MOUNTAINS
AND MEMSAHIBS

BY THE MEMBERS OF
THE ABINGER HIMALAYAN EXPEDITION
1956

Joyce Dunsheath: Leader
Hilda Reid: Food and Medicine
Eileen Gregory: Climbing Leader
Frances Delany: Geologist

FOREWORD BY MRS. PANDIT
High Commissioner for India

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# CONTENTS

**FOREWORD by Mrs. Pandit, High Commissioner for India**  ix  

1. **PREPARATIONS** (Joyce Dunsheath)  
2. **AREA CHOSEN—EARLY HISTORY AND EXPLORATION**  
   (Joyce Dunsheath)  
3. **THE JOURNEY OUT—EARLY STAGES** (Hilda Reid)  
4. **THE JOURNEY OUT—FINAL STAGES** (Hilda Reid)  
5. **MANALI** (Joyce Dunsheath)  
6. **THE START** (Frances Delany)  
7. **FIRST DAYS ON THE BARA SHIGRI GLACIER** (Frances Delany)  
8. **THE UPPER REACHES OF THE BARA SHIGRI GLACIER**  
   (Frances Delany)  
9. **FUEL CRISIS** (Hilda Reid)  
10. **THE ICE PASS AND TIGER TOOTH** (Joyce Dunsheath)  
11. **THE CATHEDRAL** (Eileen Gregory)  
12. **TRAPPED!** (Eileen Gregory)  
13. **THE RETURN** (Eileen Gregory)  
14. **OBSERVATIONS OF A GEOLOGIST** (Frances Delany)  
15. **DEO TIBBA** (Eileen Gregory)  
16. **CONCLUSION** (Joyce Dunsheath)  

**APPENDICES**  
1. **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**  
2. **COST**  
3. **FOOD**  
4. **MEDICAL EQUIPMENT**  
5. **EQUIPMENT**
ILLUSTRATIONS

Camp 5

1. The Start
2. Desolation in Iraq

3. Water Carriers near Agra
4. Manali Village

5. Eileen Gregory and Frances Delany at Manali
6. Supper in the Chandra Valley

7. Base Camp
8. Paying Off the Porters

9. Lone Tent, Abinger Ice Pass
10. Summit of Jeldi Jeldi

11. Looking down the Gyurdi Valley
12. Ghula over the Upper Chandra

13. The Cathedral
14. Snow-summit of the Cathedral

15. Camp half-way to the Ice Pass
16. The Narrowing Valley

Maps: Journey By Car
Bara Shigri Glacier

Frontispiece
facing page
38

,,
39

,,
54

,,
55

,,
134

,,
135

,,
150

,,
151

Front Endpaper
Back Endpaper

vii
HAVING been brought up in the shadow of the Himalayas, it is natural that I should love mountains and thrill to stories of mountain exploits.

As I read the attempts of Mrs. Joyce Dunsheath and her enthusiastic team to climb the little-known Kulu-Spiti-Lahul area of the North-West Himalayas, I felt a vicarious sense of achievement in their effort, and this feeling will, I am sure, be shared by many women the world over.

I am ashamed to admit that until I met Mrs. Dunsheath I was unaware of the existence of a Ladies’ Alpine Club and had no idea that such a number of women from all walks of life had distinguished themselves in mountaineering. This knowledge has given me great satisfaction and, if I may say so, pride—for until comparatively recent times the climbing of mountains, along with many other activities, was looked upon as the special prerogative of the male. That women are now scaling mountain heights physically is entirely appropriate, for has not woman, from time immemorial, scaled heights of a different sort in order to survive—to retain faith and courage in life?

We live in an age which makes difficult demands on the individual. It is therefore more than ever necessary to have time to replenish our strength by closer contact with the forces of nature—to get away from the humdrum business of daily life into realms which offer wider horizons. For those who can climb physically to the mountain tops this form of relaxation is of the greatest
Foreword

value, but to those like myself, to whom this effort is
denied, it is good to read of the attempts made by others
—for sitting in our homes we can share in the adventure
and get a glimpse of the snowy peaks.

I offer Mrs. Dunsheath and her companions my warm
congratulations, not only for their mountaineering, but
also for having written this book, which will give
pleasure to many people and I hope arouse their interest
in the distant places so well described.

Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit

20th August 1957
CHAPTER ONE

PREPARATIONS

(Joyce Dunsheath)

If you close your eyes and say “Himalayas”, what do you see? It is not hard to guess—a vision of icy peaks against a deep blue sky, jagged ice-falls, snow-covered domes and untrodden passes leading on and on to vast mountain ranges covered in perpetual snow. If you are a climber, there comes the picture of men roped together, leaning heavily on ice-axes, gasping for breath as they put one foot painfully in front of another, gaining height inch by inch from the grudging slope. With the picture comes the feeling of elation that such men experience when they stand upon a peak conquered for the first time and the satisfaction that comes from having pitted one’s puny strength against the might of nature and triumphed.

To think of Himalayan climbing is to think of all one’s own climbing experience magnified ten times and exalted to the realms of the impossible. Many times in my life have I wished that I was a man of strong physique and outstanding climbing ability who would be an acceptable member of a Himalayan Expedition. I have pored over the records of those who have been lucky enough to be chosen and I have gone with them in spirit to the fastnesses of that mighty range of mysterious and romantic mountains stretching for over a thousand miles across the north of India. But I am a woman, fifty-three years of age, tied by household tasks and social
Mountains and Memsaibs
duties, so the idea remained among the lumber at the
back of my mind to which it rightly belonged. Himalayan Expeditions, I told myself, were only for men, and
for that small percentage of men who have outstanding
physical strength combined with that steadfastness of pur-
pose and determination which extends their powers and
carries them even beyond the limits of human endurance.

In the spring of 1955 I read in the newspaper that
some Scottish women were preparing to climb in Nepal:
that set me thinking. A few weeks later I met Millicent
McArthur at our Climbing Club and she told me that
she was going to accompany her husband and another
married couple to the peaks of Lahul. Was it possible,
then, that the Himalayas were not the fastnesses reserved
only for the one per cent. of super climbers? Could ordi-

ary men and women penetrate these stupendous ranges
and climb peaks twice the height of the giants we know
in Europe? But still the question of how one started re-
mained. I knew that no woman had a chance of being
included in an expedition organised by men, unless, like
Mme Kogan, who with Pierre Vitos conquered the Nun
in 1953, she was really outstanding as a climber, and I
could hear of no women thinking of organising an
expedition in 1956.

Then I remembered the advice of W. H. Murray of
the Scottish Himalayan Expedition of 1951, that if you
wanted to go on a Himalayan Expedition the best way
was to get one up yourself. Could I organise one? I had
never been to India and had had no previous experience
of expeditions, yet if this were the only way, I could at
least look into the possibilities and try. I realised right
from the beginning that this could not be just a holiday
jaunt upon which one set out blithely with a suitcase in
one hand and a camera in the other. If it were to have
any chance of success, every detail would have to be
carefully planned. This seemed a formidable task.
Preparations

In August 1955 I met Hilda Reid again. We had climbed together in the Canadian Rockies, and the impression I had retained of her was that of an enthusiastic climber and a person of great common sense. More recently we had enjoyed climbs in the Swiss Alps, and as I got to know her better I appreciated what a good companion she would be in lonely mountain huts. So, as soon as I saw her I put the question: "What about coming with me to the Himalayas?" "What?" she said, her eyes nearly popping out of her head. "Oh, rather, I'll come! It will probably mean giving up my job at the hospital, and I haven't much money, but I'll manage it somehow." Money—yes, we should have to go very carefully into the matter and see how much it would cost. I seemed to recall from the accounts of other expeditions a figure of about £400 each for a small party. This would have to cover the fare out, the purchase of stores and equipment, the payment of mules, Sherpas and porters, and the cost of food for the whole cavalcade for about six weeks.

But the immediate problem was to find two other kindred spirits, for we came to the conclusion that four was the optimum number. It is never safe for one to go alone to the mountains, and even two involves quite a big risk: one might fall ill or have an accident. Moreover, we were contemplating climbing in remote parts, hundreds of miles from the nearest town and possibly seven days' march to the nearest source of help, with no available transport. Three can be an awkward number, for there is always the division into two and one, with someone feeling left out; moreover, a tent for one is too much of a luxury and expense in the high mountains. On the other hand, a party of more than four would be an expedition on the grand scale, and this was never our intention. So we wanted a third and fourth member of the party, but it is not easy to find people with the
necessary qualifications for an enterprise of this kind. We needed not just a good climber but someone with a spirit of adventure who would enjoy finding new routes and leading first ascents, not just a good orthodox camper but one who was ready to put up with hardships and face altogether new situations, and, above all, a good companion with whom one could live at peace in the solitude of the snows. There are few people, too, who have both the time and the money for an expensive holiday of at least two months’ duration.

Eileen Gregory, another member of our Club, seemed to combine all these qualities, and she was enthusiastic from the moment we mentioned it to her. “This is the right moment for this to have happened,” she said. “I am feeling I want something to shake me out of the rut I have got into, and a chance to climb in the Himalayas is not to be missed. I’ll give up my job and get another when I get back.”

We were a long time finding a fourth, but one day it was suggested that I should invite Frances Delany, a geologist and strong climber. The disadvantage here was that she was working in the field in French Equatorial Africa and we could not meet before the expedition started. This meant taking a big risk, for we should all be thrown together in a wilderness of snow for several weeks with no means of escape one from the other, and it is a well-known fact that living at high altitudes is bad for the nerves and makes one critical and querulous. However, it was obvious from her letters that she was a person of strong character and had had wide experience of trekking in unknown country and of dealing with native porters and guides. Her geology would give an added interest to the party, and there was no doubt about her enthusiasm for Himalayan mountains. So we decided to invite her, and our party was complete.
It was at this juncture that we began to plan the journey out. To go by air would be too expensive, and a long sea voyage is not my idea of pleasure, although I was ready to endure it for the sake of arriving. Then one day while driving my little 10-h.p. car along the familiar by-pass between Dorking and London I had a brain-wave. What fun to go by car, what a way to see the world! I telephoned to Hilda and put the proposal to her. She agreed that it would be a wonderful experience, but questioned whether two unescorted women with little knowledge of the inside of a car could undertake such an arduous journey. Roads would undoubtedly be bad and garages few, the car would have to be specially equipped for the long desert stretches, and the way would lie through countries where riots and bloodshed were everyday occurrences. Supposing the car should break down in the loneliest spot? Supposing one of us got yellow fever or dysentery or any of the other plagues of the East? Suppose we should be attacked by bandits, suppose . . . But explorers must be of sterner stuff than this, and there was magic in the names of Istanbul, Damascus, Baghdad and Isfahan. So we decided to go in the little car, and we never for one moment regretted our decision.

Now, it is all very well talking in the grand manner about visiting the Himalayas, but they are a range of mountains 1500 miles long and some 300 miles deep. We had to be more specific in our objective. We decided not to carry oxygen, so any height over 24,000 ft. was out of the question. We ruled out Nepal because permission to enter was so difficult to obtain, and the political situation made Tibet impossible. Even so, there was still a wide area to choose from. I staggered back from the library with arms full of books, I pored over maps in the Royal Geographical Society map room, I discussed possibilities with Indian friends, I consulted
Mountains and Memsahibs

mountaineers and I conjured with names until ideas gradually narrowed themselves down and the name "Kulu" stood out as the area of greatest attraction for a party such as ours. Hotfoot, I read Kulu and Lahul by Colonel Bruce. This seemed the promised land, easy of access, renowned for its magnificent scenery on either side of the Beas River, and offering a wealth of peaks of about 20,000 ft. just asking to be climbed.

I joined members of the Pinnacle Club for a week-end in the Welsh mountains, and by a stroke of luck met one of the R.A.F. party who the previous year had been to Kulu and made an attempt on the Bara Shigri Glacier at the very centre of our chosen target. He showed me a sketch-map made by Gunther and Kempe in 1953, the first men to go up the glacier, and described the way as far as he had got. His reconnaissance party had had to turn back because of bad weather, but they had seen enough to be able to assure us that, given good weather, we should find the exploration of the glacier and the scaling of some of the surrounding peaks a task worthy of our efforts. It seemed that the wealth of material available was such that we were bound to find something to suit all tastes and strengths. On his advice, I wrote to Major Banon, an Englishman whose family, of Indian Army tradition, had settled in the remote village of Manali at the head of the Kulu Valley. He gave me useful information and offered to engage local porters for us. He warned us that we must fit in our climbs between the melting of the winter snows and the onset of the monsoon, roughly between the middle of May and the end of June, all too short a time in the best of seasons.

We arranged to meet Mr. Gunther in London, and he willingly gave us all the information he could about this mighty Bara Shigri Glacier, on which he had spent a week in 1953. He warned us not to be discouraged by the "dirty" ice-face on the first day's hard climb, for
this toil would be amply rewarded by the clear pure whiteness of the upper reaches. He showed us photographs he had taken on the expedition, which amply justified his description of the magnificence of the scenery. He called some of the peaks by the names he had given them—Cathedral, Lion, Ice Pass—so that we soon began to feel that we really knew them. Given good weather, we should have four weeks on the glacier instead of his mere ten days, three of which had to be spent in tents because of the continuously falling snow. This would allow us time to go to the very end of the glacier and thoroughly explore its full length, which he estimated as twelve miles.

After these talks we began to get the trip in perspective. We should each make our own way to Manali, a village 6000 ft. up at the head of the Kulu Valley. There we should meet our Sherpas, porters and muleteers, and, after a few days needed to sort and repack our stores and equipment, set off over the 13,050-ft. Rohtang Pass down into the gorge of the mighty Chandra River which rises in Spiti, very near to Tibet, and eventually joins the Indus far to the west. We should travel upstream along its south bank for five days, following the centuries-old trading-route leading into Tibet. We should have no worry as to where to set up camps, for there were only a few places in this arid gorge with sufficient grazing for the mules. Just where the river makes a right-angled bend as it comes from the north and turns west, we should come on the Bara Shigri Glacier, which here discharges on to the rocky valley from the south-east and sprawls a full mile wide almost to the river edge. At this point we should establish a Base Camp, sending the mules back and retaining only the Sherpas and one or two Ladakhi porters. These would relay the packages up to a central point where the glacier makes a wide sweep; this we hoped to reach.
Mountains and Memsahibs

in three days. Gunther had called this wide-open place Concordia, reminding him as it did of the beautiful Concordia Platz of the Bernese Oberland.

From this central point he suggested three excursions; one to the “Ice Pass” to see whether it could be connected with the Tichu Nala Glacier already explored from the south-west; one to the extreme end of the glacier to look over on to the mysterious Gyurdi River, the upper reaches of which had never yet been seen; and one over the cols leading to his “Lion Glacier” and the mountains of Spiti and Tibet.

I am at heart an explorer and love wandering by myself in unfamiliar country, preferably where no one has ever set foot before. I had had some experience of this in the Canadian Rockies and in the New Zealand Alps, while Hilda, who had spent five years in western Canada, had done a lot of climbing in unexplored country, including a first ascent for women, so that such an adventure held no terrors for her. We were therefore both enthusiastic about exploring such virgin territory as Mr. Gunther described.

In order that the information we should bring back could be useful to others, some knowledge of surveying was necessary. I consulted my scientific husband. “Easy,” he said, “for anyone interested in mathematics as you are.” So the next day a borrowed theodolite was delivered at our Surrey home and many happy days were spent measuring the adjoining hills and fields. In a few days we knew the exact position of every tree in the garden! Text-books on surveying helped me to understand the use I should make of my readings on the instruments.

I also joined a class of would-be explorers at the Royal Geographical Society and received more help and encouragement. Here I learned the use that could be made of photographs in a survey and was introduced to the
Preparations

photo-theodolite. I came to the conclusion, however, that this was too heavy an instrument for a woman to carry to 20,000 ft., and I was driven, with the help of a firm of instrument makers, to invent something of my own. We devised a small metal cylinder on which the camera could be mounted and which itself would screw on to a light tripod. Aiming at simplicity, ease of operation under bad weather conditions and reasonable accuracy, we arranged for the cylinder to move round the 360° circle clicking into slots at every 15°. It would also incorporate a compass and level. By this means the camera could be set up with the lens pointing due north and views taken at regular intervals all round, so that when the photographs were subsequently printed they would form a complete panorama. This proved very satisfactory in use, and, combined with plane-table observations, gave a reasonably good record of the area. For use on the plane-table, we had square sheets of aluminium made with drawing-paper stuck on each side with waterproof cement. This saved a good deal of time and trouble at high altitude in preparing and transporting our records. Frances, a trained geologist and surveyor, was able to help a lot with this work when we actually reached the glacier. We had great difficulty in getting a large-scale map of the area, for this was on the Indian secret list. However, we were able to study one of 4 miles to the inch in the map room of the Royal Geographical Society and the librarian kindly made us a copy of Gunther's original sketch-map.

The question of language naturally arose, and by the good offices of a friend, an Indian student at London University, I found an enthusiastic teacher. From then on, as I went about my daily household tasks or stood in queues waiting for the bus, I would practise how to say "Put up the tent", "Make me some tea" or "We set off tomorrow for the high peak", and was transported in
Mountains and Memsahibs

imagination to a tiny camp set on ice in the vastnesses of a snowbound world. Eileen, for her part, took a textbook of Urdu with her on her sea voyage and arrived in India with a good if theoretical knowledge of the language. But alas! these efforts proved of little use to us, for both Sherpas and porters spoke a dialect of Tibet. It was interesting to find that although the two dialects varied, they could understand one another. These men lived a thousand miles apart, yet so great is the stretch of Tibet across the north of India that the language was still a common one.

Now that the party was complete and the area decided upon, we could make definite plans, settle when we should start, how many mules, how many porters and Sherpas we should engage, what quantities of food we should require, what equipment, and how many tents we should need. Eileen, Hilda and I gathered round a table at my home in Abinger Hammer on the North Downs to work it out. The first thing was to find a title for the enterprise, for all expeditions must have a name: after trying various alternatives, we decided to call ourselves the “Abinger Himalayan Expedition 1956”. We had to have a fund available out of which to pay immediate expenses, so we decided that each member should pay her own fare out by whatever means she elected to travel and should contribute forthwith a sum of £100 to the general fund. This would be banked in a special Expedition account and drawn on as required. Information received through the Royal Geographical Society, who in the meantime had approved our expedition, showed that the Mount Everest Foundation were prepared to give grants to expeditions exploring new areas and making scientific observations on the topography and geology of the region. We decided, therefore, to apply for such a grant, but in the meantime to go ahead on the basis of meeting the cost our-
Preparations

selves if there were no other means of getting to the Himalayas.

The next step was to fix a date, and on the advice of Major Banon we decided on the middle of May as the time of departure of our caravan from Manali. This meant arriving in India at the end of April, so Hilda and I would have to leave by car about the middle of March. Eileen agreed to take the baggage with her by sea, and after poring over time-tables and consulting steamship companies, decided to travel on the P. & O. steamer Corfu leaving England on 29th March and arriving at Bombay on 16th April. She was influenced in her decision by the fact that the P. & O. Steamship Line generously agreed to take our baggage free of charge. As the total amount would be nearly a ton, this was a big consideration.

This brought us to the question of the number of porters, Sherpas and mules we should need to transport such a weight. If a man could carry forty pounds and a mule one hundred and twenty pounds, how many of each would be needed to carry our loads up the glacier? I was reminded of the chain sums we used to do at school and of the old problem: “If a hen and a half lays an egg and a half in a day and a half, how many days would it take to collect a hundred eggs?” We felt that, being an all-women’s party, we should need the maximum, but on the other hand the hiring of Sherpas is an expensive business and we had to limit the number as far as was reasonable. The standard rate of pay is five rupees a day per man and eight rupees a day for the sirdar in charge. In addition, fares from Darjeeling have to be paid, food and equipment have to be provided for all, and each Sherpa has to be insured and have a medical test. The local porters only ask four rupees a day and provide their own food, but we understood from members of other expeditions that though they were excellent as carriers
Mountains and Memsahibs

they had had little or no experience of climbing on ice and snow and none of cooking for Europeans. The Sherpas, on the other hand, were well trained in rope and ice technique and had experience in camping and cooking for other expeditions.

I later wrote to the local secretary of the Himalayan Club at Darjeeling, and she kindly agreed to look out for reliable men who had been on expeditions before and could give us the maximum help. Our sirdar, nicknamed Pansy, was a treasure, combining as he did the qualities of an experienced mountaineer, an efficient camp servant and a controller of men. We finally decided to engage four Sherpas and four Ladakhi porters to carry from Base Camp to the top of the glacier or wherever our explorations might take us. The problem of ordering mules to carry the 3/4-ton of equipment and stores to the foot of the glacier was solved by Major Banon, who wrote that the actual number could be determined when he had seen the loads, and that for the present he would make preliminary arrangements so that mules and muleteers would be available at the required time from the country around Manali.

Each member of the team would work out her personal equipment. We had the usual Alpine climbing outfit, but the great height and more strenuous climbing would exact a heavy toll on anything not quite first-class and everything would have to be examined with critical eyes and replaced if necessary. We there and then decided to have new boots with Vibram soles big enough for three pairs of socks to be worn inside, reserving our worn boots as spares. Trousers, blouses with long sleeves to guard against the scorching sun, woollies, windjammers, anaraks could probably be used from our existing stocks. We accepted thankfully the offer of the British Nylon Spinners to give us each a suit of nylon fur with a waterproof lining which they had
Preparations

designed specially for arctic conditions. This we knew would be invaluable in snowstorms and blizzards. As it turned out, we had such good weather that clothing as warm as this was unnecessary for climbing and was only used at camp in the evenings. Each had her own ice-axe, crampons and carabiner, while ropes and pitons would be ordered for the party.

We decided to take five tents, two for the four of us, one for Sherpas, one for porters, and a large spare which could be used as a cook-tent and for surplus equipment. We would buy or hire two strong, specially treated cotton tents with a “sleeve” opening. This is a circle cut in one end of the tent into which has been sewn a loose bag of material, which can be gathered up and tied with a tape either from outside or inside the tent. We eschewed zip fasteners on the advice of the Scottish Women’s Himalayan Party, as being liable to freeze and so efficiently prevent either ingress or egress! We already had a sleeping-bag each, but decided that two, one inside the other, would be necessary in extreme cold. They were down-filled and proved quite adequate to withstand the coldest night if one also slept in all one’s clothes. By the courtesy of the Sea-Esta Company, we were provided with air-beds for the whole party.

Everything had to be assembled and ready for the shippers by 1st February, so we arranged to distribute the work amongst us. Frances was too far off to help at this juncture. Hilda was the obvious person to become the medical officer, and she agreed to arrange for the food also. Eileen had had most experience in guideless climbing and high camping, so she took over the equipment lists and transport. I was left to carry on with the general planning.

The Commonwealth Relations Office in Downing Street advised us that permission for the expedition to proceed should be obtained from the Indian Govern-
Mountains and Memsahibs

ment, and we were warned that the wheels of government in some countries turn slowly and it might be months before we had a reply. It was now already January, and if two of us were going overland we should certainly have to set out in two months' time. Supposing we got three-quarters of the way there and then had a letter to say we had been refused permission to climb? Well, nothing venture, nothing have. We decided to take the risk, and were justified, for permission came just two weeks before we set out.

Hilda worked hard at menus, basing her quantities on the food lists of previous expeditions, but remembering that we were women and had not the voracious appetites of men. Some of us thought we should eat twice our usual amount when using up energy climbing, while others thought that the rareness of the air at high camps would take away appetite and we should eat less than normal. Vitamins and the number of calories had to be taken into account, and Hilda was very gratified when the final list was approved by an expert dietician. Practically all food had to be tinned, but we found dried fruit and dehydrated vegetables excellent. Manufacturing firms were most generous in either making us gifts of their products or in offering reduced terms. The Metal Box Company made us tins to the size of our special requirements, and these took the place of the usual wooden boxes for carrying food. They were excellent in use. A further gift of diothene bags of all sizes proved most useful in the carrying of small quantities of food on high climbs.

Hilda also stocked a First Aid Case and Medicine Chest and even went so far as to have a lesson in filling teeth in case a filling dropped out at high altitude! In the event, this proved to be a wise precaution. One member of the party lost one high up on the glacier, but, nothing daunted, Hilda replaced it without any of the
amenities of Wimpole Street. This may easily prove to be a record. How many dentists have filled teeth at 17,000 ft.? With all the work of collecting food and medicine, while still doing a full-time job as theatre sister at Hammersmith Hospital, Hilda also found time to take a comprehensive course in car maintenance at an Evening Institute. Now, if the petrol failed to reach the carburettor we should know the reason why, if the self-starter declined to start the engine we should not have to contemplate the indignity of being towed by a camel in the desert, while the mending of a puncture was mere child’s play. (As a matter of fact, owing to the chivalry of the East, we never once had to change a wheel ourselves.)

Permits, stores and equipment, Sherpas, porters and mules, food and medicine, all were now in hand and I could turn my attention to the personal problem of travel by car. The car would need to be specially prepared for its long journey through the heat of the desert and along rough roads. A steel plate was put under the sump to prevent holes from flying rocks, an extra petrol tank was fitted, and additional tins ordered so that we could cover six hundred miles if necessary without refuelling. New and stronger springs were fitted and the back seat was removed entirely so that there would be the maximum space for luggage. We bought an additional spare wheel and had special deep-tread Dunlop tyres put on all wheels.

We then started to plan the route in detail, and, on looking at a map of the world, realised with a shock that 8500 miles of unknown country lay ahead of us. We wrote to the Automobile Association rather hesitatingly for advice on the possibility of undertaking such a journey across Europe and the Middle East to India. By return came a typewritten sheet outlining the way just as if we had asked for a route to Brighton! This rather
Mountains and Memsahibs

took the wind out of our sails, for it looked as if we were not undertaking such an adventurous journey after all, but our experience ultimately showed that there was much more in it than would appear from an optimistic A.A. itinerary.

We began to collect introductions to people living in those countries through which we should pass. The British Council put us in touch with their representatives in the capital cities on our route, the Girl Guides Association with their commissioners, and we visited many hospitals on our way, meeting everywhere the same friendliness and keen interest in our enterprise. We were pleased to find that while the world was in a state of tension and fear, we as individuals were given every possible help and treated as friends by all we met, no matter what their colour or language.

Zero hour came, and by a miracle all was ready. Everything was in the hands of the shippers, all arrangements were made in India and all documents in order. By the middle of March 1956, Eileen had performed her last experiment and put away her test-tubes, Hilda had assisted at her last operation and packed her uniform, while I had as far as possible set my house in order. We pictured Frances tramping back to her base at Brazzaville in French Equatorial Africa, packing her topee and making ready for her flight to Delhi. Leaving Eileen to catch her ship on 7th April, Hilda and I reached Dover on 20th March ready to cross the channel early the following morning. This was farewell to England for five months. The expedition was launched.
CHAPTER TWO

AREA CHOSEN—EARLY HISTORY AND EXPLORATION

(Joyce Dunsheath)

For centuries the pulse of trade flowing between Tibet and India has beat slowly and regularly through the long arm of the Kulu-Lahul-Spiti territory in East Punjab. The three districts have suffered many invasions from north and south, Hindu and Buddhist religions succeeding each other with the Aryan and Mongol conquerors. Yet always salt, borax, wool and precious stones from Tibet and Spiti have been in demand in the Indian market, and the hard-living Tibetans have been ready to endure much to obtain the wheat, barley and rice of the plains. A centuries-old trade-route runs from Tibet through Spiti and, meeting the source of the Chandra River, comes down with it from the 16,000-ft. Bara Lacha Pass, south to Shigri. Here they make a right-angled bend to the west and remain together for twenty miles before the track turns south over the Rohtang Pass to Manali and the Kulu Valley.

Captain Ford tells us how at Puti Runi (Split Rock), a recognised camping-place on the river bank, middle-men bought animals and wares from the travellers, then turning south drove the sheep, goats and yaks laden with goods up the valley now blocked by the Bara Shigri Glacier, across the head of the Parvitti Valley along the old track to the Sutlej Valley at Rampur. Here they
Mountains and Memsahibs

bartered with the men of the plains, exchanging their goods against grain, woven material and ponies, serving a real need and making a scanty living themselves. Other traders went on past Puti Runi, taking another two days to reach the top of the Rohtang Pass (13,050 ft.), then went down the other side, stopping at the cañon below Rahla still known as the “Custom House”, and on into the fertile Kulu Valley and the Punjab plains.

We know little of the early history of these districts, and the absence of records may be accounted for by the following legend. The last of the Rajahs (1807-48) was an autocrat of uncertain temper who entrusted the archives to two keepers. One day in a burst of anger against these men he gave orders that they should be killed. They protested and said that if they died their wives would carry out the orders left with them to burn the archives. In spite of this, sentence was carried out and the faithful wives burnt all the records accumulated through the ages. However this may be, we do know that there were three invasions of Kulu—in the twelfth century when it became part of Ladakh, in the fifteenth century when a Kashmir Buddhist took the town of Kaluta, and in the sixteenth century during the Tibetan occupation.

The first account of a journey into this area is found in a manuscript written by a Portuguese priest in 1631. This tells how he set out on a twenty-one-day journey from Tsaparang to reach Leh, the capital of Ladakh, and back via Gya and the Rohtang Pass. C. Wessels, in his book Early Jesuit Travellers in Central Asia 1603-1721, prints a map which shows the route in red as crossing the Chandra at the Rohtang Pass and going directly north to the Bara Lacha Pass. Our experience is that this would have been impossible to a non-climber and that he must have turned down the Chandra, crossing at
Khoksar, and followed the stream east and north till he reached the pass at its source.

There are no further records until the publication of an account of the travels of Moorcroft and Trebeck in the Punjab. William Moorcroft was a veterinary surgeon who went out from England in 1808 to work for the East India Company. Finding the horses used by the company for trade to be of very inferior stock, he decided that they needed to be crossed with a stronger breed; obtaining at last a reluctant permission from the Indian Government, he went to seek horses in Bokhara, Turkestan, but was allowed no money and only a limited amount of goods to trade with en route. As his companion he took George Trebeck, the adventurous son of a solicitor in Calcutta. Trebeck acted as surveyor, evidently taking his job seriously, for he says, “Measurement is made in paces, bearings of compass noted with great precision, latitudes determined by observation and height by barometer and thermometer at principal elevations.” From Sultanpur they went up the Parbati River. He explains the hot springs at Mani Karn by the following legend. The goddess Parbati, while bathing one day in the river, laid her jewels on the bank. A wily serpent stole the earrings and took them to the regions below the earth. When pressed to return them, he snorted with indignation and the earrings blew out of his nostrils and returned to the goddess. Ever since then, hot water has gushed out of the cavities in the earth formed by his nostrils. After many disappointments, delays and hardships, they reached Leh in September 1820 and were forced to remain there for a period of two years due to pecuniary difficulties and suspicion on the part of the authorities. From Leh they went to the capital of Kashmir and out over the Pir Pandal to Kabul and Bokhara. On the return journey, Moorcroft left his companion to visit Maimana, where he succumbed to a
Mountains and Memsahibs

fever and died. Trebeck brought back to Delhi the detailed diary they had kept and the map they had drawn.

In 1833 a young surgeon of the Bengal Native Infantry, J. G. Gerard, travelled in Spiti and has left a comprehensive account of the people and land. He tells of villages set along the steps of the river between 11,000 and 14,000 ft. in open hollows facing the sun where a good barley was being cultivated by a black-skinned, thick-set, beardless people. He observed with some surprise flocks of black-headed sheep and sturdy goats grazing in cold and arid pastures, and watched with admiration the plain-featured women spinning and weaving the silky hair of the yaks into magnificent shawls.

Nothing else is heard of the area until the period of British administration. Kulu and Lahul came under British protection in 1846 and Spiti in 1849. We then hear of visits to the area and exciting shooting expeditions by parties of young officers. Captain Alexander Cunningham of the Royal Engineers went up to Manali “through five miles of jungle”, and traversing the alluvial flat, went over the Rohtang, climbing on the way the flight of stone steps to Rahla, where he describes the river, contracted to eight feet, falling in a picturesque cascade down the rock. He was fascinated to see the source of the Beas at the head of the pass trickling from under a mica slab. Descending to the Chandra, he crossed it at Khoksar by a “ghula” (a wooden cage drawn across on a rope cable) and followed the stream east and north to the Bara Lacha Pass. He describes the scene of utter desolation in the Chaildra Gorge, the absence of trees, animals or people. His account of a later crossing of a river on buffalo skins is amusing: “The skin floats upon its back with the legs upwards and the paddler lies across the skin with his feet
on one side hanging in the water while he grasps one of
the legs in his left hand and uses a small paddle with his
right hand. The horns and ears are removed and all the
orifices carefully sewn up with the exception of one leg
which is left open for inflating the skin and when in use
is secured with a piece of string or a leather thong.”

He too returned via the Bara Lacha and the Rohtang
to Manali.

F. Markham of the Indian Army went on a shooting
expedition in July 1851 and describes the crossing of an
enormous glacier. “It was the most difficult and danger-
ous of any I had seen and extends down to the river,
which has cleared a passage for itself. The glacier is about
four miles in breadth”—obviously the Bara Shigri!
There is now a reasonably good rope bridge at Khoksar
replacing the ghula of Cunningham’s records.

A. Wilson, too, says the Bara Shigri Glacier is four
miles wide, but he crossed it on ponies in a journey of
three hours over blocks of granite and gneiss perched on
the edges of crevasses going down to unknown depths.
His coolies explained very effectively the enormous
ridges up and down which they laboured by saying that
a mountain peak had fallen into the glacier. He waxes
poetic in his description of the Chandra:

Bare it is, without house or trace, and destitute
Of obvious shelter as a shipless sea.
The glaciers creep
Like snakes that watch their prey.

It is interesting to note for comparison that he quotes
A. F. P. Harcourt as having counted 3648 steps when
walking across the glacier in 1869, and having therefore
estimated the width as two miles. Harcourt was Assistant
Commissioner of the Punjab in 1871 and submitted to
the Governor an excellent report of Kulu, full of statis-
tical information and accurate observation.
Mountains and Memsahibs

In 1863 Philip Henry Egerton, District Officer of the Kangra District, asked permission to explore Spiti to look into the possibilities of trade there. He took the first photographs of the Himalayas, and one is full of admiration for a man who at that early date in such rough country carried plates, exposed, developed and printed them on the spot and got such admirable results.

The first official survey of the area was made in 1851, and an account of this is given in the Great Synopsis of 1879, published by the Survey of India. Three parties covered the area of 9000 square miles of country, one going from Spiti across the Kanzam La, another from Kulu up the Bhaga and a third south from Leh: all met at the Bara Lacha at the end of the summer. The present map (Survey of India, ¼ in. to the mile, Sheet 52H) is based on their work, and the area of East Lahul is as they surveyed it. The Kulu Valley was resurveyed in 1921 and the results published on the ½ in. to the mile, Sheet 52H/SW. The Bara Shigri is represented as a river with many streams flowing into it and only the mountains along its lower reaches on the true left have been put in and the heights indicated.

