on the Geological Features of the latter Inferno is furnished by Mr. Harold Brodrick.

There are some excellent illustrations, *e.g.* of the Cevedale and Königspitze, of the Kleine Zinne, of Store Skagastölstind. We are pleased to notice a satisfactory increase in the numbers of the Club.

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE HIGHEST CLIMBS ON RECORD.

To the Editor of the ALPINE JOURNAL.

SIR,—In the November number of the 'Alpine Journal,' on pp. 626–628, Messrs. Collie and Garwood criticise the use of the term 'record' in the title of a paper by myself which appeared in the 'Alpine Journal' of August 1905.

May I be permitted to say I used the term 'record' after mature reflection, having read Mr. Graham's account as well as what Mr. Freshfield and others have written on the subject, and being somewhat conversant with what has been said in different parts of the world concerning Mr. Graham's claim? The foot note on p. 506 states clearly my reason for such use, which does not commit me to any opinion as to whether Mr. Graham did or did not make the ascent claimed.

Further discussion of the possibility, the probability, or the reality of that ascent seems to me to be futile, since under the circumstances and so long after the event no satisfactory conclusion appears likely to be reached, and the question will probably remain a matter of individual judgment. The best way to lay some of the ghosts that have sprung up in connection with it would be for some one to make the ascent of Kabru, in which case certainty would take the place of speculation regarding them.

An important fact, which cannot be ignored, is that Mr. Graham's claim is disputed. It has been disputed from the first, and Mr. Freshfield's elaborate and carefully written arguments have failed to convince mountaineers in general, as well as others, of its credibility. As doubtful and disputed results are not usually placed against acknowledged ones, why should an exception be made to the rule in this case? On this ground I think the word referred to is properly and justifiably used.

The letters of Messrs. Collie and Garwood leave the matter just where it stood before. Nothing is added to what Mr. Freshfield, whom both writers cite as authority, has already said. If Mr. Graham's account appears to them convincing they are perfectly justified in believing it, but their belief does not prove that Mr. Graham climbed Kabru, or that his disputed ascent should stand as a *fait accompli*.

May I call attention to three points in these letters? (1) Professor Collie states that Mr. Graham climbed 20,000 ft. on A 22,

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and reached 22,700 ft. on Dunagiri, showing that he was capable of climbing to nearly 23,000 ft. without suffering very greatly from altitude, as evidence that he might climb to 24,000 ft. on Kabru.

If it be true that he had no barometer—and even if he had one he had no corresponding readings at a measured lower station to compare its readings with—what is to be judged as to the accuracy of these two altitudes? They are simply estimates, which may be wide of the truth and ought not to be admitted as evidence in the argument.

(2) Sir Martin Conway is not the only 'competent authority' who holds an opinion adverse to Mr. Graham's claim. Col. Waddell, who has a right to be considered a good authority on the topography of as well as other matters pertaining to Sikhim, devotes considerable space in his book 'In the Himalaya' to contesting Mr. Graham's ascent. Prominent members of the Indian Survey, and among them some of its highest officials, whose knowledge of the circumstances attending Mr. Graham's Sikhim expeditions, and of the region around Kabru, as well as their professional attainments, entitles their opinion to weight, have expressed their disbelief in decided terms. Germans, whose ability to analyse and weigh evidence cannot be called inferior to that of other peoples, refer to the matter as a 'dunkle Frage.' And, finally, among leading Alpine guides, who have learned of circumstances unknown to the general public through means of information peculiar to their craft, there is a sentiment of incredulity based on reasons that appear worthy of consideration.

(3) Mr. Garwood states that Mr. Freshfield and he camped for several days in 'immediate proximity' to Kabru, and 'agreed that there was no special obstacle to an ascent having been made.' It does not follow that because they camped near the mountain they could correctly estimate the obstacles it might offer to an ascent. It is by no means always easy even for experienced mountaineers to determine from below what obstacles will be encountered on a mountain towering thousands of feet above them, especially if the surface of the mountain be broken. Kabru might present inaccessible spots that could not be seen at all, or, if seen, could not be identified as such from its base, or even higher up.

There are three sharp rock aiguilles standing over half a mile apart on a high spur running out to the Biafo glacier which, when viewed from the ice for a long distance, appear to rise close together from the base, and to form the apex of a single pyramidal peak.

I have ascended a considerable number of high Himalayan summits, all of which were previously studied from different points as carefully as possible, and in every case difficulties were met with that were not apparent during reconnaissance. The more one climbs on Himalayan peaks the less confidence has one of one's ability to judge beforehand of the obstacles their recesses may offer. Trial affords the only proof.

WILLIAM HUNTER WORKMAN.

Bombay: January 5, 1906.

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