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MR. CONWAY IN THE HIMALAYAS.<sup>1</sup>

THE Karakoram, or Mustagh range, is intermediate between the Hindu-Kush and Kuen Luen systems, and forms the watershed between the Upper Indus and the Oxus. The northernmost angle of this noble mountain barrier of India, unparalleled among the mountain chains of the world for the number and height of its peaks and the extent of its glaciers, was the scene of Mr. Conway's explorations in the summer of 1892.

His object was to observe the glaciers from a scientific mountaineering point of view, to compare the conditions of snow and ice phenomena with those of the Swiss Alps, and to attempt the ascent of a peak or two. His companions were Mr. M'Cormick, a talented artist; Mattias Zurbriggen, an experienced Swiss guide; Lieut. the Hon. C. G. Bruce of the 5th Gurkhas; Messrs. Eckenstein and Roudebush. Four Gurkhas of the same regiment contributed by their admirable service to the success of the expedition. This book is a record of their doings, written at the time, before the impressions of the scenery and the incidents of each day had faded from their minds. It brings before the reader, in a series of vivid pictures, the wild and rugged nature of the country, with its horrible stony valleys where a burning sun makes life almost unendurable; the magnificent scenery of the higher regions, where storms and ice-streams are carving the face of rock precipices and softening the outlines of hill and valley; and, lastly, those giant mountains which tower aloft in solemn grandeur over the desolate world of ice and snow.

It was through such scenery that Mr. Conway and his party advanced up the Hispar pass and along the whole length of the Biafo and Baltoro glaciers to the snow-covered slopes at the foot of the great mountains. Practised mountaineer though he was, Mr. Conway found the walking far worse than any he had yet experienced. The glaciers were much longer, wider, and more crevassed than those of Europe, while the rock *débris* was out of all proportion greater. It was a constant struggle over stone-covered mounds, monotonous and fatiguing to travel over. Neither was there any prospect, at the end of the day's journey, of a warm, comfortable hotel to rest in. The most that could be expected was the shelter of a miserable tent where a few hours of sleep, often courted in vain, might enable the weary explorers to resume their journey. In spite of all these untoward conditions, and notwithstanding the constant bad weather, so depressing to mountaineers, Mr. Conway and his party kept up their spirits. When the sun dispersed the clouds he was ready to set up the plane-table and take a round of angles; now and again he would start off to climb a ridge whence he could get a more extensive view. On one such occasion, accompanied by Bruce and Zurbriggen, Mr. Conway first caught sight of a rounded mountain mass, to which he gave the name of Golden Throne. This, the most brilliant of all the mountains seen, became the chief object of their desires. With one consent they cried

<sup>1</sup> *Climbing and Exploration in the Karakoram Himalayas.* By William Martin Conway, M.A., F.S.A., F.R.G.S., etc. With 300 Illustrations by A. D. M'Cormick, and a Map. London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1894. Price 31s. 6d.

out, "That is the peak for us; we will go that way and no other." Mountaineering, however, is full of disappointments, though not without its rewards, and the Golden Throne remained unascended. By means of the photographic camera, however, and Mr. M'Cormick's talented brush, its outlines, and those of its other giant companions, K 2, Gusherbrum and Masherbrum, were accurately defined. It was one of the chief objects of the expedition to photograph the great mountain K 2, the second highest in the world; and Mr. Conway determined that, if he remained on the glacier till winter, he would not leave this part of his programme unaccomplished. They spent five nights on the moraine at the junction of Godwin-Austen and Baltoro glaciers, while the snow fell and dense clouds obscured the distant view. The difficulties of arranging for supplies of food and fuel for so large a party at such an elevation (15,870 feet) were very great. But Mr. Conway's powers of organisation were equal to the emergency. The twenty coolies were divided into relief parties, and were kept constantly carrying loads from a lower station, where fuel could be collected. So successful were these arrangements, that the *menu* for each day comprised hot fresh herrings for breakfast; chops and a sweet omelette for lunch; soup, a joint, and scrambled eggs for dinner—not a contemptible fare for men living beyond the limits of human habitation, where the only natural productions were ice and snow, and hardly a trace of animal and vegetable life could be seen for miles around. Their tents were pitched on broken stones overlying the ice; and here, huddled together, four men in a seven-foot tent, they waited patiently. Meanwhile, Mr. Conway deduced from his observations the relative and apparent height of the principal mountains. K 2 was found to be 27,750 feet, and Golden Throne 23,600 feet. These figures, dependent on barometrical measurements at their camp, are 500 feet below those ascertained by the Great Trigonometrical Survey of India for K 2 (28,250).

