PEAKS AND VALLEYS

BY

F. S. SMYTHE

WITH SEVENTY-SIX REPRODUCTIONS OF
PHOTOGRAPHS BY THE AUTHOR

ADAM AND CHARLES BLACK
4, 5 AND 6 SOHO SQUARE LONDON W1
1938
INTRODUCTION

An appreciation of the beauty inherent in hills and the wilder and lonelier regions of the earth is a comparatively recent development of the human mind. True, the glimmerings of such appreciation pervaded the work of the earlier painters, particularly of the Italian school, and many notable canvases have hills as a background or secondary motif, but for the most part hills were regarded as ugly, useless and terrifying lumps of matter interposed by an inscrutable Providence to provide yet further difficulties and dangers in the path of mankind.

The influence of mountainous landscapes on the human mind is reflected in contemporary art; thus in the paintings and drawings of a hundred or more years ago the underlying motif is one of ugliness and fear. Line and form are subordinated to harshness and hostility; the sheep walks of Skiddaw become horrific beetling crags; the Pass of Glencoe reflects in tenfold exaggeration the human miseries associated with the past.

Art progressed, but not so rapidly as the literature of the hills. Few of the greater artists turned their eyes to primitive beauties and the number of meritorious mountain paintings is lamentably few. The reason is simple: there is no more difficult subject for an artist than a mountain, for mountains, unlike the sea or a conventional landscape, are essentially static in quality; they are inimical to life, and movement is restricted to clouds, streams and the play of the wind, whilst the scale on which they are built is as deceiving to the eye as it is to the brush. A skilful drawing or painting of hill scenery needs no justification, but the daubs which find their way into exhibitions—even into the Royal Academy—are proof that to any but an artist of exceptional skill and experience, who must perforce devote himself to his subject, hills are better left alone.

For these reasons photography affords a medium for capturing something of the beauty of hills far to be preferred to 99% of the said daubs. These may seem provocative and sweeping statements, especially when it is realised that the artistic interpretation and scope of the camera
is strictly limited, but I maintain that a good photograph of any subject is to be preferred to a mediocre painting, and especially does this preference apply to mountain scenes.

What constitutes an effective feature of a mountain landscape? In my previous book* I set down my views on this difficult and complex subject. It is unnecessary here to recapitulate them but I would reaffirm my belief that simplicity is the soul of beauty in any picture and especially in mountain photographs. In painting, the artist is able to ignore detail which detracts from the theme of his subject and thereby extract and interpret as it were the soul of the subject. The photographer is in a less happy position: muddling detail too often obscures such interpretation and there are many instances in this book where this vital artistic defect occurs. It is, therefore, even more important in photography to cultivate simplicity than it is in painting and the photographer is of necessity strictly limited in scope by his medium. How often when confronted by a magnificent mountain vista are we impelled to press the shutter and how often are we depressed and disappointed by the result. The stereoscopic power of human vision undoubtedly plays its part in tempting the photographer, and depth, height and distance, which are compressed to infinitesimal dimensions in a photograph, must always be considered in terms of a single plane. Colour also plays no mean part in suggesting scale and depth and a comparison of black-and-white prints with colour photographs reveals a marked difference in the apparent depth of photographs. Progress in colour photography is slow, but the time is probably not far distant when black-and-white work will be a thing of the past, though for my part there are many subjects which I prefer in monochrome, possibly because this offers a greater scope for artistic interpretation than is the case when a scene is reproduced in its natural colours. Translating, transferring and interpreting from one medium to another raises photography from a purely technical craft to an art worthy to rank with other arts.

There are many with no artistic sense, no eye for a subject or its arrangement, to whom photography has no meaning beyond a record of places, people and events; others appreciate beauty in nature but find it difficult to interpret, and a few with a heaven-born sense of beauty allied with a perfect technique for interpreting it. I am one

* The Mountain Scene.
of the strugglers and stragglers of photography. The beauty of nature inspires me with a feeling of hopelessness. I long to transfer it—if only a tithe of it—to a film, and more often than not I fail dismally. Never in my life have I taken a photograph that completely satisfied me. This is at once the curse and the lure of art. Perfection in any artistic medium is impossible—so we strive towards an unattainable ideal. Art is but the shadow of the soul. Moments there are when, in contemplation of the hills, the clouds, the stars and flowers, beauty is made known to us. We may not interpret it through any mechanical medium for it is a part of us, untranslateable, the child of instinct, not of reason, a perfection of creation infinitely far removed from paintbrush and camera. This then must be my introduction and apologia. If by any chance my poor photographs recall happy days on hills or in flower-clad valley meadows, if they can suggest the keen air of the heights, the healthful tussle with ice slope and precipice, and the companionship and peace of the camp fire, then I am well content.

KALIMPONG, BENGAL
JULY, 1938

F. S. S.
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PEAKS AND VALLEYS
THE ALPS

I. SUNRISE ON THE WEISSHORN

The Zermatt Weisshorn is one of the shapeliest peaks of the Alps and its long upcurving ridges unite in a point of mathematical exactitude. Numerous routes have been made to the summit, but even in these days of specialised and desperate climbing the north-east ridge, originally followed by Professor Tyndall and his guide, J. J. Bennen, ranks high among standard Alpine routes for its beauty and interest. The lower portion of Professor Tyndall’s route is nowadays short. Circuited by climbers, who reach the crest of the ridge at a considerable height; but in 1935, when some friends and I climbed the mountain for the first time, we were ignorant of the modern “short cut” and, I believe, followed the original classic route. The photograph was taken at the point where we gained the crest of the ridge. It was a stormy sunrise with heavy clouds massed in the valleys, and I well remember my delight when the sun broke suddenly between the clouds and lit the ridge so that it stood out in brilliant relief against a dark background of valley, mist and mountain—a perfect subject for the camera.
II. THE DENT D’HÉRENS FROM THE WELLENKUPPE

The nearest neighbour of the Matterhorn, the Dent d’Hérens, was first climbed by Edward Whymper not long before the Matterhorn was vanquished in 1865. It is a shapely mountain and its grandeur is enhanced by a névé field which clings precariously to the north face over which Captain G. I. Finch made a curious and interesting route to the summit, a route capped and "improved" upon by the late W. Welzenbach who, with characteristic dash and skill, tackled the ice-wall en face, a difficult and dangerous alternative to Captain Finch’s route but possessing the merit of directness, a quality much sought after by the modern Alpine climber. There is an amusing little story connected with the Wellenkuppe from which this photograph was taken. When the late Lord Conway of Allington made the first ascent he decided to name the peak Wellenkuppe on account of its wave-like snow crest, but he knew that the Swiss authorities would never accept a name given to one of their peaks by an Ausländer, so when he descended to Zermatt he told the people of that village that he had just climbed the peak known as the Wellenkuppe. The villagers, unwilling to exhibit their ignorance as to the names of their own mountains, did not venture to dispute the name, and the Wellenkuppe it has remained to this day.
III. & IV. CLIMBING THE LYSKAMM