The era of climbing parties in the Himalayas began only in the twentieth century, and the expeditions to giant peaks have overshadowed the stories of smaller expeditions. Yet these have taken place, and but for two world wars the area would have become better known and developed.

The indefatigable Lt.-Col. the Rt. Hon. C. G. Bruce travelled up the Kulu Valley on a seven months’ leave in 1912, and after a short stay in Manali crossed the Rohtang Pass and the Chandra at Khoksar to reconnoitre the Gaphan. He climbed the “Solane Weisshorn”, the “Gaphan Schreckhorn” (though he failed on the Gaphan itself), the “Kondini” and other lower peaks from
Patseo before returning to civilisation. He also made a preliminary reconnaissance of Deo Tibba.

The history of the climbing on Deo Tibba is interesting. In 1939 Major J. O. M. Roberts spent a two months' leave from the Indian Army in Kulu. Taking with him three Gurkhas entirely inexperienced in climbing, he made a reconnaissance of Deo Tibba from the Jagatsukh. He came to the conclusion that a route was practicable up a large ice-fall to the north-east of the col at the head of the Nala. He also had a look at the approach from the Hamtah, which Colonel Bruce's guide, Fuhrer, had attempted in 1902 with some success, but decided that the route, though possible, was too dangerous because of the threat of avalanches.

Captain Lind made an attempt on the mountain in 1940 via the Jagatsukh and camped under its summit. He died soon afterwards in the battle of Singapore, but had left manuscript notes of his climb with Major Banon at Manali. His route was followed in 1951 by Mr. and Mrs. Peck, who reached a height of 16,600 ft. on the saddle. Universo, an Italian military publication, tells how three Italian prisoners of war made an attempt in 1945 and got to a height of 5509 metres on "Punta San Marco", where they left a little figure of the lion of St. Mark. In 1950 the Hamtah route was again prospected by Peck and Paterson, but the next year Ker, Trower and Evans favoured the Jagatsukh Nala approach. They made two attempts on the summit, first by the "Piton Ridge", on which they were stopped by an unclimbable gendarme, and next by the Watershed Ridge to the foot of the final curve that leads on to the dome of the ice-cap. They retreated before treacherous snow and ice conditions. In 1952 Mr. and Mrs. Graaf and K. Berrill finally conquered the elusive summit. Crossing the Piton Ridge, they set up a high camp at 18,200 ft. on the Upper Snow-field. The next
Mountains and Memsahibs

day they ascended to the col between Deo Tibba and Indrasan and thence up the north ridge. It took five hours to do the final 1500 ft., but at last they stood on the top triumphant, just forty years since the first reconnaissance was made by Bruce.

Major Roberts was a tireless explorer, and after his reconnaissance of Deo Tibba spent some time among the mountains of the Parbati Valley. His object in 1939 had been to find a new way into Spiti, but, failing in this, he had gone on over the recognised Pin-Parbati Pass route and on to Lahul. In 1941 his objective was the head of mountains around the Tos Nal, a tributary of the Parbati, and from a high camp at 16,000 ft. he says he could see all the mountains of the Kulu-Spiti Divide from Pk. 21,165 to 19,500 marked on the Indian Survey (52H, 4 miles to 1 in.) and a col over to the Tichu Nala Glacier. This would seem to link up with the Ice Pass which we reached on our expedition, from whence it certainly seemed possible to get on to a range of lesser mountains to the south. One lone peak sprang up from the bed of the valley and may well have been the “Turtle Peak” climbed by Snelson.

Roberts next climbed a peak 21,148 ft. and christened it “White Sail Peak”. In 1952 Snelson, Graaf and Schelpe made plans to explore the basin of the Dibibokri, a tributary of the Parbati. They climbed a number of lesser peaks and finally scaled Rubal Kang (20,300 ft.) and the Pyramid (19,200), and so went on to Parahio and back to the original camp on the Tichu Nala. The Tos Nal and Tichu Nala are thus linked up with Roberts's exploration.

In 1953 Mr. A. E. Gunther chose this area for exploration because it was so very accessible and he could therefore have the maximum time in the mountains in a month's leave from London. His small party of four sahibs and four Sherpas left Manali on 18th September
and went with mules over the Rohtang, down to the Chandra, making five camps upstream before coming to the right-angled bend where it is joined in the summer months by the Shigri stream oozing from the Bara Shigri. After exploring the East Shigri Glacier and climbing a peak of 19,600 ft., they returned to base at the foot of the main glacier.

After a day's rest they set off again and reached the central core of the glacier, which they named Concordia, in three days. Here they found that the glacier came down in a wide curve, and pushed another camp four or five miles up the upper reaches. From it they climbed a 20,000-ft. peak, which we always referred to as Gunther's Peak and which we subsequently climbed. Bad weather and the end of the leave necessitated their return to Manali, but in this short time they had seen enough to know that here were virgin peaks in plenty and a fascinating area of exploration for those who could follow. Gunther made a sketch-map on his return and inspired several parties to follow in his steps.

The next year an R.A.F. team, the McArthur party, and the party from Cambridge University led by Mr. P. Holmes, all explored the Kulu-Lahul-Spiti watershed, although the Bara Shigri Glacier was not explored further till our 1956 expedition.

An expedition of the R.A.F. Mountaineering Association left England in May 1955 with the object of plotting the course of the Gyurdi and Ratang Rivers, tributaries of the Spiti River. They planned to approach via the Bara Shigri Glacier, but the late winter snow was still so deep and treacherous by the end of May that after a reconnaissance by some members their plans had to be changed. They decided to cross the Chandra and explore the Kulti Valley, which was completely unknown. With local porters, whom they found to be very good though untrained mountaineers, they climbed several
Mountains and Memsahibs

peaks along the ridge, the highest of which they named Tila-Ka-Lahr. They then made an ascent of Tanagiri, 21,000 ft., the greatest height achieved by the expedition, before returning to Manali with valuable topographical information.

In 1955 Hamish and Millicent McArthur with another married couple, Frank and Babs Solari, followed the same route to the base of the Bara Shigri Glacier and continued beyond it, still following the Chandra, to the Kanzam La. They climbed the Kanzam Peak (18,000 ft.), then crossed the Chandra and did some useful surveying of that part of Lahul lying within the bend of the river. Their map was published in the Alpine Journal. They made a first ascent of an uncharted 19,000-ft. peak, then went on to climb the highest peak in the area, marked on the Indian Survey as 20,430 ft. On their way home they found the river too swollen to cross and had to go via the Bara Lacha Pass to the Bhaga, adding sixty miles to the journey, then back to Manali via the Rohtang. By the river they met another expedition from Cambridge University led by Peter Holmes, who took over some of their porters. This new party went up to the Bara Lacha Pass, and in spite of bad weather thoroughly explored the mountains of Spiti to the south and east, approaching the Bara Shigri by hitherto unknown valleys and passes.

The same Cambridge party went again in 1956 under the title of the “Ratang-Parbati Himalaya Expedition”. Peter Holmes is a keen cartographer and was anxious to clear up some map difficulties he had met with the previous year and to enlarge upon the area he had then surveyed. He claims to have explored and photo-surveyed a hitherto unmapped area of over four hundred square miles, to have crossed ten virgin passes and to have discovered fifteen new glaciers. In addition, the party climbed ten virgin peaks, six of them over 21,000 ft.
One more glimpse of the area is found in the recently published *Himalayan Circuit* by G. D. Khosla. This is particularly interesting as it is written by an Indian High Court Judge who made an official journey into Kulu, Spiti and Lahul and expresses the Indian viewpoint on mountains, people and customs. So often the British eye misses much that is interesting through lack of understanding of the history of the country and the mentality of the people. We can only hope that his expressed object in writing the book "so that a little more attention can be paid to this backward but magnificent region of our country" will be realised and that more mountaineers will spend their holidays in this delightful part of the Himalayas.
BURSTING with excitement, I threw open my bedroom window in the early morning of 20th March 1956 and looked out on to the grey streets of Kensington and a steady rain falling from an overcast sky. But my spirits were in no way dampened by the gloomy scene, for it was a red-letter day for Joyce and me. We were off to the Himalayas! It seemed unbelievable that we were ready to start out on the great adventure on the very date we had planned twelve months ago.

The main bulk of my packing had been completed some time ago, and suitcases, bags and boxes were already assembled at Joyce’s flat. I checked over my handbag—sombre blue passport now gay with visas of far-away places, travellers’ cheques, flimsy pieces of paper inscribed in unknown characters and languages signifying money—one could only hope that nothing vital had been forgotten. I joined Joyce; and we rushed off together to a farewell luncheon given by the Press.

Back in Kensington, we tackled the mountain of luggage which had accumulated over the months at Joyce’s flat, a formidable array of air-beds, sleeping-bags, camping equipment, kit-bags, spare parts for the Ford Anglia, a box of food, water-carrier, can of paraffin, twelve empty petrol tins, two spare wheels, suitcases and all the other impedimenta required for our
8500-mile journey. Even with the back seat removed from the car, it was a work of art to pack everything in and to give, we hoped, the minimum amount of rattle.

It was the five-o'clock rush-hour as we made our way slowly down the Old Kent Road in a steady downpour of rain and headed for the White Cliffs Hotel, Dover. We were too excited to sleep much that night, but eventually morning came and with it a large mail of greetings and good wishes from a host of friends. The biggest thrill of all was a letter from Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, wishing the expedition success. As usual, there were a few last-minute items to be bought, and at 9.30 a.m. an odd figure was to be seen rushing down the High Street, red cap flying in the breeze, clutching numerous small parcels in one hand and a frying-pan and mug in the other. Ten minutes later, a small black car drove into the last available space on the cross-Channel steamer, ropes were cast off, and we were away on the start of our great adventure.

We sped through France to Geneva and along the upper valley of the Rhône till we came to the Simplon Pass, which we found to be still snowbound, so we entrained the car through the tunnel. It was snowing heavily as we emerged on to the Italian side, and we were held up for half an hour while avalanches thundered down. By the time we reached Domodossala it was pitch dark and bitterly cold. We were told we could not get the car off for at least an hour, so we went off in search of food. On our return, to our dismay, the train with all the cars had disappeared: eventually we discovered them half a mile away in a siding. Loud and excited voices greeted our arrival, for the cars ahead of ours had been moved and we were holding up proceedings. Hastily we climbed on to the truck and into the car. Joyce took one look through the back window and
Mountains and Memsahibs
decided she didn’t like it at all. She would have to back
down four empty trucks with a wide gap between each
and a sharp rise on to the far truck. Still, it was the only
way, and we started. Torch in hand, I hung out of the
window, peering into the blackness. At least six men
were down in the deep snow waving their arms wildly
and shouting instructions in rapid Italian while another
blew continuous blasts on a shrill whistle; and the gang of
workmen clearing the snow added their own comments.
Somehow we reached the last truck, only to find a right-
angled bend had to be negotiated in order to let the car
drop off the truck into a snowdrift. Even this was
accomplished without accident. The workmen, umbrella
in one hand and shovel in the other, began to dig and
push us on to solid ground. After this experience, back-
ing the half-mile to the station yard was child’s play,
but we were very cold and wet when it was all over, and
our only thought was to leave Domodossala as soon as
possible. Our spirits were still high, but had we realised
that for the next four weeks we were to have rain for
our constant companion, I doubt if we should have felt
so cheerful!

As we drove towards Milan the next day the beauty
of Lake Maggiore was completely lost to us, and we were
bitterly disappointed to find that Venice, “throned on
her hundred isles”, had a mantle of rain. We continued
on our way via Trieste to Kozina and the Yugoslav
frontier, where we filled in complicated forms and
answered dozens of questions, not the least difficult of
which was to state the number of parcels in the car!

Once into Yugoslavia, the absence of traffic was very
noticeable and we saw only two lorries and an occa-
sional oxen-cart all day before reaching Zagreb. Here
we were taken to a gathering of the Combined Alpine
Clubs of Yugoslavia by our friends, the Cepics, and had
our first introduction to Slivovice, the national drink.
This further enlivened the already gay party, and when we left our new friends we were the proud bearers of badges signifying that we were honorary members of the Alpine Club of Yugoslavia.

The next morning we made our way on to the “Autoput”, an excellent modern cement road running almost straight to Belgrade, 320 miles away. At the end of each 100-mile stretch there is a restaurant and garage for the traveller, but otherwise there is scarcely a building to be seen. It was a strange feeling to be speeding along this main highway linking the two main cities of the country on an almost deserted road.

It was dark and cold when we entered Belgrade through melting snow-banks and mud, but Dr. Paula Lah, the head of the Blood Transfusion Institute, to whom I had an introduction, and her deputy, Dr. Simonovic, gave us a warm welcome, and for two days we enjoyed their hospitality. They warned us of the bad state of the roads along which we now had to go and telephoned to a colleague in Skopje to meet us on arrival and to arrange accommodation for us at the Hotel Macedonia. Nothing was too much trouble for these Yugoslav friends, and we were very grateful for their kindness and hospitality.

Although we were off at 6 a.m. the next morning, the streets were already crowded with people on their way to work. They seemed to lack all traffic sense and, sprawling across the road, took little notice of our horn. Later on we stopped for a picnic lunch outside Topola and were interested to see the long procession of country folk returning from market, the women gay with red skirts and coloured head-scarves. Fascinated by the sight of an old lady working with distaff and spindle while minding her sheep, we decided to take a photograph. Fortunately we did not get out of the car, for, as I was searching for some coins to give her, her gnarled
Mountains and Memsahibs

hands were in a flash thrust through the open window and at my throat as she tried to tear off my bright yellow beads. Joyce promptly let in the clutch, leaving a very angry old lady hurling insults after us from the middle of the road.

Soon after this incident the road began to deteriorate, and thick mud, large pot-holes and wash-outs slowed us down to ten miles per hour. After several hours of this tedious driving we were glad to see the lights of Skopje in the distance. At a prominent crossroads about two miles from the town we were challenged by an armed policeman. He talked loud and long, and, quaking inwardly, we could only nod our heads at intervals and hope we were doing the right thing. When he paused for breath, Joyce laid her head on her arms to simulate sleep and said, "Hotel Macedonia". It was obviously the wrong remark, and the policeman started all over again, repeating constantly a word that sounded like "Sentrotel". At last he seemed satisfied and, grinning broadly, waved us on. On arrival at the Hotel Macedonia we had hardly time to get out of the car before a tall, well-built man rushed across the road and said, "Good-evening. I am Dr. ——, a friend of Dr. Lah, who has telephoned me. You are very late and this is not the hotel. Did the police not give you my message? I have given them instructions for twenty miles round to tell you to come to the Central Hotel as there were no rooms at the Hotel Macedonia." The explanation of the hold-up was as simple as that!

The next morning we were shown round the town and found Skopje a strange mixture of East and West. The River Vadar, which runs through its centre, has on its right bank modern stone buildings and wide streets, but on its left bank there are typical narrow streets of the East lined with bazaars and mosques. We were amused to see a red double-decker London Transport
bus, looking quite out of place, being used for local transport.

It was difficult to get away, for as these people so seldom see visitors they were loath to let us go, but by midday we were travelling through wild mountainous country to the Greek frontier. As we drove late at night down to the coast we were thankful to think that accommodation had been arranged for us in Salonika by the Greek Girl Guides Association. Joyce is a Guide Commissioner in London, and, through the International Commissioners, had arranged many contacts en route. I am not a Guide, but I must confess to being very impressed with the friendliness and helpfulness of Guides in all those places where we were able to meet them.

The next morning we drove slowly along the five-mile stretch of the bay and were able to appreciate the beauty of the ancient city set between the hills and the sea. As usual, we got lost getting out of the town, but eventually found ourselves on a road with a wonderful surface passing through attractive villages. The road started to climb, but this did not worry us as we were obviously on a new by-pass and hoped to join the coast road later. Up and up we went into the heart of the mountains, each turn revealing wilder and more spectacular scenery. We saw no other cars and no sign of human habitation, only the great bald mountains rising fold upon fold before us. Then, on rounding a sharp bend, we came abruptly upon a military post with an armed sentry outside. As we slowed down, a deathly silence filled the car. Surely we hadn’t reached a Bulgarian frontier post? Joyce said in a small voice, “Alexandroupolis”, and, to our relief, we were waved on. A few miles further on, a right-hand fork was marked “Kavala”, and as we knew this to be on our route we thankfully turned down towards the coast. This new military road within a few
Mountains and Memsahibs

Miles of the Bulgarian frontier had given us a most interesting drive and saved us a good deal of time into the bargain, so that, for once, taking the wrong turn out of the town had been worth while.

We now settled down to bouncing and bumping, avoiding pot-holes and ploughing through mud. When for once we had a good stretch of road, I stepped on the accelerator and was bounding along at thirty miles an hour when Joyce yelled “Stop.” “Why?” I said. “It’s the best stretch of road we’ve had for ages.” “Well,” said Joyce, “there was a stop sign, although I can’t think why.” We soon found the reason, for whistles shrilled and men shouted: I had driven right across the Greek frontier! The douanier was very angry, but his wrath subsided when he found we were bound for the Himalayas. He proudly told us his wife was one of the leading mountaineers of the country. At the Turkish frontier-post, situated some two miles further on in the railway station, we were given another glimpse of the human side of Customs Officials. I was asked my occupation, and on giving it as hospital sister, the officer said, “Ah! sisters and teachers, good people: no customs for them.”

We approached Istanbul by way of a new auto-strada on which work was still in progress. The sides of the road were lined with advertisements, many of them illuminated, reminding us of American highways. As we came down from the hills the huge city was a mass of winking, sparkling lights spread out before us, but we were soon involved in narrow tortuous streets and suburban traffic. The sudden appearance of a tram-car rounding a corner at high speed was most disconcerting to a driver accustomed for weeks to deserted roads. We crossed the Golden Horn by the Attaturk bridge and began to look for the Hotel Bristol, to which we had been recommended. We were soon hopelessly lost in
The Journey Out

the maze of streets, and since nobody could understand us we were at our wits' end when we saw a welcome blue light labelled "Poliz".

Joyce, always ready to take on a new language, entered the station.

"Good-evening, could you direct me to the Hotel Bristol, please?"

As this produced only a blank look, she tried French and German and finally said very loudly and clearly, "Hotel Bristol." To her astonishment, the answer came slowly.

"Ver-ee diff-ee-cult."
"Well, any hotel. I have a car outside."
"Ver-ee diff-ee-cult."
"Yes, I know. Hotel Bristol."
"Are you married?"

Greatly surprised, Joyce said, "Yes, I am."
"Have you children?"
"No, I haven't."
"Is husband in car?"
"No, a friend."

The conversation was getting out of hand. The officer then called in another man, and after talking to him at great length, turned to Joyce and said, "I, police officer."

"Yes, I know," said Joyce patiently.

Then, pointing to the other man, he said, "He, police officer, follow him."

With a sigh of relief, Joyce dashed out of the police station.

Meanwhile, I was sitting rather unhappily in the car in a dark street, and every now and then a dark unfriendly face would peer through the window. I prayed Joyce would not be long, and was very relieved when she arrived escorted by an enormous policeman. She explained that all we had to do was to follow him, but
Mountains and Memsahibs

it quickly became apparent that this was not his idea: he had no car and was coming with us. As the back of the car was piled high with luggage, it meant that the three of us, at least the equivalent in bulk of four normal people, must huddle very close together until we found this elusive hotel. When, however, this outsize Turk waved his long arms about violently in directing us through the maze of crowded streets, discomfort gave way to positive danger. However, we ultimately drew up at the Bristol, to the very obvious pride of our bulky guide. Fortunately he had a generous conception of his duties and did not leave us until, as the result of a long altercation with the manager, he had secured us a room. We were delighted to find it was a room with adjacent bathroom, but our dreams of luxury were soon dispelled: a bathroom without hot water is a delusion. But we were dead beat and, for the time being, sleep was our solace.

In the clear light of day, two essentials forced themselves upon us—we must get the car serviced and find a hotel with hot water. We transferred to the luxury of the Park Hotel, although we were horrified at their high prices. It was very evident that we must get through Turkey with all speed, for even with the black market rate of 16 lira to the pound a large hole would be made in our resources. However, we forgot our worries temporarily in the luxury of a hot bath and gave ourselves up to the sybaritic enjoyments of the Park Hotel.

One day was quite insufficient for the sights of Istanbul, but we did manage to spend an hour admiring the magnificent collection of porcelain in the Seraglio Palace and visiting the two most famous mosques. The solid outline of Saint Sophia stood clear against the sky, but a moving background of grey cloud enhanced the ethereal beauty of the slender minarets of the Blue Mosque. As we gazed, a door opened in one of the
slender towers and a muezzin came out on to a high balcony, stretching out his arms towards Mecca as he called the faithful to prayer. Had we had more money, we would have made many purchases in the sukh (bazaar), for here, in its rambling alleys, were spread out carpets, oriental silks, spices of the East, beautiful metal-work and embroidered cloths, besides all the usual junk set out to catch the eye of the tourist. We were fascinated by the cosmopolitan crowd bright with the rich colours of the Orient, rich and poor, young and old, jostling each other in their endeavours to get the best bargains. At the end of the day we picked up the car from the nearby garage and went early to bed so as to be fresh for journeys into the unknown lands that lay before us.

Tuesday, 3rd April, was a red-letter day in our calendar, for we crossed the Bosphorus and we both felt that a new phase of the adventure was beginning. Soon after boarding the ferry-boat we discovered that our precious diary had been left in the hotel, but we were comforted by the thought that it would be a simple matter to telephone from the far shore and have it forwarded to Baghdad. The short trip was soon over, and we drove off the boat into a small clean town. When we had gone a mile without seeing a telephone-box, we stopped to enquire of a policeman on point duty. He understood our signs and unhesitatingly left the traffic to look after itself while he guided us to a large school and took us straight into the headmaster’s study. As no one was there, the policeman himself tried to effect the call, but with no success. A man and a woman, obviously caretakers, showed us to seats in the hall while the policeman returned to his duties. We were about to get up and go when the woman caught my hand and took me through several corridors to a room with a glass door through which I could see that a class was in pro-
Mountains and Memsahibs

gress. All the children were dressed in long black tunics fastened by large white buttons at the back, wide white collars, strong black stockings and heavy shoes, and the girls all had large white bows on their hair. In front of them stood a teacher in European attire, addressing the class. Pointing to the teacher and then to the clock, my guide held up five fingers, smiled broadly, and took me back to my seat. Joyce interpreted this pantomime as meaning that the lesson would be over in five minutes and the teacher would interpret. Before the five minutes were up, however, another teacher entered the building, and as he could speak German we were able to explain the situation and with his help we spoke to the Park Hotel and made arrangements for the recovery of the diary. After a difficult conversation in a mixture of English, German and Arabic with all concerned, including the headmaster, who now turned up, we bade them farewell. We found the policeman back on point duty, shook hands and departed on our way.

At first we went through many pleasant villages, but gradually we began to climb into the lonely mountains. It was a little disconcerting to find we were back on bad, unpaved roads, and each hairpin bend served to reveal ever thicker mud until eventually we ran into snow. We went over many high passes before reaching Kabatas, from whence a good road descended to the basin in which lies Ankara, the capital of Turkey. Here we found many new friends. The British Council Representative took us home to dinner to meet his English wife and friends, and the Ford agents not only serviced the car free but gave us another car and a chauffeur to see the town. From the broad, modern High Street dominated by the imposing new Civic Buildings we went up the hill to the old fort, where veiled women glided silently by in the narrow cobbled streets.
1. The Start
Joyce Dunsheath and Hilda Reid

2. Desolation in Iraq
3. Water Carriers near Agra

4. Manali Village
We were anxious to leave Ankara early the following morning, for the A.A. had described our route as a “lonely strategic highway”. Indeed it was! Between 6 a.m. and late afternoon we only saw a few shepherds enveloped in whole sheepskins, looking as thin as their emaciated sheep grazing on the sparse tufts of coarse grass. Flat-roofed mud huts housed nomads literally clothed in rags, while even the few camels wandering over the road looked old and mangy. Arid mountains rose to the east and to the west, and before us lay the vast expanse of the Tuz Golu, a salt lake fifty miles long, at the end of which towered an 11,000-ft. volcano whose debris littered the landscape for miles around.

Towards dusk we made a detour to see Aksaray, and, on the outskirts, got out of the car to take photographs of the picturesque houses. In the central square we stopped to fill up with Shell; fortunately the man had only put in a few litres before Joyce realised she had lost our purse containing 300 Turkish lira. Frantically we searched the car until Joyce remembered she had had it on her lap when she got out of the car to take the photographs. By this time a large crowd of men had gathered round us: they seemed friendly, but we felt the situation could become ugly. We were therefore relieved when a man elbowed his way through the mob and asked us in English what was happening. We explained, and he paid for our petrol, advising us to go back and search for the purse before returning to him at the Bank. We did not find the purse; in fact, we had little hope of so doing, for 300 lira would represent great wealth to the finder. On reaching the Bank, we were plied with the inevitable cup of strong sweet Turkish coffee before getting down to business. We discovered that it was a private bank for the use of farmers and could not do business in travellers’ cheques. We were very worried, as it was 200 miles to the next town, but the Manager
eventually agreed to accept a £2 cheque himself and gave us 14 lira. Before driving away, the money was transferred to my safe keeping and we resolved to keep strictly to main roads in future, for the whole incident had shaken us badly.

Now a good military road wound its way over the Taurus Mountains, a magnificent range rising to heights of 11,000 and 12,000 ft. We drove through the “Cicilian Gates”, the River Gulik rushing and roaring hundreds of feet below us in a narrow gorge, and as we sped onwards were delighted to find neat, clean villages set amid lush vegetation. We had been recommended to stay at Mersin, but as this lay off our route we pushed on to Adana, a decision we were later to regret. It was late when we entered the town, tired and very hungry, and the depressing streets did little to cheer us. We drove round and round seeking a hotel, but they all looked equally impossible. We did enter one, but the room we were shown was full of flies and the dirt of many moons. Hastily we returned to the car, deciding to find the road to our next port of call, Iskenderun, and sleep the night in the car. This proved no easy matter, as a series of one-way streets always returned us to the same crossroads and the same policeman on duty. Finally he stopped us, and when we said “Iskenderun”, he said firmly, “Otel”. As we had no other words in common the conversation did not last, and beckoning us to follow him, he set off at a hot pace. To our horror, he pulled up in triumph in front of a large hotel and insisted on us going in. The suave manager insisted that he had no vacant rooms and no meal at that time of night, but after a mysterious phone call by the policeman he changed his tune and we were admitted. It turned out to be a clean hotel run on American lines, and we had a good hot dinner in a smart restaurant to the accompaniment of the latest jazz. Wearily we crept
into bed, and the next morning were glad to shake off the dust of Adana from our feet.

The drive through the delightful fishing-town of Iskenderun did much to hearten us, and on the advice of the Consul there we made a detour to see Ataya (old Antioch). We were now in the land of rolling hills, green valleys and orange groves, and this persisted till we crossed into Syria less than fifty miles from Aleppo. We made good use of the facilities offered by the well-appointed hotel there, for we realised that for the greater part of the rest of our journey we would be travelling across desert. It was pleasant to awake to blue skies and sunshine, and our drive to Damascus was full of interest. We passed by villages of beehive-shaped mud huts, and the open desert on either side of the straight road was dotted with young camels frisking round staid old beasts of burden now freed from toil to enjoy the delights of motherhood. Now and again large American cars flashed past us carrying sheikhs in white robes and head-shawls who leaned out of the windows to mock at this diminutive little English car.

We were both excited to be in the ancient city of Damascus, full of reminders of early Christian days. We walked in the Street called Straight and by the old city walls, stopping below the window from which St. Paul escaped in a basket after his conversion. In the centre of the town we found that great monument of the Omar dynasty, the mosque of Omayyad. In the year A.D. 4 a Greek temple was built on this site and later became the Christian Church of St. John the Baptist. In the seventh century the Arabs converted it into a magnificent mosque adorned with gorgeous, costly mosaics. Unfortunately the interior suffered a good deal of damage from fire in the seventeenth century, but its walls are still adorned with many of the exquisite murals and mosaics, while four hundred Persian carpets, valued at
Mountains and Memsahibs

half a million Syrian pounds, cover the floor. Elaborate glass chandeliers hang on gold chains from the ceiling, and in the centre is a large, richly ornamented shrine, said to contain the head of St. John the Baptist. There was much more to see, but our time-table only allowed of two days here, so reluctantly the following morning we were off on the road to Amman.

After only two hours’ driving we were halted in a small village three miles from the crossroads along which the King of Jordan was to pass at noon on his way to visit the Syrian capital. It was terribly hot sitting in the glaring sun, and we were soon surrounded by hordes of children and swarms of flies. Happily, a man of some authority came to our rescue and made space for us in the shade of a tree. He enquired about our journey and gave us a note to the Jordan Customs which whisked us through without formalities beyond the minimum.

Once over the frontier, we found ourselves winding uphill into a fertile country of great natural beauty. The hillsides were a riot of colour and the green was such as we had not seen since we had left England. Wild poppies, red and yellow anemones, blue anchusa and many-coloured rock roses grew in profusion, and mimosa trees lined the roads. Climbing over a high ridge, we had before us a wonderful view over a wide, pleasant but deserted valley. This was not in accordance with our scheduled route, but our car compass told us we were going in the right direction, so we pressed on. An hour later, the road just came to an end, but as we could see a small town ahead we bumped our way down to a path just wide enough to take the car and found we had reached historic Jerash. Its ancient city walls and the huge arches of the stone temples bore witness to its Greco-Roman life and culture. From here it was an easy run down to Amman, the capital of Jordan.

It seemed a pity to be so near Jerusalem and not see it,
so, although it lay fifty miles off our route, we decided to allow ourselves a day to visit it. We set off along a road which led through narrow gorges and over tumbling streams, shaded with fig trees and gay with flowers. Gradually the land became more barren, and when we had crossed the River Jordan by the Allenby Bridge we were in stony wastes. We passed a notice reading sea level and went on down and down till we dropped into a plain at 853 ft. below sea level to lonely Jericho. The road was lined with the huts, food centres and community halls of its huge Refugee Camp. Soon we were driving through the Wilderness of the Bible, a land of smooth grey barren hills interspersed with wild rocky plains. We saw encampments of black goat-hair tents surrounded by camels and goats, the Bedouins living just as their forebears did in the first centuries of the Christian era. Soon we could see the Dead Sea, but we branched off towards the hills surrounding Jerusalem.

Owing to the recent fighting in the city, we deemed it advisable to hire a guide and were fortunate in finding a man who spoke good English and was very well informed. We drove first to the Mount of Olives, from which we could get a good view of the city set on its three hills. The white houses showed up plainly against the green of the grass and trees, and inside the high stone walls we could see the spires and domes of churches and mosques. Looking to the Golden Gate, we could trace the path along which Christ rode in triumph on Palm Sunday.

We left the car and, following the stations of the Cross, reached the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, built by the Crusaders in the twelfth century on the site of a much earlier one. Crossing the sacred threshold, we were plunged at once into a ghostly mysterious atmosphere, for the oil lamps gave only the faintest glimmer. The Greek Orthodox Church has controlled the build-
Mountains and Memsahibs

ing for more than a century, and electric light is consequently forbidden. Through the gloom we made out many others like ourselves carrying long, lighted tapers, and priests in flowing robes shepherding the knots of sightseers. We climbed dark stairs to reach the holiest place in Christendom, the site of the Crucifixion—three holes in the ground each surrounded by a silver plate marking the positions of the three crosses. We gazed curiously at the five chapels within the one church, representing five different Christian religions, and so came out into the light of day again. We passed by the famous Jewish Wailing Wall and crossed the Garden of Gethsemane with its beautiful flower-beds set against a background of dark olives. The sun was setting over this historic scene as we set off back to Amman. It had been a wonderful day which will always live in our memories as one of the most outstanding of the whole trip.
CHAPTER FOUR

THE JOURNEY OUT—FINAL STAGES
(Hilda Reid)

The thought of the 586-mile stretch of desert between Amman and Baghdad had worried us from the moment we began to plan our car journey, for desert to us meant sand, scorching heat, and a lonely track where the bones of the unwary traveller lay bleaching in the sun. We were told that there would be two alternatives before us at Amman—the pipe-line road which was longer in mileage but had a metalled surface, and the desert track followed by the Overland Desert Mail Service where we could, on payment of a fee, have a bus as escort. In either case we should have to complete the long journey in a day, for there was no accommodation along the way.

We took advice at Amman and found that the bus only operated at night, so, as we wanted to see the countryside, unpleasant though it might be, we decided on the pipe-line road. We were up long before dawn on Wednesday, 11th April, and after completing the mammoth task of repacking the car, were off at 6 a.m. To avoid the usual waste of time in taking the wrong road out of a town, we enquired of the policeman on point duty and he wrote in Arabic characters on a piece of paper torn from his notebook, “We want the road to Baghdad via Rutbah”, so that we could show it to passers-by, who generally understood no other language.
Mountains and Memsahibs

He then signed his name with a flourish and asked us to let him know that we had arrived safely.

The fifty miles to Mafraq presented no difficulties, and when we turned east at the junction with the pipeline we found an amazingly good road going almost dead straight. We got up to a speed of sixty miles an hour, but after bounding dangerously over “Irish Bridges” and endangering the springs in unexpected pot-holes, we slowed down to a steady forty and were thus better able to avoid the groups of camels and their young that gambolled lightheartedly across the road. We sped on through the shimmering sand with only the distance posts—twenty-five to the mile—for company until we were stopped by two soldiers of the Arab Legion for a passport check. This was quite an amusing experience. They could neither speak nor read English, and solemnly held our passports upside-down while they examined them attentively, page by page. They were very interested in our cameras, and seeing our intention to take photographs, rushed into their tent and donned their long, flowing red cloaks lined with sheepskin before striking an attitude in front of the tent.

On we went over the interminable miles of desert: all day the sun beat down on us and there was not a breath of wind. It got unbearably hot in the car, and mirages of trees and water made us think longingly of cool breezes and iced drinks. At long last we came to the Jordan Customs, housed in a shed at the Iraq Petroleum Company’s Pumping Station H.4, near Rutbah Wells. Here we thought we would find some civilised habitation, but there were only a few huts. The officer in charge, who emerged from his office clad in pyjamas, a towel swathed round his head, was none too pleased at having his siesta disturbed, and made only a cursory investigation. We now had to face the two hundred miles to Ramadi and the Iraq Customs, surely a record
length for "No Man's Land". There was no alleviation of the heat and sand, for even the occasional low scrub and camel thorn had disappeared, and, made acutely aware of our insignificance in this vast desert, fear momentarily gripped our hearts. This was the first of many deserts we should traverse before reaching Delhi.

