

ability of my English comrades and of Jean Maître, who is a good rock-climber, and who may be safely trusted as leader on these and other mountains at Arolla.

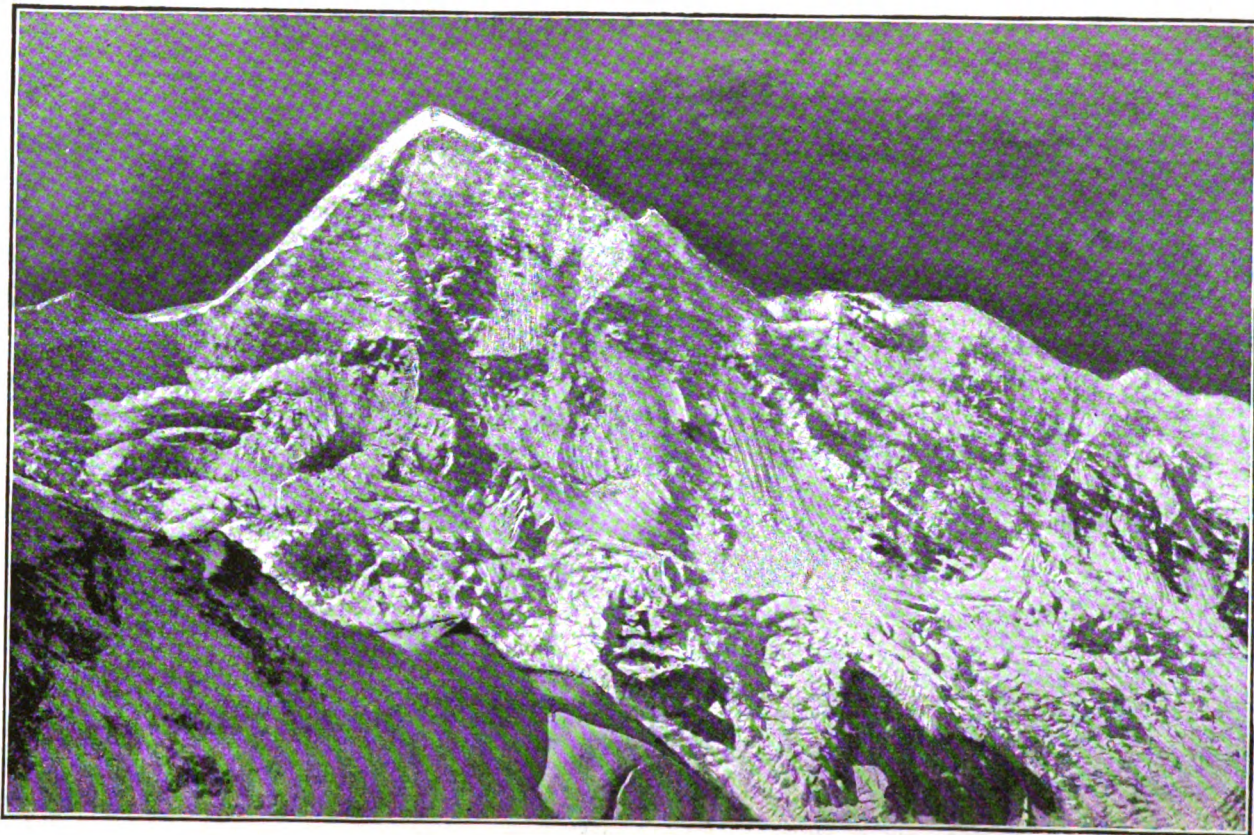
Few mountains in Switzerland afford so good rock-climbing as the Arolla peaks, the Dents des Bouquetins, Mont Collon, the Aiguilles Rouges, and others, and yet comparatively few climbers have taken the advice of Mr. Cust and others to make Arolla their headquarters for a short time, instead of Zermatt and Grindelwald. Many peaks have only once or twice been ascended, and there is still new work to be done by those who thirst for glory. These should study most closely Mr. Larden's 'Guide d'Arolla' when published. For my part, I think Arolla is a delightful place at which to spend a month's holiday. The big and little expeditions to be made are equally good. Interesting glaciers are near at hand, the nearest of which—the Glacier de Cijorénove—is now advancing most rapidly, and by next summer will most probably have covered an ancient green lateral moraine, and so will destroy what was, last year, very decent pasturage. There are pretty walks through the meadows and the woods of the Arolla pines to neighbouring chalets, and suitable fields for exercise for both the young and old.