Perhaps the grandest high level route in the Alps is to traverse in one day from Monte Rosa over the Lyskamm, Castor and Pollux to the Breithorn. The traverse of the Lyskamm alone is a great expedition, for this peak is noted for the narrowness of its snow ridges and the treacherous cornices which on more than one occasion have brought disaster to an incautious party. The uppermost of these photographs was taken when the party, of which I was a member, was climbing the north ridge of the Lyskamm after a night spent at the hut on the Italian summit of Monte Rosa. The lowermost photograph was taken on the ridge connecting the two principal summits of the Lyskamm. Though no photograph can convey the sense of space and isolation experienced by the mountaineer on a high mountain, it suggests something of the beauty of this great snow edge leaping into the blue far above dragon-tailed glaciers and remote valley depths. In the background rises the Matterhorn, with its moderately inclined east face in striking contrast to the great precipices overlooking the cloud-filled Italian valley of Breul, whilst on the right rises the Dent Blanche.
Shutters click, mouths open and gape (Wunderbar! Wunderschön! etc.), trains crawl like lice in the valley, human beings congregate on the summit, the competent and incompetent, the careful, the reckless, the suicidal; and tins and stones, and occasionally bodies, rattle and bump now that the Matterhorn is as fashionable as the pyramids or the Savoy Grill. Yet, for all this superficial degradation, the annual cacophony of human vulgarity, the shouts, yells, screams, catcalls by which the sub-human species strives to assert its domination over Nature, and the other beastlinesses of the ordinary route, the Matterhorn remains unique, and something more than unique. The virgin has been foully raped, but her soul is unsullied, her spiritual beauty undefiled. Listen, and the voice of the clouds and the winds, the anger and gentleness of this divinely upthrust fragment of earth is perceptible to the adventurer. No human vulgarity can destroy the pristine charm of this marvellous mountain which thrusts its pyramid into heaven 10,000 feet above the chalets and pastures of Zermatt.
VI. THE DENT BLANCHE: MORNING LIGHT

The Dent Blanche is esteemed by mountaineers on a parity with the Weisshorn and Matterhorn. It was climbed before the Matterhorn, yet its difficulties are greater and no festoons of fixed ropes detract from the beauty and interest of the ascent. A route nowadays popular with mountaineers is the Viereselgrat by which the summit is attained via the east ridge. This name originates from the remark made by the first party to climb the mountain by this route. They were so impressed with the difficulties and dangers that they apostrophised themselves as four asses. In this photograph, taken shortly after sunrise from the junction of the Zmutt and Tiefenmatten glaciers, the Dent Blanche appears in all its grandeur above light mist which the strengthening sun will soon dissolve. The east ridge is that to the right of the summit, whilst the south ridge, the ordinary and easiest route, is that to the left.
VII. A SNOW RIDGE ON THE ZINAL ROTTHORN

Readers of Sir Leslie Stephen's classic, "The Playground of Europe," will remember his delightful account of the first ascent of the Zinal Rothhorn, during which he frequently found himself spreadeagled on the steep rocks of the Zinal ridge, "like a beast of ill repute nailed to the wall of a barn." Nowadays the ascent is usually made from Zermatt. After climbing some thousands of feet of easy slopes the mountaineer gains a snow ridge which provides a delightful introduction to the steep upper rocks of the mountain. This photograph was taken one cloudless morning in August, 1933, and recalls to me brilliant sunlight and still air—ideal conditions for climbing on the rough red gneissic rocks of the Rothhorn. In the background, across the Zermatt valley, are the several summits of the Breithorn with the Lyskamm on the extreme left and the snowy cones of Castor and Pollux in between. Flat lighting is hopeless when photographing snow ridges, and to convey the sharpness or difficulty of a ridge it is essential to photograph it when one side is shadowed.
VIII. THE FINDELIN GLACIER

Trees always form an admirable foreground to snow or glacier scenes, for they assist the eye in its quest for scale; and the scale of mountains is difficult to estimate, as witness the old lady who, gazing at some pinnacles about 200 feet high perched on a distant ridge of the Eiger, naively inquired "What are those men doing there?" Her sense of scale would have reduced Mount Everest to the size of Leith Hill. How much more difficult is it for the camera to succeed where the eye fails. It cannot succeed, but the photographer can, through the beauty of his compositions, convey a sense of grandeur and distance. This photograph, taken on the path between the Riffelalp and the Findelin glacier has as its motif a single tree which suggests the grandeur and beauty of the hills. The eye is prepared at the outset for a background of glacier and snowclad peak. Such a composition is not dependent on any rule of thumb but on an instinctive recognition of a central or representative theme in the landscape. The photographer must find some object which in itself sums up much of what he is striving to convey; and at the same time emphasises the depth and scale of the composition.
IX. AN ALP ABOVE KANDERSTEG

Few English people are able to visit the Alps in April, May and June. Yet during this period the Alps are at their best. Under the influence of a brilliant sun the snowline retreats rapidly, and as the snow melts the sodden turf bursts miraculously into life. Through the lank withered herbage of the previous summer innumerable shoots thrust upwards and soon the upper pastures are gay with millions of crocuses. It was my good fortune in 1934 to witness this transformation when I spent March, April and May traversing Switzerland on ski. At least I took ski as far as Kandersteg, but after that I abandoned the high snows for a delightful stroll over alps and pastures to Adelboden, Lenk and Gstaad. This alp was typical of many I saw; a host of crocuses growing in that magic area, "Twixt the pinewoods and the snow, where the airs of heaven blow." A conventional, not to say badly composed picture, yet conveying, perhaps, something of the beauty of a region unsurpassed for the beauty of its peaks, valleys and flowerful alps.
X. NEAR MÜRREN

As already mentioned, trees can often form the central theme of a picture and are invaluable in conveying the spirit of a certain type of mountain scenery. Taken as separate studies they are much more difficult to photograph effectively, and clouds and lighting must be studied very carefully if the photograph is not to be but another of those glimpses of the obvious that decorate the family album. Clouds are especially important for they enhance the beauty of any landscape and are particularly effective as a background to trees. The grouping of trees also provides an interesting study, for the beauty of a tree photograph depends more than anything on the arrangement of the subject. The hideous rectangular pinewoods planted by the Forestry Commission in the Lake District are sordid examples of man’s unimaginative and inartistic handiwork, but natural conditions offer infinite scope to the photographer. It is essential, however, when photographing trees to aim at a composition at once simple and bold, and in this photograph I have endeavoured to do this. I cannot claim perfection or even moderate success, for the photography of trees calls for an unusually high degree of artistic skill. To see beauty and to arrange beauty are the two prime requirements in photography.
XI. A STREET IN CHUR

The Swiss town of Chur in the upper Rhine valley dates back to Roman times and presents many features of beauty and interest to the photographer. To most visitors to Eastern Switzerland Chur is but a name in a timetable, a railway junction for various sports resorts, yet those who like to enter into the spirit and feeling of Switzerland—which it is impossible to do in a winter sports hotel—should visit this and other “unpopular” places. There are numerous streets such as this in Chur and the tall medæval houses make charming subjects for the artist and photographer. There are no slums in Swiss towns and the cleanliness is a marvel to behold; for in Switzerland there exists a communal system founded on a traditional community of interests.
Simplicity of design is the keynote of effective landscape photography and in particular of mountain photography. Snow scenes are especially liable to be misinterpreted in this respect and the photographer, confronted with a multiplicity of detail, is in danger of assuming that this detail may be crammed into a film. Such experience as I have had in snow photography has convinced me that unless a scene can be rendered simply it is better not to photograph it at all. Line and form, subtle and complex enough even when reduced to two dimensions, must be rendered as simply as possible and a landscape suggested through one small part of it. This picture taken near St. Anton in Austria is by no means a good example of what I am trying to convey, but the easy curve of the stream, the simple configuration of the tree, the unobtrusive background and the absence of complex lighting effects suggest a certain harmony, restfulness and peace which is the keynote of winter scenes in the Alps when the streams are hushed and the forests and hillsides profoundly silent. To sum up; to my mind the secret of pictorial photography lies in the photographer's ability to see into the heart of his subject and having seen what lies there interpret it simply.
If I had choice of all the Alps, from Monte Carlo to Vienna, in which to spend my days I should not hesitate in my choice—it would be the Austrian Tyrol. And my choice would not be dictated by scenic beauty and grandeur, by climate or by people, but by a combination of these things. There are other countries of grander landscapes, but none where the qualities of beauty and friendship are more apparent. Friendship I shall always associate with the Austrian Tyrol. The mountains and valleys, the forests and the alps are friendly and it is only to be expected that the people should be friendly, kindly and hospitable; it would be impossible to picture ungraciousness in a country where so much is gracious. Parts of Tyrol, like parts of Switzerland, have been spoilt by commercialism, but much remains untouched by the greedy paws of the avaricious. Here is a typical instance, a photograph which to me depicts a typical scene: the path through the meadows emerging on to the rocky hillside, the vanguard of the pines and above and beyond the eternal snows. Nothing spectacular, nothing dramatic; no enormous sky-cleaving peak in sight, but just a peaceful scene in a peaceful country which many have learnt to love.
THE HIMALAYAS