After dark, in poor visibility due to a driving rain, we met a new hazard—sand had drifted across the road from a recent storm. We proceeded cautiously, the passenger leaning out from the window with a torch to guide the driver. How we avoided getting stuck I shall never know, but we did eventually arrive at Ramadi and drove into the station yard to the Customs. We were made to wait for an hour in a hot room swarming with flies, and were then interrogated in Arabic. This of course got us nowhere, and the officer was about to let us go when he noticed Joyce's typewriter. This caused great concern, but we were allowed to proceed after being given a note in Arabic which we gathered would be of interest to some official in Baghdad.

It was now after 9 p.m., and when we had driven well away from the little town we stopped to make tea and have a meal. Only seventy-six miles remained to Baghdad, and we had caught up with traffic coming to and from the capital. We had just got back into the car with food on our laps and a scalding mug of tea in our hands, when headlights blinded us and a car pulled up containing six smartly dressed young sheikhs, their flowing head-dresses bound to their heads with a black ribbon. They were evidently surprised to see two unescorted women and enquired politely if we were all right. After the exchange of a few pleasantries they drove off, but returned within a few minutes, their numbers increased to eight, to make the suggestion that we should join them for the evening. Joyce thrust her mug of tea into my hand and set off at a furious pace
Mountains and Memsahibs

over the bumpy road whilst I performed juggling feats with the two over-full mugs.

Thankful to have shaken off our admirers, we crossed the Euphrates and went on for another half-hour to Habbabiya, twinkling with lights from the Air Force Station. We were both very tired by now, and when we saw some pits alongside the road from which earth was being taken for road repairs, we decided to stop for a few hours’ rest. This was a good spot, for by driving into one of them we were fairly well hidden from the road. We closed the windows and locked the doors before settling down for what remained of the night. It was raining heavily and continued to do so for hours.

We woke with the dawn and lit the Primus in a strong wind. Workmen driving past in lorries looked curiously at us, but made no attempt to interfere. Reinforced by a good breakfast, we got back on to the road again and were horrified to find that the surface had almost completely disintegrated. Here and there we were able to drive over the surrounding land, but much of it was flooded. Thirty miles from Baghdad we saw ahead a confused jumble of cars and lorries, and as we approached them we found that the road had disappeared in a sea of mud. We drew up behind them and viewed the scene in silence, quite overcome. However, we couldn’t turn back now, so there was nothing for it but to go forward as far as we could. Slipping and sliding we crept along, accompanied by a group of cheerful, dirty Arab children dressed in striped pyjama-like clothes. Each time we progressed a few yards they cheered wildly, and when we stuck they wallowed in the mud, throwing sand under the wheels and pushing us clear. In this way we inched our way forward, passing other vehicles bedded down in the mud, and after ten more miles of this nightmare drive came on to a dual carriageway, King Feisal Avenue. Here, to our great
relief, we were able to drive at a reasonable speed. Joyce had driven magnificently under frightful conditions for six hours.

We showed our note to the first policeman we saw in Baghdad and were directed to the airport, where a Customs Officer certified and registered the typewriter. We made our way to the British Embassy, where we were warmly welcomed in spite of the fact that we presented a sorry sight, being covered from head to foot in mud and dirt. We were told that hotel accommodation was almost impossible as the city was full of Americans assembled for the opening of the Habbabiya Dam by King Feisal. The Y.W.C.A. was suggested, and when we phoned, a charming English voice said they hadn't a bed, but if we had camping equipment we were more than welcome to sleep on the floor. We gratefully accepted the offer and made our way through narrow streets congested with every conceivable mode of transport from the latest American cars to camel-drawn tongas until we reached the residential area. Here we found the Y.W.C.A. pleasantly situated in a quiet avenue shaded with trees under which sheep and goats grazed at leisure. The warden, Miss Pilsbury, did everything for our comfort, and we found here, under the palm trees in the delightful garden and by the ageless waters of the Tigris, the rest we sorely needed after our experiences of the previous day.

The car had to be serviced, and this proved a little difficult. We arrived on a Thursday, and Friday is the Sabbath of the Muslims. To make matters worse, it was the feast of Ramadan, when no true follower of Mahomet eats from sunrise to sundown and energy is at a low ebb, so that we did not reach the top of the queue by Saturday night. Fords keep Sunday as their Sabbath, so that it was Monday before the car had any attention. When we got it back, we found that a window was
Mountains and Memsahibs

missing from one of the doors, so Joyce had to go back to the garage with the man and, once there, insisted on waiting till the job was finished. She sat on a wooden box in the middle of the yard drinking Coca-Cola at intervals and at last brought the car back fit to continue its journey. It was too late to set off that day, so it was Tuesday before we eventually left. Thanks to the kindness of the Y.W.C.A. staff and their friends, what might have been a very uncomfortable four days was turned into a pleasant interlude.

Refreshed and rested, we set off on the next stage of our journey, which would bring us to Teheran. As usual, we lost ourselves getting clear of the city, but soon found our route leading over a vast area of land devastated by the 1955 floods. Much building was in progress, but of course the roads, still being made, were atrocious. It was here that we met our first combined rail and road bridge and rattled along in the wake of a train: this was to be a common occurrence before we reached Manali. We crossed another stretch of desert, where, fluttering round the trees in the oases, we saw many strange and beautiful birds. Towards afternoon we were among hills approaching the Persian frontier.

Here both the Iraq and Iran officials were very friendly and helpful, and we were soon on our way again over the high Persian plateau, along which we were to travel at an average height of 4000 ft. until we reached Teheran. The bald mountains of Zagros were beautiful in their pastel shades seen through a haze of rain, while the earth was a vivid red with outcrops of grey rock in waves as if solidified from molten lava. Large flocks of sheep were moving slowly along, grazing as they went, tended by shepherds in sheepskin coats who viewed us in wonder and astonishment as we passed. We went by many camps of incredibly filthy nomads and at first slowed down, but so many weird people rushed up to the car
that we did not dare to stop. We crossed the Pattagh Pass and went on down to Kermanshaw, where, as by this time it was late afternoon and the next possible stopping-place was 150 miles away, we decided to spend the night. While seeking a hotel, we accidentally drove into a barrack square, where a very polite officer immediately detailed a young, shy subaltern to accompany us to the town. The hotel, built on an old historic site, was reasonably clean, and we ate our dinner with relish in an old baronial hall, where we met a Dutch artist, Lily Eversdyk Smulders. She was courageously travelling quite alone, visiting the homes of the local people so as to get portraits at first hand of types met with in different races.

We had thoughts of making Teheran the next day (365 miles), and, with this in mind, left at 6 a.m. We passed the great rock carvings of Darius at Behistun. The precipitous rock face towering 1700 ft. above the road bears inscriptions in three kinds of cuneiform writing tracing the genealogy of Darius, enumerating the provinces of his empire and describing his military triumphs. In the centre, a carving in the stone depicts nine bound rebel chiefs passing before the king, who stands triumphant, his foot on the body of a captive.

The road was now once again very pot-holed and we were amused at the efforts to repair it. Every ten miles or so a lonely man shoveled loose earth into the holes: if none were at hand, he just passed quietly on. Another amusing sight was offered by two shepherds clad in traditional pushtins, one carrying an open umbrella and the other wearing a trilby hat! About half-way up the 8680-ft. Assadabad Pass, in the midst of a torrential rainstorm, I noticed that the steering was difficult—a puncture in the nearside front wheel! We donned mackintoshes, jacked up the car and set to work to change the wheel, but we had not got far before a
Mountains and Memsahibs

lorry miraculously appeared and out tumbled two Persians, who, without saying a word, took the tools from our hands and finished the job. Truly the gods were on our side that day, for this was the only vehicle we saw for hours. The descent from the Pass was spectacular, with hairpin bends easing the 10,000-ft. descent to Hamadan.

Our first task was to change a cheque, and, as usual, this proved a lengthy business. While Joyce went into the Bank I stayed to guard the car. So many people crowded round it that two policemen were necessary to control them, and they insisted on escorting us to our next objective, a petrol station. Here we were recommended a hotel, and to our surprise found it excellent. It was modern and full of Americans, who told us that the road to Teheran was impossible because of the repairs and reconstruction being undertaken. However, we had to go on, and we set off at dawn the next morning much refreshed from a long-deferred bath and washing of hair.

The road was bad, but no worse than that to which we had become accustomed. We made the long slow ascent of the Awaz Pass without undue difficulty, but our troubles started on the descent, for snow lay all around and the rushing stream in the gullies on both sides overflowed on to a badly cracked and pot-holed surface. In places there was no road at all and we just went blindly forward, groping our way between rocks and through water till we met a metalled surface again. About ninety miles from Teheran the road levelled out, and here the repair gangs were at work. The road is an achievement of the British occupation during the 1914-1918 war, but, as little had been done to it in the interim, it had deteriorated badly. One day it will regain its solidity, but that day is long hence, for everything is done by hand. While peasants carry baskets of earth on
The Journey Out

their heads and deposit the contents in the required place, others lift stones one at a time and construct the foundations. We were forced to make many detours to avoid the construction works. Crossing a wide stream in one of these, we got too far on to the side and there we were, stuck in the mud with the water rushing all round us. Fortunately there were many other cars wanting to get along and a lorry soon pulled us out. By the time we reached Teheran we were both expert at driving through raging torrents. It was here that we taught ourselves to read the Arabic characters of the numerals on the milestones, a piece of knowledge which was to prove very useful afterwards.

Teheran is a delightful, modern city; the straight main streets run north and south so that each has a vista of the lovely snow-capped Elburz Range, with Mount Demavend rising 18,550 ft. into the blue sky. We found a very comfortable hotel opposite the American Embassy, which kindly provided us with free garage and drinking water. Our first job the next morning was to take the car to the Ford Agents to be serviced, and then we called on the Consul, Mr. Perotti. Although very busy, he gave us a warm welcome and much valuable advice. "You know the worst part of the journey is before you?" he said. "I should go to Isfahan: that's worth seeing and it's not a bad road. But from here to Isfahan you are going along a diving-board. There you will take the plunge and you won't come up again till you get to Quetta, six days further on—and please send me a postcard when you get there." This fearful prognostication did not spoil the pleasure of Teheran for us. We admired the Shah's Palace, visited the Archaeological Museum, and on the way were amused to see the women doing the family washing in the public drinking-fountains. We finally went back to the Ford Agents to pick up the car and had a great reception. They had
Mountains and Memsahibs

never seen this model of car and insisted on taking photographs of us in it. The inevitable Turkish coffee was produced, which I still disliked although I had consumed dozens of cups of the thick sweet stuff in the interest of politeness. We were then taken to see their beautiful new garage and showroom nearing completion. It was with difficulty that we escaped and got back to our hotel for dinner, after which we made a careful check of our food in readiness for our long desert journey.

For once we got out of a city without losing ourselves in the process. Our spirits were high and the sun shone in a clear blue sky as we ran through the suburbs and out on to a good road running through the desert. We were delighted by the groups of camels with their young that we saw and were able to get quite close to take photographs. Here too we met camel-trains, the animals heavily laden with goods and brightly dressed ladies riding at ease. The mountainous road next skirted a salt-marsh many miles in length where the white patches of salt, stretching out to the grey sand and sparkling in the heat of the noonday sun, deceived us into thinking that here was a great lake. There were often mirages of pools, too, on the road, but there was no water on this Persian plateau. Occasionally we came across a yellow village, a collection of round houses made from the sand, reinforced with a little straw or a few stones. Many were derelict. We passed by the Holy City of Qum and saw the shining blue dome of the mosque containing the shrine of Fatima, the favourite wife of Ali, who died at the age of eighteen, leaving three sons. We did not attempt to enter the city, for Mr. Perotti had warned us that two women alone would be frowned on, but kept to the by-pass. We covered the 283 miles from Teheran to Isfahan in excellent time and drove along the banks of the Zaindeh River past
5. Eileen Gregory and Frances Delany at Manali

6. Supper in the Chandra Valley
7. Base Camp

8. Paying Off the Porters
five lovely old stone bridges which in the mellow evening light invited the traveller to linger. We drove over the Pul-i-Ali-Verdi-Khan, a royal bridge built for Shah Abbas, along a central road from which little stone rooms abutted over the river like boxes at the Opera. Below us was another tier, and above a promenade with terraced gardens. Back again in the city, we stayed at the only possible hotel in the town, and even there the plumbing left much to be desired. To have a shower was a major operation. On turning the tap, steam belched forth with a terrifying hiss, then cold water would descend, to be replaced again with dramatic suddenness by a scalding hot stream. But at least the hotel was clean and the prices reasonable.

The central square of the city, the Maidan-i-Shah, is indeed beautiful. Each side has a superb building—the Musjid-i-Shah (Royal Mosque), the mosque of Sheikh Lutfullah, the Ali Qapi (Supreme Gate) and the majestic entrance to the great Bazaar. All the buildings are connected by arches, and in the centre is an artificial lake which reflects the blue of the mosques, the gold of the gate and the form of the noble arches. Graceful women promenading round the lake made us feel very conspicuous, as ours were the only unveiled faces to be seen. Our pleasure was marred by the hordes of children who surrounded us as soon as we got out of the car and followed us everywhere. Our only comfort was that if they were with us they were not interfering with things in the car!

We were very excited next morning to see a car with a G.B. plate standing in front of the hotel door. The occupants proved to be John and Patsy Lidley and their friend Max Browning, who were driving out to Calcutta to join their regiment. We remembered the warning of the consul at Teheran not to drive the miles between Bam and Zahidan without an escort, and
Mountains and Memsahibs

immediately arranged with them to meet later along the road. On our way to the Shaking Minarets we again noticed many tall circular towers and were told that these were pigeon towers. All were obviously disused, and one was in such a state of ruin that we could see the inside from the car. This revealed a honeycomb of little cells in which the pigeons built their nests and thus fertilised the soil below in which the favourite melons of the shahs were grown. The door was half-way up the tower, and was only opened once a year when the guano was removed.

We were sorry to leave so beautiful a city, but time pressed. We found a new road direct to Nain with a wonderful surface and soon covered the ninety miles. Further on, the road was very bumpy and we lost a clip off the handbrake, which rendered the mechanism useless. We did not realise this till our new English friends, parked by the roadside, signalled to us to stop. The footbrake had also become full of sand so they had the surprising experience of seeing us coasting quite a distance before coming to a halt. Our friends had stopped because they had found a suitable bivouac for the night in an old deserted building and were waiting for us to join them for supper. It was a very peaceful spot, and as we sat later under the stars we felt, like Le Petit Prince, that there were no other human beings on this planet. The building had a number of rooms, so we dumped our stove, food and water in one and our air-mattresses and sleeping-bags in another, then sat down to a supper of eggs and tinned bacon washed down with tea. This lonely spot we felt offered a suitable opportunity to try out our trip-alarm. We fixed the string to the cover and cunningly laid it across the entrance ready for any night marauder. Some time after we had retired I wanted a drink, and creeping carefully so as not to wake Joyce, I made for the other
The Journey Out

room. Unfortunately I forgot the alarm and caught the trip-wire, and the most ghastly noise pierced the silence of the desert. Joyce leapt from her sleeping-bag, and I was frozen to the spot until I realised what was causing the din. We then at least knew how effective our toy was. For the rest of the night, the only noise to be heard was the faint tinkle of bells of the passing camel-trains.

We arranged to look for our friends the next day in Kirman, then set off for Yezd, where we might hope to get the brakes repaired. As we approached the town, a cloud of dust heralded another car, which turned out to be carrying an officer of the Pakistan Army. With him was a Persian whom he had picked up on the road. He immediately took charge and piloted us to a garage, where he was obviously well known. He invited us back to his home while the work was being done. We were welcomed into a delightful large white plastered house built around a central courtyard where brightly coloured flowers were set round a pool, in the midst of which a fountain was playing. We then met his wife and two children, and were taken into a room completely devoid of furniture, on the floor of which was a priceless Persian carpet. On this we sat drinking tea from beautiful china beakers. Lettuce was served with a sweet sauce and barley water with floating flowers. They were very proud of the fact that the son could speak some English and were genuinely excited at the opportunity of entertaining us. After declining their kind invitation to stay the night, we left Yezd with the footbrakes working once more, though probably not up to the standard required by the Metropolitan police! The handbrake remained faulty until we got back to London.

We were now able to make good progress for a time on a straight piece of road bounded by low hills on our right, relieving the flatness of the scene. It was here that
we had a most uncanny experience. Suddenly the car went off into a terrific skid and we bounced off the road on to the rough ground at the side, missing huge boulders by a hair's breadth. It was a terrifying, crazy drive, and when we eventually stopped, we were both exhausted. As far as we could see, there was no cause for skidding except that a number of great clouds of dust were being whirled up into the sky. There was a gap in the hills in almost the same straight line and we could only conclude that the car had been caught by a whirlwind. Not long after this uncanny experience, there was a terrific bang which sounded like a gun fired at the back of the car. We stopped, crawled underneath the car to look for a hole, examined all the tyres, but could find nothing wrong. But what was my astonishment on trying to get back into the car again to find that the handle of the door on this side had been cut right off! Was it a stone from below or a meteorite from above? Surely a stone would have flown out at an angle away from the car, and there was no one about to throw stones. One possible explanation is that we were struck by a falling stone which had been carried up to a height by one of the whirlwinds which had swept us round a short time before. Whatever the explanation, the two events coming close together in such a remote spot quite unnerved us, and it was two frightened women who set off again, wondering what would happen next in this mysterious place.

I must admit we were relieved to see the little town of Kerman. We had seen nothing of John, Patsy and Max, so sought out Mr. Moinian, whose address Mr. Perotti had given us in Teheran. He had been in the Embassy for some time when there had been an office in Kerman and therefore spoke good English. His wife, however, who graciously welcomed us, spoke only Persian. It was a very large house with an enormous Persian garden at
the end of which were other houses for the staff, the whole enclosed by a high wall. Five of the largest Persian carpets I have ever seen covered the floor of the room into which we were ushered. While a meal of chicken and rice was prepared by two little maid-servants, we were introduced to the son and to Mrs. Moinian’s mother. The two maids then went off into a corner and gossiped together for the whole evening, for neither could speak English. At ten o’clock it was made clear to us that we were to put our bedding down on the beautiful Persian carpets, and bowls of water were provided on the verandah outside. The two little maids peeped from behind curtains at us while we were washing, giggling all the time. Breakfast of eggs, chapatties and tea was served to us the next morning and we were introduced to Mr. Moinian’s daughter-in-law, a girl of fifteen nursing her six-months-old baby.

After going into the town to report to the police, we left along a rough road under a scorching sun unrelieved by shade. We found some low scrub and crawled under it to have our lunch. Before the kettle was boiling the other G.B. car caught us up. The occupants had spent an uncomfortable night under the stars, but had managed to see carpets being woven in a Persian home. The desert was now unrelieved, and sand storms arose from time to time, covering everything with a fine dust. We entered Bam together on a dreadful road, and the sight of emaciated women and children emerging from sand and clay hovels did not cheer us. Some, squatting on the ground, had a shoddy collection of articles for sale spread out in front of them. John and Max went to the police while we waited, our car hemmed in by people. I think everybody in the town had turned out to look at us. After long arguments and discussion with the police, the two men returned with the news that we could sleep on the top of the bus shelter. It was difficult driving
Mountains and Memsahibs

into the bus station, so great was the crowd, and a lot of people gathered round to watch us unpack. We mounted a rickety wooden staircase and found two rooms in the course of construction above the shelter. These were cleaned by the simple process of throwing buckets of water over the concrete floor, and we were invited to take possession. A young man who spoke English introduced us to his teacher of English, both of whom were glad of the opportunity of language practice. We all agreed that the pupil was far better than the teacher! As one of the joints of our Primus stove was leaking, we had difficulty in cooking supper, but all the difficulties were compensated by our view of the most magnificent sunset. The sun sank in a torrid sky behind a frontispiece of palms, their feathery arms outstretched to the heavens, which flamed in orange, scarlet and gold. We had little sleep, for the bus departed in the middle of the night and lorries pounded heavily to and fro.

It took us two and a half hours to get breakfast and pack the two cars, but by nine o’clock we were heading for the worst and most desolate part of the journey. There was a desert track, but it was corrugated just like a washboard and kept us in a permanent state of violent vibration. Other and smoother tracks made detours rejoining the main track again later. It was on one of these that the other car, which was leading, skidded, slowed down and came to a halt in the loose sand. Joyce, who was driving, tried to avoid this by swerving back on to the main track, but too late, and we found ourselves also stuck, but only ten yards from the track. We decided to try and dig the Anglia out first, and all set to work with spade or hands. Suddenly a high wind sprang up, driving burning sand before it. Coughing and choking, we dived for the cars and shut all windows. Even so, the sand penetrated and visibility outside was less than five yards. For over an hour we were thus
imprisoned. A lull in the storm brought us all into action again. By taking our heavy luggage out of the boot, we hoped to make better progress. Unfortunately, no sooner had we deposited everything on the sand than we were forced back into the car. After several attempts, however, we succeeded in getting the Anglia on to the track. It was decided that we should set off and try to bring back help for the others. We started, but our progress was short-lived. After half a mile we found that sand had drifted over the track and, before we could take avoiding action, we were stuck again, this time well above the axle.

The storm blew relentlessly as we sat helpless, peering through the windscreen. Cactus plants in the distance deceived us into thinking that they were objects on the horizon, and now and again a clear patch revealed to us the other car sitting equally helpless in the sand half a mile away. Our coffee from the Thermos was full of sand, and altogether we were thoroughly miserable. After three hours of this torture a distant cactus moved and revealed itself in a few minutes as a lorry a hundred yards off on a parallel track. It stopped opposite us, and five Persians got out. Absence of a common language was no barrier, and they quickly got to work, the leader using a spade and the others burrowing in the burning sand with their bare arms. The storm was dying down, and within half an hour we were back on a hard track by the lorry. The headman proceeded to draw pictures in the sand to show us where to keep to the track and where to leave it for the desert. When we offered them money, they politely shook their heads. On pointing to the other car stranded in the distance, they made us understand that they had appreciated the position and drove off to rescue our friends. How incredibly lucky we were to have met these friendly and helpful people, for this was literally the only other vehicle we saw that
Mountains and Memsahibs
day on the two hundred and fifty miles of desert track. It was quite dark before the headlights picked out the rocks and piles of sand on the Gilubec Pass. It was a ghostly place where one could imagine banshees wailing around the corpses of the boys on motor-bikes who had been lost there the previous year. It was with much relief that we reached the plain and the frontier town of Zahidan, where we were joined later by our friends, John, Patsy and Max.

Again we enlisted the aid of the police. They installed us in the local Iran Tour Office next door to the police-station, in a bare stone room with a three-foot wall half-way across. We cooked supper and prepared for the night with half the town outside watching but kept at bay by the ever-vigilant police. We had promised to be out of the office by 6 a.m., but it took over an hour to get petrol and free of the town. Fifteen minutes of bad road brought us to the Iranian border post, where passports were stamped. We went gaily on our way, but, overrunning the military check, were sent back under escort. The officer in charge was very charming and obviously lonely. He invited us to stay for lunch with the promise of ice-cream, which was even then being stirred diligently in the stream by his man-servant. As we had to decline this tempting invitation, he produced two bottles of iced orange squash, the first iced drink we had had for many days. It was delicious.

On the far side of no man's land at the Pakistan border we were greeted at the post by: "Are you the ladies who go to climb in Himalaya?" How on earth could he know about us in this out-of-the-way place? We never knew, but it certainly eased our way through the Customs. On leaving the post, we found ourselves on a good metalled road and were speeding along when a jeep suddenly appeared round a corner and we only just avoided a head-on collision. The four occupants
The Journey Out

screamed and shook their fists at us and made us realise with a shock that we were driving on the wrong side of the road, for Pakistan has the same left-hand rule as Great Britain.

It was a long way to Dalbadin on a deserted road, but the surface was good, and when we pulled up at the Rest House our hot eyes were soothed by the sight of a green garden in which tables were set around a shady pool. During the night Joyce felt sick, and by morning it was obvious that she had dysentery. This was not the place in which to be ill, and although Quetta, our next stop, was 394 miles away, we decided to go on. I administered pills and settled her in the already hot car. A good road passed through salt-flats with an occasional "wash-out" to negotiate. As the sun rose higher and higher, the car was like an oven, and we felt we were slowly roasting. I began to worry about the engine, for it was very sluggish, and I saw with relief hilly country ahead. We crept along up and down the sharp gradients, crested the last long steep rise at less than ten miles per hour, and descended to Quetta knowing that our troubles were over for the present. At the entrance to the town a signpost read "Nunshki 71½ miles, London 5877 miles", and a little further on we found the house of Mrs. Marker, the Girl Guide Commissioner to whom Joyce had an introduction. She had arranged for us to stay at the Lourdes Bungalow Hotel, and, once there, Joyce crept thankfully into the clean, soft bed of a room cooled by electric fans. I spent an hour getting rid of the sand from our belongings before having a bath and following her example. It seemed ages since we had slept in such comfort.

We spent four very happy days at this delightful hill station, visiting and being entertained. Joyce soon recovered, and on the last day we went to fetch the car from the garage, which had carried out a thorough
Mountains and Memsahibs
desanding operation. On the way back, a horse-drawn
tonga suddenly turned right in front of us. Fortunately
no one was hurt, but the beautiful clean car had a nasty
scratch right across the body: worse, the horse fell down
and lay inanimate. “Goodness!” said Joyce, “how much
does a horse cost?” We were so relieved at seeing it get
up once it was released from the shafts that we didn’t
even complain about the scratch.

We decided to take the longer of two routes to
Lahore via Sukkur, as the shorter road was reported to
be in very bad condition. At first, our way lay through
mountains and was very pleasant: camel-trains and great
flocks of sheep met us at intervals, but these gradually
got fewer as we drove south and came once more to
the scorching desert. We were exhausted by the heat by
the time we came to Sukkur, and crossed over the Indus
into the town by the largest barrage in the world. A
hundred and one sluice-gates let forth the water to
irrigate the surrounding desert. We carried a letter of
introduction to an engineer, and although he was away
on leave, we were allowed to stay at the luxurious
Public Works Rest House. From our enormous beauti-
fully furnished bedroom, with two separate dressing-
rooms, we looked out over a wide, cool verandah on to
the river and the dam. The garden was bright with
flowers, and a flame tree just below the balcony held
up its orange blooms for our delight. Electric fans kept
us cool in what is well known as one of the hottest
places in all Pakistan.

We were away to a slow start in the morning, wend-
ing our way out of the town in company with bullock
carts, stray animals and countrymen on foot till we
reached open country and sped along in the scorching
heat of the Sind Desert. When we reached the Rest
House at Multan we were disappointed, after the luxury of
Sukkur, to find a small, bare rest house in which to stay.
In the expanse of flat agricultural land through which we travelled the next day we sought out an Englishman owning a large fruit orchard and a factory for canning fruit and bottling fruit juices. We had a welcome rest in his delightful house and then pressed on to Lahore. Here we stayed a night in the Guide House, entertained by Begum Khan, Chief Girl Guide Commissioner and Minister for Social Service for Pakistan.

Leaving the city at dawn, we were the first car over the frontier at Wagah, sixteen miles away. We were soon through Customs formalities and found ourselves at last in India. At times during the past five weeks we had wondered whether we would ever reach the end of our journey, but now things looked really hopeful. We allowed ourselves three hours' rest at Ludhiana, where the Rest House had to be specially opened for us and a little boy sat in the boiling sun guarding the car until we were ready to take to the road again. We had a short night's rest at Ambala and made a very early start the next morning for Delhi. A good, fast road brought us to the door of the Hotel Cecil in time for breakfast. This is a hotel well known to climbers, for the owner, Mr. Goetz, is the local secretary of the Himalayan Club.

We used every minute of our two days in Delhi shopping and sightseeing. Mr. Sing, a tall handsome Sikh to whom we carried an introduction, was determined that we should not miss any of the interesting sights of the city. He picked us up each day at 7 a.m., and we thoroughly enjoyed the luxury of touring in his chauffeur-driven car.

On the evening of Saturday, 5th May, we started to pack the car, for we had learnt to make very early starts and rest during the heat of the day. When I took the first case out to the car, I found I could not open the boot. Many people tried, including a mechanic, who poured
Mountains and Memsahibs

much oil into the lock, but all to no avail. I decided it would have to go back to the garage the next morning, and so, disappointed, we went to bed. I was awakened from a deep sleep by Joyce shaking me and saying, “I’ve done it. Hurry and get up. It’s 4.30.” The oil must have done its work during the night. The car was packed with great speed and we were off by 6.30 a.m. It was already warm and the air was very still, heralding another baking-hot day.

About two hours out of Delhi we were jogging along quite merrily when the car suddenly stopped. Two Indians from a passing car came to see if they could help, but we could find nothing wrong. Then a lorry stopped and the driver examined the engine. His verdict was that the carburettor was too small and had become overheated. He cooled the engine down by throwing cold water on it and applying wet rags to the pipes, and we chugged on for another two hours. During the afternoon we had a puncture, but luckily just outside a garage. While we were waiting for the tyre, our friend the lorry driver drew up and saw that we received proper treatment and were not overcharged.

It was 9 p.m. when we reached the Rest House at Jullundar, a large house set in a magnificent garden and guarded by two officials at the doorway. We were treated very courteously, but with suspicion. After much telephoning, we were asked to write a letter saying just who we were and what we wanted. This was carried away by a messenger, who returned in a few minutes to say that we could not stay there as only very important people could use the facilities. This was a great blow as it was past ten o’clock and the hotels we had seen coming through the town had looked very unattractive. Joyce brightly suggested the police-station, and once again we were lucky to find a policeman who spoke a little English. He escorted us to the station,
which was a small wooden shed on the roadside. The room we were shown into contained eight men, four of whom were Sikhs with coloured turbans and full black beards. We asked them to find us somewhere to stay. This request threw them into utter confusion: they threw up their hands and all talked at once, while we just stood and looked helplessly on. As no result seemed to come out of the debate, Joyce said, “Sleep in garden.” They looked even more amazed—never had such a situation arisen before. Eventually they produced two wooden bed-frames, a bucket of water and a hurricane lamp and set them down in an open space about twenty yards square surrounded by open-fronted wooden sheds. We put down our sleeping-bags, heated soup, washed as well as we could, and went to sleep under a brilliant starry sky. We awoke at 3.30 a.m. to find the huts filled with sleeping policemen and the police-station empty. We washed, made tea, packed the car and crept out of the station, leaving the sleepers undisturbed and two empty wooden bed-frames in the centre of the garden.

From Jullundar we travelled north to Pathankot, the terminus of the railway, where we turned east. As we passed through the town we became mixed up in a long army convoy which kept passing and repassing us. We were by now in the foothills of the Himalayas and, mindful of overheating the engine, we stopped frequently to allow it to cool down. Every time this happened, one of the army outriders would come rushing up to see if we were all right. About midday the convoy branched off to Kangra, and we were left with an almost deserted road.

At Baijnath we stopped at the Rest House for our usual after-lunch siesta, and on setting off again experienced the thrill of our first view of the Himalayas. Looking across low distant hills, we suddenly caught a
Mountains and Memsahibs

glimpse of high peaks right ahead, standing out perfectly clear in the afternoon light. In this hilly country the slopes were terraced, men and women carrying loads of earth in baskets on their heads to put them into furrows ready for the rice seedlings. Fir trees were now replacing the deciduous trees of the plain, and the steep banks of the Beas River were green with foliage. From now on we had to stop frequently to cool the engine to keep it running. At one of these enforced stops near a village we heard the sound of music and later saw a procession of men approaching, each with a garland of flowers round his neck or hat. They were dancing round a sedan chair in which was seated an elaborately dressed man. He was wearing a hat of gold tinsel, and a gold fringe, completely covering his face, hung down to his chest. We learned later that this was a bridegroom being carried to his bride’s house by the other young men of the village.

The afternoon wore on: the valley became more beautiful, and, as we climbed higher, every turn of the road brought a new delight. At Mandi we found the Dak Bungalow high up on a hill overlooking the attractive little village. Dozens of lights from the houses were flickering up and down the hillside, whilst close around us the fireflies darted. Beyond Mandi, the road and river ran together through a long deep gorge where it was not possible for two cars to pass. We did not know this when we retired to bed, so that our intention to leave early the next morning was thwarted by the one-way traffic system in operation over this twenty-five miles. We had to wait till 8.30 a.m., when traffic going upstream was allowed to start. Impatiently we waited, watching the sun get ever higher and higher. When at last we did get off we made but slow progress, for the road was literally cut out of the rock face overhanging the river. Rounding its acute bends, we were
thankful that at least we could not meet oncoming traffic.

Twelve miles beyond Mandi we came to a suspension bridge 288 ft. long, so light that only one car was allowed on it at once. At the entrance, a short dark-skinned middle-aged man met us and walked in front of the car wearing a placard on his back reading "I am instructed to walk in front of your car to enforce a speed limit of 4 m.p.h." Our minds went back to the early days of motoring in England, when it was compulsory for a man with a red flag to walk in front of a car. We now travelled along the north bank of the Beas, and at every mile the road became worse. Repair work was in progress in some places, and as this meant driving on the outer edge with a sheer drop below us, it was a nightmarish journey. At times we seemed to be suspended in mid-air with the raging waters several hundred feet below us. Our progress was slow, and we now began to worry that we might meet cars from the other direction, but we reached the village of Out safely and the end of the one-way traffic system.

By this time the car was again complaining loudly, and we had to stop frequently to drain the radiator and refill it. In the last forty miles to Manali the heat got worse and worse as the day advanced, so that we had to stop about every five miles to repeat the cooling process. Fortunately there was plenty of water at hand, and the enforced stops gave us opportunity to admire our surroundings and the snow-capped peaks ahead. We crossed very rickety bridges and circumvented many fallen rocks before we reached the bazaar at Manali and started on the last incline. Half-way up the hill the car came to a final standstill, and we had to walk the last two hundred yards of our 8500 miles to "Sunshine Orchards" and journey's end.

69
CHAPTER FIVE

MANALI

(Joyce Dunsheath)

The Punjab Hill States of Chamba, Kulu, Lahul, Spiti and Bashahr comprise a mountainous region three hundred miles long and one hundred and fifty miles broad, bounded on the north and west by the Indus, and on the south and east by the Sutlej. The general level of the country is high, tier upon tier of peaks rising from 17,000 to 20,000 ft. above its deep valleys. It contains only two giants, the mighty Nanda Devi (26,620 ft.) and the Nun Kun (23,410 ft.). Along its length rise four great rivers, the Beas, the Ravi, the Chenab and the Jhelum: all flow southward till they join the Indus in the Panhnad and flow with it to the sea. The most easterly of these, the lovely Beas, rises among the slabs of the Rohtang Pass (13,050 ft.), from whence it tumbles down through rocky gorges and between densely wooded slopes to the irrigated terraces and colourful orchards of the fertile Kulu Valley. The Chandra comes from the Bara Lacha Pass (16,000 ft.) in Spiti and flows south for more than thirty miles before making a right-angled bend to the west to flow through the arid lands of Lahul and Chamba to become known as the Chamba in Kashmir and flow south to the sea.

