

## THE ASCENT OF HARAMOUK.

BY DR. ERNEST F. NEVE, F.R.C.S.E.

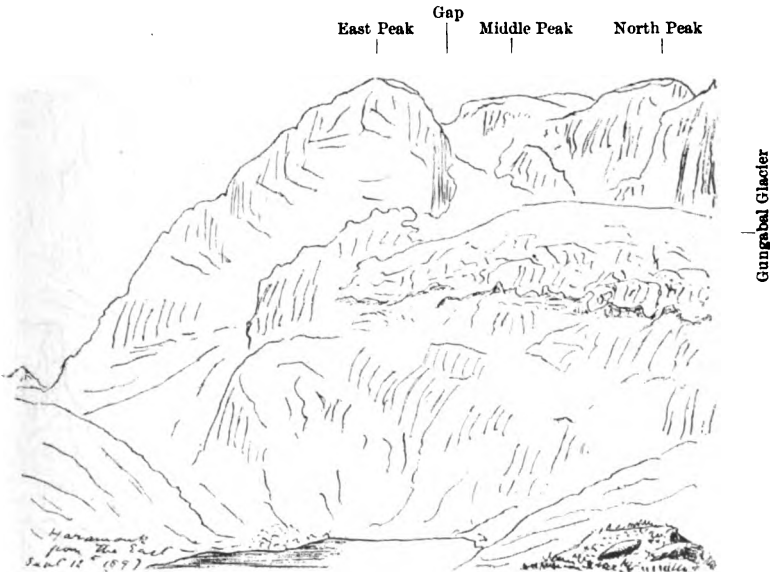
THE valley of Kashmir forms one of the most important bases for climbing expeditions in the Himalayas. From Kashmir the intrepid Mummery started for his bold attempt on Nanga Parbat, but, alas! perished in the attempt—probably in an avalanche. The interesting work, too, done by Sir Martin Conway in the Kashmir Himalayas is well known to English readers.

To the climber Haramouk presents especial interest. Its height is not very great, being 16,900 ft. But it is the most distinctly Kashmiri of all the outstanding mountains. Its shoulders and ridges slope well down into the vale, and it forms one of the most striking mountain masses which compose the magnificent background to the panoramic view of the western end of the valley of Kashmir, seen from the S. and E. Rising like a giant above the ranges round, its wall-like cliffs and snowy domes glitter in the sun—a very dream of beauty.

Haramouk has, by both the Mahammedans and Hindus of Kashmir, been invested with a halo of romance, chiefly on account of its supposed inaccessibility. The Hindus say that there is a vein of emerald in the southern cliff, and that no snakes can live in any part of Kashmir from which this can be seen. They add that the mountain never has been and never can be climbed. The Mahammedans, however, relate that a religious mendicant once upon a time did succeed in reaching the summit, but was pushed over the edge during the night and perished. The shepherds look up with awe at the snow fields which crown the mountain and from which the various summits arise, and tell you with bated breath that fairyland lies up there and that since the days of Father Adam no foot has ever trod those upper snows.

The lowest of the peaks is a conical mass of rock, which was used for survey purposes many years ago. It is known as the 'Station Peak,' and can be fairly easily approached from the W. by a long rocky ridge. The other summits are the Western, Middle, Northern, and Eastern. The last, which is the highest of all, is separated by a gap 400 ft. deep from the rest of the mountain. On three sides—namely, the N., E., and S.—there is a deep snow cornice, resting on a sheer rock precipice which drops about 3,000 ft. to the upper edge of the Gungabal glaciers.

The Woolar Lake—the largest sheet of fresh water in India, and through which the Jhelum River flows before it leaves the vale of Kashmir—forms a convenient starting point for Haramouk. On it one can carry one's supplies to the mouth of Erin Nalla, a valley which leads right up to the watershed on either side of the mountain. Starting from the lake, which is 5,000 ft. above sea-level, our first march leads us through rice swamps, then through patches of jungle bright with balsam, blue larkspur, and the pink blossom of the wild indigo. The hill-sides are a rich green, with heavy crops of maize. Presently we reach the lower margin of the pines,



HARAMOUK FROM THE EAST.

*From a pen and ink sketch by E. F. New.*

which we have seen clothing the slopes above us. After this the route becomes much more distinctly mountainous; the valley narrows; the sides become steeper, and broken here and there by patches of cliff. Already we can see the upper level of the pines and the birches, crooked and twisted from the pressure of many a winter's snows. A long, steady climb through a forest of firs, and at last we emerge on the upland meadows, gay with alpine flowers, and finally pitch our camp by the side of a shallow lake at a height of

12,500 ft., far above the level of trees and very near the upper limit of vegetation. This is the base camp.

From here in 1887 Dr. A. Neve and I successfully reached the summit of the Western Peak, and returned the same day.



STATION PEAK, FROM RIDGE CAMP.