XIV. CHIR

Great forests of chir (Pinus longifolia) cloak the lower foothills of the Central Himalayas. These trees deposit a dense carpet of needles which prevent the growth of shrubs and flowers, and it would seem that this is one of the reasons why botanists of a past generation stigmatised the flora of the Central Himalayas as unworthy of serious attention. In point of fact the upper valleys of Garhwal and Kumaon are exceedingly rich in flowers and rival the valleys of Sikkim and Kashmir which have contributed so lavishly to British gardens. Though the chir is possessed of scanty foliage and casts but little shade, it usually grows straight and true to a considerable height. It is well spaced and these forests resemble parklands. Lastly, it is highly resinous and there are numerous government resin collecting stations on the foothills. The photography of trees allows of many studies and exercises in composition. Harsh effects must be eschewed, and dramas of dense shadows and high lights, while being attractive to the eye, seldom make good photographs. Flat lighting is to be preferred to render which effectively panchromatic film is desirable.
XV. HIMALAYAN OAKS

The usual upward order of growth in the foothills of the Central Himalayas is chir and fir forests up to 5,000–6,000 feet with some deciduous trees, then firs, deodars, larches, tree rhododendrons, oaks and other deciduous trees and, lastly, pines, birches, junipers and other shrubs. The Himalayan oak, unlike the English oak, is a tall and narrow-spreading tree. It is usually found between 7,000–10,000 feet, but in places grows up to 11,000 feet. It seems to prefer a moderately moist climate for epiphytic ferns often festoon its branches. A photograph such as this depends for its effect on the grace of the subject. When photographing trees the photographer’s aim should be to achieve harmony. If the lines are in one direction do not interpose harsh unharmonious lines in another direction. It is no easy matter to compass within the confines of a small film such majestic trees without sacrificing nobility and majesty.
XVIII. AN OLD FRIEND: THE OUTPOST PINE

In 1931 when crossing the Kuari Pass en route to Kamet I photographed a gnarled weatherbeaten outpost of the forest.* In 1937 I came on the tree again. Probably many years previously it had been struck by lightning, but so great is its residual strength that the storms of the past six years had not succeeded in snapping it or uprooting it, and it welcomed me as an old friend when I descended from the pass. Later, when on my return journey, I photographed it for the second time silhouetted in all its beauty against the dawn, with the great peak of Dunagiri forming an appropriate background. The scene composed itself, but the picture cannot render the pink of the glowing cloudlets, the dusky purple of the valley depths and the peak of Dunagiri, blue and remote, moulding itself in the swift tide of subtropic light. As far as I could see not a twig had changed in the past six years and I remember thinking on that perfectly still and beautiful morning that this tree which had endured so long was symbolical of the changelessness and peacefulness of the high hills and in some static manner provided an object lesson to restive, contentious and combative mankind. Shelley's lines from "The Two Spirits" are not inappropriate:

Some say there is a precipice
Where one vast pine is frozen to ruin
O'er piles of snow and chasms of ice
'Mid Alpine mountains;
And that the languid storm pursuing
That wingéd shape, for ever flies
Round those hoar branches, aye renewing
Its aëry fountains.

* The Mountain Scene. Plate LXIV.
XIX. JOSHIMATH

The village and shrine of Joshimath is situated at the junction of the Alaknanda and Dhauli rivers. The pilgrim route to Badrinath passes through it and it is a halting place for some 50,000–60,000 pilgrims en route to the shrines of Shiva, Vishnu and other Hindu gods near the sources of the Ganges. Apart from an interesting temple dedicated to Shiva, Joshimath is an ugly little place and affords yet another instance of the march of civilisation in its corrugated-iron-roofed hovels. It is, however, redeemed to some extent by its situation for it is perched on a hillside some 1,500 feet above the rivers already mentioned, on the far side of which spring up the southernmost ramparts of the Badrinath and Zaskar ranges. Perhaps the photograph illustrates to some extent how much can be made out of an ugly or unpromising subject by means of clouds. The ugly little hovels are rendered almost beautiful beneath a vast canopy of monsoon cloud radiant in the afternoon sun. Remove these clouds and what remains? almost unrelieved ugliness. Photographers and artists owe much to a beneficent heaven which ever strives through sun and cloud, moon and stars to beautify the sordid growths with which men surround themselves.

XX. GOATS CROSSING THE DHAULI RIVER

Vehicular traffic is unknown in the Central Himalayas and sheep and goats are commonly employed to carry grain from the foothills and lower valleys to the upper valleys, where it is transferred to the backs of yaks and jhobus (half-breed yaks) and taken across the high passes into Tibet to be bartered for various commodities.
XXI. THE ALAKNANDA VALLEY

There are vaster Himalayan valleys than those of Garhwal and Kumaon. The Indus, Brahmaputra and Arun rivers discharge their waters through enormous gorges—Nanga Parbat for instance rises 23,000 feet out of the Indus valley—but there can be no finer valleys from the point of view of scenic variety and beauty than the valleys through which rush the waters of the Ganges. Through the tremendous gorges of the Alaknanda river the pilgrims trudge along a well made path towards their goal, Badrinath, the shrine of Shiva, the Destroyer, which is but a few miles from the source of the river said by the devout to be the true source of the Ganges, “where Shiva lived and the Ganges falls from the foot of Vishnu like the slender thread of a lotus flower.” The pilgrim season is from May to September and pilgrims of all classes from all over India, even the remote south, make the journey from Hardwar up the Alaknanda valley to Badrinath and Kedarnath. Unhappily disease is rife along the route and cholera, dysentery, typhoid and malaria exact their toll of the devout, whose notions as to hygiene and sanitation are of the most primitive nature despite the educative and remedial measures of the Indian Government.
XXII. A HINDU TEMPLE

The Alaknanda and Gangotri rivers, the two principal tributaries of the Ganges, are associated with Hindu religious mysticism, and the pilgrim routes in the district are rich in shrines where the devout may pay their respects to Shiva, Vishnu, Ganesh, the sun god, and other gods. Some of these shrines are of great antiquity for the pilgrimage to Kedarnath and Badrinath was instituted by Sankara, the destroyer of Buddhism in Northern India, in the seventh and eighth centuries. This photograph besides depicting a typical shrine also conveys something of the beauty and grandeur of the country. For people who have spent their lives on the plains of India it must be a remarkable experience to venture into this country of precipitous gorges, tumultuous snow waters and majestic peaks. The influence of the abode of the gods, Himachal (Himalaya), can be seen in the expression on their faces. Few seem to enjoy their pilgrimage, but all are overawed by their stupendous environment.
XXIII. IN THE ALAKNANDA VALLEY