At length, on August 18, the weather cleared sufficiently to disclose the forms of the mountains and enable the party once more to start upwards. The sun shone out with extraordinary power and brilliancy, raising the temperature suddenly, not, as in lower regions, turning the newly fallen snow into water or slush, "but drying it up into the thirsty air." Advancing for some distance over the moraine, they at length came to snow-fields and mounds of ice uncovered by stones, of a formation peculiar to the Baltoro glacier. The descriptions given of this glacier and the climb to the summit of Pioneer peak (chaps. xxii. and xxiii.) are exceptionally interesting, for they cover a good deal of new ground. Colonel Godwin-Austen in 1861 surveyed the main features of this icy region, but he did not attempt any difficult mountaineering work, for which, indeed, he was not equipped. Captain Younghusband in 1887 felt his way across the disused Mustagh pass, coming from the north and descending to Askole. Mr. Conway added to and completed Godwin-Austen's survey, besides making a number of new observations specially valuable from a mountaineer's point of view, and also of wide general interest. His collections of the flora along his route are a distinct gain to botanical science, while his notes on the

effects of high altitudes and variations of temperature on the human organism are very valuable.

There can be no doubt but that in climbing Pioneer peak (23,000 feet), an outlier of Golden Throne, Mr. Conway and his companions accomplished all that men could do, every step of the last part of the ascent having to be cut with the axe, and all precautions being taken to avoid disaster. Zurbriggen himself declared that not another step could he cut; and all of the party, weakened as they were by the continued strain of the last three weeks, recognised that the utmost limit had been reached, and that henceforward nothing remained for them but "downwards and homewards."

We are compelled to pass over much that is interesting in this book: the description of Kashmir, with its gardens, ruined temples, and lovely scenery contrasting with the dirt and squalor of its capital; the march to Gilgit, and thence up the Hunza valley to Nagyr and Baltit; and, lastly, the visit to Leh and the Lamasery of Himis. We lay down this book with the conviction that its author has laid the British public under a deep debt of gratitude; and we hope that other explorers will be found to carry on such work in the same spirit and with the qualifications possessed by Mr. Conway.

E. D. MORGAN.

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## OBITUARY: 1894.

By J. W. M'CRRINDLE, M.A., M.R.A.S.

Lieutenant-Colonel ALFRED BURDON ELLIS, C.B.—This distinguished officer, who was the author of several valuable works on African geography and ethnology, died of fever in the island of Teneriffe, on the 5th of March last, at the early age of 42. His name was at the time prominently before the public. He had conducted with eminent success the short but arduous campaign against the Sofas, and the official despatches in which he described its incidents had all appeared in the columns of the *Times* just before he was cut off. He was the only surviving son of Lieutenant-General Sir S. Burdon Ellis, K.C.B. Born in 1852, he entered the army at the age of 20, and after a short term of service in the West Indies was transferred to Africa, where during the remainder of his career he rendered important services both as a soldier and as an administrator. He took part in the Ashanti War in 1873-4, also in the operations against the Awama, and in the Zulu War. In 1892 he commanded the expeditions to Tambi and to Toniataba, receiving for the latter the C.B. and the medal with clasps. He held various civil as well as military commands along the West Coast, chiefly on the Gold Coast and in Sierra Leone.

Colonel Ellis, amidst the discharge of his official duties, found time to study the languages and ethnic characteristics of the Guinea tribes; and the works in which he has embodied the results of his researches are