Round Kangchenjunga by Douglas W. Freshfield

Review by: T. H. H.

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ways, and mostly with the addition of diacritic marks. This creates inevitable difficulty in the spelling of proper names, and it seems at present to be practically impossible to find any consistent solution for that difficulty. In this volume, many of the names belonging to the less familiar languages are spelt phonetically, but this is far from being a uniform rule. On p. 48 (and elsewhere) we have the spelling Marosh. If so, why not Buchech instead of Bucsecs in the second line below? On p. 235 we have Raduyevats. If so, why not Galats on p. 238 and elsewhere? And so in numberless other instances. These examples are not given in the spirit of petty criticism. As regards this matter, the present reviewer lives in too big a glass house to wish to throw stones, and his only desire is to show how much it is to be wished that geographers should come to some agreement on this question.

The volume is provided with an index, and is amply illustrated with maps and diagrams, all well conceived. Five of the maps, orographical (or bathy-hypsometrical), geological, and ethnographical, are coloured. They are all by Bartholomew of Edinburgh, and show the same excellent work as those in the first-published volume of this series.

G. G. C.

ASIA.

KANGCHENJUNGA.*

‘Round Kangchenjunga.’ By Douglas W. Freshfield. London: Edward Arnold. 1903.

No part of the world of mountains requires more attention from physically well-trained scientists than does the region of the farther Himalayas. In the nearer Himalayas overlooking the plains of India are many well-known “hill stations,” beyond which the great majority of visitors never move. But there is always a minority who forsake society to search amongst the valleys of the sub-Himalaya for scenery or sport. To them the conformation of ridge and vale, the curving course of the mountain torrents, and the uneven tracks of the mountaineer are well enough known within such limits as a summer’s holiday will permit them to wander. But they seldom penetrate far enough to make a serious geographical study of Himalayan structure, or to examine Himalayan glaciers with the critical eye of an Alpine expert. There is, indeed, a professional element to be noted, which belongs to the Indian Survey—men who go far and see much; but they are not men who write about what they see, and the limit of their sphere of observation is fixed by the financial issues which govern the Survey budget. Breaking records in ascending peaks, or assisting science by examining the conditions of glacial action in remote altitudes, is not encouraged by the Indian Government, for the simple reason that it does not pay. Thus it happens that beyond Kashmir, or the districts of Kumaon, Garwhal, and Sikkim, there is nothing of the nature of a detailed survey existing; and even in Kashmir and Sikkim such surveying is limited to the immediate neighbourhood of British occupation. Of the topographical detail of the further ranges of the Central Himalayas, in Nepal, we know nothing whatever; and can learn nothing, so long as the present system of exclusion is applied to European travellers. In short, the greater part of the Himalayas still forms a *terra incognita*; but whilst actual topographical detail is wanting in our

* Mr. Freshfield requests us to note the following *Corrigenda*: P. 25, line 4 from top, for 1892 read 1902; p. 178, line 18 from bottom, for Thangchen read Ram Thang; p. 354, for March, 1893, read 1903; p. 360, for Sikkim Expedition of 1868 read 1888.

maps, there are, nevertheless, countless peaks in the snow-capped mountain chains of which the positions are fixed with mathematical certainty by the process of triangulation from a distance. It has been found possible, too, in the interests of a general structural outline of the mountain, to trace the connection of these peaks, and to indicate the general position of many mountain ranges, and consequently of the valleys separating them; and it is only minor details that are required to fill up blank spaces or to replace conjecture. It is therefore an immense assistance to the geographical illustration of the structure of Himalayas when mountaineers of Alpine experience like Mr. Douglas Freshfield gave their time and their ability (to say nothing of their money) towards unravelling the mysteries of those far-off mountain fastnesses which the foot of the professional surveyor is never likely to tread. Mr. Freshfield moves to his work with all that previous knowledge can give of exact information in his hand. He knows what is determined and what is not; which peaks are certainly fixed in position and altitude, and which are uncertain. Consequently, every scrap of additional information he gives is valuable. With some of his convictions (for instance, he is convinced that Mr. Graham ascended Kabru), he will hardly get professional surveyors to agree. Mr. Graham was totally unable to interpolate his position, and such observations as he made will not fit Kabru; but all that Mr. Freshfield has to say on this, as on any other, subject he touches, is of direct value to those whose business it is to put together all available geographical material for the purpose of producing a general map of the Himalayas. If we only had a few mountaineers of the same sort yearly to venture as far afield, accepting the same risks (which, after all, are not great), and imbued with the same scientific spirit of inquiry as Mr. Freshfield, we should soon be *au fait* with the uttermost Himalayas, so far, at least, as they are not barred from us by native prejudice.