It is seldom, even in the Himalayas, a country of infinite beauty and variety of scenery, that Nature, man and beast arrange themselves to a photographer’s satisfaction. This picture, however, is an exception. I was strolling up the Alaknanda Valley from Joshimath early one morning when I came on a scene of instant appeal to a photographer: a sunlit path, a graceful tree and a background to accentuate the brilliantly lit foreground and add depth and true range to the picture. One thing only was lacking—life of some kind, but I had not paused for more than a few seconds when a flock of sheep appeared, laden for the most part with bags of grain and driven by picturesque drovers. All unconsciously they completed what I believe to be one of the happiest photographs I have ever taken, and one which composes itself with that simplicity so essential in pictorial photography.
XXIV. A VILLAGE IN THE BHYUNDAR VALLEY

The upper valleys of Garhwal are populated by a hardy people, many of them shepherds, who eke out a precarious existence from little fields of millet, barley and vegetables. Wool and grain are the two principal commodities of Garhwal; the former is exported to the plains of India, the latter is transported over the high passes into Tibet. Such trading, particularly with Tibet, has resulted in a fusion of blood and a type with pronounced Mongolian characteristics is found in the upper villages on trade routes which traverse passes such as the Niti and Mana. These people are known as the Marcha Bhotias who, unlike some half breeds, combine many of the best qualities of both Indian and Tibetan races. Many are shepherds and, being natural mountaineers, become first-rate porters after a little training in the finer points of mountaineering.

XXV. CAMP FIRE

No incident of travel can recall pleasanter memories than a camp fire, that little circle of intimate and peaceful light which seems to concentrate within itself the joy and romance of travel. Photography of camp fire scenes is primarily a matter of film- or plate-speed and exposure. The smell of burning juniper or rhododendron is sufficient to convey one in an instant to the Himalayas there to live once more the calm star-filled nights and enjoy a companionship and communion such as only the wild can promote.
XXVI. BIRCH TREES AT THE BASE CAMP, BHYUNDAR VALLEY

My first base camp in the Bhyundar Valley was almost surrounded by silver birches with a lower frieze of purple and white-flowered rhododendrons. Between the silver birches, whose brilliant foliage trembled and shivered in the breeze like sunbeams in a pool, loomed a wall of rock peaks 20,000 feet high. It would be difficult to picture a more delightful contrast than that between the stern crags with their green-lipped glaciers and the delicate almost ethereal lacery of the silver birches. Yet such contrasts are never unharmonious in reality or in a photograph; for one aspect of nature serves but to enhance the beauty of another, the whole uniting in that perfection of being through which man is enabled to sense the supreme rhythm of the Universe. Art, music, and photography are merely vehicles for expressing this rhythm and beauty that through such expression man is inspired to see a little further into the heart of his surroundings.
Perhaps this photograph sums up as well as any other the beauty of the Bhyundar Valley. A flower-clad hillside, snow mountains and clouds are simple enough ingredients, but capable of being interpreted in many different ways. For me the photograph calls to mind a monsoon morning of bright sunlight and slow gathering clouds, and a temperature and climate like that of an English June, which I spent collecting and pressing plants. In the photograph the white blooms of *Anemone polyanthas* are prominent. I have seen this glorious anemone, which grows 2–4 feet high in the Bhyundar Valley, covering slopes so that they appeared white from a mile or more away. But this was only one of many flowers growing on the slopes of the valley and I collected about 200 different plants in a square mile. There may be other mountain valleys as rich or richer in their flora, but none where flowers, meadow, stream, woodland and peak unite in such diverse and beautiful vistas. In this flowerful valley combine the qualities that go to make the Central Himalayas one of the grandest yet withal one of the most verdant and beautiful regions of the world.
XXVIII. A MINOR PEAK, GARHWAL HIMALAYAS

The peak depicted in this photograph is about 17,000 feet high, a minor peak by Himalayan standards. It was climbed with little difficulty from the Bhyundar Valley and the ascent was impressed in my memory because I was very mountain sick, as I always am when I first go above 16,000 feet. It is natural that the highest Himalayan peaks should attract most attention, but to the mountaineer whose mountaineering is actuated by a love of the mountains rather than the competitive instinct the tens of thousands of minor peaks and unfrequented valleys of the Himalayas are more representative of the Himalayas than the giants of the range. Height is no measure of grandeur in mountains or a measure of interest and beauty to the true mountaineer, and to assess the golden age of Himalayan mountaineering as the age of major climbing and exploration is fallacious; the golden age embraces much more, and generations yet unborn will enjoy the same thrills that the earliest pioneers enjoyed in this magnificent country.
XXIX. THE ZASKAR RANGE

Panoramic views from high mountains are notoriously unsatisfactory as all sense of scale is lost in bird’s-eye views and the absence of prominent objects inspires apathy on the part of the viewer. The most beautiful, interesting and impressive views are those from minor summits, for the eye is led upwards as well as downwards and is better able to appreciate depth and height. In this photograph, a somewhat bewildering multiplicity of detail is simplified to some extent by the arrangement of the main lines and the dipping strata of the Zaskar Range assists the camera. Peaks built on no definite geological scheme are the most difficult to photograph effectively, and tangled rock spires such as the Dolomites, while being impressive to the eye, often as not, appear woebegone objects in a photograph. Line and form: estimate any scene to be photographed in these and do not be misled by mere size, extent or colour.
XXX. A SNOW PEAK, BHYUNDAR VALLEY

This peak to the south of the Bhyundar Valley provided a lesson in route finding. It is about 19,500 feet high and was climbed from a camp of about 15,000 feet. Stratified rocks usually possess lines of weakness which enable the mountaineer to work out a route, and in the present instance a long sloping shelf, the lowermost end of which was accessible via a gully, and a higher gully in the rock band above the shelf, gave access to the upper névé and summit ridge of the mountain over which the ascent was completed. I remember the ascent well because of the quantities of rhododendron tea imbibed before and after it. This beverage is prepared by boiling ordinary tea over a fire of dwarf rhododendrons, the only fuel at 15,000 feet in Garhwal, and letting the pungent smoke impregnate the tea. Rhododendron tea is the standard beverage of mountaineers in the Central Himalayas.
XXXI. A ROCK FACE, BHYUNDAR VALLEY

This photograph is included merely so that those who have never seen, or never want to see, a mountain may be given the opportunity of employing some wholly unnecessary adjective expressive of their appreciation of scale. The rock face is of course equally impressive without the miserable little men at the foot of it, but a certain etiquette in these matters demands that the miserable little men should be included, even inserted afterwards if necessary: actually they were there when I took this photograph. I am reminded of some engineering works where I once worked. A particularly small man was employed at a regular wage in order that the noble mechanisms constructed by the firm could be photographed in his presence. In the vicinity of the engineering works was a firm of model makers and these kept a specially large man whose hands I believed suffered from elephantiasis in order that the minuteness and exactitude of the models could be appreciated by a discriminating public.
XXXII. MONSOON MISTS

The monsoon, as not everyone knows, is a current of warm moisture-charged air from the equatorial regions which produces effects in India and elsewhere very similar to those experienced during an average August in Britain except that in India the climate is pleasantly warm. Its effect upon the Himalayas is determined largely by the breadth of the Himalayas. Thus in the Eastern Himalayas where the high peaks form a comparatively narrow range above the foothills, the monsoon rages with great violence and has become very unpopular with Everest expeditions owing to the fact that it deposits large quantities of snow above 21,000 feet. In Garhwal, however, owing to the moderate height of the mountains, coupled with the breadth of the main Himalayan range at this point, it is possible to climb during the monsoon season provided that the climber keeps well in the north of the district near the Tibetan frontier. This photograph, taken from a minor peak above the Bhyundar Valley, shows mists flooding up the Alaknanda Valley which forms a natural channel for the monsoon current as well as for pilgrims, traders, mountaineers, Yogis, yaks, etc.
XXXIII. THE SECOND BASE CAMP

My second base camp in the Bhyundar Valley was on a meadow at about 12,000 feet embowered in flowers, prominent among which was a magnificent white anemone (*A. polyanthes*), a near relative of the well-known *Anemone narcissiflora* of the Alps and other parts of Europe. Other flowers growing within a few yards of the tents included the rare golden lily-like *Nomocaris oxypetala*, the blue *Nomocaris nana*, *Corydalis cachemiriana*, *Viola biflora*, *Polemonium caeruleum*, *Delphinium Brunonianum*, *Eritrichium strictum*, yellow and red Potentillas.

