

The Caucasus



The Geographical Journal, Vol. 11, No. 4 (Apr., 1898), 427-428.

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toes. Near this place, in many of the gullies, exist the remains of large stone terraces, evidently constructed as soil dams, the ground above these being used afterwards for gardens, some of which are cultivated to the present day. Going east from Bocoyna, a small town on the eastern slopes of the mountain, are extensive llanos, upon which many cattle are grazed, and Cusihiuriachic, a mining camp of considerable importance, situated in a barranca below, is passed. At Coyachic there is a considerable amount of land under cultivation, which is irrigated from the river, and the country from thence to Chihuahua is barren and stony, with here and there fertile valleys. North of Bocoyna are a series of small hills; the country is well watered, and several large ranches exist.

Between Guerrero, a town of about 2000 inhabitants, in a good agricultural and mining centre, and Casas Grandes, the country consists of elevated plains with occasional low rocky hills; there are several cultivated villages, and at Balle an extensive Mormon colony, with numerous green fields, gardens, and plantations.

The Casas Grandes, Boca Grande, and Diaz valleys, which lie between Casas Grandes and the international boundary at Columbus, are fertile, and have also been partially taken up by Mormons; but the country to the east of Lake Guzman more resembles that traversed by the Mexican Central Railway, and in the dry season, at any rate, does not look inviting.

THE CAUCASUS.

THE last volume of the *Memoirs* of the Caucasian Branch of the Russian Geographical Society (vol. xviii.) contains a number of papers full of interest.

M. N. Alboff, who has been engaged for several years in the study of the flora of Western Caucasus, in that part of the range which runs along the Black Sea coast, gives further results of his important work. In 1894 he made two very interesting excursions in that part of the range, and now gives, first, the diary of his excursions, and next his extremely interesting observations and conclusions relative to the flora of that region as a whole, and the flora of the limestone crags in particular. The paper is accompanied by a map, $6\frac{3}{4}$ miles to an inch, of the Chernomorsk district, and the western part of the Sukhum *otdyel* (independent district). The first excursion was made to the Akhakhcha, the Kytsyrkha, and the neighbouring mountains; and the second, which lasted sixteen days, to the mountains Arashkha and Adzituko. This last excursion was especially full of interest, as regards new topographical observations and botanical collections. Full lists of plants collected, several of which are new (while some, like the new species named *Campanula regina* by the author, are of rare beauty), are given, as also a comparison between the limestone-crag flora of Abkhasia, Chernomorsk, and Mingrelia.

The interesting Tartar stem of the Kumyks is the subject of an anthropological sketch by M. Pantukhoff, containing a discussion of their origin, and some anthropological measurements.

In a paper on the Highlands of the Chechenes, Madame A. Rossikoff gives a detailed account of her journey in that part of Daghestan, which is the more welcome, as up till now there is no complete geographical description of the region, and the very villages are marked inaccurately on the maps. The mountaineers, who fought so brilliantly under Shamil, are also little known. Madame Rossikoff begins with the beautiful plateau or terrace of Vedeñ (last stronghold of Shamil); then she describes the Chaberloi plateau, the valley of the Keri, the gorge of the Argun, and the pass Ityn-kul. A map, $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles to the inch, accompanies the paper. Several samples of Chechen folklore are given.

An interesting note concerning the Pshaves and their land, contributed by M. Khizanashwili to a Caucasian paper, is reproduced in this volume of the *Memoirs*.

Two papers are devoted to climatology, namely, one on the precipitation in Caucasia in the summer of 1894, illustrated by two maps, by A. Woznesensky, and another by K. Rossikoff, on the glaciers and the lakes of the northern slope of the main range, in which measurements of both the glaciers and the levels of the bases in 1893 and 1894 are given.

In the domain of statistics, we find four detailed papers, containing a full statistical description of the government of Baku, and statistical data relative to the provinces of Erivan, Daghestan, Kutais, and Elisabethpol; and in the domain of ethnography a splendid atlas of eight ethnographical maps of each separate province of Transcaucasia, on the scale of $13\frac{1}{2}$ miles to an inch, is published by E. Kondrutenko, as well as a note concerning these maps.

The numerical data contained in V. Cuinet's work, 'La Turquie d'Asie' (1890-94), concerning the Armenian population of Asia Minor, have been utilized by General Zelenyi and Colonel Syscoeff to draw a detailed map ($33\frac{1}{2}$ miles to an inch) of Turkish-Armenia and Kurdistan, giving the percentage of Armenian population in each of the vilayets and the districts of the region. Besides, detailed tables, showing the distribution of Armenians in Transcaucasia, are given by the editors.

The twenty-third volume of the 'Collection of Materials for the Description of Localities and Inhabitants of Caucasia' (*Sbornik Materialov*), which continues to be published by the Caucasian School Administration, contains a number of interesting papers, including an elaborate description of the Kuban province, by L. Y. Apostolov; papers on the Mennonite settlements, and on the ancient town of Majary; and a variety of smaller notes.

EAST SIBERIA.

THE last numbers of the East Siberian Branch of the Russian Geographical Society which have reached us (xvii. 1 and 2, 1896; and xviii. 3, 1897) contain an excellent review of the expeditions which were sent out by the Russian Geographical Society and its Siberian branch for the exploration of Siberia during the last fifty years, as also the yearly reports of the East Siberian branch for the years 1894, 1895, and 1896.

We learn from the latter that the exploration of the Khangai mountains was made by D. A. Klements, for the Academy of Sciences. The upper course of the Khoitu-Tamir was explored in 1894. The great range consists of granites and quartz porphyries, covered with clay slates and other metamorphic slates. A few beds of conglomerates are found on the outskirts. A formidable development of volcanic activity took place in the south-east and south-south-east Khangai, probably during the Tertiary epoch. At the sources of the Onghien and the Orkhon, hundreds of miles are covered with almost uninterrupted flows of lava. The valleys of the Khangai are well populated, and old stone graves are numerous everywhere. Parts of the Gobi-Altai were also explored, and it appeared that the Baga-Bogdo and the Artsy-Bogdo are two quite distinct ranges. The Gobi-Altai is dry and thinly populated, the breeding of camels being the chief occupation of the natives. Surveys for 1860 miles, and bulky collections of plants and insects were brought in. In the year 1895, Klements crossed the Western Khangai, and discovered a miniature glacier. In the Ubsa-hor depression he discovered layers containing coal and forest plants, which were sent to the Academy of Sciences.