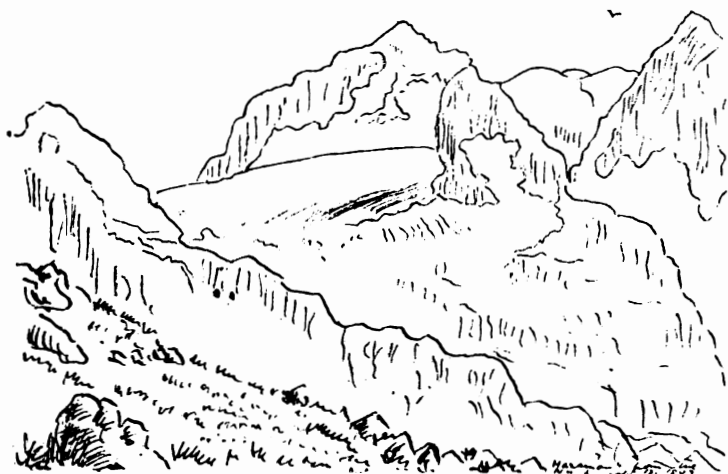
*From a pen and ink sketch by E. F. Neve.*

That year we proved that the higher peaks could only be reached by placing another camp higher up.

In 1897 I carried this into effect, and with Dr. Lechmere-Taylor climbed up to, and placed a *tente d'abri* on, a ridge 2,500 ft. above the base camp. For this we had to build

with stones a level place to hold the tent. The following day we made a further ascent, and I reached the summit of the middle dome and placed a pole at the top of its precipitous southern face. The chief difficulty was a bergschrund, which completely surrounded the snowy side, while the precipitous rock-face appeared impracticable. Eventually we found a small snow bridge over the chasm, and were able to cut our way up the steep slope.

In 1898, accompanied by the Rev. E. I. E. Wigram and Mr. J. H. Oldham, I made another attempt. We spent the night on the same ridge. But this year the bergschrund was



HARAMOUK FROM THE NORTH.

*From a pen and ink sketch by E. F. Neve.*

quite impossible without ladders, so we made a circuit below it and ascended the Northern Peak—a very fine summit, only a few hundred feet lower than the eastern top, of which we obtained a near and very fine profile view. The fatigue was great, as we spent 8 hrs. on unusually soft snow. All these attempts were made in September, as the weather in Kashmir is usually more settled in the autumn.

Hoping that in June, owing to the greater amount of old snow, the ascent of the middle dome—the only route to the top—would be easier, accompanied by Mr. Geoffrey Millais, I made in 1899 another ascent. We placed our base camp in the usual situation, and took up ten porters and two light tents to the ridge camp. The weather was mild and free from

wind, but a little cloudy. Starting at 4.30 A.M., we posted six of our porters along the route within hail of each other at all the difficult parts on the rock-climb. This precaution was taken to secure our return if the weather should prove bad. Taking two picked men with us, 45 minutes' stiff crag work brought us to the snow. This was in good condition. Working round the N. slopes of the Western Peak to the gap between it and the middle dome, we found that once more a large crevasse, surmounted on the upper side by ice cliffs, blocked off all access to the latter. A slender snow bridge which I attempted

to cross was too soft and let me through at the first step. We next turned our attention to the point where the snow joined the rocks on the S. face, and found that, by working up the rocks where practicable, and cutting steps up the steep snow slope where the rocks were impassable, we were able to make good progress. Indeed, we reached my 1897 pole by 9.45 A.M. From this point there was a drop of 400 ft. down steep rocks to the gap between the middle dome, on which we were standing, and the Eastern Peak. This was rather difficult, owing to the looseness of the rocks. We reached the bottom at 11 A.M., and felt that the battle was won. From this point a steady climb—at first on a fairly easy gradient,