XXXIV. ANDROSACE PRIMULOIDES

“Pretty and easy” is how one nurseryman’s catalogue describes *Androsace primuloides*, but to appreciate this beautiful rock jasmine you must see it flooding in a rosy cascade over a boulder under the deep blue of the Himalayan sky, charging the still air about it with an indescribable perfume.
XXXV. A MEADOW: BHYUNDAR VALLEY

The Bhyundar Valley is remarkable in that the traveller feels as much cut off in it as though he had been transported to some Shangri La. This impression is due to the fact that the upper portion of the valley lies almost at right angles to the lower and is separated from the latter by the narrow gorge seen in this photograph. Having passed through the gorge the traveller emerges as it were on to the Fields of Avalon, meadows and slopes bright with flowers. Almost every evening during my stay in the valley a mist boiled up between the jaws of the gorge only to melt away a few minutes later. The photograph shows the mist-wreathed gorge with a carpet of flowers in the foreground, a gentle, charming and perfect contrast to the dark crags that spring thousands of feet out of the valley.
XXXVI. A DELL: BHYUNDAR VALLEY

The charm of the Bhyundar Valley lies not only in its wealth of flora but in the unsuspected dells and alps that adorn the hillsides with carpets of bloom set amidst silver birches, rhododendrons and flowering shrubs. In this photograph taken in late June white-flowered Anemone polyanthes are blooming, whilst between them the foliage of a pearly everlasting (Anaphalis nubigena), the fronds of a fern, the leaves of a cinquefoil (Potentilla argyrophylla) and the thistle-like foliage of a morina (M. longifolia) may be observed. It would be difficult to picture a more delightful spot than this, with its foreground of flowers and shrubs and its background of sweeping rock peaks biting into the slow-pacing clouds, and I well remember the morning I took the photograph, one typical of Garhwal in June; a brilliant sun, crystal clear and cool atmosphere and diaphanous clouds athwart a sky of deepest blue.
XXXVII. A FLOWER-FILLED GULLY: BHYUNDAR VALLEY

The fertility of Garhwal at a height of about 13,000 feet is particularly evident in gullies which carry down the snow water in the spring. Many moisture loving plants are found in such situations whilst the crags and turfy ledges are the home of innumerable rock plants. In this photograph rhododendrons are seen on the right, juniper on the crag to the left and silver birches in the background. Photographs taken with the camera tilted downwards are liable to be as unsatisfactory as the reverse, and the only means by which a sense of depth can be conveyed is to arrange the background as cunningly as possible so that its lines direct the eye into the valley depths. It is the lines of a photograph that convey a sense of scale not detail, however skilfully this may be inserted. I make no claim for this photograph, but take away the sweeping lines of the background and what remains? It is on line alone that its merit, if any, depends.
This study of bracken might have been photographed anywhere; actually it was taken under a shadowed crag in the Bhyundar Valley. Such studies which depend entirely on the grace and arrangement of the subject and upon a careful arrangement of lighting bring the photographs in close touch with the principles underlying pictorial photography. Landscape work by comparison is simple and anyone who obeys a few simple rules can make pleasing pictures, but close-up studies of still-life subjects demand a highly specialised technique allied to an unerring artistic sense and taste. This picture is woefully inadequate in expressing what I tried to capture, the delicate beauty of a few bracken fronds. Equipped with elaborate apparatus, and the appurtenances of the studio the same subject could be rendered effectively, but to do this the ardent and enthusiastic photographer would have to contort himself in certain sinuous and inelegant attitudes on a small ledge under an overhanging crag, with a considerable drop waiting to receive him and his apparatus in the event of a false move.
XXXIX. CUSHION SAXIFRAGE

Plant life in the high Himalayas is similar to that of the high Alps. Plants which attain to considerable dimensions at moderate elevations become close compacted cushions of foliage when exposed to the bitter winds and cold of 16,000–20,000 feet. In Tibet, flowers are almost stemless owing to the fierce cold winds but their blooms are huge, and to come upon such a saxifrage as this, covered in hundreds of starry blooms, growing on an arid mountainside, is a delightful experience. Such plants may adapt themselves to the British climate but unhappily our moist airs and warm winters cause them to lose their compactness and they become lank and attenuated. The adaptability of plants to a wide range of altitude is remarkable. I have seen a balsam (Impatiens Roylei) growing 8 feet tall at 7,000 feet and the same species as many inches tall at 12,000–13,000 feet.
XL. CAMP FIRE

Travel would be a poor thing without a fire to warm and solace the traveller at the end of a day's march. My most pleasant memories of mountaineering in Garhwal are associated with evenings spent by the camp fire, and it needs but a whiff of juniper or dwarf rhododendron smoke to transport me in an instant to the Himalayas. At my base camp in the Bhyundar Valley my Tibetan porters used to build a fire every evening and I would sit by it peacefully and contentedly long after the afterglow had faded from the peaks and the sky was alight with innumerable stars which at these clear moisture-free elevations sparkle with amazing brilliancy. It is at such moments when the air is still and the smoke stands straight up to heaven that the romance of travel and the verities of the Universe are apparent to the traveller.
MOONLIGHT: ABOVE THE BHYUNDAR VALLEY

Moonlit landscapes must ever tempt the photographer, but unfortunately photographs taken by moonlight too often suggest badly exposed daylight photographs. The photograph in question was taken from a bivouac camp above the Bhyundar Valley. I cannot remember what exposure I gave the film; in moonlight photography it is best to expose for a minute or so and hope for the best whilst expecting the worst. It was a beautiful scene and the photograph does not render it justice. I recollect looking out of my tent, which was perched on a little shelf some 3,000 feet above the valley, over soft shawls of stationary moonlit mist to the great buttresses and ice-clad summit of Hathi Parbat, a peak of 21,200 feet.
XLII. A SHEPHERD OF THE BHUNDAR VALLEY

From July to September sheep and goats graze in the upper valleys of Garhwal under the charge of shepherds who build stone huts which they roof with birch bark. Having none of the social or economic problems of European races the people of this district are happy and peaceful, and the shepherd in this photograph is a representative type. He had discovered something which millionaires or armament manufacturers cannot purchase, peace and happiness. Every day he brought me sheep’s milk. He neither expected nor demanded payment for this, and indeed money had little meaning or value to him. So I presented him on occasion with an empty biscuit tin which delighted him beyond measure. Once I gave him a tin which had some biscuits still remaining within it. He peered suspiciously at the biscuits, turned them out on to the ground and made off with the empty tin smiling happily.
XLIII. NILGIRI PARBAT