There is just a word to be said about high altitudes. All, or very nearly all, the peaks fixed in position by the Survey Triangulation have their heights recorded. The effect of refraction is of course duly eliminated from the observations, but it may happen that the formula used for the application of this correction may not invariably fit the peculiar atmospheric conditions prevailing at the time of observation. In other words, there may be errors in the recorded altitude still to be eliminated by further observation. But they cannot be large errors, and the recorded heights may safely be used by travellers for the purpose of determining their own attained altitudes by a simple observation of the altitude of some known peak above them, and their distance from it. It may be said that this is not so very simple, but it must be seldom indeed that the opportunity for interpolating position can be entirely wanting during the ascent of a high mountain with other fixed heights around it. At any rate, aneroids are not to be trusted, any more than are hypsometers or mercurial barometers, when very high altitudes are in question. It may be taken as accepted by most professional mountain surveyors that such an altitude as 23,000 feet, for instance, is not determinable by any form of barometer. Mr. Garwood, who accompanied Mr. Freshfield, believes in a Watkins, but he deals with more reasonable altitudes. It would have been more satisfactory, however, to have had the confirmation of an actual observation to a fixed peak or two. Good mountaineers should read Mr. Freshfield's story for themselves. It is well worth it. It is magnificently illustrated—no finer views of the finest of Himalayan snowy altitudes have ever been taken. And Mr. Freshfield's own power of word-painting is yet more illustrative than the direct illustration. Take, for example, his description of that marvellous view of Kangchenjunga from under the flagstaffs on Observatory Hill at Darjiling: "The variety of expression in the vast landscape was extraordinary. At dawn the lower mountains shone, indistinct

in detail, through a veil of amethystine vapour; the damp air converted the naturally green hills of the middle distance into blocks of blue or mauve colour, recalling the background of an old Venetian picture. Soon the sun's shafts, darting into the thousand hollows that lie between the snows and Darjiling, drew the warm, moist air out of their depths in transparent waves. These, as they rose into a colder atmosphere, were condensed and transformed into tall, luminous, sharp-edged columns of cloud which rose vertically, until, caught by some upper current, they bent and broadened at the top, and finally broke up into detached fragments, which floated away slowly northwards to lodge in the hollows of the snows during the hours of noontide heat. Meantime less adventurous cloudlets loitered among the ridges which break down one beyond the other to the lowlands of Kuch Behar, or hung motionless, bright bars throwing pale shadows across the amber patch of plain, visible where the Teesta breaks through a deep gate in the outermost range of foothills." Can any photograph recall the Himalayan cloudland like that? or present to the imagination the glow and the glory of the "almost unbelievable vision" which Mr. Freshfield depicts as the day wears to its close?

T. H. H.

SIBERIA.

'From Paris to New York by Land.' By H. de Windt. London: George Newnes. 1904. Pp. xiii., 311.

This account of a journey from the western sea-board of Europe to the eastern sea-board of North America is mostly occupied with the formidable regions between Irkutsk and Bering straits, the passage of the straits, and the crossing of Alaska. The expedition was undertaken to ascertain—it has pretty well disproved—the feasibility of an Arctic railway uniting the American lines with the Siberian. The writer's sufferings, as recorded by himself, were so severe and prolonged, the task he undertook so beset with natural difficulties, that it is no wonder if a certain dyspepsia has got into his style; if he finds Moscow dull and dreary; if he recognizes so grudgingly the recent progress of Irkutsk; if he dismisses the Greater Schwarzwald of the Urals as "merely downs" (downs which reach 5000 feet); and if, after sounding almost every possible depth of misery among the Chukche villages, he introduces us to the first Eskimo settlement in Alaska as "infinitely drearier and more desolate." At the same time, his picture of the genial *ispravnik* of Verkhoiansk is a pleasant interlude; the agricultural work of the Skoptsi colony just outside Yakutsk is effectively described; and it must be recognized that the author's travels involved experiences as trying as anything that can be attempted in North Asia. His undertaking was of considerable negative importance, if it only discouraged fantastic schemes; it may be hoped that his criticisms of the remote Siberian outposts, such as Sredni Kolymsk, will not fail of result.

Some of the distance figures are not easy to follow. Thus, on the map facing p. 193, the interval between Verkhoiansk and Nijni Kolymsk is given as 2000 miles, while on p. 277, in the "approximate table of distances," it is returned as 1340; again, we have estimates of 3200 and 2840 miles for the space between Verkhoiansk and Bering straits, even the lesser being, we fancy, excessive if a straight course be intended. It is probable, and highly desirable, that the Siberian trunk may soon throw off a branch to Yakutsk, but why should this be prolonged north to Gijiga? For though this may be no "idle dream," as Mr. de Windt assures us, it is surely an idle way of describing the connection of two places lying practically in the same latitude, but separated by some thirty degrees of longitude?

Mr. de Windt's narrative shows clearly how recent developments in Southern Siberia have not only not been accompanied by parallel progress in the far North,