Manali lies 6000 ft. up on the right bank of the tempestuous Beas and, thanks to its temperate climate and the enterprise of Englishmen, produces luscious fruit which is sent all over India, Kulu apples being
prized above all others. Yet it is comparatively unknown, for the road up the valley is of recent construction and in the rainy season can be blocked for days by swollen streams, broken bridges and fallen debris. Transport is consequently poor and uncertain. The road ends at the sukh or bazaar of Manali, a collection of open-fronted shacks. Wares are displayed round all three sides, and at the front the proprietor sits cross-legged on the floor, an open tin for money on his right and scales on his left. To weigh cereal, he rises and, suspending the scales by a ring from the middle finger of his left hand, puts weights on one pan and pours grain into the other until they balance. Most shops sell everything from cigarettes and sweets to cooking-pots and shawls. There are, however, some specialists: the village tailor sits cross-legged in front of his Singer sewing-machine, executing orders on the spot, but he may be met with in the village, for he is itinerant and carries round with him the machinery of his trade.

In a good central position stands the Post Office. The common herd are supplied with stamps through the wicket window, but the visitor is privileged to step inside the office and send off mail, assisted by the stiff-jointed Indian clerk whose fingers, crippled with rheumatism, can hardly hold the steel pen with which he laboriously signs his name. When the bus arrives, bearing the incoming mail, the office is closed and only opened again just before the next arrival. Beyond the sukh, a six-foot sandy track climbs steadily uphill between groves of deodars interspersed with deciduous trees, chestnuts, lime and English oak and beech. On the left is the Civil Rest House, and on the right the Forest Rest House reserved for the Forestry Commissioners and other important government officials. We should never have penetrated this attractive bungalow set in a clearing of the wood had we not met the
Mountains and Memsahibs

Deputy High Commissioner for India in Pakistan and received an invitation to see a display of dancing performed in his honour on the lawn in front of the bungalow. Twelve male dancers, clad in short pleated white tunics, circled round with slow rhythmic steps, one hand on hip and the other holding a fine white handkerchief, to the rhythm of drums, the call of the three-foot-long silver trumpet and the shrill notes of a little pipe. Four picked men enlivened the spectacle with a sword dance, in which they made passes at each other brandishing curved blades mounted on jewelled handles.

The track got even narrower, passing two or three more bungalows, but there was still room for a car to drive up to “Sunshine Orchards”, the home and hotel of “Chini Sahib”, the acknowledged head of the village, who regulates its affairs and to whom all disputes are taken. With Europeans he is the English gentleman, but he has an Indian ménage in an adjoining house where he speaks the local dialect and subscribes to the local customs and religion. His father, an Indian Army officer, settled there when he retired from the service and brought up his three sons to carry on his work in the orchards which he started.

“Sunshine Orchards” is a wide-eaved spacious house of wood and stone set slightly above the road on a sandy knoll. Steps lead up to the house level and on to a roofed verandah which goes round three sides. This provides very necessary shade in the noon of a summer's day at latitude 32° N. A red roof gives an air of familiarity to an otherwise drab appearance, and the Indian “boy” standing at the top of the steps to greet us when we arrived with the words “Char, madame” made us feel that we had come among friends and the long pilgrimage was over.

It was past two o’clock and lunch was served at once
in a large dining-room furnished in English style—good soup, curried rice and stewed apples. Coffee afterwards was not so good, but in a land of tea we were wrong to insist on the drink of the West. We were then shown to a large airy room on the ground floor: leading out of it was a private wash-room complete with wash-basin, commode and tin bath, with a convenient hole in the floor-boards through which it could be emptied. A zealous "waterman" came quickly at a summons for hot water, and we grew quite fond of his wrinkled face and his constant hail of "Tandi Pani". We were now accustomed to the afternoon siesta habit, and had no difficulty in closing our eyes to the hot Indian sun and relaxing on the webbed mattresses of the wooden bedsteads. We were awakened by the smiling "boy" holding out a tray of tea, and after a change into clean clothes felt ready to meet the rest of the guests.

At dinner we met Major Banon for the first time, a grey-haired man of seventy, sturdy of build, clad in open-necked shirt and khaki shorts. He bade us welcome and introduced us to the others. There was a frail elderly lady from Delhi who had had long acquaintance with the valley and knew all the footpaths for miles around. She had an ambition to climb up to the top of the Rohtang Pass, but so far had not achieved it: she was, however, able to give full directions to anyone else setting out. We made the acquaintance of Jenny, a three-year-old of great charm and vivacity whose mother had brought her to escape the heat of the plains and to await the arrival of her father on leave from the Army: she had the dark eyes and glossy black hair of her Indian father and the pale skin and dainty charm of her English mother. Then there was a German with halting English with his charming Bombay wife and two young boys whose great interest in life just then was fishing in the stream for trout and seeing that they were cooked.
Mountains and Memsahibs

for supper. Another lady from Bombay had brought her thirty-year-old son, a would-be climber who eagerly listened to any information we could give him of rock and snow ascents. All were immensely interested in our enterprise, the old lady with a touch of envy, the climber with professional interest, the children with excitement at seeing real live Himalayan climbers, and the German with considerable apprehension. Every day after our departure on the expedition he would say, “I wonder where those girls are tonight. Gott in Himmell!”

We now had ten days of acclimatisation and preparation. The news of the pass was disquieting, for it was reported to be still full of snow and impossible for mules. Hilda and I were not altogether unthankful, for we needed time to get over the journey and to get our muscles into condition again. We spent the days exploring the valley and surrounding mountains. Our first excursion was down to the Manaslu River, where a well-constructed bridge led across and up the opposite hillside through fields terraced ready for the later rice crop and so to Manali village itself. We soon came to a cluster of square low houses set up the hillside in a forest of immense deodars, their broad sloping roofs descending well over the walls to provide shade from the hot midday sun. Stones culled from the hillside kept down the slate tiles set just overlapping each other to allow the monsoon rains and winter snows to slide off the angle and protect the wooden sides. Around each was a covered verandah, again a protection to the inhabitants from the elements. Two girls carrying heavy loads of wood on their backs came moving rhythmically down the path and stepped aside to let us pass. Their long brown shawls edged with red were draped around one shoulder then caught at the waist into a skirt which swept the ground. The material for the clothes is all
spun and woven by the women from the wool of their sheep or the hair of their goats and yaks and is extremely tough and durable. I should have thought it was too hot for the climate we were then experiencing, but they wear the same all the year round on the theory that it keeps the warmth of the body in and the heat of the sun out. A man came out on to his verandah smoking his hookah. Tobacco of a poor quality is cheap and easily obtainable in the bazaars, and although the younger men smoke the “Tiger” cigarettes they also like to puff at the long-handled pipe ending in a round bowl which is passed round from mouth to mouth. Another man then appeared wearing the typical tight off-white trousers of goat hair and a long tunic coat tied round the middle with a gay sash. On his head was a closely fitting cap of the same material, a red band giving it an inch of depth. Some children now came running round the corner and stopped abruptly on seeing us, setting hands together as if praying and putting out the tongue in greeting.

Above the village huge forests rose up the hillsides, legacy of countless centuries and happily as yet undespiled. In a thick grove of deodars we stumbled on the dark Hindu temple. There was no time to linger then, but another day I got up very early and came along the little path leading to the enormous trees through which the sunlight filtered, casting strange patterns on the grass at my feet. The square temple stood dark and forbidding on a grass-covered knoll. It had a three-tiered roof of a Chinese pagoda surmounted by a cupola, the edges carved in fringes which sighed in the breeze and shaded a stone-flagged platform. I mounted to the door set three feet above the ground and pushed. It gave a little, but the face of the goddess on a brass knob frowned down upon the unbeliever and forbade entrance. I sat down on one of the stone flags and gazed around. What peace! Here was God, the god of all
Mountains and Memsahibs

religions, the spirit that pervades all nature and gives the peace that passeth all understanding. As I sat spellbound, the soft notes of a horn came through the scented air, rising and falling only a few tones, now short, now long, each clear as crystal and soft as the ambient air. I got up to go, and after a few yards turned round for a last look. A Hindu woman and child were at the door, and while the child placed a simple bunch of flowers on the sill the woman took ointment from her jar and smeared a little on the door, then walked silently away. With bowed head, I left the holy spot.

Later I was told the story of the goddess. She began life as a demon living with her brother in the fastness of the Rohtang Pass until he was killed and she herself seized and flung into the air. She came to earth in the deodar grove known afterwards as “Dungri” (hip), where a temple was erected in her honour. Harimba is now the goddess of Manali and brings fortune or misfortune as she wills.

We were privileged to see the spring festival in this same grove. At 3 p.m. on 16th May the shrill notes of trumpets and horns and the rhythmic beat of drums began to echo round the hills, drawing nearer and nearer till by 4 p.m. processions of people began to converge on the temple. First came those from Manali itself down the terraced slopes to the dark forest. In the centre of the crowd was their goddess Harimba carried on a palanquin borne by two bearers, one at each end. Her form was oval, draped in multicoloured scarves hanging down almost to the ground: from it rose six silver heads in two rows of three. All around her danced men clothed in homespun trousers and short beautifully pleated tunics swathed with sashes and bands: on their heads were closely fitting caps from which hung fringes of coloured beads and silver ornaments, a plume stuck upright in the middle of their foreheads. The procession
went straight to the temple and carried in the goddess. The throng surged excitedly round a priest, the spokesman of the goddess, who stood by the door, his body tense. He followed her in and presently they emerged, preceded by two men shaking brooms of peacock feathers and holding out bowls of sweetly smelling incense. A path was made through the mob right up to the sheep-horns pinned to a distant tree and on to a mound covered with flat stones that served as altar. The devout hastened to set offerings of sweets, jewellery and embroidered cloth before her. Now another god arrived, fortunately in friendly mood, and Harimba was taken to greet him. Together they moved among the trees to the central arena. The new arrival was preceded by a holy man with lean body, piercing eyes and long greasy black hair. He took off his yellow coat and, clad only in short goat-hair trousers, performed a rhythmic dance, now carrying burning charcoal, now brandishing evil-looking knives and now rattling chains. The band played louder and louder, and finally all moved down to the arena: the villagers presented a colourful sight in their best clothes, the women wearing all their jewellery on their arms, around their necks and in their nostrils. Heads were covered with bright scarves and shawls. More gods and goddesses arrived, each with bands and dancers, and, having done the ceremonial round, settled down with the others to enjoy the festivities. The bands amalgamated and occupied the centre of the arena. The dancers, now some thirty in number, formed a circle and swayed round rhythmically, then broke into groups and executed more complicated movements. The music stopped for a time then broke forth again more excitedly: men with curved swords swayed in mock fight, getting ever nearer and nearer as the tempo increased, then slowed down with swaying bodies and

Manali
Mountains and Memsahibs

sank slowly to the ground. Now it was the turn of the gods and goddesses again. Two moved forward together and one left the arena to return ten minutes later lurching drunkenly. She reeled against a rival, who, taking up the challenge, swayed and charged, meeting and retreating as the music dictated till peace was restored. This constant variety of mime, play and dance went on until the shadows lengthened and all were tired. The processions re-formed and the villagers wound their way up the hills again to their homes, while Manali, the hostess village, celebrated with drink and food till far into the night.

So the days passed pleasantly, each bringing its new experience and each carrying us one stage forward to the time when all should be packed and ready and bodies acclimatised for the great expedition ahead.

On 12th May our Sherpas arrived. They had completed a thousand-mile journey from Darjeeling in three days, sleeping on trains and cooking their food en route. The sirdar, Ang Tschering, conscientiously produced little scraps of paper as receipts for all the money he had spent on the way. He was very proud of the fact that he could write, and when I reimbursed him, signed PANSY in sprawling capitals on the paper I presented. Seeing my surprise, he told me that he had been on many expeditions since his first in 1936 with Shipton on Everest, had learnt English from English climbers and had from his earliest climbs been known as Pansy. So Pansy he was to us. He had brought with him three younger men, all relatives. Pasang Dorje was thirty-three and had gained his Himalayan Club badge of recognition as cook on three expeditions. He was slightly deaf, a handicap to him when climbing, but very reliable. To our amusement he knew all about pressure cookers!

Mingma was a handsome lad of twenty-three who
proved to be the best climber of all. This was his third expedition, and a satisfactory chit from us at the end of our trip would gain him the coveted badge also. He could understand English though he spoke only a few words of it, and those so distorted as to be almost unrecognisable.

Nima, the youngest, had had the proud position of porter at Base Camp on Makalu and had, so Pansy said, been complimented on the speed at which he delivered the mail. He had an ever-present smile and followed his allotted memsahib like a faithful watch-dog.

They were all short and wiry, beardless with a shock of coarse black hair cut short all round the head. Their skins were dark and their eyes, set slightly aslant in their rather Mongolian features, twinkled all the time.

They were given a room over the garage, where they slept and had their meals, usually doing their own cooking on a Primus stove. Each morning they were up early waiting to help us with the sorting and repacking of the stores and equipment. We allowed them to buy their own food, to take on the expedition, and soon sacks of tsampa, atta, dal, rice and sugar began to appear. They were horrified at the few packets of sugar we were taking, for they needed twice as much as we did. At the last minute, Pansy added a small sack of potatoes from Major Banon's store and a dozen eggs from the hen-run. We examined their equipment and found it was all in good order. It had been used on previous expeditions and been checked over by the secretary of the Darjeeling branch of the Himalayan Club before they set out. We had to pay them a hire charge for the use of these clothes.

Pansy had to act as interpreter for everybody. He could understand the local dialect and translated orders backwards and forwards. All the Sherpas enjoyed the Hindu festival although they were Buddhist, and
Mountains and Memsahibs

appreciated the necessity of putting off departure for two days after it!

On 18th May an imposing caravan of two memsahibs, two Sherpas and twenty-six porters left Manali for the Bara Shigri. Frances and Eileen had already left to explore the Jobri Nullah before rejoining us at the Hamtah Pass. We were due to start at 9 a.m., but we didn’t think this was possible, knowing the habits of the East, and therefore arranged for early-morning cups of tea at 7 a.m.; however, at 6.30 a.m. porters were already gathering outside the house. By 7.30 the crowd had increased to twenty, and Pansy was busy with his spring balance weighing and adjusting loads. Each man carried up to fifty pounds but the optimum weight was forty. It was a skilled work to get the loads just right. A kit-bag was a good start, but the addition of a rope would probably make the total too much, whereas an extra kettle would be too little, and many things had to be added and subtracted before a compromise was reached. As each man got his load, he retired to sit in the shade till his companions were ready. As we got towards the end, it was apparent that we were going to have too much weight for too few men, but Pansy, with stony face, kept the figures on the balance dial towards him and added an extra piece to each man so that all was disposed of by the time the Headman, Panu, arrived. Panu was a handsome fellow, tall, neatly dressed in tight grey trousers and long off-white tunic coat, a broad white sash tied round the middle and a little white round cap on his head. From his mahogany-coloured face gleamed a pair of twinkling black eyes and a fine set of white teeth. He greeted us with many salaams, signifying his willingness to follow us to the ends of the earth at the head of his horde of villagers. At 9 a.m., after many photographs from Press, visitors and expedition cameras, we set off down the village
Manali

street and over the bridge beyond the sukh. Our route now lay up the hillside on the further side of the stream, and after two miles we passed through the village from which the majority of porters had come. The women and children were out to greet the men, who all put their loads down and squatted thankfully on the ground while the women ministered to them with mugs of tea and food. As they gathered strength, however, their voices rose and soon became an angry roar. At length, Pansy got out the scales again and we realised that the subject of dispute was the size and weight of load. The net result was that everything had to be reweighed and two extra porters engaged!

We now set off again. A track zigzagged up the slope, but the porters, instead of keeping to this, went directly and very steeply uphill. We found that this was a habit of the porters on the mistaken theory that the shortest way was the quickest. High up on the ridge we looked back on Manali, following the lines of the huts of the sukh, the deodar forest lining the route, the thin silver streak of the river and the orchards of Major Banon.

After many halts we reached the Alain Nala and camp was made above Jobri by the side of a rushing stream. This was the place where we had arranged to meet Frances and Eileen, so we sent up three porters to help bring down their kit. The rest of us went to bed early after a hot supper and slept the healthy sleep of the tired but content mountaineer.
CHAPTER SIX

THE START

(Frances Delany)

It seemed that we would never get away from Manali, where the staid "Pension de Famille" atmosphere clashed with the adventurous spirit of a Himalayan expedition. The expedition had been called to assemble at Manali at the beginning of May. I had already been ten days in Manali, and Eileen still more, when Joyce and Hilda arrived. We had employed the time usefully exploring the Jagatsukh Nala. In mid-May the snow on the passes excluded the use of mules to transport our equipment to the base of the Bara Shigri, and my limited leave did not permit us to dawdle in Manali until the Rohtang should be open at the end of the month. The passes will always hinder expeditions in the Chandra Valley, where the monsoon breaks only some six weeks after the snow has melted at 13,000 ft.

In the intervals of sorting the kit we held meetings, discussing endlessly and inconsequently the different alternatives open to us. Like the mountain of Lafontaine, our labours should have brought forth a city as great as Paris, but what appeared? Hot air—suggestions and decisions sufficiently imprecise to necessitate further conferences twelve hours later. We sought advice from Major Banon and his brothers and interviewed travellers freshly arrived from the Rohtang; all gave us the answer which we were unwilling to accept; that both the Rohtang and Hamtah Passes were still impracticable for
mules. The obvious solution was to go and see for ourselves, but someone had to stay behind to continue the preparations and meet the Sherpas when they arrived. As I had already had some training with Eileen, she, Joyce and Hilda set off with a mule and muleteer to sleep at the Kulti Rest House. The next day Joyce and Eileen reached the col and were forced to accept the evidence that the depth of snow was still such as to render the pass out of the question for mules. We therefore decided to recruit twenty-six Kulu porters to cross the Hamtah (14,200 ft.), leaving Manali on 18th May.

The delay until the 18th was necessary to allow the porters to recover from the three-day religious festival and its ensuing alcoholic fatigue. As the Sherpas were already with us, it seemed a pity for all four of us to waste the intervening days in Manali. One evening as we sat comfortably in the sitting-room, waiting to be called to our baths, I suggested that two women could go with two Sherpas and amuse themselves in a valley for two days. My remark met with such a stony silence that I was glad to disappear upstairs to bath in the large tin tub and get rid of the dust clinging from the packing-straw. Later I explained my plan to Eileen, and, formulated in a more catholic way, it was accepted. Eileen and I drew the short straws and we decided to take Mingma and Pasang and four Kulu porters to reconnoitre the approaches to Indrasan up the Jobri Nullah.

We spent the morning packing our civilian clothes back into the suitcases, writing hasty last letters home and checking over equipment and stores.

The porters appeared about eleven o'clock, and after a scratch lunch we set off. Already in Manali the midday heat was more appropriate to a siesta than a climb, and our path led up the sunlit side of the valley. As we wound through isolated hamlets and beside the bare terraced fields awaiting their rice seedlings we met
Mountains and Memsahibs

several women hastening in their colourful finery to the festival, whose drums called across the valley. As we mounted, the view across the valley became more beautiful, but the path increasingly steep and slippery where it was carpeted by fallen cedar needles. I was always glad when the porters decided to rest their burdens and we could gaze down on the patterned valley floor with its white dusty roads winding on each side of the Beas River. As soon as we crossed the shoulder into the Hamtah we were in the shade among large deodars; the rhythmic drumming faded, and with it vanished the last signs of sedentary living. Skirting the cliffs, over occasional slabs and narrow cow-tracks, the path led on to open meadows, where we camped late in the afternoon at Chika. The meadow was marshy and covered with large leaves of a type of snakewort, but still pleasantly free from flies and cow-dung until the herds came to graze later in the season. Though we did not realise it, this was to be our last warm camp for many days to come.

The Jobri Nullah, up which we wished to go, is a left, that is to say eastern, tributary of the Hamtah Nullah. We therefore had to cross the main river the next morning. The recognised crossing-place was over a fallen tree upstream of our camp, and we reached it by open pastures, where in a group of trees we came across the skeleton of a bear, picked clean but for the soles of its feet; hard thick black leather armed with great claws.

The porters thought we wished to camp at the foot of the Jobri Nullah, and in a green meadow, on the Hamtah mule-track, they started unfastening their loads. We assured them that we had no intention of stopping there and started up the Jobri Nullah. At eight o’clock they started grumbling about the length of the stage, so Eileen and Mingma went ahead and Pasang and I stayed to encourage the porters. Once they
The Start

were no longer under our eyes they forgot to simulate exhaustion and started to walk well without the constant rests which they feigned to need when we were with them.

Above a narrow passage full of birch, rhododendron and patches of avalanche snow, the valley opened out to meadows where flocks of sheep were grazing. Many of the sheep had horribly swollen feet and were lying dismally on the ground to die of starvation. The marshy slopes led to higher pastures where the grass had barely emerged from the winter snow and was still an unhealthy yellow. Here the porters staged a sit-down strike. Looking up the valley, we could see on to the west face of Indrasan and Deo Tibba: a great glacier tumbled from the pass between the two mountains, falling over two successive ice-falls into a narrow valley. The lower tongue of the glacier was much crevassed, but perhaps a route could be found to the south side of the valley. We decided that the one day which we had at our disposal was insufficient to reconnoitre the valley, and turned left to explore a glen to the north.

The ringleader of the porters, long locks curling from under his felt hat with its distinguishing purple band, agreed to put off the sit-down strike for a while. But half an hour up the glen the men sat down again and refused to continue. Eileen and I tried a ruse; pretending to advance, we sat down behind some large boulders in the sun, in the hope that our disappearance would entice a further effort from the porters. But their refusal was definite this time, and they surlily advanced to our boulders, untied their loads, pocketed their rupees and were off.

We pitched camp at about eleven o’clock between two delightful streams. Mingma and Pasang busied themselves with the tents, carefully excavating horizontal platforms with their ice-axes (or ours).
Mountains and Memsahibs

Eileen was worried by bites, given, she said, by a thing between a spider and a beetle. When she produced one, I laughed to think that she had come all the way to the Jobri Nullah to discover ticks. It was drizzling after lunch, so we unpacked in the tent. A sudden cry came from Eileen, who, throwing away her rucksack, disclosed a black scorpion, which, according to the Sherpas, was harmless.

We decided to go further up the valley next morning and try to climb anything that seemed feasible. An early start was voted, so I gave the alarm clock to Pasang, set for four o'clock. Alas, we did not then know his propensity for breaking things, and it cost me 50s. in Nairobi to have the alarm clock repaired. We ourselves did not wake till 6 a.m., to cloud and drizzle, but we set off before the Sherpas, who rejoined us an hour later up the valley, where the snow still lay deep over the slopes.

As we could see no summits through the mist, we set off up a suitably inclined slope, walked along a crest and roped up a steeper ground. It soon became apparent that we were getting nowhere, or rather that we did not know where we were getting; wet snow lay on loose slabs and boulders, and we decided to turn back. Even after a ration of chocolate Pasang was not too happy and kept on pronouncing the word: Carambums. We eventually discovered that he wished to put on his crampons, and he continued happily down the slope with enormous sods of wet snow balled between the teeth of the crampons.

Lower the snow was very wet and we had our first introduction to a very tiring method of march. All of a sudden, even if you were walking in the traces of the leader, the snow would subside beneath you. Up to your knees or waist in a pit of wet snow, there ensued an exhausting struggle; first, to take off your rucksack, and
then to compact the sides of the hole and climb out. Frequently the surrounding snow was also soft, and we soon discovered that the best system was to crawl on all fours and stand up only when a hard surface had been met.

We reached camp wet and tired; it drizzled all afternoon and I foresaw that my six books would not last long on the expedition if the weather continued to be bad. Late in the afternoon Mingma gave a sudden indistinct cry which we took to signify an approaching flood; but his announcement had been “Porters coming” and not “Water coming”! Purple hat and his companions jumped across the stream to greet us as if we had left each other the preceding day the best of friends. They shared the Sherpas’ rice and slept under a large boulder sheltered from the wind by a wall of slabs.

Eileen descended direct to Chika next morning to tell the main party that I was taking a short-cut along the side of the valley into the Hamtah Valley. In her haste she missed the magnificent views back up the Jobri Nullah towards Indrasan and Deo Tibba. The night had swept away the clouds and the early blue sky showed up in their full glory the snow-ridges adjoining the two main summits. Our path passed over meadows bright with pink primulas and strewn with lichen-covered boulders; the sparkling peaks behind us were thrown into relief by the shadow-filled green valleys into which we descended.

Once in the main valley, we had to cross innumerable steep slopes of hard snow. The Kulu porters managed well in their wooden clogs or rope-soled sandals and moved rapidly where we cut steps. Pasang again mumbled “Carambuns”, and advanced tentatively one foot and then the other, enlarging the steps into veritable elephant-tracks. We then lost the path in a great land-
Mountains and Memsahibs

slip, but eventually reached the Hamtah Valley to find the main party below us.

Tea and biscuits refreshed us, and our rations could have been further supplemented by some large succulent-looking white pigeons. As we were near the snowline, the head porter Panu insisted that we must stop.

A clear babbling stream meandered through the wide valley. There were sufficient large boulders on the valley floor for privacy and the porters chose for their shelters large blocks perched on the hillside. Tents were slowly pitched and after a warm discussion we managed to obtain a cooked lunch. Eileen and I had left camp early after a scant breakfast, whereas the main party had enjoyed in leisurely fashion a substantial one. After a few days even those who upheld the merits of a cooked breakfast decided to eat only a plate of porridge, which enabled our provisions to last much longer. Even a warm lunch could not dissipate the misery of the afternoon. Low clouds and an intermittent wind driving the damp down the valley kept us cold. The head of the valley was frequently in the mist, and only occasionally could we see the spire of Indar Keila rising above the rocky slopes to the north.

It is always prudent when trekking in uninhabited country, whether by camel, mule or on foot, to sleep the first day near one’s point of departure so that all the objects forgotten at Base can be fetched the following day. At this camp the list of kit required from Manali was becoming impressive. Boots set aside to go over the Rohtang were wanted immediately; Joyce, who had brought to India her husband’s climbing-trousers instead of her own, had left even them at Manali. The most serious item was the paraffin, of which Pansy had assured us four gallons would suffice for the first three weeks; it was already abundantly clear that more would be required. We drew up a list of articles for Major
Banon, explaining to him in which kit-bag or suitcase they were to be found, and arranged to send back a porter to collect the material.

Camp next morning resembled a village market-day, not the organised market where the salesmen stand quietly behind their stalls but an oriental bazaar, where the vendor, yelling and gesticulating, throws his wares at the client while claiming their superiority over the wares which his rival is throwing from the other side. Pansy and the head porter Panu were bargaining briskly in several languages with the porters. The scales were to the fore to weigh each load: a rope added to one, crampons, sleeping-bag or sack of rice abstracted from another. The scales were not always correctly read, but when Pansy declared a load to weigh only 3.5 lb. it was eagerly accepted. Once a porter had obtained a load which he considered sufficiently light, he sat down apart, guarding it jealously from his friends’ calculating eyes. As there was snow ahead, the men drew on thick woollen socks. Their footwear appeared most unsuitable, as rope sandals, or wooden clogs shod with iron, outnumbered by far the boots.

An encouraging note was struck in this confusion by the arrival of four Ladakhi porters. They had been repairing the Chandra bridge at Kuti, and, warned of our departure, had hastened back over the Rohtang to Manali to pick up the equipment provided by the expedition. Dressed alike in R.A.F. blue windproofs, they appeared at first distressingly uniform: Namgyal, Umgyal, Zor-Zor (Georgy-Georgy) and a fourth who remained anonymous, for he was ill and returned immediately, with our list of forgotten objects, to Manali. The Ladakhis were older than the Sherpas, except for gentlemanly Pansy, and consequently more reliable. Not given to playing the boyish pranks which delighted the Sherpas, they seldom even joined in the
Mountains and Memsahibs

game of throwing stones at a cairn until its destruction. They were taller than the Sherpas, and their features filled the intermediary step between the fine-faced Kulu porters and the Tibetan faces of the Sherpas. Their equipment made them the poor cousins of the Sherpas. Their most precious items of clothing were long woollen underpants, which, white at the start, became grey with wear. In the cold early mornings they wore windproof trousers and anoraks with fur-lined hoods; later in the day the windproofs were discarded and summits were climbed, camps pitched and struck, in grey woollen underpants. Their odd assortment of pullovers, gloves and socks helped us to distinguish one Ladakhi from the other, until their faces and vastly differing characters had become familiar.

I stayed to film the departure from camp, and the other memsahibs were far ahead when the caravan suddenly organised itself and the porters moved off as if all the complaints had been made in jest. The delay had made me bitterly cold, but moving rapidly ahead to film the men as they passed, then catching them up again, was a warming occupation. The men halted about every twenty minutes, resting their loads against boulders or just subsiding with their loads on to the snow. This latter position was difficult to abandon, as it required a second porter to haul them to their feet; the alternative was to roll laboriously over on to their knees and stand up under the load. Purple hat struggled along amid his crowd of admirers, but the porter who made the least fuss was a venerable personage, Ramdasana, who would have been better in character sitting at a comfortable fire smoking his hookah in peace; even by European standards he could well have been a grandfather. The men had a curiously rapid, uneven gait, and their constant gossip did not preserve their breath for the task in hand. Clustered around their favourite pacer,
the groups moved haltingly upward, keeping in touch one with the other along a line of stragglers.

A moraine curving to the left took us out of the valley, and a party of Spiti people whom we met descending gave us news of the col. Clothed in dirty brown or purple robes, high fur-lined boots and fur caps, they were in a great hurry to reach the lower pastures. The women carried loads as heavy as the men, though for the distance they had come their baggage seemed very light. Wood was an important item, as were large shovels resembling paddles, used for clearing the track of snow. One learned man sported a large breast-pendant with a photograph of an august personage I imagined to be the Dalai Lama. Flat-faced and cheerful, even the most dignified was not above asking backsheesh for their photographs, but seemed content with sweets instead of currency.

An enormous boulder at the summit of the col allowed us to stretch out in the sun while waiting for the porters to catch up. Eileen and the Ladakhis prepared fixed ropes to facilitate the descent. There were unpleasant rocks below, and the angle of the slope was such that we preferred to take no risks and prepared a path “for tourists”. As we were waiting, a charming couple appeared, a bespectacled schoolteacher and his wife, with a young companion, on their way back to the Spiti Valley to reopen the school. A few sticks of wood, a lightly packed knapsack and a small bundle was all their luggage. Perhaps in the Chandra Valley they would find hospitable tents at night, but in the Hamtah they must have slept in the open. The wife seemed to consider the crossing of a 14,000-ft. col in early spring a normal occurrence and climbed with ease down the steep snow-slope, helped only by her long alpenstock. The schoolteacher had a fair knowledge of English, but we were too busy at that moment to ask
Mountains and Memsahibs

questions about Spiti; they kept with us as far as the Chandra, but then turned west to cross the river at the Chatoru bridge.

A long snow-traverse, unfortunately exposed to small snow-slides, an unpleasant corner on wet rock and then a straight descent led our long cavalcade over sodden grass slopes on to unbearably soft snow in the valley. Two of the memsahibs stopped to eat, but Eileen and I preferred to continue before the snow became still softer. The obvious track, following closely the course of the river, we considered too risky for heavily laden men, and they were forced to climb painfully and vociferously up the flank of the valley to trudge miserably through deep wet snow along the lateral moraine. To my delight, I discovered boulders containing beautiful crystallised tourmaline pegmatites, and while Eileen went ahead to the camp-site I collected magnificent samples; unfortunately the porter who carried my kit-bag next day realised it contained stones and promptly jettisoned them!

Chatoru was a delightful camping-ground. A grassy meadow, with many large boulders still warmed by the sun, enabled us to spread out our clothes to dry, hang our socks on the rocks and change into our tennis shoes. These had been recommended on the equipment list as “plimsolls for camps by river”. They, however, proved useful even above the snowline, where, worn under canvas overboots, they were a pleasant change from heavy and frequently wet mountain boots. A large boulder with a crack enticed Eileen to practise climbing. Mingma followed suit when the tents were pitched, but he chose a vertical face from which he jumped down when no more holds were to be found. Pasang limited his activities to that of spectator, but Nima also tried his strength, while Pansy looked on like an elderly hen admiring the pranks of her brood.
We had a photogenic supper, sitting around a crate on black metal boxes containing the provisions. Having no chairs or tables, the boxes were in constant demand, and they became much-valued accessories when we camped on snow. While eating, I noticed a curious phenomenon which was our nearest approach to the abominable snowman. Written in bold lettering on the army ration boxes we had purchased were the words: exploit yeti. What mysterious significance this might have to military circles we did not know, but it seemed an apt designation for rations consumed on a Himalayan expedition.

Above Chatoru, snow still covered the summer pathway and we found our route up and down the ridges, crossing small rivers on snow-bridges and even using the large bridges which spanned the Chandra. We rested interminably in the hope that the porters would catch up, but, impatient, we would continue before they came in sight.

All morning we crossed pleasant gravel stretches or wound between the moraines, but a most unpleasant stretch occurred where the glacier descending from the Bara Umea Pass joined the Chandra. The plain was strewn with boulders covered with very soft snow. Mingma and Nima roared with laughter each time they fell through up to their waists. After it had happened to me a dozen times the novelty began to pall, and I would willingly have camped where we were. The plain led us to a marshy area where, however carefully we stepped, we were bound to fall eventually into deep water which over-topped our boots. Pretending it was all fun, we would proceed, squishing loudly, to fall into another mushy trap some hundred yards further on.

In the afternoon Eileen and I were far ahead of the main column and had found a delightful spot with numerous boulders to shelter the porters. Eileen dis-
Mountains and Memsahibs

appeared down the hill to wash herself, whilst I stood
sentry above. My own ablutions were hasty, as my
distaste of cold water surpasses that of clean dirt. We
had even lit the primus and were drinking well-earned
tea when a distant hail told us that the main party would
not come further and were camped further back.
Furiously we packed again, hung our wet washing on
the rucksacks or aired it on the ice-axe head and climbed
back along the moraine through wet snow to join the
others, having learnt our lesson that it was never worth
while to get ahead of them.

Our camping-place that night, called officially Puti
Runi, had been described to us as a meadow, but there
were few signs of verdure that evening. The porters
were in a better humour and dressed Eileen up as a Kulu
woman. A locally woven grey blanket was draped
around her and clasped at the shoulders with large
safety-pins; she strapped the instrument box on to her
back and declared that she would claim a porter’s wage
for the next day’s march.

Even her scorn scarcely encouraged the men, who,
next day, dumped the loads at the first site suitable for a
base camp. Their loads were light that day, for they had
left their own kit at Puti Runi and were to return
there, or even further, that same night. Pansy went
ahead to reconnoitre a good camping-place and chose
the crest of the moraine, slightly sheltered—or so we
hoped—from the wind by some large boulders.