## EXPLORATION OF THE CAUCASUS IN 1888.

### I.

[The following note is extracted from the Journal of the R. G. S. for September last. We may mention here that in the current November number of the same Journal will be found an article by Mr. D. W. Freshfield on 'The Peaks, Passes, and Glaciers of the Caucasus,' summarising the results of exploration up to date.]

**M**R. A. F. MUMMERY returned from the Caucasus early in August last, after a successful and very pleasant journey. Starting about the end of June with an Alpine guide, Zurfluh of Meiringen, he went straight to the central group, of which Koshtantau, 17,096 feet, the second (measured) peak in the Caucasus, is the highest (measured) summit. The qualification is necessary until the height of Shkara (see Mr. Freshfield's recent map and paper) has been ascertained. The difference in height between the two peaks is not very great, perhaps 250 feet, but it appears likely that Shkara will, as Mr. Freshfield has anticipated, prove to be the higher. On July 24, Koshtantau was ascended; two previous attempts, on one of which Mr. Mummery climbed alone the south-western buttress of the great mountain, itself 13,500 feet high, having



**TETRULD**  
**FROM THE WESTERN SHOULDER OF GESTOLA**

*W. F. Donkin phot. 1886*

been unsuccessful. In the course of Mr. Mummery's journey the lofty ridge connecting Dychtau and Koshtantau with the watershed, and dividing the névés of the Bezingi and Dychnu glaciers, was twice crossed by passes respectively about 13,000 (Shkara Pass) and 13,700 feet. An attempt to ascend Shkara from the Dychnu glacier had to be abandoned in consequence of glacier difficulties which were too great and continuous for so small a party. The main chain was also crossed into Suanetia by a variation of the Zanner Pass (described by Mr. Freshfield), and a return to the valley of Chegem on the north side of the chain effected by a double pass over the Thuber, Gvalda, and Basilsu glaciers, west of the natives' Basil Pass and never before traversed, which throws much new light on the intricate topography of the névés of these great icestreams, and the structure of this part of the chain. The upper névé of the Gvalda glacier proves to extend to a point considerably east of a line drawn due north from the snout of the Thuber glacier. The weather was fine throughout, and the snow, except on steep slopes, in excellent condition. The revision of the Russian survey is to proceed very rapidly. A single officer has been instructed to survey the square represented in the map published with the May "Proceedings" during this summer, and the new map is intended to be published by the spring of 1889. Mr. Mummery writes as follows with regard to travel, and his experiences are the more valuable, in so far as he went without previous experience of the country or special facilities:—"No other holiday has afforded me half the pleasure. I found the travelling much easier than I expected. Notwithstanding that my interpreter proved too short-winded for the high passes, I managed to get all I wanted, from chickens, duck's eggs, new potatoes, and Russian bread in Suanetia, to mutton, oatcakes, and fresh milk in Balkar and Chegem. I became great friends with the old chief at Bezingi, who gave me several dinners in his private apartments. I in return provided tea and sugar for himself and his numerous relatives and friends. One of the Bezingi hunters accompanied me over the glacier passes, but not on the ascents. But some of the Bezingi men are splendid walkers, equal on rocks to average Alpine guides; on ice, of course, they have much to learn, and their foot-gear is ill-suited for continuous mountaineering. The diurnal variations in the weather are also perhaps worth notice. Bright mornings, wind and a little cloud about mid-day, with mist and a suspicion of rain or snow at sunset were the characteristics of the weather while I was there. The mist and showers did

not extend below 8,000 feet, but the dews were quite sufficient to account for the vegetation on the moraines.”’

