

THE MOUNT EVEREST FILM OF 1924

IN presenting the kinematograph record of the Mount Everest Expedition of 1924, Captain Noel and his collaborators have been faced with the difficulty that whereas the expedition followed exactly the same route as in 1922, camped in the same places up to the North Col, and went the same—the only—way up the mountain, it was necessary this year to approach the subject from a different angle: not only to avoid repetition of scenes already familiar, but for the higher and paramount motive admirably expressed by him in his opening speech at the Scala Theatre on the evening of December 9. He was resolved that nothing should be done to vulgarize the tragedy of the last high climb.

The new record then lays most stress upon natural beauty: the marvellous ice-scenery of the trough in the East Rongbuk glacier, the exquisite effects of cloud shadow and sunset upon the glittering pinnacles. Through this cold unearthly scene we see the expedition passing, on its way to the high camps. From his eyrie on the North Peak Captain Noel photographed the climbing parties at long range with a mighty lens of great aperture and focal length, so that one may actually see the climbers moving on the mountain at somewhere near their extreme heights: a marvel of photographic technique. A few days later Odell at Camp IV. on the North Col laid out the signal of six blankets on the snow, to say that the search had failed, the camps had been found empty, and that hope must be abandoned. We follow his movements on the film from a great distance, as the party at Camp III. must have followed them through the telescope: and that is the nearest we come to the fatal accident. It is a sympathetic and moving record, and could not, we think, have been better done.

Most interesting and important are the pictures of the final pyramid, showing much more detail of its surface and its difficulties than we have seen before—no small triumph for the kinematograph camera in competition with the many cameras that have been turned upon that summit in the last few years. But indeed the photography is excellent throughout, and Captain Noel deserves our sincere congratulations on his success. In the discussion following Major Hingston's paper (published in this number of the *Journal*) all speakers agreed on the extraordinary difficulty of concentrating on a job to be done, and we may recall how Colonel Norton insisted on the extreme distaste they all felt for the simple operations of cooking and eating at the high camps. Let us imagine, then, what it must be to operate a complicated machine like a kinematograph camera with an electric drive and a lens as big as itself. As the product of supreme skill the film earns our respectful admiration. But that is a refinement, and not to be insisted upon, lest we miss appreciation of the subject in praising the technique.

The subject is worthy of the skill. In the film of 1922 we saw more

variety of incident, with exciting side-shows. The record of 1924 is deliberately more restrained, more artistic, and worthy of its title, *The Epic of Mount Everest*. We heartily commend these moving pictures to the notice of all our Fellows, and urge them not to miss the opportunity of seeing a film quite unlike the last.

As a prologue to the representation Captain Noel has brought from Tibet seven Lamas from a monastery near Gyantse, and one of the Sherpa porters, all in the care of Mr. John Macdonald, son of the British trade-agent at Chumbi. We see and hear the celebrated 10-foot trumpets in a little scene of Lama life that is designed to create the right atmosphere. The incidental music introduces some of the charming Tibetan airs that Mr. Somervell collected in 1922. We regret only the unavoidable absence of a lecture such as accompanied the first film, for which the sub-titles, with a touch of the professional jargon, are a poor substitute.

TWO ANCIENT MONUMENTS IN SOUTHERN KURDISTAN

C. J. Edmonds

THE Qara Dagh is a double range of cretaceous limestone, rising to a height of over 5000 feet. Between the two jagged ridges is a tract of elevated oak forest, about three-quarters of a mile wide, called Naokopi. Although between it and the line of the great Kifri-Kirkuk-Altun Kopri road, which divides Arab from Kurd, there is a belt some 45 miles across of exclusively Kurdish territory, it is at the Qara Dagh that the real Kurdistan seems to begin. For this belt consists, for the most part, of the most forbidding scenery imaginable—broken “bad lands” of clay, gypsum, and sandstone, crumbling and dusty in summer, slippery and treacherous in their narrow paths after rain. To the north of the range lies another world, park-like, oak-grown country, with blackberry hedges and orchards, running brooks, and tobacco gardens. Near its south-eastern end the Qara Dagh range contains two striking monuments of antiquity.

The first is out in the open at the southern foot of the Paikuli Pass, on the main migration road of the nomad Jaf, and is called by the Kurds *Butkhana*, the idol house. Its existence is well known, the ruin having been discovered by Rawlinson in 1844, and more recently examined by the German archaeologist, Dr. Ernest Herzfeld, in 1911, 1913, and, under British auspices, in 1923. The original building, which stands on a natural hillock, has collapsed, and all that remains is a core of stone and mortar, about 12 feet high on the north, the highest side. But over the hillside are scattered numerous blocks of dressed stone, a few with mouldings, many with fragments of a third-century bi-lingual inscription in Sassanian and Chaldæo-Pehlevi (W. Geiger and E. Kuhn, ‘Grundriss