Unrolling from aluminium tubes rolls of rupees in
small denominations, Joyce and I, aided by Pansy and
Panu, sat down to pay off the porters. Panu was paid
first and offered a substantial present when the whole
deal was done; this encouraged him to take our side
against the porters’ complaints. I counted rapidly the
small notes, passed them to Joyce, who added the 5-
rupee notes, passed them to Pansy, who handed them on,
The Start

and the porters received them from the hands of Panu. The parting gift of cigarettes was appreciated, and the men hastened off towards the warmth of Kulu and the fleshpots of their own homes.

We remained. Four women, four Sherpas and three porters from Ladakh, sheltering behind boulders from the cold wind and wondering what the coming days would bring.
CHAPTER SEVEN

FIRST DAYS ON THE BARA SHIGRI GLACIER

(Frances Delany)

Base Camp was never much frequented. Pitched amid great snow-covered boulders, the tents overlooked a flat of the Chandra Valley. The river, sweeping from the north in a right-angled bend and joined by the waters of the Shigri, flowed in wide meanders. On our return journey the snow had melted, revealing a well-marked track through the camp site, and between the meanders had appeared a startlingly blue lake. The Bara Shigri was tantalisingly hidden from the camp by a high buttress, and only its snout was visible to the east. Beyond the glacier tongue, a perfect snow-pyramid appeared an enticing goal as it shone in the light of the full moon; later, when the snow had gone, the mountain lost all its charm and was revealed as a dreary heap of shale. The main track to the Kanzam La and Bara Lacha La followed the far side of the Chandra Valley. Places where the Chandra River could be crossed were few, and at Chatoru the traveller had to decide between the small track south of the river, which led through our camp, or the large route to the north, which was reputed to be passable for a jeep.

Early-morning starts were very disorganised. Pansy would first light a Primus either in his tent or behind a rock. Some thirty minutes later a Sherpa, generally Mingma, would call outside our tent: "Chai, mem-
sahib". In our tent it was Eileen who crept half out of her sleeping-bag to untie the mouth of the tent and let in the mugs of tea, the tin of milk, sugar, the biscuits and cold air. A full blast of the latter would make me disappear still further into my sleeping-bag. We soon learned to keep the butter in the tent at night so that it was not impossibly frozen at breakfast. The jam seemed to survive the cold and was edible and ready to be spread when required.

The tents were too low to enable one to sit upright, and breakfast was eaten in a recumbent position, which was tiring enough when held for a light meal, and I can only imagine the Romans had some special cushions to support them when they embarked on an interminable feast. Even a second cup of tea could only postpone for a short while the horrid moment of getting out of the sleeping-bag. Pulling on cold trousers, which had been pressed overnight between the sleeping-bag and the air-mattress, I used to search the foot of the bag for socks which had been put there to dry and keep warm; boots were also cold, though never frozen. Emerging on all fours through the narrow mouth of the tent was a manœuvre made still more difficult by the presence of a guy-line immediately in front of the tent.

While we were getting dressed the Sherpas would be packing their loads and their own equipment, getting colder and colder all the time. Pansy suffered most in this way, for he was the first to rise and in spite of his plastic cape, which might have been designed for a French postman, his face took on a pained expression and even his moustache seemed to shiver. Lack of cooperation ensured that the occupants of one tent were ready before those of the other tent. The early risers would stand around in the bitter wind hoping desperately that the late risers would find their missing socks or gloves. Whirling our arms around and stamping our
Mountains and Memsahibs

feet, we could only encourage the seeker, who, sitting still warm in her tent, was in no hurry to confess to having found the lost objects.

Ferrying equipment up the glacier was a performance rather like that of the cannibals ferrying missionaries across the river. The porters could only take a small load if they also transported their own equipment, tents and sleeping-bags. Therefore some days they only carried stores up to the upper camps, and returned in the afternoon to the lower camp; they finally took up our tents and their own. We made fairly early starts when there was only ferrying to be done. When the tents had to be struck, sleeping-bags folded and personal clothes divided into the kit-bags, depending on whether they were required at the higher camps immediately or not, we lost precious half-hours. If we left camp when the sun had already reached the glacier, the first hours were pleasanter, but the snow would be soft long before we reached our goal. The heat of the sun on the glacier snow sapped our energy so that we straggled into camp in a disorderly rabble. Late starts were doubly annoying when the porters had to return to the lower camp.

We generally carried our personal clothes and cameras, Thermos flask and food for the day. Even then the men seemed inordinately laden with food and equipment. They rested about every half-hour, allowing the slower walkers to catch up with them. When the snow became soft, the porters frequently broke through the superficial crust up to their knees or even up to their waists, and finding a suitably hard track was a job fit for a martyr.

We were full of energy those first days and eager to do our best. We intended to start the topographical survey of the glacier from Shigri, a “meadow” at the northern limit of the glacier tongue. Eileen and Hilda took the porters up to establish a dump of food at
Camp 2, while I helped Joyce to survey. Pansy was encouraged to carry the instruments, much against his will, for he expected to be left in charge of Base Camp to protect it against thieving travellers.

Even as we crossed the glacier tongue to set up a base line on its eastern fringe we could not see up the Bara Shigri. We looked, however, on to the first left tributary glacier: an impressive, totally crevassed river of ice which descended from two imposing mountains. These mountains appear on the maps as Dharmsura and Papsura, or the White Sails, and their heights have been exactly measured (21,165 ft. and 21,148 ft.) by the Survey of India. The western escarpments of the same mountains had dominated the camp at Puti Runi. As it was Joyce's first attempt at serious mapping, we were not very successful: lines which should have converged, diverged; or else met at points beyond the edge of the paper. The surrounding summits were too high to fix with the alidade. Their height also prevented satisfactory use of the camera.

Floundering back to camp across the glacier was an unpleasant task, and I gave back to Pansy the half of the instruments which I had rashly offered to carry.

The other party had successfully chosen a site some four hours above the Base Camp. Unfortunately Hilda had been unable to keep up with Eileen, and she decided not to go on. Instead of waiting for their return she started down alone. Losing the upward tracks, she fell, as we all did from time to time, into holes in the snow and returned to camp thoroughly disgusted with life. She preferred to remain in her tent the next day when the porters returned again to Camp 2. Joyce continued the survey, while Eileen and I climbed the buttress behind camp.

We had hoped that the summit would give us a view of the Bara Shigri, but the glacier curved tantalisingly
Mountains and Memsahibs

from view and only the lower reaches were visible. The climb taught us a lesson. We had charged ourselves with the panoramic camera and its tripod besides our own cameras. Though the rocks were easy, we climbed roped; in the Alps the instruments we were carrying would not have incommode us beyond measure, but we had reckoned without the altitude. Instead of moving elegantly from slab to fissure and chimney, I gasped and panted, swearing mightily when the rigid, uncollapsible tripod caught in a crack or jammed against a block during my upward movement. Our efforts were recompensed on the summit, where the camera could record the entire arc of the horizon and we were able to photograph the summits visible from the north-north-west to the south-west.

Twice now the men had ferried loads up to Camp 2 and we were able to move the tents up the next day, leaving a tent at Base so that five of the men could return to sleep there and bring up further loads the following day. Pansy weighed the loads, giving, I suspect, the heaviest loads to the Ladakhis. As I brought up the rear, I was astonished to see that Pansy had no load for himself. In spite of his official function as sirdar cook, his self-appointed guardianship of the camp was more important, and I realised that the job of sirdar was frequently going to be easier than that of memsahib-geologist!

The route first chosen by Eileen from Base to Camp 2 proved satisfactory and was subsequently followed. It climbed gradually to the right side of the glacier, and with only a few losses in height reached a shaly moraine opposite the fourth tributary glacier on the true left. The camp had a magnificent view to the west on to a spectacular mount which, at the time, we called Kamet. It had two inspiring snow-ridges, hung with cornices ready to drop like over-ripe fruit on the first warm days.
First Days

The face between the ridges was furrowed with fine snow-ribs and descended in an awesome precipice to the flat glacier below. The Bara Shigri rose behind the camp, but from minor hummocks on the glacier we could look towards Concordia and could speculate on the topography ahead of us.

There was a great work of terracing to be done to pitch a camp up to Sherpa standards. Fortunately the flat slabs of shale were admirably suited to the purpose. A stone wall was constructed to shelter the kitchen, and two large platforms were created to pitch our two mountain tents. A course of stone beneath the tent contributed considerably to the warmth of the tent at night. It was pleasant to sprawl on the warm stones instead of sitting compactly on a tin box amid the snow, and to watch the afternoon shadows increase on the face of Kamet. Minute overhanging blocks of snow would cause shadows worthy of a cathedral, whilst others would loose their hold and tumble on to the glacier below. To the east of camp the afternoon sun shone warmly on to a much-ravaged moraine. Cemented by frost at night, the moraine boulders were loosened during the day and came thundering down at regular intervals, accompanied by a great avalanche of smaller stones and dust. At first the noise was alarming, but we soon realised that the falls could be treated as unimportant "noises off".

Eileen disappeared after lunch and came back with a report of a fantastic bathing-place in a nearby crater lake. Joyce and Hilda eagerly followed her, so I felt honour-bound to follow their healthy example. A steep slope of bare blue ice led down to a patch of water covered with ice-floes. Small pebbles frozen into the ice-slope facilitated the descent, but the slope was crowned by large unstable boulders perched on the rim and ready to slide into the lake at the first provocation. There was no beach line around the lake, and the crater side
Mountains and Memsahibs

continued underwater at the same unrestful angle. In fact, the lake had more the merits of a beauty spot than of a lido. Balancing on small pebbles which sent icy shivers up my legs, I secured my boots and socks behind a boulder and hung my clothes on a knob of another, and I was really prepared to wash myself thoroughly as I advanced a reluctant toe into the water. Now, even in Switzerland on geological excursions during my student days I would never accompany my friends in their joyful glissades down snow-slides into icy Alpine waters, in spite of their jeering taunts. Here I was well hidden from camp; who would ever know whether I had been spartan or not? A damp flannel, rubbed rapidly over the arms, becomes warm, and can be used, I discovered, without ill effects for the rest of the body. The reason the madman gave for banging his head against the wall applied—I did feel better when it was all over. To forestall any awkward remarks on my return, I voiced my disapproval of the bathing-site, but was assured that there was a lovely beach on the opposite side of the crater. I did not enquire if the water was any warmer over there.

In the evening the young Sherpas built cairns on the moraine. We thought they were intended as beacons to find the camp in bad weather. But they were intended to serve as targets for throwing stones, an art at which the Sherpas showed an uncanny precision and with which they whiled away many a long hour.

Eileen and I were still full of goodwill and energy, and decided to choose a camp site at Concordia the next day and establish a first food dump there. The porters with us showed little energy and we deposited our loads on a long flat stretch some way short of Concordia. We expected the porters up from Base during the morning, leaving Pansy again behind to receive the men from Manali with the paraffin and other packages.
First Days

On our return to camp, we found Hilda in great distress. When she and Joyce had attempted to light the Primus for breakfast, the pump had not functioned. As they did not know the simple trick of putting butter round the leather valve, they had replaced the valve by a rubber circle. In contact with the paraffin, the rubber had swollen and the Primus was blocked. Joyce had descended to Base Camp. There she had hoped to meet the porters who should arrive with all the things we had forgotten in Manali and could instruct them to obtain more valves. An association of Pasang, pliers and patience resulted in damaging the Primus but also in extracting the offending rubber ring. Eileen expertly remounted the leather valve, buttered it, and we were able to cook our lunch.

Late that afternoon the porters arrived from Base Camp. Instead of sending them off early in the morning, Pansy had kept them waiting in the hope that the Manali porters would arrive. Similar flouting of orders would have got responsible officers court-martialled in the Valais, but here the Ladakhis took it in their day's work and Georgy still managed to joke when he arrived wet and exhausted. To accomplish an act of penance, Pansy went back to meet Joyce with a Thermos and food.

It was decided that the porters merited a rest the following day, and a rest-day was decreed for everyone. Eileen alone felt energetic and took Mingma to explore the glacier, entering the Bara Shigri from the east above camp. I had originally intended to accompany them, but was too tired. Apart from normal fatigue, we suffered terribly from sunburn. Our glacier cream was completely useless about 13,000 ft.; acriflavine during the day and a thick layer of lanoline at night helped to appease our suffering. The skin on my face was burning, stretched tight ready to split, and throbbed constantly
Mountains and Memsahibs

at night. Joyce and Hilda had perhaps less sensitive skins or were prepared to regard sunburn as a necessary ill, but Eileen and I soon adopted masks. I made a yashmak from a geological sample-bag and Eileen used a triangular bandage to cover her face. The mask was suffocating even when nose-holes had been tailored; it was also a nuisance when eating, for I frequently forgot, in my hunger, that I was wearing it and grasped a mouthful of cotton soaked with glacier cream. With dark glasses, a hat and the veil I was a very inelegant follower of the first long-skirted women climbers.

Eileen discovered that the tributary glacier divided some way above its junction with the Bari Shigri. When she had gone sufficiently far up the southern branch to see the col at the head, she turned back. Glacier walking at the best of times is not a particularly exhilarating exercise. Even in the Alps glacier lassitude is a well-known ill; here, where the midday heat was greater and the snow attained a softness unknown in the Alps, we were still more easily prone to fatigue and it required a good deal of will-power to continue and achieve an objective. Our first rock climb had shown us that the altitude practically excluded any high peak until we had become sufficiently acclimatised, and the only means of obtaining the necessary training was to toil up and down the glaciers or steep snow-slopes.

Loud cries of welcome greeted the porters from Manali on their arrival at Camp 2 that evening. They brought with them paraffin, of which we were already in short supply, letters, boots for Eileen and brown trousers for Joyce. Unfortunately Major Banon had opened my brown suitcase to get the trousers instead of Joyce's, so she had to use my slacks, which were warm but not at all windproof. The porters also had with them a collapsible Primus belonging to Eileen which, they said, they must take back to Manali under pain of a heavy
First Days

fine. We pointed out that a note from us to Major Banon would avert the fine, but they persisted in misunderstanding us and left early next morning, with the Primus which would have admirably replaced the damaged one.

We all moved up to Concordia the next day, 28th May, and some of the porters returned to sleep at Camp 2. As we came level with each tributary in turn, an exciting view of the glacier cirques was offered to us. The Lower Bara Shigri is limited to the east by a monotonous crest with only two gaps; to the west lie numerous tributaries encircled by rock and snow summits festooned with cornices or rocky crests soaring boldly against the bright blue sky: all unnamed and unclimbed, a paradise for a mountaineer.

The last stretch into camp was exceedingly tiring. We had left camp too late or perhaps dawdled on the way, and the snow was very soft. In order to choose a track for the laden porters, Eileen and I took it in turns to walk ahead. Eileen would first lead until, reaching a soft area, she would fall into the snow up to her waist. Whilst she battled furiously to compact the walls of her hole and climb out, I would take over the lead. First avoiding the soft area discovered by Eileen, I would continue until it was my turn to fall, struggle, crawl and rise. The process at least enabled the porters to keep a steady pace, and our antics tickled their sense of humour and kept the party in good form.

Our first camp at Concordia was in the western portion of the great plain. The Bara Shigri descending from the east describes a wide bend where it is joined by four side glaciers. The wide expanse of snow thus formed is fairly level, and bordered by the moraines which follow the flow-lines of their own particular glaciers. The site was suitably near the summit we wished to climb the next day, and was also near a
Mountains and Memsahibs

channel of running water. While the Sherpas pitched the tents and blew up the air-mattresses, the cook lit the primus. Wet socks and shirts were hung on the guy-ropes to dry and the sleeping-bags spread on the tent ridges to air. The energetic members went to wash before lunch, which, as usual, consisted of tea, biscuits and cheese or jam.

The walk up to Concordia had left us all tired, and the unaccustomed altitude set nerves on edge. Arguments on the length of the stage and situation of the camp had left an unfriendly atmosphere. The afternoon dragged listlessly by, until an empty jam-tin reminded me of a letter of recommendation which one of the Ladakhis possessed from a former expedition: he “had shown promise as a batsman”. With an ice-axe and an empty tin the game we played was a mixture of baseball, nursery rounders and cricket, but it dispelled the moral and physical coldness of the camp. There was considerable confusion as to who was on which side and who should field where and when: late batsmen had a very diminished target at which to aim. Mountain boots or canvas overboots may not be recommended footwear in the book of rules for the sport, but they transformed our innocent game into a stiff training.

Our first official climb was of a 17,500-ft. mountain which we named Jeldi Jeldi. Leaving Hilda at camp for a much-needed rest, Joyce, Eileen and I set out early on the morning of 29th May with Nima, Mingma and Namgyal across the mile of snow separating the camp from its base. From Concordia the main summit was hidden, but an easy route to the main crest appeared to lie up snow-slopes. At first gentle, then steeper, the slopes led to a ridge dominating the steep north face of the mountain. We reached the principal summit about four hours from camp, and Joyce set about taking a photographic panorama with the mounted camera.
while I dictated the bearings of the different summits. The most impressive mass of rock lay south of Jeldi, where a dreary black triangular buttress rose to a summit resembling the Schreckhorn of the Bernese Oberland. From the summit, snow-crests led N.E. and S.E., festooned with outside cornices; below the ridges equally fearsome snow-slopes contained imposing hanging glaciers. To the west of Jeldi a lovely snow-plateau, separated from the low glacier by magnificent ice-falls, was surrounded by beautiful summits. The most obvious of these was the Cathedral, which was separated by a small col from a triangular summit to the north which we termed the Chapterhouse. From our viewpoint we could see the whole sweep of the Bara Shigri where its upper portion describes a wide arc to join the lower portion at Concordia; a perfect geometrical figure brought into evidence by the curving moraines.

The short-cut home suggested by me turned out to be the longer route. A steep snow-slope offered to begin with a magnificent glissade, but below that rows of snow-pyramids made the descent very tiring. The long trudge back across the glacier was further extended for Mingma and me, as we went back to collect the clothes discarded early in the morning on our upward route. Back in camp, we discussed the next day's programme. Hilda now felt well enough to participate in the activities and it was decided that she and Joyce should go up the glacier arm south of Concordia. Unfortunately, there were not enough porters at Concordia to move tents and stores for the two memsahibs and two porters. The three porters who set off up the glacier, therefore, came back to sleep at Concordia after erecting a tent for Hilda and Joyce. These two spent a night alone in perhaps the most perfect setting of the whole expedition.
Mountains and Memsahibs

Eileen and I opted to employ the day in exploring the glaciers at the head, a reconnaissance which proved of use later when we crossed a col from this valley into the Namgyl Valley.

We returned early to camp and were able to profit from the nearby stream. The water flowed in the channel after eleven o’clock, but before that the ice had to be broken. The channel was more an icy swamp than a stream, and frequently the water-carrier would break through an apparently solid surface into the submerged pond. Late in the afternoon water melting far up the glacier would reach the channel in a sudden spate, bearing with it chunks of ice and snow. These tended to obstruct the channel and force the water into other furrows.

Pansy was the first that evening to remark on the possible danger of the channel, but as we had already slept several times without incident we took no notice. Eileen and I had retired early after our walk up the glacier; I was already in my sleeping-bag and Eileen just getting into hers when a shout from Pansy, “Water coming”, made us jump up. From the tent we could see a wall of water, with blocks of snow tumbling over the crest like foam on an ocean breaker. The flood was obviously far too great to pass through the narrow channel near camp and would be forced right through the tents. Now, I have the unfortunate habit of taking off my climbing-trousers to sleep; as I had not only to get out of my sleeping-bag and put on my boots, but also my trousers, I emerged from the tent long after Eileen, when the spate was already unpleasantly near. We placed our sleeping-bags and pullovers on the tents, so that they at least would keep dry. The flood swept down, blocking the narrow channel and piling up behind the dam. I tried to open a channel to bypass the tents, but only succeeded in getting wet up to the knees.
The men hastily assembled their kit, moving tents and equipment on to higher ground.

We had a hectic twenty minutes, but in the end the flood only passed through the tent of the Ladakhis, soaking their socks and shoes and carrying off one of Nima's puttees, which he did not retrieve till some weeks later. We moved camp to higher ground though the danger was over for that day, glad to know that after all Pansy seemed to have some foresight and knowledge of Himalayan conditions.

Leaving Pansy with the leisurely task of moving camp to a safer site when the porters came up from Base Camp to help him, we started next morning with four porters to join Hilda and Joyce. As their camp had not been pitched far enough up the arm, we decided to move it further to enable a climb on the following day. This meant that for the second half of the stage the men would be carrying double loads. Eileen and I reduced our kit and food to a bare minimum, knowing that if more was required the porters could return the following day.

The camp was a pleasant site, but rather far from our goal for the next day. In order to obtain a few hours' solitude, I walked up the glacier to some curious rock-outcrops which had attracted my attention and made a suitable goal for my walk. The evening sun disappeared rapidly behind the peaks, and as I came back the cold night wind had already started to freeze the snow; each step was accompanied by a tinkling swirl of displaced wafers of ice.

Joyce and Hilda were the energetic starters the next morning, and they left with the porters nearly an hour before Eileen and I started. A small glacier to the east led over easy slopes to a col from which we hoped to see over into the Gyurdi Valley. We crossed unwisely over large blocks of ice fallen from a small ice-fall, on
Mountains and Memsahibs

the scarred surface of which the tormented blue-green ice shone like watered silk. On the next steeper slope Eileen was so far ahead that she started to cut steps to keep herself warm and pass the time. Mingma enlarged them to a size much appreciated by the last members of the party.

The col was a windy spot, but gave us a view into an unknown valley, which we cheerfully took to be the Gyurdi. The Gyurdi was such a mystery that each time we discovered a valley which faced east we would christen it the Gyurdi. Whilst Hilda struggled up to the col and Joyce took panoramic photographs, Eileen and I sheltered in a snowy hollow. We eventually moved up the slope to the south. Later Mingma caught us up with a laconic note to say that Joyce and Hilda were returning
to camp but would we achieve the summit? Now, the summit for which we were aiming had no particular interest for us; camp had been pitched too far away to make the ascent feasible and it was already too late in the day to hope to reach the summit. However, as we were committed, we continued up a weary slope of windblown snow which gave way like cotton at each step. Namgyal first, then Mingma, led the rope, having repeatedly to stop when I was out of breath. An amusing Bergschrund led to a small plateau, from whence we reached the summit crest. A rock-ridge, about half a mile long, still separated us from the main summit, and we had not the energy or the time to attempt it. The ridge lay parallel to the strike of the rocks, so that it was formed by a series of slabs, dipping steeply to the west and overhanging to the east. From a camp pitched near the col the summit could be easily reached.

Low as we were by Himalayan standards, the cold was intense. Namgyal had abandoned his windproof trousers early in the day and had to borrow Mingma’s red over-trousers to cover his grey underpants. My feet were quite numb, and whilst Eileen photographed and Mingma constructed a cairn Namgyal rubbed my feet, massaging the toes in a very professional but painful manner.

We crossed the plateau, and the first three people on the rope descended carefully across the bridge, which appeared to span a very large Bergschrund. Before we had moved to the far side of the bridge, however, Mingma jumped heavily on to it. I expect he proclaimed his usual triumphant “Zinzabad” at the same time, but I was too appalled at his unorthodox movement to remark much else than the miraculous fact that the bridge had held.

The steps on the steep slope had entirely melted and we kept constantly sinking into what were either
Mountains and Memsahibs

crevasses or very soft snow patches. The slopes would have made a magnificent ski descent, but perhaps the altitude would have changed an exhilarating descent into an exhausting chore. A detour to some rocks put me behind the other three, and we reached the camp site to find that most of the kit had been moved to Concordia, and that there was nothing particularly edible left. As we approached the new Concordia camp, Nima came to meet us with a well-earned flask of tea and some Dundee cake.

The second camp site at Concordia was a doubtful improvement on the first. Placed between the moraine ridges, it lay out of danger from the afternoon ice-floods; the stream was further away and one had to cross the moraine ridges before getting out of sight of the camp. In countries with a dense vegetation cover is never lacking. On glaciers, as in the desert, the problem becomes acute and offers three solutions. The first is to pretend, like the unselﬁsh conscience Arabs, that you are invisible; the second is to walk bravely out into the barren distance until the camp dwindles to a mere speck. The third solution depends entirely on luck, when in an apparently flat plain you discover a small hollow, peacefully discreet. At Concordia, especially in the afternoon, the laconic statement of “I must disappear” meant in effect that you were undertaking a complicated and tiring manœuvre. The nearest dip was separated from camp by some 500 yards of totally decomposed snow. Before reaching your goal you would fall at least twenty times through the snow up to your knees or waist; your socks, ruckled round your ankles, would expose your sunburnt legs to the cold snow; your hands and arms were chapped from pushing against the snow, and your boots ﬁlled with slush.

In spite of all our efforts, it was impossible to keep the camp free of refuse, and our tidy-minded leader was
First Days

distressed at the tins which were strewn for hundreds of yards around camp. The deep crevasses which would have provided suitable rubbish dumps were still covered with snow. When we left Concordia, some four feet of snow had melted from the camp site, and all our carefully buried tins were exposed to daylight. They twinkled encouragingly in the sun at the approaching caravans, but at close range the glacier resembled the Mer de Glace after the Sunday tide of sightseers has passed. We can only hope that subsequent monsoon snow will hide our untidy debris until it re-emerges at Shigri some centuries hence, when it may have a certain archaeological interest, testifying to the extraordinary vagaries of twentieth-century man.
CHAPTER EIGHT

THE UPPER REACHES OF THE BARA SHIGRI GLACIER

(Frances Delany)

The day was now approaching when the mules should reach the base of the Bara Shigri with the second half of our provisions and equipment. When they arrived, some of our porters would be fully occupied in ferrying the kit up to Concordia. We therefore decided to employ all the manpower to move camp and all the provisions on to the Upper Bara Shigri the next day. Namgyal, Mingma and Nima were to stay with us, while Pansy and Georgy-Georgy and Umgyal returned to Base. We still had perfect days with a clean-swept sky which gave us no picturesque cloud effect for our photography. Only in the late afternoon billowing mist swirled over Gunther's Col from the west, dissipating in the warmer air on the Bara Shigri.

The men had now become accustomed to carrying a particular load, and it was no longer necessary to add or subtract oddments from the frames in order to satisfy each man. The packing of our personal kit took as long as ever. Alpine climbers are accustomed to carrying a change of clothing; spare socks, shirts and vests are stuffed into the rucksacks. When we were moving camp for several days, it appeared necessary to take a corresponding number of spare clothes. As the days were very sunny and dry, I soon discovered that one shirt, two
pairs of socks and two pullovers filled my needs. From then on I had not to decide each morning whether I would wear the blue shirt or the red, the yellow socks or the green ones. A great proportion of personal equipment which arrived half-way through the expedition was never taken on to the glacier, for we had reduced our needs to an ample minimum.

Our washing dried quickly; shirts and underclothes hung to dry between the tents gave the camp a pleasantly domestic air (though male climbers might have shuddered at the array of feminine articles: some even had pink frills or were made of lace) and our unironed clothes were well in character with our sunburnt faces and matted hair. On rest-days we became comparatively elegant, had time to treat our complexions, cut our nails, and Eileen once washed her hair, an exotic sight against towering 20,000-ft. giants, but one which the Sherpas fully enjoyed.

Our toilet was non-existent or scamped on active days. The frosted tent roof excluded much movement in the warmth; outside, the cold was too piercing to encourage the use of a brush and comb. It was only at our first halt on the march, backed against a warm boulder or rucksack, that I would search in the kangaroo pocket of my anorak and bring out a pocket-comb from among the tubes of sun cream, magnifying glass, sweets, safety-pins and lipstick. The latter, though never intended by the makers for such use, protected my lips well from the wind and sun, and replaced the absent lip salve. I had no mirror with me, but I imagine my appearance matched the wild looks of the party as I saw it. Remarks from friends after the trip as they inspected my photographs made me realise in effect what a curious hair style I had developed; it was not exactly a Mau-Mau style, but it probably held its irregular partings from female fashion in the Oubangui. The Sherpas'
Mountains and Memsahibs

hair also crept slowly down their necks, but their chins were practically beardless, so had the advantage over the Ladakhis, whose chins bristled with sparse stubble. Only Pansy sported a moustache, to proclaim his position as sirdar; at the start it was a dandy, well-cultivated growth, but later, festooned with festive icicles, it more often drooped under the pressure of cooking, interpreting, advising and scolding.

The Ladakhis differed entirely in physique from the Sherpas, who were squat, broadly built men. The long-limbed Ladakhis tanned a deep brown, whereas the Sherpas reddened to an autumn russet. Namgyal appeared to be the leader of the Ladakhis, whether by seniority, social standing or experience I know not. His boots were very shoddy, but he managed to climb successfully. Umgyal was the dandy, affecting a white ski-cap of ribbed knitting on which he kept his dark glasses; he seemed to smoke constantly, and was very elegant in an old-school pullover. Georgy-Georgy was my favourite, perhaps because we both had the same boisterous sense of humour. My first “B’ism Allah” of astonishment which he heard cilled forth verses of the Fatah, and the call to prayer was followed by a long stream of what he imagined to be Arabic and may have been so, completely unrecognisable under a strong Ladakhi accent. The orientation towards his Mecca was shaky, but not sufficiently wrong as to be towards the almighty dollar. He had some notions of army drill and, when thoroughly exhausted, responded cheerily to “about turn, forward march” and “ten shun”; a useful circus play to distract the party’s mind from past or impending labour. Aticha, the fourth Ladakhi, who came with the mules, was promptly baptised Tissue Paper. He remained a somewhat silent figure with neither sufficient English nor love of horse-play to enter into our jokes. Both he and Umgyal had their ears pierced for earrings.
East of our Concordia Camp the Bara Shigri rose rapidly and formed a crevassed zone, hemming in several deep blue lakes which clustered under a rocky buttress to the south. The icy water, suitably framed by large boulders, with the mountains west of Concordia in the background, were ideally photogenic, and the views from the opposite side of the lakes always seemed the most suitable. I was glad when Joyce found a propitious site for a base line and I was able to catch up the party again. These halts were usually the moment to distribute our sweets. The porters originally had their own store, but this had either already been consumed or was guarded jealously by Pansy. Each day Hilda gave a ration to each member of the expedition, but a ration did not last long when shared with the porters, and I was constantly requesting more.

Gently rising to the east, the glacier disappeared behind a southern ridge dominated by a magnificent spire. Just beyond the bend we decided on a suitable camp ground and had the tents pitched while Joyce and Hilda were still surveying. Some time later the main body of the porters arrived with a request to send down coffee and food to Joyce and Hilda to help them reach camp, which from below seemed very far away. Their arrival enabled Eileen and me to have a second sitting at lunch before retiring for a well-earned siesta.

There was no water “laid on” at Camp 5. Luckily my outer sleeping-bag was covered with wax-cloth. A thin layer of snow spread on the waxed surface of the bag, suitably tilted to run off into a saucepan, soon produced water for cooking. Pansy frequently scorned this water, which even to me smelt faintly of rubber. But in spite of there being fastidious tea-drinkers among the mem-sahibs, they all assured me that the system was perfect.

As the days became warmer, the snow melted more during the day. Cold nights froze the surface snow
Mountains and Memsahibs

again, but also cemented tent-pegs and ice-axes firmly to the ground. When the tents were struck, it took a considerable time and much skilful hacking to detach the tent-pegs from their casing without damaging the guy-ropes. A slight fall of snow in the night covered the tents with sparkling snow-crystals, which also had to be scraped from the canvas before folding the tents. Condensation within the tents occurred at night, between the air-mattresses and sleeping-bags, and a slight film of hoar frost covered the ceiling, ready to shower down the bare back of an incautious dresser.

We were now at a height of 17,000 ft., and a rest-day was needed to acclimatise. However, Eileen and I were feeling strong, so we decided to carry out the second ascent of the summit towering above the camp. The Peak surveyed around camp, reputed to reach 20,000 ft., was first climbed by A. E. Gunther; in bad weather he obtained little view from the summit and had been able only to guess the surrounding topography; the brilliantly clear sky which accompanied our ascent enabled us to improve on his sketch-map of the area. A problematic glacier on Mr. Gunther’s map had been the Lion Glacier, presumed to join the Bara Shigri lower down. We were able to see from the summit that this Lion Glacier did not exist; the watershed to the north of the Bara Shigri followed closely the right side of the glacier north of the ridge extending Gunther’s Peak to the west, and all the glaciers descended into a valley lying north of the Peak.

After toiling up ploughed fields of snow, sown with snow-pyramids like giant’s teeth, my courage failed; there seemed no sense in further toiling up another steep slope, the weather was fine and from a sheltered spot I could luxuriously watch the scenery while the others had the summit victory. I gave my compass to Eileen, asking her to take bearings from the summit, and
The Upper Reaches

sat down to wait. They took the rope out of a rucksack and started to rope up, Eileen in yellow, Mingma in a scorching red and Nima in green, colourful spots against a brilliant white slope and blue sky. I suddenly revolted against myself: why come to the Himalayas to admire the view, what weakness to sit down when summits by the hundred had been climbed to prepare myself for the present climbing! Perhaps the sudden reversal of my decision alarmed Eileen, but she showed no signs of it, and encouraged me during the next two hours up steep scree and snow-slopes to the summit. There the struggle was not yet over; patience and concentration were still required to change films, take bearings on the summits, set up the tripod, film and photograph with the correct exposures. The air was bitterly cold, and had there been a wind I do not think I should have worried.

The summit was festooned with cornices and cut by crevasses and surrounded by a timeless space frozen to perpetual immobility. South of us, the Bara Shigri was bordered by magnificent summits, white as wedding cakes and equally enticing. West of them rather formless summits stretched as far as Concordia, half-way to which the camp appeared as a dirty speck on the glacier. The magnificent summits beyond Concordia were dwarfed by the distance. Two great valleys deepened northwards, joining below their glacier tongues, and here the dull grey rocks on which we stood gave place to a multicoloured sequence which promised to be of geological interest. The zone of coloured rocks stretched across the country from near the Kanzam La towards the Spiti Valley, in a south-easterly direction, and was cut by another valley which opened to the north-east of our Peak, springing from a col between Gunther’s Peak and the Snow Cone. The mountains to the south-east were rocky summits of an infinite variety
Mountains and Memsahibs

of shapes, showing, like the Helvetic Alps, strata folded, rumpled and bent by the great mountain-building tectonics.

I lost my hat on the way down, but Nima noted its place, and when we reached its level he unrope to fetch it. He started happily, but then commenced a standing glissade which soon turned into a sitting one and eventually an uncontrolled slide. Eileen cried softly, “Oh! no, Oh! no”; and I invoked the patron saints of climbers. I expect Mingma laughed. Nima eventually stopped on softer snow and climbed back to my hat and his ice-axe; his astonished face when we scolded his recklessness made us think that perhaps his initial glissade had been involuntary. It is very hard to scold a grinning lad who replies to your admonitions with a smiling “Yes, sir”. As with Mingma in similar circumstances our reprimand fell on un-understanding ears and was certainly of no effect; Nima will glissade in the same fashion at the next opportunity.