## II.

On August 10 a party, consisting of Mr. J. G. Cockin, Mr. H. W. Holder, and Mr. Hermann Woolley, with the Grindelwald guides, Ulrich Almer and Christian Roth, started from Rostov, on the Don, with the view of exploring the mountains at the head of the Bezingi Glacier. They arrived at Kotlarevska on the afternoon of the next day, and proceeding with all possible despatch reached Naltshik on the evening of the 11th, and Bezingi at noon on the 14th of August.

On the afternoon of the 15th they pitched their tent on the east side of the Bezingi Glacier, about 8,400 feet above the level of the sea, near a shelter called ‘Missés Kosh’ by the natives.

### *An Attempt on Koshtan Tau.*

The day after their arrival they started for Koshtan Tau. Having slept out on rocks a little above the lowest ice-fall of the Koshtan Glacier, they made an early start, following the line of ascent taken by Messrs. Dent and Donkin in 1886. They reached the ‘ochry-red’ rocks, and then were compelled by gendarmes to make a detour to the south face of the south western arête. After being baffled in two or three attempts upon the white rocks they were enabled, by keeping close to a couloir, to reach a height of about 16,000 feet. By this time, however, the day was so far advanced that they were compelled to abandon their expedition and return to their tent.

### *The Ascent of Koshtan Tau.*

Three days later another attempt was made upon the same mountain, this time by the northern arête.

The night of August 19 was spent on a ledge of rocks on the right bank of the ‘Missés’ Glacier (the middle one of the three glaciers marked in Mr. Freshfield’s latest map). In the morning the party started at 4.45. They reached the depression in the N. arête overlooking the Mishirgi Basin at 8 o’clock. The summit was gained at 2.5 p.m. The snow varied much in character, but was for the most part light and powdery, making progress difficult. The steep rocks which had to be surmounted afforded good climbing, but the rocks of the arête, though loose and gene-

rally covered with light snow, were not difficult. Very little time was spent upon the top, as a strong cold wind was blowing and clouds were gathering. The depression in the N. arête was reached on the return at 6 p.m., and the sleeping-place at 10.45, considerable delay having occurred through the necessity for taking to steep, difficult and unknown rocks to avoid the ice-fall, as the method by which this had been turned in the morning was impracticable at night. A second night was spent on the rocky ledge, and the tent was reached the next morning.

*The Ascent of the 'Saddle Peak.'\**

The party left their camp at 2.25 a.m. on August 24, proposing to attempt the ascent by the N.E. face. After leaving the Bezingi Glacier the course lay up good firm rocks alternating with short snow-slopes. Then a ridge of shattered rock was followed as long as possible, after which the ascent was continued up the steep glacier which is prominent on this face of the mountain. The plateau from which the final peak of the mountain rises was reached at 1 p.m., and the summit at 2.25.

The climb from the plateau to the arête, and along the arête to the summit, was difficult and tedious, the snow being in very bad condition, and the rocks generally covered with snow.

Mr. Cockin was prevented by indisposition from completing this ascent.

After this ascent Mr. Woolley took no part in the expeditions of the party, his arm being disabled through the influence of frost and snow on a slight wound in the wrist.

For some days the weather was unsettled, and no climbs were attempted.

*The 'Shkara' Col.*

On the 29th Mr. Cockin and Mr. Holder started at 4.30 a.m. for the pass at the base of Shkara marked with a (?) in Mr. Freshfield's map. The top of the col was reached at 9.45. The party only descended a short distance on the east side of the col, as it was perfectly evident that there

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\* The Saddle Peak is situated about midway between Gestola and Djanga. Mr. Freshfield puts it upon his map due S. of Gestola, and almost due E. from Tetnuld. This is not quite correct. See Mr. Donkin's photograph (facing *A. J.* xiii. 252), in which the Saddle Peak is the middle of the three peaks, and is immediately under the letters S.W.

were no difficulties in the descent on this side upon the Dych Su Glacier. The remainder of the day was spent in reconnoitring on the arête to the N.E. of the col, but the mists prevented any trustworthy observations being taken.

