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A Science Service Feature

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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THE HIGHEST WEATHER STATION

An Associated Press dispatch announces that Russian meteorologists have at last carried out the long-talked-of project of establishing a meteorological station on the summit of Mount Elbruz, in the Caucasus, the altitude of which above sea level is usually given as 18,526 feet. This altitude makes the station much the highest now existing in the world, though lower than the one formerly maintained by Harvard University on the summit of El Misti, Peru, which was 19,200 feet above sea level. Elbruz is the highest mountain in Europe, as Europe is generally bounded by geographers, but some authorities place this mountain in Asia.

Plans for erecting a meteorological station on Elbruz were first heard of in 1908, when efforts to finance the project were made by the Caucasus Alpine Club. Apart from the expense involved, the task of erecting the station presented almost insurmountable difficulties from a mountaineering standpoint, and the men who finally accomplished it deserve the utmost credit.

"Braving dangerous ravines," says the report, "scaling yawning precipices, conquering towering glaciers and ascending the precipitous snow-covered slopes of the great cap of the Caucasus, they succeeded after five days of agonizing efforts in reaching the top and erecting a small hut. In its erection every stroke of the snow shovels and picks was accompanied by giddiness and sickness. It required more than eight hours for nine men to get the hut together -- a job that normally should have taken less than an hour."

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