It is difficult in amateur photography to dissociate sentiment and association from technical and artistic merit. To me this is technically and artistically the best photograph in this book, but the unbiassed reader may hold a very different view. In any case Nilgiri Parbat, 21,264 feet, is associated with the longest and finest snow and ice expedition of my mountaineering experience. The photograph was taken from the north and shows the upper ice face of the peak by which the ascent was completed. Apart from the intrinsic beauty and grandeur of the subject, for Nilgiri Parbat is one of the finest peaks of its height in the Garhwal Himalayas, the photograph is an example of what may be achieved by lighting and fortuitous chance. The mist, which emphasizes height, depth and distance was there by chance, but the lighting (early morning) was carefully arranged, and the photograph was taken looking across the crest of an ice-fall. The gradation of lighting was singularly beautiful and the ice face of the peak appears beautifully moulded owing to the angle at which the sun’s rays are touching it. In a word conditions were perfect for photography, and I was indeed fortunate to find them so with such a subject for my camera.
During the traverse of a 16,500 feet pass north of the Bhyundar Valley I came on some tracks in the snow, apparently those of a biped, which my Tibetan porters declared to be those of a Mirka or Snowman. I made measurements and took a number of photographs then followed up the tracks for some distance. The porters were very loath to accompany me, but eventually did so as they said that the Snowman walks with his toes behind him and was therefore coming not going. But when I asked them to accompany me in the reverse direction they refused: this was the direction in which the Snowman had gone and if we came up with him we should all die horribly. So I went alone and followed the tracks to a small cave. There were tracks coming out of the cave but none going in and I wondered whether the porters were right. As an ice axe is a poor defence against an Abominable Snowman I stood at a distance and threw a stone into the cave. Nothing happened, so I looked in; there was of course nothing there and the single track was easily explained by the "snowman" having jumped down from some rocks into the snow at the mouth of the cave.

The zoological authorities identified the tracks as those of a bear (*Ursus arctos Isabellinus*), but the Great British Public were by no means prepared to accept this prosaic explanation of the Abominable Snowman and the columns of *The Times* shook and thundered with the bellicose letters of his indignant defenders. For my part I welcome this opportunity of making myself clear. I sincerely hope there is an Abominable Snowman. In an unromantic age which cannot produce anything better than the Sea Serpent and the Loch Ness Monster there is something stimulating in the possibility of an Abominable Snowman, to say nothing of an Abominable Snowwoman and, not least of all, an Abominable Snowbaby.
XLVII. A CAMP ON THE BANKE PLATEAU

The Banke Plateau is the name given to a series of snowfields forming part of a glacier system between the East Kamet and Banke glaciers. Its presence was unsuspected till 1937 when Lt. R. A. Gardiner in the course of a surveying expedition discovered it and mapped it. Later in the same summer Captain P. R. Oliver and I visited it hoping to find a route from it to the summit of the Mana Peak, 23,860 feet. The camp in this photograph was on the middlemost of the three main snowfields and was the third camp pitched above the Base Camp in the Banke Valley. Unhappily when a lantern slide was made from the negative the photographer carefully eliminated the camp believing it to be a fault in the negative. Rock peaks and towering monsoon clouds make an appropriate background to this lonely waste of snow which is almost arctic in its remoteness and solitude.
XLVIII. KAMET

The best photograph I have been able to take of Kamet, 23,447 feet, was from the slopes of an unnamed peak of 21,400 feet on the ridge between the East Kamet Glacier and the Banke Plateau. Kamet was climbed in 1931 by a small expedition of which I was a member and the route followed is well seen in this photograph. Having established a base camp and camp 1 on the East Kamet Glacier, seen some 4,000 feet beneath, camp 2 was pitched round the bend of the glacier, camp 3 on a concealed plateau to the right of the photograph, camp 4 on the prominent ice tongue and camp 5, 23,300 feet, just below Meade’s Col which is to the right of the summit and between it and the minor peak, the East Ibi Gamin. From camp 5 two parties reached the summit after climbing the skyline slope. Although easy, except for the final slope which was steep, the ascent was made difficult by soft powdery snow. The cold was also severe and several members were frost-bitten, Lewa the Sirdar of the porters being so seriously affected that he subsequently lost all his toes.
XLIX. GATHERING MIST: NILGIRI PARBAT

This photograph, taken from approximately the same direction as No. XXXIX, shows monsoon mists gathering about Nilgiri Parbat. Such photographs, which show the summit of a peak floating mid-aerially in the clouds, possess an ethereal quality which renders them especially attractive both technically and artistically. Art is to suggest as well as to reveal and in this clouds are the greatest ally of the photographer. In mountain photography I have always accepted clouds as an integral part of a landscape, so much so that I omitted mention of them in "The Mountain Scene" when dealing with the technique of mountain photography. The fact is that the cloudy grandeur of the heavens beautifies many a photograph which would otherwise be mediocre. I am frequently asked what filters I use. In the present instance no filter was employed and the picture was an ordinary "snap" on "Panatomic" film.
L. PEAK 21,400 FEET AND THE BANKE PLATEAU

This peak was climbed without difficulty via the left-hand skyline by Capt. Oliver and myself from a camp on the Banke Plateau. The photograph suggests the extent and lovely charm of the plateau on which we spent some interesting and delightful days trying to discover a route to the Mana Peak.

LI. ON THE BANKE PLATEAU

This photograph more than any other reveals the remoteness and beauty of the "Urns of silent snow," though urn is perhaps scarcely descriptive of the snow ridge in the foreground which separates the uppermost and middlemost snowfields of the Banke Plateau. It was a perfect morning when this photograph was taken and the rays of the rising sun revealed the texture of recently fallen snow so that we seemed to tread some finely woven and cross-woven fabric of pure silver. In the background are Nanda Devi, Dunagiri, and the peaks of the Zaskar range.
Our third camp on the Banke Plateau was pitched in drizzling snow and dense mist. We were uncertain as to our position, for all that was visible was a waste of virgin snowfield stretching mysteriously into the mist, but towards evening the mists suddenly broke up and dissolved revealing a scene of ethereal beauty. From a low ridge immediately above the camp we gazed across the uppermost bay of the series of snowfields forming the Banke Plateau to Peak 22,481 feet. This snowfield breaks away at its southernmost edge in a tremendous ice-fall descending towards the Banke Glacier, the green-lipped walls and towers of which were in stern contrast to the unbroken silver-lit snowfield stretched like a fairy strand beneath the shadowed ice-slopes and precipices of Peak 22,481 feet. It was a scene to delight a photographer and a brilliant shawl of fast shredding mist perfected, if that were possible, the beauty of the composition. It was only necessary to shield the lens from the direct rays of the sun and snap an unfiltered picture. Next day we ascended Peak 22,481 feet via the south ridge, which forms the left hand skyline in the picture, reaching the summit after a stiff ice climb.
LIII. LOOKING WEST FROM THE ZASKAR PASS

The Zaskar Pass 18,992 feet is a pass through the Zaskar Range some 3 miles south of the Mana Peak and links the Dhauli and Alaknanda Valleys. Having failed to climb the Mana Peak from the Banke Plateau, Oliver and I ascended the Banke Glacier to the pass with the intention of reconnoitring the south side of the Mana Peak. The pass, which had been crossed for the first time only a few weeks previously by Lieut. R. A. Gardiner of the Survey of India, is entirely without difficulty and it is curious that it is unknown to the inhabitants of the Dhauli and Alaknanda valleys. The view looking westwards of the Badrinath Peaks (right) and the isolated peak of Nilkanta is magnificent. The source of the Alaknanda River is in the valley between these peaks.