*An Attempt on Mishirgi Tau.*

On the evening of August 30 the party slept out on the rocks where the night had been spent in the first attempt on Koshtan Tau. A start was made the next morning at 5. The glacier was in good condition, but the highest ice-fall gave serious trouble. At 8.45 the schrund was crossed and the foot of the S. arête was reached. From this point a traverse was made to a couloir on the S.W. face of the mountain. The ascent was continued by this couloir and over rocks for some hours. Then the arête was struck again, and finally, at 2.25 p.m., the party found themselves at a height of about 16,000 feet, cut off from the highest peak by a deep cleft. They returned, crossed the schrund at 7 p.m., were benighted on the mountain, and arrived at the tent the next day at 9.30 a.m.

*The Ascent of 'Salananchera.'\**

The party started from the tent at 5.5 a.m. on September 3. They followed first Mr. Freshfield's route for the Zanner Pass, then by loose rocks climbed to the head of the col on the W. arête, which was reached at 10 a.m. The summit was gained, by the western arête, at 11.30 a.m. The rocks on this arête were good, but the snow, as usual, in a very unsatisfactory condition.

The top of Salananchera is a splendid point for topographical observations. An hour was spent on the summit, and the tent was reached at 5.10 p.m., a thick fog causing great delay in crossing the glacier near 'home.'

On September 4 Mr. Holder and Mr. Woolley left the camp for Bezingi, and returned to England by Vladikavkaz, the Dariel Pass, Tiflis, and Batoum, Mr. Cockin remaining with the guides to try further ascents.

On October 10 Mr. Holder received a telegram from Mr. Cockin announcing his safe arrival at Batoum, and inti-

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\* This is the unnamed peak, in Mr. Freshfield's map, lying to the N.E. of the Zanner Pass. There seems little doubt that Salananchera is the name given to the glacier descending from this mountain towards the Bezingi Glacier, but whether or not it is the local name for the mountain itself is uncertain.

mating 'did Shkara, second peak of Djanga, top of Salananchera Pass, Zanner Pass, and north peak of Ushba.'

[On November 5 we received, through the kindness of Mr. Holder, Mr. Cockin's detailed notes of his splendid ascents. The late date at which they have been received, and lack of space, compel us to hold them over till our next number, but the following summary gives an outline of the narrative. On September 7 Mr. Cockin, with Ulrich Almer and Christian Roth, made the first ascent of Shkara. They started from the Bezingi glacier, and having gained the northern arête of the peak, followed it (in parts very sharp, much step-cutting required) for  $4\frac{1}{2}$  hours to the summit. An observation made on the top showed that Shkara is higher than Guluku. On September 12 the same party made the first ascent of that point of Djanga which is nearest Shkara. This ascent was also made from the Bezingi glacier, by means of a lateral glacier, some rocks, and long snow-slopes. 'We had a clear view, and found ourselves well above the Saddle Peak and still more Gestola, well below Shkara, and a little below another point of Djanga. Our point is the one nearest Shkara; the point farther away, and appearing in the photo-print to be lower, is higher.' The line taken on the ascent of both peaks can be well seen on the photo-print given with Mr. Donkin's paper.\* On September 28, Mr. Cockin alone with Ulrich Almer (Roth being temporarily crippled with rheumatism) made the first ascent of the north peak of Ushba, this being their third attempt. This was achieved by way of the great couloir between the two peaks, in which the snow was found to be very soft (there had been a great fall of fresh snow a few days before), though in a safe condition. They reached the 'neck' between the two peaks in 10 hours (including halts) from their bivouac just above the last trees on the south side of the peak, and thence in 2.35 more, mainly by not difficult rocks, gained the summit of the northern peak, an overhanging corniche of snow. They remained on the top about forty minutes, but were in mist all the time, and could not ascertain whether the northern peak was the higher or lower of the two summits.† With less snow and ice on it than on Sept. 28, the ridge from the 'neck' to the south peak would probably be possible.—EDITOR.]

\* *Alpine Journal*, vol. xiii. p. 242, 'Panorama from below Guluku.' Shkara is there named Koschtan Tau.

† Both Mr. Freshfield (*A. J.*, vol. xiii. p. 508) and Messrs. Donkin and Fox (*infra* p. 97) have expressed their opinion that the northern peak is most probably the higher.