The final glissades of the descent were exhilarating. The first one down knocked over the snow-pyramids and left a well-polished chute down which the others slid at high speed, to the detriment of their trousers. Mingma unfortunately dropped the rope at the top of one slide, and realising its loss only at the bottom, climbed a long way back to fetch it. He arrived back in camp later, when I had already retired to the tent with a splitting headache, the price of too much energy.

The topographical survey was advancing well and we intended to pitch a sixth camp at the head of the Upper Bara Shigri. From this camp we hoped to climb a snowy summit to the north, which, as we had observed from Gunther’s Peak, seemed a suitable goal for all the four memsahibs. We had four porters with us. Their carrying capacity was insufficient to transport all we needed up
The Upper Reaches

the glacier in one relay, especially as one of them needed a rest-day. The climb on Gunther’s Peak had totally sapped my energy, so whilst Eileen, Joyce and Hilda went up the glacier with lightly laden porters, I lazed around camp, surveying and geologising in the afternoon to the north of camp. Here the contact of two types of rock was easily accessible and reproduced that visible on a mountain to the south-east which I called Contact Peak.

The following day found all four memsahibs and four porters on their way under a cloudless sky to pitch camp at the head of the Upper Bara Shigri. Mingma and Nima were to return that night to Camp 5, so one tent was left standing. A slight dip at the foot of the col in the final glacier cirque offered a pleasant camping-site, and while we pitched the tents, Namgyal returned to fetch the loads dumped the preceding day lower down. After lunch, the wind started blowing and the sky darkened; heavy clouds poured into the Bara Shigri from the west. We thought it might be wise to make sure of the view from the col that evening, so that we could decide on the route for the morrow in case of mist. It only required half an hour to reach the col, where a biting wind made observations most uncomfortable and the rocks offered no protecting angles. To the east lay a deep valley, which we promptly termed Gyurdi again. The valley crossed below the snowline the same zone of multicoloured rocks which we had seen from Gunther’s Peak; and the descent into the valley from the col appeared easy. From a summit on the East Shigri Glacier, Mr. Gunther had observed a col surmounted by rocks resembling a lion, which he named Lion Col, and placed at the head of the Bara Shigri. We had discussed lengthily the probability of the col above Camp 6 being the Lion Col. The proof of the matter was made from the col itself, from where no summits near the foot
Mountains and Memsahibs

of the Bara Shigri could be seen, as the ridge of Gunther’s Peak totally masked the view to the north and north-west.

Having decided the routes for the next day’s climb, we returned swiftly to camp with our discoveries.
THE weather had been so continuously fine for eighteen days that we were unprepared for a change. We therefore viewed with concern the heavy clouds which lay over Camp 6 on the evening of 5th June, and shivered in the wind which, rapidly gaining strength, tore at the frail little tents set 17,500 ft. up on the uppermost reaches of the glacier. It got colder and colder as the pleasant peaceful scene of the afternoon now took on a menacing look. I had suffered from the altitude more than the others, but was now feeling much better. It was particularly disheartening to me, therefore, to think that the possibility of reaching the snow-summit the next day was in serious jeopardy.

Our immediate thought was to have an early supper and seek the comparative warmth and shelter of our tents. Pasang had already cooked the Sherpas' supper and readily agreed with me to start on the memsahibs' meal at once. Having arranged the menu with him, I had turned towards the tents when he called me back. With a broad grin he said, "Memsahib! Only enough fuel for one breakfast." I thought this was some kind of a joke, as Pasang was not over-intelligent, but on investigation I found it to be grim reality. As I broke the disastrous news to the others, snow began to fall in earnest. It was obvious that we should have to return to Concordia, for we were dependent at this height on fuel.
Mountains and Memsahibs

for melting the snow for water. Moreover, all Sherpa food had to be cooked and could not be eaten raw. As our rations had been carefully worked out, we could not understand the shortage, but it had happened and retreat was the only answer. No one slept very well that night as we lay in our sleeping-bags listening to the storm outside.

We awoke to a cold bleak morning: the wind had dropped considerably and only light snow was falling, but the sky was still full of threatening clouds and the thermometer was at zero. Camp was struck and we left for the descent, all carrying very heavy loads. Half-way between Camp 6 and Camp 5 the Sherpas dumped some of their loads and we proceeded at a faster pace. Joyce, who was carrying all the survey instruments, had trouble with her rucksack. The iron frame cut into her shoulders and finally the shoulder-strap broke. On reaching Camp 5 at the foot of Gunther's Peak, Eileen and Frances decided to carry on to Concordia, taking Namgyal and Pasang with them in case the porters should have arrived from Base with the new supplies. We divided what little fuel we had left, and they departed down the glacier, soon lost to view in the mist and gloom.

Mingma and Nima returned to recover the loads that had been dumped whilst Joyce and I set up camp and took stock of our remaining food supplies. One great decision had to be made—should we have tea for supper or for breakfast, for there was not enough for both. We decided in favour of breakfast, and after an unappetising supper retired to our tents. We woke to another cold bleak morning, but there were definite signs of improvement. Our one cup of tea each did little to warm us, and it was a hard chore to pack up camp. We could not carry everything, so we packed the survey instruments carefully in their wooden box and
Fuel Crisis

left them behind. It seemed a long way down to Concordia that morning, and on arrival we found that the porters had not returned from Base Camp and all fuel was finished. As a little stream here was free during the day though ice-bound at night, we knew that at least we should not die of thirst! Pasang and Namgyal had already set off down to Base to hasten the supplies. Eileen said she had a wonderful idea for supper, so we appointed her cook for the evening. Our meal consisted of cold meat and biscuits followed by a mixture of Quaker oats, mixed dried fruit finely chopped, and raisins, the whole being moistened with powdered milk and water. It was a wet soggy mess, but we nobly ate it.

The weather had still further improved the next morning and we decided we would stay there one more day. Somebody remembered the one wooden box (all the others were metal) left high up the glacier with the survey instruments, and Nima and Mingma went off to retrieve it. There was no sense in sitting in the tents wondering where our next meal was to come from and feeling sorry for ourselves, so Joyce decided that all should do a climb. Frances, however, was feeling sick, so three of us set out to climb a rock-summit near camp. We ascended steadily for four hours, but by this time my feet and hands were so numb that I had to return to camp. Joyce managed to get two-thirds of the way up and then sat on a gendarme while Eileen scrambled precariously along a ridge to the top.

Mingma and Nima returned in triumph with the box and, chopping it up with ice-axes, divided it into two halves so that it should do for two meals. We had good hot soup that night cooked over a crackling wood fire and went comforted to bed. We had been in bed for some time when we heard voices and shouts in the distance. The Sherpas were chattering excitedly, and soon the vague forms of two figures could be seen
Mountains and Memsahibs

picking their way over the glacier. It was Umgyal and Georgy-Georgy, who had made a forced march of twenty-four hours to reach us with supplies. These porters brought a message from Pansy that one mem-sahib must go down at once. As they spoke no English, it was difficult to get the whole story, but it was evident that Pansy was in difficulties and needed support. Joyce decided that she must go, and as I shared a tent with her I went too.

We were off early the next morning with Umgyal and Georgy. We only took a few biscuits and cheese in our pockets so as to leave as much food as possible for Eileen and Frances. As we got down to the lower levels we were disgusted to see that the snow had melted, leaving a mass of dirty rubble. It was difficult to reconcile this dreary scene with the expanse of dazzling white we had left three weeks ago. Great mounds of boulders towered above us, while below were large caves and pools. At intervals, small slides of stones would come hurtling down and fall with a great splash into the dark cold water. It was very hard going, especially for Joyce, who had sprained her ankle the day before. We toiled on in the heat as far as Camp 2, ate our meagre fare and drank our flask of tea. We felt we must reach Base Camp before dark, so set wearily off as soon as we had finished. Below Camp 2 the mounds and dips became higher and deeper and were now interspersed with large patches of mud.

By five o'clock we were almost at the end of the glacier when we heard shouts, and soon Pasang and Namgyal appeared—we never did understand where they were going—and made us understand that Pansy had moved Base Camp seven miles further up the Chandra Valley. We received this news in stony silence, hardly able to believe our ears. Namgyal, in his usual efficient manner, started to build a platform for our tent
and soon had it set up. The porters lit a fire with the remains of the instrument box and a little juniper they found in cracks and proceeded to cook the few handfuls of atta they had brought with them—little enough for four men. Joyce and I were so tired that we got straight into our sleeping-bags, and were overjoyed when Pasang’s head appeared at the doorway of the tent. With a broad smile, he solemnly handed us two mugs, saying “Khana, memsahibs”; our joy was short-lived when we saw that all they contained was hot water. We searched our rucksacks and found a few spoonfuls of lemonade powder. It was better than nothing, so, trying hard to keep our minds off succulent steaks and steamed puddings, we took some sleeping-pills and went to sleep.

Surprisingly, we both slept well, and after a breakfast of one cup of lemonade set off on our seven-mile walk. It was very hot in the valley and we were glad to climb up a bit after getting round the bend of the river. By this means we avoided the worst of the rapidly melting snow and ice and looked down on the river rushing round the enormous ice-floes which had broken off from the banks; swollen with waters from the hills, it tumbled down faster and faster with miniature water-falls and whirlpools.

We could see a wide expanse of stones ahead of us to which Pasang and Namgyal pointed excitedly. We guessed that the camp must be near and asked the porters to hurry on and bring us back food and tea. With now only Georgy as companion, we continued slowly along until we reached the Karcha Nullah. We then had to go quite a way up this side valley in order to cross the swollen stream by an ice-bridge. This added another mile to our journey, and when we reached the Chandra again, we sat down in the sun and waited for the porters to come back. As we sat sunning ourselves, we saw
Mountains and Memsahibs

approaching a strange figure. It proved to be a man of very small stature, Tibetan-featured, with a long pig-tail streaming out from under his round hat, wearing a home-spun jacket and trousers and a shawl tied round his chest. His black eyes twinkled as he greeted us, but we couldn’t understand his language. Georgy said, “He Spiti man: he bring food.” Off came the shawl and in great triumph he produced a 4-lb. tin of biscuits, a tin of cheese and a tin of butter—but no tin-opener! However, an ice-axe and a broken knife proved quite adequate. At this moment, Umgyal could be seen approaching at great speed, but as he reached us he stumbled and fell. Alas! our precious tea was full of glass. Poor Umgyal was very upset. We then completed the journey, the last effort being a climb 300 ft. sheer over a rocky spur to the camp at Karcha.

Pansy had a meal ready for us, and, to our delight, a large basket of cherries had arrived with the mules as a gift from Major Banon. Never had cherries tasted so delicious. The crisis seemed to be over. We heard that the mules had been unable to proceed along our side of the river and had had therefore to cross over by the bridge at Chatoru Koti and come along the path on the other side of the Chandra. There was no means after this of crossing back, but by means of a “ghula” at Karcha they had got the things across. A ghula is a wooden cage suspended on a pulley and worked from side to side of the river by an overhead rope. Two of the porters, therefore, had had to walk down to the bridge and come back up the north side of the river, a distance of over forty miles, to operate the ghula. In the meantime, the chowkidar had arrived and demanded payment for its use. Pansy had got worried at all these difficulties and sent for us!

That night we packed food for Eileen and Frances, and very early the next morning Namgyal set off to
return to Concordia. Whilst the rest of the porters and Sherpas started to ferry the loads back to Base Camp at Shigri, Joyce and I set off with Pansy for a walk to the Kanzam La, the pass leading up into Spiti and over into Tibet. It was a pleasant walk high above the river, and as we climbed, the Lahul peaks were thrown up against a clear blue sky. We could see for miles up the narrow Chandra Valley and trace the river down as far as the Shigri bend. At the top of the pass we found a Laptse, a great high stone cairn surmounted by sticks carrying colourful prayer-flags, some of which were inscribed with the Buddhist prayer, "OM MANI PADME HUM" (Hail, thou possessor of the lotus flower, Amen). The fluttering flag, so the nomad thinks, will keep him safe till he passes that way again. With Pansy, we added our stone to the cairn. The view looking over the other side of the pass was rather disappointing, as the mountains of Spiti and Tibet were much lower than we had thought and quite bare. But it was a thrill to look at forbidden Tibet and realise that we were so near to the Inner Line. It had been a pleasant day's outing and we returned cheerfully to camp to prepare for our departure early the next morning. In the evening, two Tibetan Lamas appeared on the opposite bank, and we amused ourselves by pulling them across on the ghula. They were delighted with the empty tins we gave them.

The snow-bridge at the Karcha Nullah was melting fast, so Pansy arranged for the porters to make short trips to get all the loads across before it collapsed altogether. The walk back to Base was uneventful, and the sight of the high peaks made us impatient to get up the glacier again. We put our camp nearer to the base of the glacier than before, but in any case it would have been impossible to cross the now swollen Shigri River, which was rushing down to join the Chandra. Pansy amazed us by being able to pick out tiny flocks of sheep.
Mountains and Memsahibs

grazing hundreds of feet up on the other side of the river. We took ages to find them even when he had pointed out the position. We started on the task of re-packing our stores next morning, for only two weeks now remained to the end of the expedition and it was unnecessary to carry everything up the glacier. During the morning a shout from Pansy brought us running. He pointed across the valley, and before we could even distinguish a moving figure he said, "Headman from Manali." It was indeed Panu, and he had brought mail from Major Banon. As he had not found us at Base, he had gone up to Concordia and back, a noble effort, as these Manali men were not used to snow and ice. We settled down to read our letters in the sunshine and were pleased to find one from the shipping company confirming our passage home on the Elysia.

The packing was completed by late afternoon and we joined the Sherpas in their tent to listen for a couple of hours to Pansy's account of his many previous expeditions. We were in our sleeping-bags when Atisha, one of the Ladakhi porters, arrived with a letter from Frances saying that Eileen had gone off on a five-day expedition but she herself was waiting for us at Camp 2 suffering from heart cramps due to carrying heavy loads at high altitude. It was too late to do anything that night, so we went to sleep ready for an early start the next morning.

After breakfast we paid off the Spiti man, who had been helping to carry loads, and he returned to Manali with Panu. Pansy, Joyce and I, with Pasang and the three porters, left for Camp 2.
CHAPTER TEN

THE ICE PASS AND TIGER TOOTH

*(Joyce Dunsheath)*

The unfortunate episode of the fuel crisis, resulting in a trip down the glacier, had cut off eight days from our climbing, so that we were now anxious to get up to the high camps again and do all that was possible in the time available before the monsoon should be upon us.

On 16th June we set off up the glacier again, each at her own pace. It was even harder work than when we first went up in May, for whereas we were then walking on firm snow, oblivious of what might be underneath, we now trudged through slimy mud or leapt inelegantly from boulder to boulder, sometimes climbing craggy rocks and sometimes descending into gaping hollows. The mystery of the underworld was now revealed to us. Here were caves of black ice separated by narrow ridges across which we picked our way, dark sinister pools and tottering pinnacles of stones left naked by the receding snow which we carefully avoided. We took photographs of each other standing under curious mushrooms, fifteen to twenty feet high, formed of a stone top and ice stem. The stone had given protection from the hot sun to the ice immediately beneath it and it had been left perched like a sunshade on its ten-foot ice column while all else melted in the sun's fierce rays.

We plodded on for five solid hours, stopping now and then for a bite of chocolate or a sip of water from our
polythene bottles, and reached Camp 2 early in the afternoon. Anxiously we called to Frances, but our shouts met with no reply. We took possession of the deserted camp kitchen to make a hot drink and satisfy hunger with macaroni cheese. Frances appeared later carrying geological specimens and recounted the pleasures of her day in the hot sunshine. Our Medical Officer pointed out the folly of carrying loads at that altitude if she felt the slightest heart strain. It was obvious that she was not fit, but it was difficult to get her to rest. After much plain talking had cleared the air, we began to make plans for the morrow. She would have a day's rest and follow us slowly to Concordia a day later. Hilda and I decided to fulfil an ambition we had cherished from our first contact with Mr. Gunther in far-away Hampstead. He had told us of an 18,000-ft. Ice Pass from which it might be possible to descend to the Tichu Nala or Tos Glacier and so link up with the 1939 route of Major Roberts. This would mean establishing a camp on the main glacier at Concordia as near as possible to the foot of the col, and another just under the pass itself. From such a camp we might hope to climb a spectacular rock-peak rising in majesty on the right which bore a striking resemblance to the Assiniboine of the Canadian Rockies, in whose shadow Hilda and I had first met in 1952. Alternatively, we could try the rounded ice-boss on the left, which, from our present viewpoint, seemed but a stepping-stone to the Cathedral.

The party that set off the next morning was therefore Hilda and I, Pansy, Pasang and the two porters, Umgyal and Atisha. Even at this height the glacier was still dirty, and we were glad after four hours' travel to see the clean snow of Concordia. It seemed like coming home again after our sojourn in the lower altitudes.

After a short rest we struck off to the right, taking as
The Ice Pass and Tiger Tooth

straight a line as possible towards the foot of the Ice Pass. Like all short-cuts, it proved the longest way, for we had to go continually up and down 300-ft. ridges, much more tiring than steady climbing uphill. Thankfully we sat down on the top of a pile of stones while the Sherpas made camp. Pasang was particularly skilful in fashioning a flat place for a tent. Having chosen his site, he would lift heavy rocks to one side, then, using his ice-axe as both rake and pick, make a gravel-like surface 8 ft. by 10 ft. which would accommodate the tent and guy-lines. It was impossible to fix pegs on such a stony base, so an enormous boulder was put in the loop of the guy-line to weight it down and keep it in position. As I lay down at night, the words sung in childhood’s hymns came forcibly into my mind, “Stones thy pillow, earth thy bed”.

From “Stony Hill”, as we named this camp, we gazed across a depression in which gurgled a little stream to a white incline, its surface marked in a series of long curved lines by the wind just as the sand is left rippled when the sea has receded with the tide. Beyond this was a steep ascent of blue ice which gave its name to the col. Foreshortened, it looked but a mere staircase up which we should romp the next day. The setting sun dipped behind Tiger Tooth (as we now christened the rock-peak) and just lit up the old Devil looking down on us, his five fingers pointing in scorn at the puny mortals below.

In the evening, Pasang went back to Frances with strict instructions that she was not to carry anything when her camp was moved up the next day. Pansy then cooked Pom and Swell to eat with a small tin of salmon and cut prunes to soak for “afters”. After this luxury meal we retired to our tent with a thermos of Milo. This had now become a habit, for we found that a hot drink at 7.30 p.m. gave us peaceful and dreamless
Mountains and Memsahibs

sleep until an outstretched Sherpa hand offered tea at 5.30 a.m. the next morning.

The following day we walked over to the site of the original Camp 3 to see what had been left there. We found that the Red Cross Box had not been brought down from Camp 4, so Pansy was dispatched to bring it across to Stony Hill. I was horrified to find what the melting snow had revealed of buried rubbish and ordered reburial at a greater depth. I wonder if future generations will come across tins and scraps of metal and speculate to what use these strange objects were once put? We made a heap of items to be returned direct to Base and another of those to be carried forward with us, then returned to our stony camp, where we found Frances busy taking ciné shots of avalanches which thundered down every few minutes from the steep sides of the passes. I got busy with the camera, taking panoramic views that proved very useful afterwards in the making of a map, for, with this as one end of a base line and Jeldi Jeldi as another, we were able subsequently to fix many points both for distance and elevation.

We were glad to be off on our expedition to the Ice Col the next day and planned to reach the pass by midday as the monsoon clouds now swept the sky every afternoon and the hot sun loosened the piled snow, which fell with a crash from rock and steeple. We went off our ridge down to the stream, then, bearing south, contoured the slope ahead, gradually making height. We found we were able to avoid cutting steps up the ice-fall by keeping to the right-hand side of it, using the frozen bed of a stream as an alley-way. Our boots crunched over the compacted snow furrowed with grey holes and black lines warning us of crevasses. We passed one inky pool fifty feet across and gazed beyond our reflections, mirrored in the clear icy surface, to the black
9. Lone Tent, Abinger Ice Pass

10. Summit of Jeldi Jeldi
11. Looking down the Gyurdi Valley

12. Ghula over the Upper Chandra
The Ice Pass and Tiger Tooth

depths below formed from glacial rock and earth ground into a fine powder. A shout from Frances coming along slowly but steadily in the rear drew our attention to four dots on the mountainside a mile away, and these gradually revealed themselves as Eileen and her party returning from their successful five-day assault on the Cathedral. Only two dots seemed to be moving, while two seemed to stand linked together for ten minutes. We feared that one member was injured and fancied the first two were hastening down for help, but at last they all moved and slowly descended. Frances decided to return to meet them at Concordia and make plans for a return to the Chandra, so, detailing Atisha to carry her things down, Hilda and I went on, making camp half an hour from the top of the pass.

We were now feeling the effects of the altitude, for we had rushed up from 13,500 ft. at Base Camp to 18,000 ft. here in three days. The effect on me was to make me feel utterly lazy. If I lay down in my tent I wanted to do nothing, neither read nor sleep nor even think, just lie. The effect on Hilda was more disastrous, for she felt physically sick. It was greatly to her credit, therefore, that she attained the summit of the pass with me a few hours later. As we stood on the narrow ridge, clouds boiled in the hanging valley below us and it was only at rare moments that we saw the top of a peak rising abruptly from the valley floor and ranges of overlapping mountains beyond. It was difficult to piece together the ever-changing picture, but we saw enough to convince us that a way down was possible and a route could be found to the Tos Nala and so back to Manali. Our panorama of this was disappointing, for clouds hid many parts, and the result, though effective artistically, is of little use to the map-maker.

From here we dropped quickly down the long slope back to camp, and in the rays of the setting sun dis-
Mountains and Memsahibs

cussed plans. As Food Officer, Hilda felt she must get down to Concordia before Eileen and Frances set off again, to supervise the final sorting and division of food for the return journey. We planned to make the return in two parties so as to explore two different routes back to the Chandra. I had set my heart on an attempt of Tiger Tooth, a mountain that offered the best rock-climbing in the area, so we decided that Hilda should go down the next day and I should follow in the evening if possible, or, failing that, rejoin the party the next day.

Every afternoon now, clouds blew up heralding the monsoon, and it was wise to finish climbing by midday. The sun was still very hot at noon and snow slid down with dull thuds from the higher slopes of the surrounding mountains, so the next morning Pansy, Umgyal and I set off as soon as the first rays of the sun struck the camp. By this time we had realised the wisdom of waiting until we were able to walk in sunshine, for the bitter cold of the grey mornings paralysed both limb and mind. We were soon up to the pass, and while I took photographs Pansy surveyed the scarred rock, seeking the line of least resistance. The most promising route seemed to start from the rock which touched the glacier at the lowest point. We could trace a staircase up to a gendarme which would undoubtedly present difficulties, but once over this, we could crawl along a crack to another and yet more difficult pillar of rock. This would be the testing point and it was useless to speculate whether it would go or not. Beyond that, the way was not obvious from our present vantage point, but we hoped it would open out as we ascended.

We set off in high spirits, everyone in top form: Umgyal carried the rope, Pansy the rucksack with food, first aid and extra clothing, and I had only my camera and water bottle. In my pocket, however, I had a number of boiled sweets, which I have always
found invaluable to combat tiredness and to give fresh energy when courage runs low. We made quick progress up a snow-gully and over the rock, then paused at the foot of the first gendarme. After one or two false starts, we hit on a practicable route and surmounted our first real obstacle. With a feeling of elation we tackled the long stretch of broken ridge ahead. The rock was solid and we were able to move all together, holding the spare rope between us in loose coils. We slowly gained height, and at the foot of the second gendarme must have been at 19,000 ft.

It was now 11 a.m. and I thoughtfully munched my biscuits and cheese as I considered the angle and footholds. Sherpas never eat during the day in the mountains, but they liked the glacier mints I offered them. Pansy soon got up and tackled the ten feet of smooth slab at the base of the giant. He was an extremely careful, deliberate climber, but lacked the agility of youth. Once embarked, however, he went steadily forward and, smiling from his eminence at the top of the slab, brought up Umgyal. Asking me to wait a little, Pansy went on, but after three attempts on another slab descended again and let Umgyal take over the lead. This porter was very long of arm and leg and used holds impossible for the sturdy Pansy. He was able to go forward but made very little height, and when he had found a good stance fifty feet away, stayed there till we had all joined him. To ascend direct was impossible, and the only route seemed to lie straight ahead round the bulge of rock and up a short staircase. The bulge proved nasty, so I waited while Pansy and Umgyal prospected further. They were dismayed by what they saw: we were still separated from the main summit ridge by a snow-field avalanching dangerously. Early in the morning this would have been possible, but with the sun getting ever stronger I felt that it was too
Mountains and Memsahibs

big a risk to life to cross it and decided that the party must go no higher. Another 500 ft. would have seen us on the summit, but a quarter of a mile of snow lay between us and our objective.

I wanted to go back the way we had come, but Pansy was some way ahead and expressed his intention of going straight downhill. Umgyal followed him, and soon they were lost to sight. As I was now without a rope, I could not start down the rock. There was plenty of time, so, sunning myself in a corner sheltered from the wind, I gave myself up to idle thoughts. Why was I here? Was it sufficient to say that I was enjoying myself to the full? Was it important always to contribute something to the march of civilisation? If I never went back, would I be satisfied with this sort of life for ever? What was happening in far-away London? Were the tulips flowering among the forget-me-nots in my garden at Abinger Hammer, or was it the turn of the rhododendrons down the long avenue that led to the summer-house? How far away it all seemed, and yet I could visualise every detail of the garden, and little things of home seemed immensely important. How remote we were from wars and rumours of wars! There had been trouble in Jordan and Israel before we left. Had it now blown up into something big, or had anxiety been transferred to a new area? Questions without answers sped rapidly through my mind, and somehow, such is the effect of altitude, the answers didn't seem to matter.

A shout from below broke into my thoughts, and, peering down, I saw Pansy on the snow and Umgyal preparing to come up a big open gully with the rope. I moved in his direction, and, meeting half-way, we went down together to where Pansy was standing. We found him gazing in dismay at a gaping Bergschrund four feet wide and apparently quite bottomless which ran all along the base of the rock, separating us from the snow.
The Ice Pass and Tiger Tooth

beyond. We traversed some two hundred yards along to our left, to where the crack narrowed, then threw boulders across to test the further edge. Quite large ones embedded themselves only a few inches, so that it seemed reasonably safe to jump, but there was always the risk that the edge might break away and we should slip straight down the crack. Pansy divested himself of the rucksack and all impedimenta and, firmly held on the rope by Umgyal, gave a tremendous leap and landed safely on the far side. His broadly grinning face invited Umgyal to follow while I safeguarded him with the rope. His long legs carried him well beyond Pansy into safety, and to my amusement they then started to build a bridge for me, finding stones to make the edge firm. I signified my intention to jump, and the horror on Pansy's face was augmented by the piercing shriek let out by Umgyal. But I had not been the champion school long-jumper for nothing, and though it had to be a standing jump for there was no room for a run, I braced my muscles, hurled myself through the air, and landed gracefully at Pansy's feet. The prestige of members in the mountains was considerably enhanced!

Now we coiled the rope and made a quick descent. Clouds were gathering all around, so that before we reached camp we were completely surrounded and visibility was reduced to a few yards. Pansy was all against descending further, for we had had a hard day and it meant another three or four hours for them carrying heavy loads; my air-mattress looked very inviting, I must say, so I did not require much persuasion to stay the night and descend early the next morning.

I left before the others, and was at Concordia by 11 a.m. Coming over the high stone-ridge separating me from the old Camp 3, I was met by Nima, who, having greeted me and pointed out a little tent far
Mountains and Memsahibs

below, went on to meet the others and to help carry
down. In another half-hour I was with Hilda and heard
her story. When she had got down to Concordia, she
had found that the camp had gone and all that was left
of it was one tent frozen to the ground in which was
most of the food supplies. She waited without hot food
or drink until 5 p.m., spending the time dividing the
food into two equal parts. Then Frances and two porters
arrived, explaining that they had moved the camp round
the bend so as to get over their chosen col the next day.
They had of course expected us all to come back to-
gether from the Ice Pass. She had given them their share
of the food and seen them depart in a snowstorm, first,
however, insisting that a cooking-pot and stove be sent
down for her. All the porters went back, and she
settled down to a night by herself on the glacier. She
knew that I was not likely to return in such a storm, as I
would think she was with all the rest of the party at
Camp 3. She looked up the glacier and wished me good-
night, then tied up the tent and settled down in bed.
Every sound of the storm was magnified, and she could
imagine a crevasse opening up underneath the tent as
the flaps strained and groaned. In the morning she was
awakened by the cheerful voice of Nima, who had
come down from the high camp saying he was ill and
could not go with the other memsahibs. He set to work
to make tea and then expressed his intention of going to
help carry down from the Ice Pass. Once down, his
illness left him as quickly as it had come!

We spent the rest of the day sorting out piles of
equipment. Umgyal was to be left behind to ferry the
now unwanted goods to Base and await there our
eventual arrival. The rest were to come with us to
execute our plan of exploring a way down to the
Chandra via the col between Gunther’s Peak and a
beautiful Snow Cone which rose on its right.
The next day we left camp at 7 a.m. with the two Sherpas, Pansy and Nima, and the two porters, Atisha and Georgy, who had now returned. The day was fine but cold as we set off following the curve of the glacier. By the time we reached the top of the ice-fall, snow clouds were fast gathering. Hilda was still altitude sick and had to stop many times to rest and get over the feeling of suffocation which came with exertion. At 11.15 a.m., when we reached Camp 5, snow was falling heavily, so tents were put up in record time. From then on, wind and snow persisted and we remained snow-bound for the rest of that day and night. Inside our cosy tent, we passed the time away with the survey sheets we had plotted, examining each with care and writing in all possible information so that we should remember the details of the scene when we were back home once more. Then we remembered our new crossword book we had retrieved at Base Camp and fell upon it eagerly. So far we had used a blue-covered one that had proved too difficult for brains at 17,000 ft. Alas! although this had a yellow cover it continued the same series as the blue one, and was if anything more difficult. The only point in its favour was that it contained solutions at the end, and of these we made free use. Our alternative amusement was reading, so Hilda went back to Seven Years in Tibet, while I continued with one of the thrillers calculated to keep any mind off the weather. A stew of corned beef and Swell followed by plum cake induced early sleep, and we were oblivious to the roaring wind and driving snow which continued till dawn, when a watery sun shone through a haze and persisted till the mist was driven away and blue skies appeared again.

Nima and I set off ahead of the others with a view to getting up to the col early and climbing the Snow Cone, but the journey was longer and the slope steeper than we had anticipated, so we contented ourselves with
reaching the col and taking in the beauty of the scene. Ahead was a horseshoe-shaped ridge, its two end horns rising to about 20,000 ft., its centre core filled with glistening ice. Behind it rose a pointed rock-peak silhouetted against the sky. The eastern end of the horseshoe sloped gradually down like the back of a whale till it met the glacier between it and a snow-dome slightly lower than the Snow Cone, which was now on our right. Gunther's Peak on our left at the other end of the col towered overhead in its full 20,000 ft., and its ridge continued, broken into many smaller peaks and dips, as far as the eye could see. Behind the ridge rose other tiers, and one could imagine passes by which the Chandra could be reached in this way. Perhaps five marches would bring us to the Kanzam La, where, having said the pilgrim prayer, "Om mani padme hum", we could descend safely to the river. Our eyes fell from the glories beyond to the pass itself, perhaps 400 yards wide, and we approached the edge. We could not, however, get nearer than twenty yards, for there was a cornice which ran along the whole length. We examined all the possibilities, but could see no way down for laden porters, so reluctantly turned our backs on the enchanting scene and went down to the rest of the party, who were already setting up camp. We were very reluctant to give up our idea of returning to Base that way, but Pansy confirmed that the initial descent was impossible for the porters and there was no time to prospect for an alternative route over a different col. I set to work with plane-table and alidade to plot the area, but was driven in by snow with the job only half done; it was only then that we noticed that Pansy was not his usual bright self. He was found to have a temperature, and Hilda, diagnosing a chill, sent him to bed with a hot drink and aspirin.

If there was to be another climb on this expedition,
it had to be done quickly, and as I had set my heart on getting to the top of the beautiful snow-dome which towered above us, I planned to leave early the next day with Nima. A blizzard raged during the night, but had died down by dawn, and when Nima brought me tea at 6 a.m. the sky was clear again and there was every promise of a good day. We set off soon afterwards, leaving the still sick Pansy in his tent and Hilda, still suffering from the altitude, in hers. Nima set a fast pace up to the col, although it was hard going, for the wind over long periods in a dry atmosphere had blown the snow into frozen curls two or three feet high. First I made a long stride from one to the other, then tried picking a way between them, but this was exhausting for it meant lifting the foot high into the air each time. Then I tried one foot up and one foot down, but eventually settled into the stride from top to top except where they lay too far apart. We were soon warm enough for me to stop and take off my second sweater, reserving it for the cooler heights ahead. Nima put it into the already heavy rucksack he was carrying, then strode on again at far too fast a pace for the beginning of a climb. Pansy told me afterwards that, knowing this tendency, he had warned him against it before setting off.

Just below the col we bore to the south so as to avoid the dip between the Snow Cone and its twin. We gained as much height as possible while contouring the slope. The pinnacles were easier now, giving way to consolidated mounds, and I was feeling happier about the prospects of success. A watery sun smiled down on us in mild encouragement and we gained perhaps 500 ft. in the next hour. Then Nima began to weaken. He still made direct fast uphill assaults, but the interval of rest between them got longer and longer. I slowly pursued a zigzag upward route, and as he got left further behind, waited for him to catch up. Clouds now
Mountains and Memsahibs

hung all around and visibility was poor. I decided that this was no day for photography or survey observations, so, when he came up, I told Nima to put down the rucksack and leave it on the snow. At this he brightened considerably, and when, having roped up, we set off again, he maintained a steady pace.

Visibility was now, however, so poor that we could not pick our way but just had to take what offered. It was mostly hard snow, with here and there a drift heralding a rock-outcrop which came as a pleasant relief from foot-slogging. As we got higher we came across crevasses. At first we were able to jump across them, but as they got wider we had to seek snow-bridges or make a detour round them. I was now getting short of breath as the altitude increased, and as we were moving both together, Nima had frequently to wait for me. The weaker I got, the stronger he became, and over 19,000 ft. I had to pause at every rope's length. Nima would go ahead, then, paying in the rope, sit down and wait for me to reach him, jumping up with alacrity as soon as I arrived. I found that at that height it needed a determined effort of will to keep going at all. This was mental rather than physical weakness: I knew my legs could carry me forward and my lungs would hold out if only I had the will to force them forward. I kept reminding myself that this would be my last Himalayan climb, and it was now or never. In the final effort, Nima would go just twenty paces ahead, then wait for me to crawl painfully up to him before going silently on another twenty paces. At this distance he was entirely lost to me in cloud. At last, a ridge of rock above a nasty Bergschrund loomed up, and there was Nima sitting in triumph on the top. "Well done!" I said. "Honour is satisfied. I name this peak Snow Cone." We shook hands and started down at once, for there was no view and time was precious.
The Ice Pass and Tiger Tooth

Taking a quick look at the compass, I headed down the slope. Soon we were able to move both together again and made faster progress. Then I had a nasty thought. "Nima, rucksack," I said. "Yes, memsahib," he answered, grinning from ear to ear. Letting him take the lead, I followed gloomily, thinking of the two precious cameras left in a vast expanse of snow somewhere on the Snow Cone. After interminable jolting downhill, Nima stopped, cast around and moved off to the right. I followed, and in five minutes he was shouldering the rucksack. These Sherpas certainly have an uncanny sense of direction and wonderful eyesight for picking out distant objects.