LIV. PORTERS DESCENDING FROM THE 20,000 FEET CAMP: MANA PEAK

After Oliver and I had prospected a route to the Mana Peak over an intermediate peak of about 21,500 feet we carried up a bivouac camp to 20,000 feet, the highest point accessible to porters without extreme difficulty. This photograph taken from the camp depicts porters descending the steep snow ridge to the main camp on the Zaskar Pass. In the background are the Badrinath Peaks.
LV. PITCHING THE 20,000 FEET CAMP: MANA PEAK

The site of the 20,000 feet camp on the Mana Peak was scarcely encouraging, for cliffs fell sheer to the Banke Glacier, but Sherpa and Bhotia porters are capable of transforming the most barren and inhospitable mountainside into a haven of rest and repose, and after an hour’s work a platform for the small Meade tent was constructed. The situation reminded me strongly of certain ill-designed houses in which the incautious guest is liable to step out of his bedroom door straight down a flight of stairs. In this tent Oliver and I spent a very cold and uncomfortable night prior to attempting the Mana Peak. Yet we could scarcely grumble at petty discomforts; the magnificent prospect commanded by our camp more than compensated for these and sunset from our eyrie was an unforgettable sight.
Hanging glaciers are formed where a glacier or névé field rests on a shelf or in a hollow above cliffs. As the ice moves downwards it breaks away on the edge of the cliffs leaving sheer ice cliffs along the crest. Sometimes, where the ice field is some hundreds of feet thick, avalanches are of enormous dimensions and hundreds of thousands of tons of ice sweep downwards, displacing the air before them which rushes along whirling up the loose snow in suffocating clouds. Where the cliffs are thousands of feet high, as in the case of the north face of K.2, the ice is ground to powder but where they are not very high, or the avalanche pours down slopes, the weight and momentum of the ice blocks may carry the avalanche half a mile or more across a level glacier. Such avalanches are the deadliest weapon of the Himalayas and it was an avalanche of this kind that overwhelmed the 1937 German Nanga Parbat Expedition.
LVII. AN ICE WALL: MANA PEAK

This obstacle, formed by the upper lip of a crevasse which split the snow ridge of Peak 21,500 feet transversely, was climbed at a point not in the photograph where it was not so steep as it appears here. Such studies of ice offer infinite possibilities to the photographer. Artistically this picture with its bold lines and background of ice peaks is bizarre, indeed almost surrealistic. There is nothing restful in its lines or in the vista of torn and shattered ice, but there is always repose in shining snow and deep blue sky. Photographs of snow and ice scenery appear much more effective when projected as lantern slides for their very nature demands a lighting and brilliance impossible to reproduce in a print.
LVIII. PORTERS ON THE MANA PEAK

The Sherpas from the Sola Khumbu Valley in northern Nepal are Tibetan in origin and Buddhists by religion; the Bhotia is pure Tibetan. Both these types have done magnificent work on Mount Everest, Kangchenjunga, Nanga Parbat, Nanda Devi, Kamet and many other Himalayan peaks. Pioneers such as General the Hon. C. G. Bruce and Dr. A. M. Kellas were responsible for the early training of these men in mountain craft and for building up a tradition and an esprit de corps comparable with that of the Alpine guide. Their principal characteristics are cheerfulness, toughness to the nth degree, a gambling instinct which prohibits thought of the morrow or even of the immediate future, and a childlike faith in their employers. In the photograph the porters are being led by Wangdi Nurbu (Ondi), a grim visaged little man, whose name will be remembered in connection with many Himalayan expeditions, who is one of the most skilful mountaineers of the Darjeeling porter corps. I venture the prophecy that he will do great work on Mount Everest in 1938.*

* He did. Since these lines were written he took part in establishing the highest camp on the mountain.
LIX. THE MANA PEAK FROM THE SHOULDER

The Mana Peak provided Oliver and me with the finest, longest and hardest Himalayan climb of our experience. Leaving camp at 5 a.m. we traversed an intermediate peak of 21,500 feet to a small plateau. Crossing the latter, we attempted to reach the crest of the north-west ridge but were prevented in this by an ice slope fully 1,000 feet high. The sole alternative was to complete the ascent by the south ridge and after a steep and very difficult climb up snow, rocks and ice we gained a shoulder of the ridge at a height of about 22,500 feet. The photograph was taken from the shoulder looking along the south ridge. The rock of the ridge is firm and excellent to climb. Unfortunately we were too tired to enjoy the climb and at about 800 feet from the summit Oliver decided not to continue. As the weather was perfect I completed the climb by myself and after a difficult scramble reached the summit at about 1:30 p.m.
LX. LOOKING SOUTH-EAST FROM THE SUMMIT OF THE MANA PEAK

As already mentioned, panoramic views from high mountains are unsatisfactory. What is magnificent and awe-inspiring to the eye is liable to become petty and mean when reduced to the paltry dimensions of a film. Thus, my memory of the superb panorama from the Mana Peak is aided but little by the photographs I took. This is the most interesting picture, though of all the things seen I remember best a glimpse of the plateau of Tibet laid like a golden strand beyond the snow foam of the Himalayas, chequered with slow moving cloud shadows and stretching illimitably northwards into Central Asia. This photograph shows peaks 21,400 feet and 22,481 feet on the edge of the Banke Plateau which is concealed behind them and masses of monsoon cloud accumulating in the south.
LXI. THE ALAKNANDA VALLEY NEAR BADRINATH

The pilgrim route to Badrinath follows the Alaknanda Valley and the pilgrim passes through a series of noble gorges in the jaws of which the glacial waters of the Alaknanda River rage tumultuously on their long journey to the plains of India which, as the Ganges, they irrigate and fertilise. Perhaps it is for this last reason that the Indians have come to look upon the inexhaustible reservoirs of eternal snow as the abiding places of their gods; and the most prosaic of Europeans must feel the influence of this country which is like Switzerland on a grand scale, with deep and tremendously steep-sided valleys, forests, meadows and giant peaks arrayed beneath a sky of gentian blue from which the sub-tropical sun shines with intense lambent heat.
LXII. A BRIDGE SPANNING THE ALAKNANDA RIVER

This is an excellent example of a native-built bridge in the Garhwal Himalayas. Unlike the Tibetans and Sikkimese, who construct rope or frail bamboo bridges, the shepherds of Garhwal make solid structures for themselves and their flocks and this bridge, which is built on the correct cantilever principle, spans the otherwise impassable Alaknanda River which carries a tremendous volume of water from the glaciers of northern Garhwal during the monsoon season.

LXIII. VIEW FROM THE SOUTH-EAST RIDGE OF NILKANTA

Nilkanta, 21,600 feet, is one of the finest peaks of its height in the Central Himalayas and worthy to rank in grace and beauty with Siniolchu, in the Kangchenjunga range. Oliver and I attempted to climb it via the south-east ridge but encountered very bad weather which forced us to retreat when about 2,000 feet from the summit. This photograph taken early one morning during a brief spell of fine weather gives some idea of the complexity of the Garhwal Himalayas. Beneath is the Alaknanda Valley and beyond in the centre Nanda Devi with Dunagiri on the left and Trisul on the extreme right.
LXIV. SHEPHERDS OF LATA KHARAK

Summer grazing in Garhwal and Kumaon is very similar to that of Switzerland except that the alps in this steep country are not to be compared in extent with those of Switzerland and villagers must take turns at grazing their sheep and goats. The photograph taken en route to the Rishi Valley and Dunagiri shows the delightful alp known as Lata Kharak which is reached after a steep ascent of 5,000 feet from Lata village in the Dhauli Valley. The sky is typical of the monsoon, with afternoon clouds banking up above the hot deep trench of the Dhauli valley preparatory to heavy thundery rain and hailstorms. This is yet another picture which has as its prime ingredients the majestic citadels of heaven—clouds, at once the joy and despair of the photographer.
LXV. THE 20,000 FEET CAMP: DUNAGIRI

Dunagiri, the splendid mountain north-west of Nanda Devi, rises 16,000 feet out of the Dhauli Valley. It was reconnoitred by Dr. T. G. Longstaff in 1907 when he crossed the Bagini Pass and was attempted by Mr. E. E. Shipton in 1936 with one Sherpa porter, via the south-west ridge, which Mr. Shipton forced to a point only 1,000 feet below the summit. Oliver and I attempted the mountain by Shipton's route and after much bad weather established a camp at 20,000 feet at the foot of the south-west ridge. It was our intention to push up a higher camp from this advanced base and attempt the summit.

