorer of the S. side of the Donos Range. After this ascent the author gained the Alasan Valley by the Kachu Pass, and, then travelling westward, crossing the Atsunta and four other passes and traversing the wild, lonely valleys and bare hills of the Khevsur country, made his way to the Georgian Military Road. Finally he climbed Kazbek by a variation of the route taken by the first successful party in 1868.

The following summer (1898) the author turned his attention once more to the Western Caucasus. Taking with him a Tirol guide—Unterberger—and six Karachai porters, he crossed the main chain by a new glacier pass—the Gonderai Pass (3,025 m.), descended the Gvandra Glen to its junction with the richly wooded Klych Valley, and returned to the N. side of the chain by the Klukhor Pass; he then made his way to the head of the Amanauz Valley, in the heart of the picturesque Klukhor Group, which has since been more fully explored by Herr v. Meck and Professor A. Fischer. On this occasion the Karachai porters belied their reputation by giving very little trouble, and, as is often the case with other Caucasians, when once induced to start completed their toilsome journey with patient endurance.

At this point Unterberger's health broke down, and after he had been conveyed to the railway Herr v. Déchy changed his plans and travelled eastward to Daghestan. Here he entered on a long journey southward, visited the Addala or Bogos Group—the scene

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of several of Dr. Merzbacher's ascents in 1892—traversed the Ikho and Sabakunis valleys, and finally reached Kakhetia by the Kodor Pass. This part of the Eastern Caucasus is a remarkable region; the numerous torrents, assisted by a heavy rainfall, have carved the whole country into a network of deep ravines and wonderful gorges, most interesting to the geologist and strikingly picturesque, but entailing endless labour to the traveller encumbered with baggage.

Four years later—*i.e.* in 1902—the author, with two Tirol guides, returned to Daghestan on his seventh and final visit to the Caucasus. Starting from Gunib (Schamyl's famous stronghold), he travelled southward through the hill country drained by the Kara Koisu, crossed the Julty Dagh, a mountain range with several summits of more than 4,000 m., and, after descending the Samur valley, made his way to the foot of Shalbuz, taking up his quarters at Kurush, said to be the highest village in the Caucasus, and finding it to be as dirty and malodorous as when visited by Messrs. Yeld and Baker in 1890. A few days later Basardjusi was ascended from the E., and then the party descended the Kussar valley to the sandy waste which borders the Caspian Sea near the mouths of the Samur.

Before leaving the country, however, Herr v. Déchy made one more excursion in the Western Caucasus, passing through a most interesting country, previously almost unknown to travellers. Procuring horses at Psebai, in the Kuban district, he ascended the valleys of the Little and Great Laba, traversing a region of dense forests—part of the hunting domain of the Grand Duke Sergius Mikhailovich—and, after crossing the main chain by the Tsagerker Pass, descended through the deserted valleys of Abkhasia to Sukhum Kale. The scenery is described as being most attractive. Although the Abkhasian Alps to the W. of the Marukh Pass cannot boast of extensive glaciers, their forms are strikingly picturesque, and the richly wooded valleys provide charming foregrounds to all the views.

On four of the expeditions, briefly outlined above, the author's wanderings were shared by one or more scientific companions—of these Professors Lojka and Hollós were botanists, and Doctors Schafarzik, Papp and Laczkó geologists. The results of their researches are promised in the forthcoming third volume.

The illustrations, considered whether as to their number, variety, or quality, form a most noteworthy feature of the book. Photographic work occupied a foremost place in the purpose of every journey, and Herr v. Déchy spared no pains to record every view or object of interest. As a result of his labours the 720 pages in the two volumes are embellished with over 400 illustrations in the text, in addition to the full-page and panoramic views.

Of the twenty-eight full-page photogravures almost every one is good, and the great majority are remarkably good; this description applies without exception to the portraits and groups of natives, in which one cannot but notice the natural and dignified attitudes

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which the Mohammedans, in particular, assume when before the camera. The conformation of the Caucasian mountain ranges is, as a rule, peculiarly favourable for obtaining panoramic views, and full advantage has been taken of this circumstance; the mountain panoramas—eighteen in number—are a valuable addition to the work.

The smaller photographs in the text are for the most part excellent, and some charming representations of fossils, weapons, ornaments, &c., have been happily adapted as tailpieces to many of the chapters. Considering the length of the journeys undertaken, the roughness of the country, the difficulties of transport and the many and various risks which beset the wandering photographer, the harvest of the author's industry must be regarded as most satisfactory.

The two sheets of Herr v. Déchy's map include the country between Pitsunda, on the Black Sea, and Derbend, on the Caspian, and thus contain all the important mountain groups from Shugus to Basardjusi. With a scale of 1 : 400,000 it must not be expected to satisfy the requirements of climbers; but as a convenient 'Uebersichtskarte' brought up to date, and showing clearly the mountain and river systems, it supplies a distinct want.

The book is essentially a record of personal travel, with descriptions of the districts traversed; but running through the accounts of the various journeys will be found much historical, ethnological and general information about this most interesting country. The author is at his best in narrating episodes of camp life and incidents of the road, and his unexaggerated and vivid descriptions of the distracting scenes with the natives will be appreciated by those who have passed through similar experiences.

There is something delightfully Caucasian about the story of the second journey through Suanetia, in which charming pictures of the exquisite scenery alternate with woeful tales of exasperation, bitterness and despair each time fresh horses have to be hired, when the landscape is invaded by a frenzied crowd of screaming, quarrelling natives, unconscious of the value of time and indifferent as to the fulfilment of their promises. Again, the author's description of his début as a medical practitioner at Urusbieh and of the miraculous cure of the comatose Tartar is excellent.

The reader who follows Herr v. Déchy on his series of trying and toilsome journeys through a difficult country cannot fail to be impressed by the energy and perseverance with which he has carried out his purpose. Although he did not ascend many of the higher peaks, he traversed a large number of passes, crossing the main watershed itself some fifteen times; and, as in the course of his exploration of between 400 and 500 miles of the Caucasian Range he visited every important mountain group from the Tsagerker Pass in the W. to Basardjusi in the E., his book might not inaptly be entitled 'The Caucasus from End to End.'

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