Now we headed straight downhill again, and in another half-hour were down at camp to be greeted with relief by a very worried Hilda and Pansy, who were on the point of organising a search party, for visibility down here was even worse. Admittedly we had taken a risk in climbing at all on such a day, but it had been every bit worth while. I drank a cup of Oxo, then slept dead to the world for several hours. There was no incentive to go out again, so we stayed in the tent reading and talking till Pansy arrived with supper. I got into my sleeping-bag and, closing my eyes, dreamt of crevasses gaping wider and wider, leering at rucksacks perched precariously on impossible pinnacles, so that the dawn came as a welcome relief.

Now we were definitely heading for home. That day we went down the col and back along the upper stretch of the main glacier to the old Camp 5 and pitched tents about a mile beyond it. We spent the afternoon surveying the side glaciers, two coming in on the left and one on the right. When we got down to the bend the next day we took photographs of the magnificent sweep of glaciers coming in on the outer bend to supplement the plane-table drawing we had made earlier in the expedi-
Mountains and Memsahibs

tion. From lofty rock pinnacles and ridges, outspread fingers of ice-gullies joined together in arms which descended in widening streams till they joined in one big snow-basin which plunged down the final slope to join the Bara Shigri on its way to the Chandra. Eileen and Frances had been intrigued by these when we first saw them from Jeldi Jeldi and had thought there might be a way up them and over the ridge at their head down to the Chandra. And now they had gone up one of these arms and we imagined them slowly making their way over first one pass and then another, getting ever nearer the valley which led to Manali and home.

In the early morning light of Sunday, 24th June, we passed by the familiar scenes of Concordia, and leaving behind the Ice Pass and the Devil, reached the staircase of glacier 8, the snow man of glacier 7 and the stream of glacier 6 running into it, arriving at noon at the old Camp 2. Here, with the wonderful pyramid at the head of the tributary glacier outlined against an azure sky, we were to spend our last night on the ice. As the sun set behind the peaks, our thoughts wandered back over the last five weeks spent so happily up there among them and forward to the journey ahead to England and home.

The next day we were down at the familiar Shigri Flats and were delighted to find fourteen mules awaiting us there, sent according to programme by Major Banon. It was too late to go on again that night, but the next morning, after a few hours of frenzied activity while the mules were caught and loaded, the cavalcade moved on. Four days later we were back at Manali recounting our adventures to the new guests at "Sunshine Orchards".
CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE CATHEDRAL

(Eileen Gregory)

FRANCES and I, with the Sherpas Mingma and Nima, were waiting at Concordia for the arrival of the supplies, brought by the mules to Shigri. I had explored all the tributary glaciers and several cols, and had a rest-day, washing my clothes and even my hair in the mixture of ice and water from a melt stream, and was now impatient to move up to a higher camp, so I was delighted one afternoon to see three figures approaching. We only recognised one of them, Namgyal the Ladakhi. Another was Atisha, our fourth Ladakhi, who had just joined the expedition. The last man was some way behind, and we were told he was the postman. When he eventually arrived, wet through to the waist, having sunk through the snow into the water beneath, he turned out to be Panu, the Headman of our Manali porters, who had carried to Shigri for us. He was of course sent by the Major and not by the Indian postal authorities. I was pleased to see him, for he was the one person who understood my attempts at Hindustani.

We sorted out the food and that same evening moved camp a couple of hours further up, to the foot of the ice-fall. Frances had overstrained herself while in the upper reaches of the Bara Shigri, and had been resting for several days at Concordia, but she found that she could still only move very slowly and with a fantastically high pulse. We regretfully decided that she ought
Mountains and Memsahibs

to go down to a lower altitude the next day, with Atisha, while I continued up with the other three men. This was a bitter blow for Frances, as the camp on the plateau was a scheme dear to her heart.

The morning sun reached the ice-fall very early, and I watched it anxiously as it crept down on to the seracs, but eventually we were ready and off. The snow soon steepened and we roped up and cut steps up the frozen snow for an hour or so. I felt sorry for the men with their heavy loads. They liked to go fast and rest every half-hour, and it would have been much easier for them if a first rope had gone ahead and cut the steps, while they had followed later, but with our small party we all had to rope together and only move as fast as I could cut the steps. There was nowhere we could rest until we were over the first avalanche channel. After this the angle eased considerably, but the snow became patchy, sometimes firm and at other times very soft. We wound our way between the crevasses, and I hoped there were no hidden ones. I passed back the spare rope for a Sherpa to carry, so that, if I fell into a crevasse, it could be used to help in the rescue. It all went more easily than I expected, until we reached the final crevasse. There was no bridge at the first point I tried, and I had to retreat to the left, where there was one. I did not like the ground, as I suspected the whole area of being unstable, so I asked the men to keep the full length of the rope between them, so as to have the whole party as spread out as possible. When I looked back I saw they had taken no notice of my orders and were standing in a bunch just behind me. They seemed unable to foresee any possible dangers, and this made me feel very lonely as I went towards the bridge. This bridge was steep and formed of soft snow. I approached it nervously and inspected my slings so that I could help myself in case of emergency. I had hoped to crawl
The Cathedral
cautiously over, but I sunk so far into the snow that I had to kick vigorously to make any progress. But all went well and I was soon up and hauling over the spare rope to fasten as a handrail, so that the men were able to come across wearing their sacks.

Camp, pitched on the plateau, was the base for three wonderfully happy days. The Sherpas spoke little English and Namgyal none, but each fitted naturally into the team. Towards evening we used to get a little restless. At Concordia we had tried to teach the men to play rounders, but we were too few for this on the plateau, and the men had to invent their own amusement. They stood in a line with an empty tin several yards in front, and tried to pierce it by throwing their axes. Later they might sing in their tent. Sometimes they seemed to be chanting prayers, and at other times it would be a ballad of the day's happenings, to judge from the frequent mention of our names.

The next morning we set out for the col between the Cathedral and the Chapterhouse. The plan was to climb the Chapterhouse and see whether there was a feasible route up the Cathedral. There seemed to be a Bergschrund below the col, and we had to go about 500 ft. up on the Cathedral side. We roped for the descent with myself last and Mingma next to me. I had intended reversing the order when we reached the rocks, but it seemed more than Mingma could bear to have to arrive third at the rocks, and he immediately unroped and started running up the first easy slab. In an effort to call the party to order, I shouted up to him that Namgyal's nailed boots were not suitable for rock-climbing. He shouted down to Namgyal, who immediately removed his boots and socks and started running up the slab barefoot—worse and worse! Mingma was carrying the spare rope, so I got them to rope together. Mingma was a beautiful mountaineer and had been well
trained in the use of the rope, but I knew that Namgyal was quite new to this sort of thing.

This left me with Nima, who was young and keen but inexperienced and terribly over-confident. He had given us a nasty shock on Gunther’s Peak when he had slipped, leaving his ice-axe behind, but by a miracle he had been able to stop before he reached the rocks. On his only previous expedition he had been postman, and had not had any mountaineering experience, so I felt I ought to give him some training in the use of the rope. Unfortunately he was not willing to learn. I tried to teach him the art of belaying, by first explaining it to him myself, and then, as he understood so little English, getting Mingma to tell him in his own language. I explained that if I fell he could save himself by having the rope over a rock, but at each pitch I could only get him to do this by shouting at him in my fiercest tone.

We reached the beginning of the summit ridge and I found the first pair waiting there. I was pleased to get ahead and went on 100 ft. When I turned round to take in Nima’s rope, Mingma told me that Nima would not come any further, but that he himself was quite willing to follow me. The rock-climbing was of moderate difficulty by British standards, but the position was sensational, a glorious jagged ridge of yellow granite.

Mingma followed me obediently, although there was a hopeful ‘Me go first, sir?” before the steeper last pitch, which I ignored. At the top a Sherpa cairn was duly built and photographed, and then I got my orders, “You go down first, sir,” and when we rejoined the others he informed me that last year he had climbed with M. Couzy, “who is a very good rock-climber”. These men had only been used by previous expeditions as load-carriers and the rôle of climbing companion was new to them, but they fulfilled it admirably and with
13. The Cathedral

14. Snow-summit of the Cathedral
15. Camp half-way to the Ice Pass
Gunther’s Peak in the Distance

16. The Narrowing Valley
enthusiasm, and Mingma soon developed a taste for leading.

The climb had given me magnificent views of the Cathedral, a fairly symmetrical mountain, with a steeply roofed Nave and a Side Chapel on each side. The way looked steep, but it seemed possible to get through the crevasses in the corner where the Side Chapel joined the Nave.

The next day we were off fairly early, although it was difficult to be sure of having breakfast before dawn. We started up the same way, but instead of descending to the col we continued up, cutting steps in the frozen snow when it steepened, and all went very easily until we reached the bridge over the last crevasse. This was steep and of soft snow. I could get no help from my axe and seemed to be making no upward progress. If I tried to kick a higher step, it collapsed into the previous one. The Sherpas looked around, and Mingma suggested he should try a place further to the left, so I came down rather thankfully. I think this had only been an excuse to get the lead, for he was able to get up the pitch which had turned me, with very little trouble. He was the smallest of the Sherpas, and I suppose his light weight, combined with the fact that he had the longest stride I have ever known, must have been a good combination for getting up the soft snow. Above the bridge the way steepened, and Mingma had to cut with his axe. I am used to acting as second on a rope and receiving all the leader's ice-chips on my head, but this upset Namgyal, who stood over me to divert them—a nicely brought up lad!

When I joined Mingma I found that we were on the roof of the Side Chapel. We went a few feet along its roof and then the way steepened again and we went up the roof of the Nave, but instead of being snow here it was hard ice, needing vigorous use of the pick,
Mountains and Memsahibs

so I did not suggest that we should change the rope order. Mingma cut a beautiful staircase, and as I stood belay-less on incredibly exposed stances I felt no anxiety for him. I have never felt like this in the Alps, and I like to believe it is a tribute to Mingma’s mountaineering skill, but I rather think it was because the effect of the altitude made me incapable of worrying.

When we reached the col between the snow and the rock-summit, Mingma offered me the lead of the last pitch, but I felt he had earned this, and I told him to go on so that I could photograph him.

We had reached the summit much sooner than I had expected. I suppose it was because the peaks of this area are really only on an alpine scale instead of being the monsters I had expected from my reading of the classics of Himalayan adventure. Certainly the summits were five thousand feet higher than the alpine ones, but so also were the valleys. There was the usual superb view, peaks in all directions, and due east across the Tos Nullah was the snow-dome of Deo Tibba which I was hoping to visit when I returned to Kulu, and did in fact climb a month later. I was not at all cold, and felt no ill effects of altitude, only a great feeling of contentment and happiness, something of the serenity mentioned by the members of the Scottish Ladies’ Expedition of the previous year.

A cairn was built. It started as a hybrid Sherpa-Ladakhi one, but this fell down. The final truebred Sherpa one seemed firm enough. Nima then found a long stone, big enough to make a cairn on its own, and he took it along to the snow-summit. I tied the rope around his waist as he passed me, as he had not bothered to retie, and was not even carrying an axe.

Once up, our first thought was of the way down, and we looked over to the south. This side was equally steep, but it consisted of snow instead of ice, and the
The Cathedral

snow was softening rapidly in the morning sunshine. I had walked up the glacier the previous evening and had picked out a possible route. I had not considered it as a way up, as the lower part consisted of a steep slope covered with “penitents” (pillars of snow, not found in the Alps but only in ranges nearer the Equator). It would have been tedious to ascend when frozen in the early morning, but was easy enough to descend when the snow was melting in the sun.

At the foot of the first steep part we were able to cross the Bergschrund by keeping to the extreme right. Then came a level part, and then a traverse. This traverse looked quite simple when viewed from below, but at this time of day it was very dicey. There were rocks above, and snow was melting on them and running down the ice, making the foot or so of snow on top very unstable. The four of us moved one at a time, even the men were cautious on it. “Bad road, mem-sahib,” Nima said to me repeatedly, but even so I had to tell him to take in my rope on each stance. Thankfully we reached the col, and then had an easy way down the penitents, with a final traverse on to some rocks to avoid the Bergschrund. Another half-hour over the flat glacier brought us back to camp for the ever-welcome tea.
Below the ice-fall I met Frances, who assured me that she had quite recovered at the lower altitude of Camp I, and gave me all the latest news. She said that Joyce and Hilda were on their way to camp at the col which I had visited a week earlier. She also said that the Base Camp at Concordia had been moved. It was now on the band of moraine just down on the left, and there was a red flag on a large block—"You can't miss it!" Frances then went up after Joyce and Hilda to tell them that we would be going off, trying to find a col over to the north of Concordia, hoping to get down a valley behind Gunther's Peak.

I went on with the men to find the new store at Concordia at "the band of moraine just down on the left"—Which band of moraine? How far to the left? I had not realised what a vast area Concordia covered; we spent hours searching, until eventually the combination of Mingma's sharp eyes and the little monocular which the Polaris Mountaineering Club had given me before I left Nottingham spotted the place. There was no flag, and we later found that the tidy-minded Pasang had removed it. There was a little food, but I had to walk a mile or so across to the old dump to fetch kerosene.

That evening Frances joined us with a list of instructions from Joyce. Some of the men were to go down to Camp I and bring up more supplies, and Atisha was to
go up the next day to fetch Hilda down to divide the food before we set out.

The following day I helped to ferry loads across to the north side of Concordia, where we pitched camp to be in a good position to look for a passable col the next day. Frances had been awaiting at Concordia the food from Camp 1, and I was amazed to see her conducting six men up to the new camp during the afternoon snowstorm. Apparently there was only Hilda's tent at Concordia and she did not want to come as far as our camp, so she had to be left alone, while the men crowded into the tents we had with us.

The next morning Nima returned to Concordia to cook Hilda's breakfast, while the other men helped to carry the loads up a side glacier. We had not been able to see round the bend, so as soon as we had finished breakfast I left the others to pack up while I reconnoitred this glacier. I found no easy way out at the head, so I returned to the others, who were waiting at the confluence of these side glaciers. It was snowing by this time, and the whole party continued up the first glacier. We pitched camp some way from the head of the glacier so that Atisha and Georgy could return to Concordia. We spent half the afternoon in the tents before the weather cleared and I was able to set out to reconnoitre the col at the head of the glacier. This looked easy enough from below, and certainly it was not very high, but when I got closer I found that it was well guarded by "Frances's gentlemen" as I thought of penitents from her habit of calling them "Penitent gentlemen". I took a lot of trouble kicking and cutting them down, thinking that the track would be useful for the laden men who would be coming this way the next day. To my disgust, when I reached the top I found that the glacier on the other side led down to the left, i.e. it was the second right-hand glacier of the Bara
Mountains and Memsahibs

Shigri and would not lead us back by a new way at all. It was a lovely view with a gently sloping glacier, gradually curving round. There were fields of penitents all in line, with rows of them curving gracefully up to a little snow-peak. Over to the right there was another steep slope of snow, which might possibly lead over in the direction in which we wanted to go, but I thought it worth trying the slopes above the camp first. I returned, sliding down between the penitents, as there was no need to continue my work of making a track for the next morning. The weather deteriorated, and I left the next recce to the following day.

It was sunny the next morning, so after a cup of tea Mingma and I set out at four o’clock up the snow-slope. We reached the top much sooner than I had dared to hope. It was a morning even more sparkling than usual, with the sprinkling of new snow on the rocks. Down the other side there was what I thought to be a fairly easy snow-slope to a wide and easy glacier, going at first north-east and then due north, the exact direction we wanted to go. Mingma confirmed that the way down would be quite possible with the loads, and then we ran down to rejoin the others, shouting down to them to have our breakfast ready. We were so happy, it was working out far better than we had dared hope. “Zinzabad”, Mingma kept shouting, and I was able to forget my regret that we were leaving Concordia without climbing another peak.

We packed. I had expected that we should have to relay, with only three men to carry, but Mingma and Namgyal insisted that we were to carry everything the first time. I am afraid that they delighted in taking it out of Pasang. They put together a load for him and he tried it, but was horrified at the weight, so was invited to feel the other two loads, after which he went back quite thankfully to his own. I must have been
Trapped!
carrying about 30 lb. that morning, but it seemed nothing, and I got right ahead of the men.

At the top I put my axe into the snow and tied a rope to it and started down, but had a shock when I found that the snow was rather unstable on the underlying ice, and I had to rely on the rope handrail to a great extent. Towards the end of the rope I found I was opposite a platform on some rocks, and I swung across and thankfully put down my sack. To my horror I found that Mingma was half-way down the rope, with his enormous sack on his back. He was glad to have a hand to pull him across when he arrived opposite me. I asked Frances to stop anyone else coming down until we had prospected to see if the lower part was as difficult, and whether there was as difficult a Bergschrund below. We put in a peg as a belay and tied two ropes together, and Mingma went down 200 ft. but did not reach the bottom. He had to wait while the others lowered their sacks and came down themselves, quite a slow business. Then Frances took the third rope down to Mingma. It was as well she went, for they found there was a large Bergschrund, and she was able to persuade Mingma not to try to jump it at the end of 300 ft. of rope, and with no spare rope in case of emergency.

Next we had to send all the sacks down, a long and tedious business, with Namgyal and Pasang having occasional disagreements. Namgyal offered to carry my sack down, and that left Pasang and me at the top. I felt the sensible thing would be for us to go down a pitch at a time, belaying each other, but the others had made the snow look rather treacherous, and as Pasang had a habit of slipping when least expected, I preferred to belay him all the way from a sure stance. When it was my turn I found the 300 ft. of rope at my waist rather heavy, especially as it was being taken in rather too enthusiastically by Namgyal at the bottom.
Mountains and Memsahibs

Lower, the snow improved and soon gave no trouble. When I joined the others I found they had the situation summed up. I was told there was a Bergschrund; it was a large one, but it would be possible to jump it and Namgyal was going to make the jump. Things seemed to be well in hand, so I waited to watch events, giving Namgyal a foot-loop in case of emergency, and belaying the occasional rope if no one else seemed to be bothering. I watched curiously as Namgyal tied on to the oldest three-quarter-weight rope and stood on the brink. Prompted by Mingma, he started taking in the slack for the jump. I watched incredulously as he reached the end of that 100 ft. of rope and asked for another to be tied on and still seemed to be taking in slack. Eventually I could stand it no longer and told Namgyal he did not know what he was doing, and that Mingma must make the jump.

Mingma tied on to the full-weight rope, but it seemed to me that he hauled in about half its length before he made the jump. I was well up above the Bergschrund belaying him and could not see the landing-place, and I had a dreadful moment before he ran further down and into view. I realised that I had asked him to do a thing I should have hated to do myself.

This incident seemed to me to demonstrate the difference between the Sherpas and Ladakhis. A good Sherpa never seemed to push himself forward, but if asked to do a thing carried it out with great ability and intelligence, but they expected to be directed. It may have been because we were a party of women that the Ladakhis were apt to think that they knew best and wanted to do more than their experience warranted. If the Ladakhis had the Sherpas' technical experience they would correspond more to Alpine guides than the Sherpas.

Mingma had obviously had experience in hauling sacks across crevasses, and soon had a fixed rope
fastened, and the sacks were pulled down this on a snap- 
link. Mingma then prospected and told us there was a 
bridge to the left, and we traversed to this. It was a 
horrid slope consisting of penitents, many of which 
collapsed under our feet, but eventually we were along 
and over the bridge and back to the sacks. The whole 
descent had taken about four hours. The fine early 
morning had not lasted and snow had been falling 
steadily ever since we had reached the col for the second 
time, although I had been almost too busy to notice it. 
Frances wanted to get as low as possible, hoping it 
would be warmer lower down, and we pitched camp 
where the glacier levelled out.

The next morning the sky was cloudless; we took our 
time over breakfast, and then went slowly down, 
Frances going off with her geologist’s hammer and I 
with my camera. The snow began to soften and we 
were glad when we reached the band of moraine, which 
we could follow to the bottom of the glacier. Next we 
started down the stones, and eventually found little 
flowers growing amongst them. They were the first we 
had seen for over a month, and they and the streams 
were bright in the sunshine.

Pasang seemed eager to pitch camp. The other two 
were tireless, but earlier than I had hoped Pasang 
persuaded us to camp in a lovely spot among the 
flowers.

The following day we were off in good time down 
the valley, which was still broad here, for our fear was 
that it would narrow to an impassable gorge. Later the 
way became more difficult. Sometimes we could walk 
along a dry part of the river bed, but at other times we 
had to traverse along the scree which went steeply 
down to the water, at times cutting steps in it with our 
axes. Pasang in particular had great trouble, and got no 
sympathy from the other two men, although I thought
Mountains and Memsaibs

he did remarkably well to get down at all with such a heavy load. As he always did on snow, he would leave his axe behind if he slipped on scree. The way became more and more tedious, until our hopes were raised by finding a small semicircle of stones at a point where a side valley from the left joined the main one, our first indication that men had been there before. It was not likely that they had come our way, so it seemed that they had either come up the valley or down a side valley, probably the one above the stone circle. I went on to prospect the way down the valley, leaving Frances to prevent the men from following me until I had found the best way. When I crossed the next spur I found that the valley was impassable at a point where the rocks came straight down to the river, so I thought I would explore the side valley and see if there was a way down from the col. To save retracing my steps I went up the slope above me. Unfortunately Frances misinterpreted my actions and followed me with the laden men. The way was horrible, we lost a lot of time, and eventually had to descend a desperate loose gully back into the side valley above the stone circle.

Once more I left the others, explaining that I would probably be gone for two or three hours, and they had better pitch camp if I did not get back in good time. I started up, thinking the col was just above the slope I was on, but when I arrived there I found that there was a much longer stretch still to mount—a horribly ugly slope, little hillocks of stones, higgledy-piggledy, reminding me of a tip from a quarry or a mine, but stretching for miles. The monotony of the scenery made it seem very hard work. Then I reached the snow, very soft at this time of the day, and needless to say there were penitents. I could see a line of peaks behind, but I told myself that the stream was too small for the cirque to drain this side, that it must drain the other way, and
it was the col I could see ahead. At long last, after three and a half hours of steady plodding, I could see over my “col”—the ground still went up, I could see still another col more than an hour further on. If I continued, I would hardly reach it before dark, and then I had to get down again. I decided to retreat. It was a serious decision, as we were short of food. There had been very little Sherpa food at Concordia, and although Frances and I had enough food for a week, the men were practically out. Feeding them on ours, we should only have enough between us for about three days. If we went on, we should pass the point of no return. We had only just enough food to get us back the way we had come. There was no time for further reconnaissance, the only way out seemed to be to start back the way we had come.

It seemed a cowardly decision to make, for if the men who had made the stone circle had not come up the main valley, surely they had come down this side one. It was months after I returned home that Peter Holmes gave me the most likely solution, that in October when the level of the water is low men are able to walk up the beds of the streams, so that my decision was probably right for the time of the year after all.

At first the way down through the soft snow was as tedious as the way up, but then I got into a snow-gully and had a standing glissade practically the whole way down.

Half-way I heard shouts below me, and, thinking it was the people in the camp, I shouted back and continued my glorious glissade. Too late I found it was Namgyal, come up to meet me with biscuits and a thermos of tea. I felt I should miss these touches when I returned to England. Fortunately he heard my shouts and returned, for Mingma was about to set out to look for him, and I did not know where this was going to end.
Mountains and Memsahibs

I was amazed to see how the men had levelled tent sites in the steep scree. Frances had been working out menus to make our food go as far as possible. Luckily exercise always takes away my appetite, and I was able to go to bed quite happily after soup alone and to refuse biscuits. Breakfast consisted of raw porridge oats: Frances had the theory that dry porridge would stave off the pangs of hunger longer than if it were cooked. She tried to get the men to put it in their tea as they do tsampa (ground roasted barley flour).

Next morning we descended the lower part of the side valley and then started to retrace our steps up the awkward part of the main valley. I soon found that Frances was lagging. The valley must have been a paradise for such an enthusiastic geologist, and after she started finding fossils her sack grew heavier and heavier under the weight of the specimens she was collecting, until her old trouble recurred. She was going much too slowly to get back before our food ran out even if her condition did not deteriorate further. I took her sack, and with the double load I could scarcely go faster than Frances. By midday we regained our old camp site, where the men were brewing tea.

By this time Frances agreed that the only thing was for her to stay behind with one of the men while I returned to Shigri with the others and brought back more food, hoping that Frances would have recovered by that time. We had only one stove, but I insisted that we took that with us, for there were old roots lower down with which Frances could have a fire made; also she had running water while we should have to melt snow.

I carried scarcely more than a camera and spare socks. The men were not overladen, and I knew there was a chance of them being replaced, while I should have to return. There was no question as to who should stay;
it was assumed by everyone that it would be Pasang, while the two better mountaineers would come back with me. We set out as soon as we had divided the food. The three of us took a generous helping for one night, and the rest was left for Frances and Pasang, about four days' supply. I knew Frances was very worried, but there seemed nothing else to do. All the same, I had the easy task as I should be too busy to worry, while Frances would have nothing to take her mind off herself.

I went up the stones with the two men and then up the glacier, where the snow was horribly soft at this time of day. At times we would sink right through to a melt stream beneath, and our boots filled with icy water, and our feet became quite numb. I plodded on and on, trying to reach the camp site we had used below the col, but before we reached it Namgyal, about twenty feet behind me, suggested that we should stop. I was so relieved that I went back to him. I had to open my sack to get out the tent-pegs, and knelt down to do so. I found that position so comfortable that I stayed in it until I remembered the expression “down to one's knees”, and got up hurriedly, loath to admit that the forced march had done that to me.

Soon I was able to go into the tent and put on dry socks, and Mingma started to cook supper. I had eaten nothing since breakfast, but all the same I thought I had better help myself only sparingly to the corned beef and Pom. The men finished the rest and then opened their secret store of atta. When this was cooked, they cut off a huge lump which they put on a plate for me, and gave me jam to eat with it, although they preferred a chilli sauce themselves.

I looked at my watch when Namgyal awakened Mingma the next morning. It was 12.20. Mingma stirred and started the Primus, and melted snow three times, firstly for tea, then for porridge, and finally for
more tea. I think we dozed off while waiting for the water to boil, and it was 3.30 before we were packed and ready to set out. This was the only morning I was able to watch the morning sun creep all the way down Himalayan peaks.

This beautiful morning we went up to the foot of the col, crossed the bridge over the Bergschrund and looked at the traverse we had used the last time. It was covered with fresh snow and looked so horrid that I turned my attention to the rocks. To my amazement there was an easy way up. By zigzagging up we were able to find easy rocks, apart from one moderate chimney. Mingma followed up this with his sack, and then went back for Namgyal's.

We left one of our ropes at the top of the col for the return, and our tins of spare kerosene at the foot of it, and then continued down towards Concordia. To our delight we found that we were following new footprints, so it looked as though we should meet up with the others and I should have a new relay of men for the return march.

As I returned down the Bara Shigri I was amazed at the difference since I had last been there a month previously. As we neared Camp 1, I got left behind, so when I arrived I was expected, and lunch was ready although it was about three o'clock. I had a very satisfying meal and then tried to get someone to take an interest in going to Shigri to fetch up more food. I felt that my two companions had done quite enough for one day, so I was horrified when I found that Pansy was sending them down to Shigri for supplies. He said that the other men would then come back with me the next day.
I was most impatient the next morning awaiting the men. I knew that Mingma and Namgyal would have kept going for about thirty hours with only a few hours' sleep, and I felt that too much had been asked of them. Eventually Mingma appeared away ahead of the others, and I realised just what an outstanding person he was. His sack contained the atta for the Sherpas' breakfast; it was soon prepared and then we were ready to set out. I had with me Nima and Atisha, who had spent the night at Camp I, and Umgyal, who had come up from Shigri. I knew that they were not as experienced as the men who had returned with me, and I felt that my responsibilities were rather great, particularly as Pansy had foretold the beginning of the monsoon in a couple of days. I put a composition in my sack and we started off to get as far as possible that day. The way up to Concordia was easy enough with stones or ice underfoot, but then we had soft snow to the camp site we had used a week ago. The men were expecting to camp there, but I was determined to go higher, and went ahead to break the trail. As I sank to my knees with each step, I soon tired and realised how unkind I was to expect Umgyal to come so far when his day had started at Shigri, four hours below Camp I. At first he hardly seemed his usual laughing self, but he soon recovered when I said we could camp, and he busied himself
Mountains and Memsahibs
digging down about three feet in the snow to find a melt stream beneath.

It had been snowing during the afternoon and the camp was in mist when we turned in, so I had another sleepless night dreading the crossing of the col should conditions deteriorate. I need not have worried, the sun was shining next morning. We reached the top of the col in good time, and then Nima looked down the other side, drove his axe into the snow and said that he was going to send his sack down. None of my protests made any impression on him. I told him that we had spent four hours descending that way, and had got up the rocks in one hour; I told him that on much of it the snow was unstable on the underlying ice, and that steps would have to be cut in the ice, but it had no effect. At last I called Umgyal further up, to the left above the rocks, where we could see the Bergschrund at the bottom of the slope. He was able to explain this to Nima, and persuaded him to come up and join the rest of us. On the short snow-slope leading to the rocks each of the men in turn came on the rope as the snow slid off the ice, but still Nima looked longingly at the snow-slope.

Once on the rocks, Umgyal, who was in front, looked over and said that there was no way down, so I explained that the way wound backwards and forwards, taking an easy track all the way down. Umgyal then went too far to the right, and found the piton we had used as a belay on the other descent. He called Nima's attention to it, and in no time Nima had his rope threaded through it and was preparing to lower his sack. This time not even my angriest tone would call him away. I had to go down and threaten to pick up his sack before I could get him away. Atisha was a great comfort. This was all new to him and he had no ideas of his own, but was willing to do as he was told. He was a good mimic, and if for example I said, "Sit down,
Umgyal”, Atisha would mimic it and say, “Sit down, Umgyal,” even if he had no idea what it meant.

Life was comparatively easy climbing up, as I could be in the front and lead the way and know that I had a rope above the men. Going down was a different matter; I felt I had to be the last down to safeguard the party, which meant that one of them had to find the way. At the bottom of each pitch they all untied and were completely out of control. Umgyal was the most difficult. He would be the first down, untie, leave his sack and look out the next pitch, and then probably come up to take my sack from me and try to take my rope. Once I allowed him to hustle me down and then along a traverse at the bottom of the pitch. It was a very easy part, but as I then watched Nima come down without a rope above him, I had as anxious a time as Nima seemed to be having, for he hated rock and moved badly on it. I was firmer with Umgyal after this.

At the bottom I left my compo ration for the return journey, and we all started down the glacier. While we rested half-way down I sorted out some food, and said they could stay the night there if they liked, while I took food for one night for Frances. They all insisted on accompanying me despite the softness of the snow. Lower down on the moraine we were racing each other.

Frances was quite cheerful when we reached her, but Pasang’s face seemed to consist of skin stretched tightly over his bones. I suppose he had fewer reserves of flesh to start with. Frances had been so afraid that we should be delayed that she had only eaten about half the food I had left her. She seemed a little weak, but I thought this was caused by lack of food, and so it proved, for she gradually recovered the next day, and was going as well as ever the day after. We all enjoyed a good supper, and the next day started slowly up, reaching the glacier and following the long band of moraine. We camped
Mountains and Memsahibs

before the snow, as we did not want to start up it in the afternoon when it was soft.

The next morning the glacier was frozen hard, and after several hours we found ourselves at the foot of the col, where Frances was able to lead the Ladakhis on the second rope, and keep them in order too!

We descended to our old camp site, where we had left one tent. It was a glorious evening and we sat outside the tents photographing the peaks and regretting that we should have to leave the snows. The next day we reached Shigri, the part below Camp I being very tedious with no snow to cover the boulders.

Eagerly we approached the old camp site, but to our intense disappointment Georgy was not there with the food he should have brought back. The two Ladakhis went back to the old dump the other side of the river. They returned after about three hours to say there was nothing there, so we got out the rest of the composition for supper. There were three tins of meat, one of Pom and one of peas, besides fruit pudding, yet even I was ravenously hungry after it, so I was not surprised when the Ladakhis packed their tent and said they would start out towards Chatoru Koti that night, where they could buy some food.

The next morning was brilliantly sunny again, and we packed and started down the Chandra Valley. To our delight, after about a mile we came to an encampment where we found Georgy. The Ladakhis had obviously missed him in the dark the previous evening. We soon learned that his smiling companion was our muleteer, a Manali man. We were greeted with mugs of rice mixed with fresh mutton. This was more than welcome, as breakfast had consisted of two or three biscuits. Then Georgy started making chapatties, and I had a lovely time with my camera, as people's smiles were beautiful to see while they ate this satisfying food.
The muleteer rounded up his animals. Only a couple were needed for the kit, which left two for Frances and me to ride. On the outward journey I had been amazed how well our Manali porters had managed on parts of the rocky way; I had no idea then that I should return as a load on a mule. The animals' packframes were padded with tents and sleeping-bags, and we sat on top, but when the padding was insecurely tied I tended to slide off backwards as the mule went up steep places.

There were great changes in the valley. Puti Runi was a green and pleasant place at this time of the year, and there was a small encampment of Spiti people there. They had a yak, the only one we saw. In the early afternoon we reached an encampment, where we found our Ladakhis already installed. As soon as we stopped we were surrounded by a circle of curious Lahoulis, who watched as our camp was prepared. It was our air-mattresses which intrigued them most, and our men loved blowing them up when there was an admiring audience. My skin felt as if it had been burnt to a cinder by the glare of the sun on the snow, and it was amazing to see that these people, who lived mostly in the open, were fairer than I.

The people, with their families, were moving their flocks to their summer grazing-grounds, possibly spending a few days at good camps en route. They were taking sacks of grain with them for trading purposes, and the next morning these were loaded on to mules. We passed sheep, each one carrying its own two little sacks of salt. The difference in the valley since our outward journey was incredible, with green grass covering all the bare brown patches we had seen in May. The grass was short and well cropped and not at all the waist-high vegetation the people told us they would find in their summer grazing-grounds.
Mountains and Memsahibs

That night Atisha bought a sheep, which he was going to kill with his knife, so Nima told us in utter horror. Both the Sherpas and Ladakhis were Buddhists, but neither were very strict about not eating meat. This was our last fine day and the weather gradually deteriorated after this. The river at Chatoru the next day was deep, but we were able to cross it by a snow-bridge higher up. We threw a rope across, which was tied to each mule in turn, to encourage them to cross the water. We watched anxiously as the water came up to our kit-bags.