LXVI. NANDA DEVI FROM THE 20,000 FEET CAMP: DUNAGIRI

Nanda Devi, 25,660 feet, the highest peak in the British Empire, is almost surrounded by a crater-like ring of peaks and it was not until 1935 that E. E. Shipton and H. W. Tilman succeeded in forcing the hitherto inaccessible gorges of the Rishi Valley and discovering a practicable route up the mountain from the south-west. This reconnaissance was followed in 1936 by the Anglo-American Expedition and Tilman and N. E. Odell reached the summit.
LXVII. LOOKING NORTH-WEST FROM THE 20,000 FEET CAMP:
DUNAGIRI

There can be few peaks even in the Himalayas which reward the mountaineer with grander views than Dunagiri, and this photograph, which shows Kamet in the background with Hathi Parbat nearer the camera and the pointed summit of the Mana Peak just showing in between, gives a slight idea of the terrific nature of the country. When photographing such panoramic views lighting is of paramount importance, and it is only through choosing a time of day when the lighting is such as to give depth to the picture that the eye is in the slightest degree able to appreciate the scale of such a landscape. Even so it is difficult to remember that the gaze ranges across the deep and fertile Dhauli Valley, for panoramic views from great altitudes tend to accentuate horizontal distance to the exclusion of depth.
Sunset photographs from mountains are easy to take and are merely matters of exposure and of choosing a vantage point. What is much more difficult is finding the right sunset! The sunset of which this photograph gives but a poor idea, primarily because it cannot render the glowing colours, was one of the grandest it has ever been my privilege to witness. It occurred in a temporary clearance during a succession of blizzards. It might be thought that the range of lighting is exaggerated but this is not so. Night has already fallen in the Dhauli Valley 16,000 feet beneath and the sun is about to disappear behind some far ranges in the west after spilling its last ruddy glare between banks of cloud on to the highest peaks.
LXIX. THE SOUTH-WEST RIDGE OF DUNAGIRI

This photograph shows the 20,000 feet camp and the south-west ridge of Dunagiri rising to the shoulder of the mountain which is separated from the summit by an ice ridge about one mile in length. The tracks made by Oliver and myself during a preliminary reconnaissance are visible on the lower part of the ridge, which appears so foreshortened that if a middle point in the picture be taken the uppermost portion is actually about twice the height of the lowermost. Our highest camp at about 21,000 feet was on the conspicuous break in the ridge at the crest of the sunlit portion. Very bad weather was experienced at this camp and three days of blizzards ruined our chances of success by plastering the mountain with powdery snow.
LXX. THE SOUTH SLOPE OF DUNAGIRI

Photographically a picture of a mountain side has little to commend it, and it is difficult if not impossible to commit to a film one scrap of the sense of height and isolation experienced by the mountaineer climbing such a slope as this. Unrelenting steepness and exposure, coupled with simplicity of outline are the concomitants of photographs of this nature. The slope in question steepens if anything below the shoulder of Dunagiri. In the background is Changabang, a peak of extraordinary steepness and typical of a certain type of Himalayan peak.
LXXI. BELOW THE SHOULDER: DUNAGIRI

No Himalayan peak that I have climbed upon save possibly Mount Everest has impressed me with a greater sense of height than did Dunagiri. Experience in mountaineering is liable to blunt any feeling of exhilaration engendered by gazing down from a high mountain into a valley, whilst the scale and absence of recognisable objects makes it difficult to appreciate to the full the majesty of downward views.

The greatest mountainside in the world is the face of Nanga Parbat above the Indus Valley, a rise of 23,000 feet, and there are other terrific mountain sides such as the north face of K.2 and the southern slopes of Everest. This photograph, taken at over 22,000 feet on Dunagiri, shows a valley of little more than 6,000 feet, and I well remember a feeling of being infinitely removed from the lower world as Oliver and I climbed up towards the summit ridge.
From the shoulder of Dunagiri a knife-like snow ridge stretches for nearly one mile towards the summit of the mountain. In 1936 when Mr. E. E. Shipton attempted the ascent the ridge was very icy and lack of time to undertake the large amount of stepcutting required to traverse it prevented him from reaching the summit. Oliver and I found the reverse conditions in 1937 as bad weather had accumulated powdery snow on the ridge to a considerable depth whilst wind had formed many dangerous cornices which meant that we had to traverse the side of the ridge instead of the crest. Even so, a cornice collapsed beneath the leader and we narrowly escaped disaster. Further along the ridge becomes even narrower and we were finally forced to traverse well below the crest on a slope so steep that it was only possible to progress by edging along sideways. The snow was in the worst possible condition—2–3 feet of loose flouiry stuff resting on ice—and this combined with a gale and intense cold presently induced us to retreat.
LXXIII. DIBRUGHETA

The mountaineer returning from Nanda Devi or Dunagiri passes through the Rishi Valley in which for some days he traverses very steep slopes. Suddenly, however, he comes to the fair alp known to the local shepherds as Dibrugheta, an alp so charming and unexpected that Mr. H. W. Tilman described it as "a horizontal oasis in a vertical desert." In 1937 monsoon rain drenched Oliver and me day after day in the Rishi Valley, but the day we camped at Dibrugheta was brilliantly fine and we lounged at our ease on a flower-clad meadow revelling in hot sunshine. This photograph gives some idea of the beauty of the alp with the slabby cliffs of "The Curtain" peak in the background. What it does not depict is the Rishi River many thousands of feet beneath in the jaws of the Rishi Valley and the great snow peaks of Trisul and Nanda Ghunti which combine to make this one of the fairest and grandest scenes in the Garhwal Himalayas.
I well remember the morning when this photograph was taken. It was a morning in late summer and hillside and forest were brilliantly colourful and marvellously fresh after a night of monsoon rain. Light clouds poised serenely on the higher peaks were melting rapidly in the hot sun and at my feet the bracken, already full grown, glistened with dew. And between the bracken fronds, perfectly still in the limpid unmoving air, innumerable flowers lifted their heads. Most prominent was the great *Anemone polyanthes* with its enormous umbels of white bloom which are visible in the photograph, and I hope that many a British garden will be beautified by this plant the seed of which I collected later. There was indeed every combination that the heart of the photographer could desire; flower, stream, forest, peak and cloud. Peacefulness was the supreme motif and it may be that the photograph, besides revealing a little of the beauty of "The Valley of Flowers," also conveys something of this most desirable of natural and human qualities.
A question the mountaineer returned from the Himalayas or other of the world's great mountain ranges is often asked is, "Do you not find the British hills insignificant and dull?" The answer is "no," for it is a petty outlook that measures the worth of beauty in terms of size and scale. Beauty is as potent and perceptible when viewed through the microscope as it is when viewed from the summit of Mount Everest. In particular the beauty of the British hills is of all natural beauty the least dependent on scale, and our reverence for it is strengthened not weakened by contrast. For my part I would as soon spend a day in a Highland glen as I would in the most majestic valley of the Himalayas; for the beauty of our hills is the beauty of home; the softness of colour and distance, the near presence of the ocean, the glory that pervades our moisture-charged atmosphere, are a part of us and of those ideals and traditions which permeate every field, woodland and homestead of the British Isles.