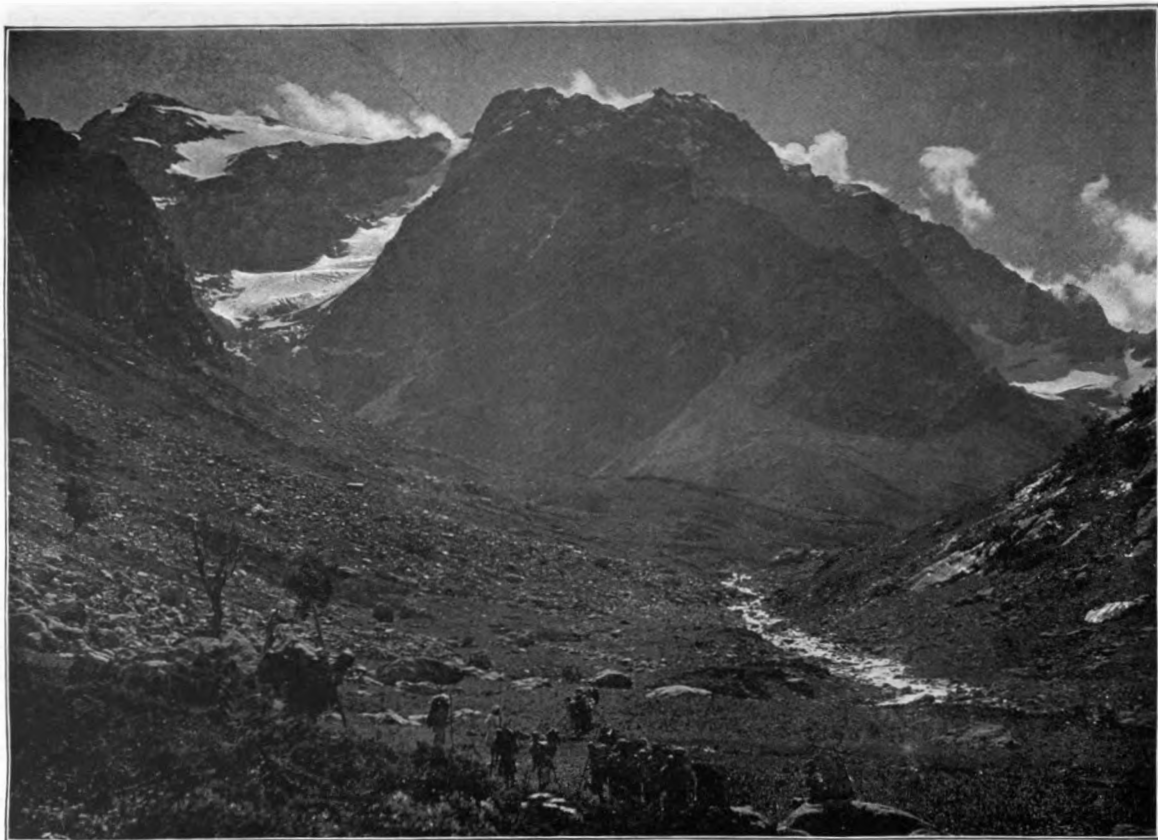
*Descent to the Middle  
1919*

**THE DESCENT TO THE GAP BETWEEN  
THE MIDDLE AND EAST PEAK.**

*From a pen and ink sketch by E. F. Nove.*

and later on up a steeper slope, requiring some step-cutting—brought us to the summit, which was reached at 11.45 A.M.

The scene was too grand for words to describe. One looked right over the top of the great Pir Panjal range, which lies to the S. of the valley of Kashmir, and the higher peaks of which rival and even surpass Mont Blanc in height. Looking around one saw, standing out like giants, the still unclimbed mountains—Kolahoi, with its Matterhorn-like peak; Nun Kun; to the N., Gwasherbrum and Masher-



*G. W. Millais, photo.*

**HARAMOUK, KASHMIR.**

*Swan Electric Engraving Co.*

brum ; and, above all, sixty miles away, the grand range culminating in Nanga Parbat.

Haramouk has been removed from the list of 'virgin peaks, but a splendid field for really difficult work awaits the alpine climber in Kashmir.

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## IN MEMORIAM.

### JOHN RUSKIN.

MR. LESLIE STEPHEN, in a very interesting article in the 'National Review' for April last, has informed the world and reminded our members that Mr. Ruskin not only on one occasion attended as a guest an Alpine Club dinner, but that he was so well pleased with his company that he joined our Club, and remained a member (from 1869 to 1882) until illness overcame him and shut him off from the outer world. We do not propose to attempt to repeat at any length here what Mr. Stephen has so well expressed elsewhere about Mr. Ruskin's relation to the mountains and his claims to the love and gratitude of all true mountaineers. The son of an Evangelical City wine merchant, brought up in a suburban villa, John Ruskin, from the day when he first caught sight of the Alps from the crest of the Jura, saw and understood mountains and taught our generation to understand them in a way no one—none even of those who had been born under their shadow—had ever understood them before. To begin with, he had a faculty of precise observation, the basis of all scientific research, which made him the most formidable of critics to any man of science, whose eyesight might be temporarily affected by some preconceived theory. But this appreciation of detail in no way interfered with Ruskin's romantic delight in the whole, in the sentiment and spirit of mountain landscapes. In some minds mountains take the place of cathedrals as a source of an emotion that may be called—in the wide sense of the word—religious. Ruskin was so happily constituted that he drew equal delight and inspiration both from architecture and from scenery.

To the expression of his observations or his feelings Ruskin brought, even from his youth, the gift of a style which has placed him among the masters of English prose. No one else has written at once so naturally and so ornately. He was, it need hardly be said, seldom quite fair as a critic, and hardly ever an impartial judge. He was born an advocate and an enthusiast; he cared nothing for consistency. He would confess to his self-contradictions with the readiest candour and good humour. He delighted in paradox; he loved to push morality into matters with which it has no concern—such as, for example, the oscillations of glaciers—and he did this without any apparent consciousness of extravagance. But, as Mr. Stephen has suggested, even when most extravagant