We stopped at an encampment just after this, but Frances, afraid that the men intended to camp there, persuaded the muleteer to go on. One of the pack animals was exchanged for mine; I was helped to mount the new animal, and it immediately started off after the others. I had no bridle and no control over it, and could only sit and see where the animal took me. As we passed a tent, Georgy came out eating a chapatti and I realised just how hungry I was. I tried to get the mule to stop, but it was useless. It insisted on following the others, so I had to sit on it for the next few hours with only my hunger to occupy my thoughts. I was cold, too, for it soon started to rain and I was in my shirt-sleeves. The rest of my clothing was in Nima’s sack, and Nima was behind eating! About ten hours after breakfast we came to another camping-ground and we stopped, and the Sherpas soon had some food prepared. It was here that I collected two lots of tsampa (roasted barley flour). The first lot Umgyal had bought for us at Chatoru, and the second lot some women had given us in exchange for a mug of tea. I put it in my tea with plenty of salt and found it most satisfying and pleasant, despite Frances’s description of it as refined sawdust! That evening I spent several hours looking out of the tent and watching Atisha prepare a stew with more of his fresh mutton. When it was ready, he brought a plateful
over to me. Unfortunately I had just had my supper and was unable to do more than taste it.

The sky was lowering the next morning. Frances was afraid that the mules would take two days to get back, so she set out early, with Umgyal to carry her sack. I accompanied the mules. The weather soon deteriorated and there was a typical Scotch mist as we crossed the Rohtang Pass. It was just like home. I felt cold, for the first time since coming to India. It was amazing to see the difference in the pass since May. Practically all the snow had gone. On the summit were numerous stones placed on end in the ground, and our muleteer added to their number and put a few flowers on top.

I arrived back in Manali at about four o’clock, a day before I was expected, to find the main party already arrived, and hastened to follow Frances’s example and have a bath.
CHAPTER FOURTEEN

OBSERVATIONS OF A GEOLOGIST
(Frances Delany)

The Kulu Valley at Manali and the Chandra Valley to the north would provide an interesting subject for geographical research. Vegetation, population, morphology and climate differ widely between the two neighbouring valleys. The one is a fertile borderland of agricultural India, whilst the other is the forbidding frontier of desolate regions to the north.

The Chandra Valley is a rocky narrow gorge such as I imagine the deserts of Mongolia to be; indeed, neither tree, animal nor bird, but only Allah, appears to inhabit the region. A wildly roaring brown river, disappearing now and again beneath a snow-bridge, flows in a narrow alluvial plain below the lateral moraines of the mighty glacier which once filled the valley.

The imagination can easily re-create a picture of the mighty glacier which eroded the valley, bearing a burden of boulders scraped from the mountains. A warmer, drier period caused the ice frontiers to melt and retreat up the valley to their present stage; miserable relics of their former selves. The boulders remained where the ice had transported them. Some 150 ft. above the present floor of the valley, the moraines are now in active erosion, and melting snow and rain bring down torrential avalanches of rocks and mud.

Vegetation is practically absent above Chatoru, and only on our return journey were we refreshed by the
Observations of a Geologist

sight of the much-sung Himalayan flora, which was strangely disappointing both in variety and richness. At the junction of the Chatoru and Chandra Valleys a few small birch trees clung to the rocky slabs and gave us fuel for the fires, promising a few centuries hence the afforestation of the valley. Lack of firewood was obviously a recognised fact, and many of the parties we met travelling through the valley carried a supply of brushwood.

Towards Shigri, the Chandra Valley became increasingly encumbered with boulders, mainly of rock types found on the Bara Shigri. Shigri itself was reported to be a meadow, but we never saw it as anything but a rocky expanse. Upstream, the Chandra is narrower and more precipitous. The decrease in the number of boulders indicates that even in ancient times the Bara Shigri was already the principal tributary of the Chandra River.

Even if it is true to say that the glaciers are now miserable relics of their former selves, they still retain an impressive majesty and solitude and are a living example of awe-inspiring destruction.

The lower part of the Bara Shigri is very tormented and strewn with boulders. Deep craters with steep ice-flanks pit the glacier like a bombed field. Rocks perched on the crater rims topple over in the hot sun and roar down into the crater lakes. In early spring the crater lakes are frozen skating-ponds; by midday the sun’s rays have broken the ice into floes gently moving between cracks of blue-green water. As the days grow warmer and the nightly freezing less severe, the dwindling lakes fret underground channels into neighbouring streams; the craters then become ugly dry bomb-craters, bottomed with a cake of mud. A fern-patterned frieze forms on the water overnight, fading with the first warm breeze, and only in the protected under-
Mountains and Memsahibs

ground channels do the decorative curtains of icicles remain.

Above Camp 2 the slope of the glacier was less pronounced and its surface more regular, furrowed only by the lateral and central moraines. The moraine clinging to the side of the valley also disappeared. The gaunt gullies of this moraine rose to the east of camp to some 150 ft. above the glacier. The melting spring snows and daily defreezing of the mud, compacted overnight by ice, caused noisy avalanches of mud and boulders. These periodical stone falls, roaring like an express train every quarter of an hour, were a constant feature of the afternoons at Camp 2. Sometimes, when the mud attained a perfect consistency, a flow of mud and pebbles spread across the glacier like a stream of molten lava and equally as unpleasant to be trapped in. Elsewhere a suitably inclined slope of snow, free from other rocks, offered an ideal chute for enormous boulders which slid majestically on to the glacier.

With a thick layer of snow to hide the irregular surface of the ice, this lower section of the Bara Shigri was a fairly pleasant walk. When the snow had melted, the walk either up or down was purgatory. Boulders of every conformation, perched insecurely on top of each other, overbalanced as soon as you walked on them. Having once chosen a line of march, you were immediately deviated from it by craters, ridges, or blocks the size of houses. There were two methods of progressing. The first, for energetic unburdened climbers, consisted in jumping elegantly from one boulder to another with a speed greater than that of the toppling boulder. This method asked for a quick eye and rapid decision. The second method, adopted by all of us after several hours’ labour, was to climb painfully up and down and around each obstacle. Small pebbles, mainly of the angular kind, entered your boots. Even the small patches
of green vegetation, the size of Connemara field, did little to make up for the discomfort of the snow-free glacier.

The glacier up to Concordia from Camp 2 was a fairly easy problem; once we had chosen a moraine, we could follow it up to camp. Underground streams flowing along the base of the moraines would trap the weary traveller who could not decide to remain on the chosen path. These streams collected water from far up the glaciers and generally attained their greatest flow in the late afternoon. They slowly worked their way into the underlying ice, carving deep caños and glacier cauldrons in which the icy water whirled around its burden of pebbles. More restful were the coloured shallow lakes which formed in hollows on the snow, but emptied, as did the crater lakes, in warm weather to leave only a sodden marsh.

Only above Concordia did we encounter small snow-pyramids, a well-known feature of tropical snow-fields. I had already met them on Kilimanjaro and knew their German name, Bussenschnee, and their Italian name, neve penitiente. None of the party could resolve my language difficulties, so the pyramids were called "penitent gentlemen", or even "Frances's gentlemen". In the dry, cold atmosphere the snow does not so much melt as sublimate. On suitably inclined slopes the alternation of the cold nights and this etching action helped by the sun during the day corrodes out of the snow grotesque figures. About three feet high and up to twenty inches broad, wafer thin at the head, but broadening at the base to a firm column, these ice-monsters depict in their jagged profile fabulous birds, comic figures, prehistoric deformities and marvellous dragons worthy of those originally described in the Alps. The figures are aligned on the glacier furrows and all face north to south, that is to say, their long horizontal axis lies west to east,
Mountains and Memsahibs

parallel to the path of the sun. The almost transparent heads of the figures seem composed of large ice-crystals. Warm days work havoc on the exotic fairyland; the monsters lose their outline, dwindle and slump like Lot's wife or Eurydice into formless cones of snow. The similarity of the snow-cones to the white hoods worn by penitents during processions in Lent gave rise to their name.

It was laborious to cross a gently sloping glacier be-sprinkled with the cones, for the spaces between them were too narrow for easy walking and to descend the glacier we were forced to walk between the cones in furrows which frequently hid running water. Their very presence on steep slopes enabled us to climb without crampons; and involuntary slides were soon arrested, painfully, by a compact pinnacle.

The ridge-and-furrow pattern on the glaciers, following the line of flow of the melting glacier water, are the skiers' bane in Alpine spring skiing, but did not distress us. Still another snow phenomenon gave a musical accompaniment to our walks. Moisture evaporating from the snow into the cold air solidifies immediately to form a thin veneer of ice above the irregular surface of the snow. Like walking in an autumnal beech forest, each step we took scattered a tinkling rush of frosty glass before us, a music less monotonous than the songs Nima chanted, rapidly murmuring phrases, in one tone, until his breath gave out.

Ibex we saw in the Jagatsukh Nullah, a magnificent cousin to the one of the Red Sea hills. Snow partridges cackled behind Camp 2, but the only glacier inhabitants we found in any number were glacier fleas, which I had only seen once before, in the Glockner area in Austria. The glaciers were free of the blown dust such as proverbially reaches the Alps from the Sahara, but one windblown yellow lime-tree leaf reassured us in the
Observations of a Geologist

midst of an icy fastness that somewhere there did exist green fields and green forests.

The dominating colour was a blinding white: a polar, biting white in the morning reaching a throbbing, scorching white at midday, when black objects exposed to the sun became too hot to handle. The black metal boxes subsided slowly into the snow and dark-coloured rocks had to be sampled with discretion.

The rock types varied considerably in the area, giving rise to equally varied mountain forms. Granite and gneiss on the lower reaches of the Bara Shigri gave rise to bold substantial summits, defended by steep ridges of sound rock, protected by spires and towers, spectacular breaches and depths. The weathered surface of the granite, as rough as a vibram sole, but of a pink-brown colour, showed in relief large rectangular crystals of felspar. Frequently it was cut by veins and dykes of pure white in which had crystallised circular masses of tourmaline, radiating like the spokes of a wheel from a central sun. Besides the black tourmaline or enclosed within the rays of the crystal sun glistened globules of red garnets and sheaves of sparkling mica.

Beyond the granite area, baked and veined at its contact, folded sediments built contorted irregular summits. Where the pressure of mountain building had been great, the rocks were transformed to shales and slates. Black, green and grey, they covered the mountain-sides with a slippery scree, forming moraines with a fairly regular surface on which it was easy to walk. More resistant rocks, quartzites and conglomerate rose bed upon bed, folded, overturned and faulted, to even the highest summits. The mountain like the Schreckhorn and the magnificent range barring the tributary glacier south of Concordia both reveal the intricacies of this series, metamorphosed both by the granite and by tectonic deformations. As with the Matterhorn, the
Mountains and Memsahibs

Mountains composed of these rocks will be more easy to scale from one side than from the other. One face will present slabs arranged like the tiles of a roof, where good handholds are few and the feet cling uncomfortably to inclined planes. The other face or ridge, a staircase composed of steps dipping towards the mountains, will offer a somewhat rickety Jacob's ladder, but still leading heavenwards.

The multicoloured zone perceived from Gunther's Peak was equally exciting when we reached the Namgyl Valley. The zone sweeps across the country from near the Kansam La, following a direction roughly north-eastwards towards the Spiti Valley. Unaltered by any granite intrusions, the sediments which were deposited in the Triassic sea were raised and tilted to their present subvertical position during the formation of the Himalayas. As we descended the Namgyl Valley, below the junction of a valley descending directly from Gunther's Peak, we left behind us the crystalline schists and came to a landscape of multiple stripes. Twin cones of scree descended on either side of the valley from their parent summits: that nearest to us was mauve, the following one red. Then came a crystal-white patch, followed by a great landslide where grey, blue and red blocks intermingled with the rocks transported from upstream. Mauve, red and white sandstones and conglomerate showed current bedding, and a fortunate choice of route found a boulder covered with fossil sea-shells. The dolomitic limestone downstream, also fossiliferous, displayed magnificent folds where the vertically dipping beds cut against the sky a jagged outline worthy of the Dolomites.

My work was but a beginning, the first line only of the knowledge that could be gained in the area. Detailed study of the crystalline rocks and the fossiliferous series could each form a thesis. A glaciologist observing all the
Observations of a Geologist
different aspects of the glacial phenomena could be satisfactorily employed for several seasons on the Bara Shigri, and detailed climatological study would probably explain the remarkable discrepancies between the Kulu and the Chandra Valleys.
I sat about Manali, miserable and watching the rain falling. The other memsahibs had left, and so had the Sherpas. I was as fit as I have ever been and wanted just one more climb. I had hoped to keep on a Sherpa, but it seemed useless with that weather, and in the end I let them all go, and almost regretted that I had not booked an earlier passage home. After five days of rain, Thursday dawned fine, and thinking that it was an isolated fine day, I set out to Nagar taking my camera. Then, to my disgust, Friday was fine as well, and I regretted not being strategically placed in the mountains to make use of it. I spoke to Chini Sahib, who agreed that my best plan was to go out for a week before the monsoon proper arrived in the middle of the month. (“You used to be able to foretell the weather here,” he said, “but it is different nowadays.” All the same, he thought we had had the chota monsoon and could look forward now to a week of mainly fine weather.)

He called two of the Ladakhis, Namgyal and Zor-Zor whom we called Georgy, to act as porters, and in an hour or so we were ready. I suggested going to Nagar again, and over to Malana. From there I felt that if the weather deteriorated again we could go down the nullah to the Parbati Valley and make an interesting circular tour, seeing new valleys and villages. I felt a little foolish as I put a rope with the kit and tried to
Deo Tibba explain to the men that if the weather held for a week we could go up the Malana Nullah and reach Deo Tibba. We could hardly speak a word of each other's language, so we could never get exact shades of meaning, and I mentioned Deo Tibba as something they would understand. I thought it much too ambitious for our party, but I soon found that the men considered it our settled aim, and nothing would divert them from it.

We caught the afternoon bus to Katrain, but a tree across the road meant a change of buses and a long delay, and we could get no further than Nagar for the night. I was pleased that the men did not expect me to use the rest house in the castle. They pitched camp just outside the village, and I felt I was back to the ideal life again as I watched my supper cooking over the little fire; yet I seemed an object of pity to some Indians, who told me that I could be put up in the Forest Rest House if there really was no room for me in the Civil Rest House.

The next day was misty. We started up the hillside, but the path was not at all the definite track marked on the half-inch map. We asked the way from a little man, who said that it was too complicated to describe, that he would have to come with us to show us the way.

I would have found his way easy to describe. One simply ignored any easy paths to right or left and cut straight up the hillside. However, he carried my sack, and he took us among wild strawberries an inch long.

It was a hot day, and I was glad enough to camp before crossing the col. There were some cow-herds nearby, and we were able to get fresh milk, with which the men made me very delicious creamy rice. I had expected that with only one memsahib and all three of us eating similar food our supper would be cooked together, but the men would not hear of this. My food had to be cooked first. They would pile it on to my plate, try to force me to a second helping, and only when
Mountains and Memsahibs

I refused any more would they cook their own. Probably they would have atta and use the rest of my rich rice pudding as "jam" with it.

The next day we continued up, and had a wonderful moment when the mist cleared and the snow-peaks reappeared, but soon we were in mist again and enquiring our way from the Manala people camping in the summer pastures. We stopped for midday tea at one settlement, and I stayed gossiping until Georgy ordered me on again. At first sight it was a delightful nullah, flowers all the way, and the varieties changing every few miles, but the path was heartbreaking, up and down the whole way, with hardly a level yard.

The going was so much more difficult than I had expected that I tried to modify the plan. I thought it was expecting too much of the heavily laden men, but they refused to understand me, and insisted on continuing up the nullah. For the first three days I put my sleeping-bag and Lilo in my sack, but as soon as my back was turned they would be removed, so I tried to stop being sorry for the men with their heavy loads.

The fourth day we continued up the nullah, but the path became worse and worse, at times petering out completely, leaving us to force our way through the scrub. Then we began to leave the bushes and had easier ground when we reached a band of moraine covered with flowers. I suggested that we should camp by the blue poppies, while we could still get wood for a fire, but Georgy was shocked and said we must continue until four or five o'clock. (We arose with the dawn each day.)

We were in the mist and could not see a way through the slabs ahead, so we went down below them and up the glacier. Eventually Namgyal, ahead as always, suggested camping on the stone-covered glacier.

There were some old dried pieces of wood to the side
of the glacier, so I was able to have my fire after all. The next day the weather was perfect, so my hurried reconnaissance the previous evening during a clear spell had been unnecessary. The map was quite correct, and after about half an hour we turned left through a right-angled bend—if that is not a contradiction in terms.

This was our fifth day out, and if we were to climb Deo Tibba we should have to do it the next day and start down the Duhangan Nullah the day after, so as not to run short of food. This put out of the question my secret ambition, to camp between Deo Tibba and Indrasan and have a look at the latter. It seemed that our only hope of pitching a camp which would be in a position for trying Deo Tibba and for starting down again was to camp on the watershed ridge at the head of the Duhangan Nullah. The snow-field to the east of the ridge, which we had looked over in May, joined our dry glacier by a very tangled ice-fall. We avoided this by going up the steep slope to the true right of this ice-fall. There were rocks and scree, a few patches of androsaceae, gentian and very beautiful blue primulae, but the slope became very tedious before we were up. Eventually I traversed on to the snow, and found that we were above the ice-fall, so we sat down for our midday tea before ploughing through the softened snow. As we continued over the snow-field, I soon recognised the 17,000-ft. peak which the Manali boy Chandru Ram and I had climbed in May. We continued towards Deo Tibba. I wanted to camp a little way up the peak, to save time in the morning, but about half an hour before we reached the base of it we saw two beautifully levelled tent sites on the rocks overlooking the Duhangan Nullah. There was a trickle of water, and it was too beautiful and convenient a place to pass, so we pitched camp there.

Deo Tibba is a magnificent snow-dome, 19,687 ft.
Mountains and Memsahibs

high and visible from Simla, 75 miles away. Indrasan, its northern neighbour, is higher, but invisible from the south. There were about five expeditions to Deo Tibba before it was eventually climbed by Clare and Jan Graaff and K. Berrill in 1952. After a camp in our position they had crossed the next ridge to the east, pitched another camp on a higher snow-field and climbed the peak by its north ridge.

We had no time for this higher camp, but I knew that in 1951 Evans, Ker and Trower had worked out the route up the watershed ridge though bad snow conditions had prevented them reaching the summit.

The next day Namgyal was up before dawn and prepared breakfast. We left the tents standing and were soon away and roping up below the lower crevasses. A little zigzagging and we were through this zone and traversing left on to the true ridge, up a little snow and on to the rocks. The rocks were quite easy and we were gaining height far more quickly than I had dared to hope. I avoided a little of the snow at the top by keeping to the rock-ridge, but this twisted in and out and we soon had to leave it. I noticed a cairn on a little pinnacle at the top of the rocks and wondered whether we should have time to play on these rocks on our way down. When the time came I had not time to think of it. We were just able to kick our way up the snow. At the bottom we could get the hafts of our axes in for proper belays, but higher up there was only about six inches of snow on top of ice and we could only get the picks in as anchors. The snow was just firm enough to bear our weight, but it was obvious that it would not hold when we came to descend.

I felt that the sensible thing to do was to descend from the top of the ridge instead of going on to the true summit, but the men would not agree. I was thrilled. I would much rather reach the summit and have an
inconvenient descent than be sensible, but I did not feel justified in taking unwilling men with me. However, Namgyal and Georgy were anything but unwilling. The way along to the last snow-dome was more awkward than we had expected. Several times the snow cracked under our feet, and we wondered if there was a cornice or crevasse. Each time I suggested turning back, until Namgyal tried Mingma's trick of saying yes to the suggestion and then starting forward in the other direction. It was intriguing to look across to Indrasan, but I could see no easy way up. I would have loved to get closer to it, but it would have needed rock-climbing companions.

After about an hour we reached the foot of the dome, but it took another two hours to reach the summit. The snow had become soft and deep, and each of us was glad when it was someone else's turn to make the track. As always, it was Namgyal who was the most indefatigable, and he broke most of the trail. The way steepened, and we reached the crevasses nearly covered by the new soft snow and needing careful testing. The last part was long, with the angle easing gently until it was level, a disappointing summit compared with the sharp peaks of the Bara Shigri. To the east we could see across to those peaks. The view was superb, and the sea of clouds collecting in the valleys added to its splendour.

Soon we started down and crossed the crevasses without incident. However, the top of the watershed ridge was as bad as I had feared. Namgyal went first and cut magnificent steps. Georgy followed him, and as he passed each step he would inspect it, brush out the chips and possibly do a little more cutting, so that I had a real staircase to descend. Thus cutting down proved more satisfactory than cutting up, for I could leave it to the men, while I felt I was of more use in belaying them. The previous day, when we had to cut up parts of the
Mountains and Memsahibs

dry glacier, I had gone in front and felt at the time that it was silly that I should collect a fine crop of blisters cutting steps for men who probably spent most of their working days wielding implements similar to an ice-axe. They would never have let me take a load while they did the cutting, and it did not seem right to me that they should both carry and cut, although they would have been happy enough to do so.

Georgy had been a great worry. He had lost his snow-goggles on the way up and insisted on coming on. He had tied a scarf round his head, but pushed it too far up to do any good. I tried to get him to take turns with mine; he refused to take them, so I would leave them in the snow for him, but he would not wear them for more than about ten minutes at a time. I could manage quite well without them, for my hair was long by this time and I could comb it over my eyes. I said I was playing at Yeti, but they did not seem to know about the abominable snowman, so I had to change to a bear.

I think Georgy’s eyes must have started hurting him at the bottom of the snow-slope, for he began to become impatient. Namgyal was going very slowly and cautiously, but I was only thankful that he was not taking risks. When we reached the rocks, at first Georgy tried to put my feet into the holds, but when he saw that this was not necessary he went to the other extreme and quite forgot that I was behind him. I had shortened the rope, but on the rocks I tended to move quicker than they, so I could cope until Georgy started jumping. The first few times I took it too calmly, and then, when I could see a clear way down for him to the left, I leant right forward to make a step down. At this moment Georgy decided to jump about six feet to the right. It was so unexpected that the coils were whipped right out of my hand and there was a violent tug at my waist, but fortunately that was all. Had he gone any further I
should have been pulled down head first. Georgy was quite unaware of the trouble he was causing, so I thought I ought to tell him to stop him doing it again. I shouted at him; he could not understand the words, but there was no mistaking my tone, and Namgyal soon joined in. Georgy still continued jumping and caused trouble at the snow-bridges lower down. Later back in camp he indicated to me that he had had a slap on one side of the face from memsahib and one the other side from Namgyal. We could laugh at it then, but it was not so funny at the time.

At times these Ladakhis had seemed the perfect mountain companions, but before we were down the peak I realised that I had been too foolhardy to embark on such an undertaking with men unused to the technicalities of climbing, expert though they were in general mountain travel. Without speaking their language, I seemed to make little progress in training them, although Namgyal had picked up a fair amount of technique from Mingma.

On the snow below the rocks I had expected trouble, but it had been in the shade for some time when we reached it, and it had frozen again. We reached camp about fourteen hours after leaving it. When we started down the watershed ridge the clouds came up to meet us but gradually retreated again, and it was not until we reached the snow-field that we were in the mist.

Georgy’s eyes troubled him during the night and he was still a little sorry for himself in the morning. My conscience had kept me awake most of the night, but his eyes recovered during the day and he was his old cheerful self, going around using one of his two English expressions, “T’ank you”, like a bus conductor. His other phrase was “Good morning”, said at any time of the day.

We had used the last fine day for the climb. The
Mountains and Memsahibs

next two days were misty with occasional showers. I was amazed to see how the nullah had changed since Frances and I had been there two months previously. The last slope to the watershed ridge was a steep scree-slope with a few large patches of snow, instead of the snow-slope which Chandru and I had cramponed up in April. The snow-fall by Chander Tal had changed into a stony waste. Below this, where there had been a little brown earth in the few places where the snow had melted, there was lush vegetation. We met some Jagatsukh men, up to collect roots, and they were able to give the Ladhakis instructions for crossing the river now the snow-bridge had gone. On the next steep part, where in May the porters, not to mention Frances and me, had enjoyed sitting glissades in the soft snow, we followed a little path in the waist-high vegetation. Soon Namgyal came to a place where he said that we must ford the river. He took off his boots and socks, rolled up his trousers, and, forbidding me to move, he took his load across and then came back and took me pick-a-back through the thigh-deep river. There were large floods at Seri, where we had camped in May. We continued down past Dudo, where the men had stayed last time, and as it was raining steadily we stopped at the next encampment. There was a huge block where we pitched camp and then crawled underneath to light our fire with the wood supplied by the herdsmen. In return we left them our surplus atta and kerosene.

The next day we found that the little track we had come up in May was too wet and overgrown. We preferred to go right down to Jagatsukh village, and reached Manali for tea. The monsoon was now due, and after this most enjoyable week I was reconciled to the thought of leaving the hills.
By 1st July 1956 the expedition as such was over and we all went our separate ways home. Frances got the first possible bus down the valley and the first possible plane from Delhi to Nairobi. Eileen stayed to climb yet another peak, then made her way to Bombay and embarked for England on a P. & O. boat, taking what was left of our equipment with her and wrestling as best she could with the complicated forms of the Customs Officers. Anything that we had taken out and not brought back, down to the last bootlace, was in theory subject to a tax. We had paid duty on the food on entering the country on the assumption that it would be all consumed, but now it seemed that porters' clothing, boots and air-mattresses had also somehow been consumed and had to be accounted for. This was an extra drain on our resources, and we were very grateful to the P. & O. Steamship Co., who transported our equipment and stores free both ways.

Hilda and I had to wait several days till the landslides, brought down by the monsoon rains, had been removed from the track. Even then, Hilda had to get out and walk over one risky bridge so as to lighten the weight of the car. We safely surmounted all hazards on the little mountain road only to find at Jullundar that the main highway was under water. This meant a delay of three days, but we eventually got through to Delhi.
Mountains and Memsahibs

We had abandoned the idea of going all the way back by car in the full heat of the summer and had decided to take the car back with us on a cargo-boat sailing from Karachi. With this in view, we had sent the car carneth by registered post to the shipping agents at the port, giving instructions for it to be returned to us at Delhi to allow us to cross the India-Pakistan border. To our horror, when we got to Delhi it had not arrived and there were only six days left to catch the boat with 1500 miles to do. We sent a wire to Major Banon to instigate a search from his end, we wired a friend in Karachi to start that end, we cabled the A.A. to send a duplicate carneth and we went to see the consul to ask if there was any possibility of getting out of the country without a carneth. Three days later, the same post brought a cable from the A.A. to say that a duplicate had been dispatched, a message from the consul to say that he hoped to be successful in getting us out of India without a carneth, and a parcel from the Post Office in Karachi containing the original! Immediately on its arrival we set off. At both the Indian and Pakistan frontiers we of course said nothing about the loss, but found that the officials knew all about it and were prepared to let us through without it!

We waited ten days in the steaming heat of Karachi for the cargo-boat to sail. All the news we could get was that it had been unable to pick up its cargo at Bombay because of the flood conditions. Then we read in the newspapers of the Suez crisis and began to think that we should never get home. Once one has set one’s face homeward, delays like this are very irritating. Much as one may like foreign travel, adventure and other countries, once the departure has been decided upon, England and home are very strong magnets. Enquiry at the Air Office elicited the information that an off-season tourist ticket would cost no more than a cabin
on a cargo-boat, so we decided to fly and leave the car to come on afterwards by sea. We thus got home on 1st August, covering in two days the 8,500-mile journey we had taken seven weeks to do by car.

Now as I write, exactly a year after our departure from London, the picture of the expedition is more in focus. Petty irritations and worries have faded into the background, together with the daily pleasures of camp and snow-fields, and only salient features stand out against a background of planning and preparation. It is no mean achievement that we have all got back to our homes without serious accident or illness. We have the satisfaction that we have done what we set out to do: we have thoroughly explored the Bara Shigri Glacier and climbed surrounding peaks of around 20,000 ft. We have shown not only that women are good Himalayan climbers but that they can plan and carry through a serious expedition. We have found that Sherpas and porters will accept women mountaineers and serve them as they serve men. Since our return, we have mapped the glacier from observations and photographs taken on the spot and thus have something concrete to hand on to others who go into the area.

The long preparation, the exhilarating climbing and the expensive undertaking are perhaps something that can only be undertaken once in a lifetime, but we are all quite sure that if the opportunity of Himalayan climbing did come again, we should grasp it with both hands. What a grand holiday it was!
APPENDIX I

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We should like to express our gratitude to the following firms who supplied food or equipment free to the Expedition:

Allen & Hanburys Ltd.  Medical supplies
Barker & Dobson Ltd.  Boiled sweets
Boots Ltd.  Medical supplies
British Nylon Spinners  Clothing
J. & J. Colman Ltd.  Mustard
Dunlop Rubber Co.  Tyres
Hilger & Watts  Camera surveying head
Kraft Foods Ltd.  Processed cheese
Lederles Ltd.  Antibiotics and vitamins
G. MacLellan & Co.  Sea-Esta air-beds
Metal Box Co.  Metal boxes and diothene bags
T. Mitchellhill Ltd.  Healthy Life biscuits
National Pressure Cooker Co. Ltd.  Presto cookers
Nestlé Co. Ltd.  Chocolate, dried milk, Nescafé, Milo, soups
Oxo Ltd.  Fray Bentos corned beef
D. Quiggin & Son  Kendal Mint Cake
H. E. Randall Ltd.  Cantilever shoes
Smiths Clocks.  Watches and alarm clock

And to the following firms who supplied food or equipment at reduced rates:

Autotype Co. Ltd.  Photographic printing and mounting
T. Black & Sons Ltd.  Tents and equipment
British Ropes Ltd.  Nylon ropes
Cadbury Ltd.  Chocolate
Farm Products Ltd.  Swell
Kodak Ltd.  Film
Robert Lawrie  Boots and equipment
McVitie & Price Ltd.  Biscuits
Reckitt & Colman Ltd.  Pom; lemonade powder
Appendix 1

We are grateful to the Royal Geographical Society for the loan of surveying instruments; to Mr. David Hearn and Mr. Claydon of Messrs. Duncan & Wallett Ltd. for the personal interest they took in the packing and dispatching of equipment; to the members of the staff of Messrs. W. T. Henley's Telegraph Works Co. Ltd. in India and Pakistan who helped with transport and personal entertainment; to the Himalayan Club, who gave us useful advice and help in the details of the expedition and chose four excellent Sherpas for us; to Major Banon of Manali, who with his expert knowledge of the neighbourhood was invaluable in the final preparations.

Finally we should like to express our most sincere thanks to the Trustees of the Mount Everest Foundation for their generous grant of £500 which was the decisive factor in making our expedition possible.
Appendix 2

Cost

<table>
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<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>Equipment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td>76 3 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sherpas, porters, mules</td>
<td>441 5 0</td>
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<td>Packing and transport in England</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Insurance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Medical supplies</td>
<td>1 6 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stationery and postages</td>
<td>22 16 11</td>
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£862 7 0

In addition, the four members of the party paid their own travelling expenses to Manali, a total of approximately £900, so that the total cost of the expedition for four people was £1762.

A grant of £500 from the Mount Everest Foundation reduced this to £1262.
APPENDIX 3

FOOD

Stores for 4 people for 6 weeks

14 lb. porridge oats
12 tins bacon
12 tins sausages
4 lb. dried egg
30 12-oz. tins meat
10 tins sardines
10 lb. butter
16 lb. cheese in tins
24 pkts. Pom
24 pkts. Swell dried vegetables
30 pkts. Maggi soups
4 pkts. dates
4 lb. nuts
4 lb. spaghetti
10 lb. raisins
4 dozen slabs Kendal Mint Cake
24 lb. boiled sweets
10 lb. slab cake
14 lb. dried fruits
2 tins custard powder
1 lb. cornflour
8 lb. tomato purée
8 oz. onion flakes
14 lb. jams and marmalade
14 lb. Macvita biscuits
28 lb. sweet biscuits
4 oz. pepper
4 oz. baking powder
20 lb. sugar
6 lb. rice
2 tins curry powder
14 lb. tea
10 tins Nescafé
12 tins Milo
2 tins Horlicks
12 lb. lemonade powder
18 lb. chocolate
10 lb. dried milk.
3 tins salt
6 tubes mustard
24 Oxo cubes
8 tins pineapple

6 Boxes Army Compo Rations (3 men for 3 days)
**APPENDIX 4**

**MEDICAL EQUIPMENT AND DRESSINGS**

- Scalpel
- Blades
- Toothed forceps
- Splinter forceps
- Artery forceps
- Surgical scissors
- Hypodermic syringe and needles
- Sutures
- Suture needles
- Clinical thermometers—2
- Orange sticks and spatulae—12
- Elastoplast—3" × 4
- Adhesive dressings, various sizes—2 boxes
- Gauze rolls—6 yd. × 12
- P.O.P. bandages—4" × 6
- Lint—½ yd.
- Triangular bandages—6
- Adhesive tape (waterproof)—2 × 1
- Cotton wool—1 lb.
- Oiled silk—½ yd.
- Gauze bandages: 2" × 12; 1" × 12; 6" × 6
- Crêpe bandages: 3" × 4

**MEDICAL SUPPLIES**

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Tab. Codeine Co.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tab. Ascorbic Acid 50 mg.</td>
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196
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<td>Glycerine and Blackcurrant pastilles</td>
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<td>Glycerine of Thymol pastilles</td>
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<td>(\frac{1}{2}) fl. oz.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alficetyn ear-drops</td>
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<td>Ung. Colophonii</td>
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<td>Water purifying tablets</td>
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<td>D.D.T. Pulv. Spray</td>
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<td>Nonad Tulle</td>
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<td>Surgical spirit</td>
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APPENDIX 5

EQUIPMENT

1 Large tent
4 High-altitude tents
2 Flysheets
6 Nylon ropes
2 Hemp ropes
Pitons
4 Primus stoves

Aluminium cooking-pans
1 Kettle
2 Pressure cookers
2 Water-carriers
Primus spares
1 Spring balance

Clothing and equipment were taken for the Ladakhi porters. These included boots, crampons, ice-axes, sleeping-bags and Everest carrying frames.

The Sherpas were equipped by the Himalayan Club before they left Darjeeling.

The members of the expedition took their own equipment, including two sleeping-bags each.

SURVEYING EQUIPMENT

Tripod and head for exacta camera
Plane-table
Sextant
Thermometer
Surveyor’s chain, 100 feet
3 Barometers
2 Compasses
Spirit-level
Alidade
Surveyed by Joyce Dunsheath
Abinger Himalayan Expedition 1956
P Camp Glacier