SKETCH-MAP OF THE JOURNEYS DESCRIBED

[Map showing routes through various regions such as Gilgit, Karakoram, Indus River, Drosai Plains, and key cities and features like Skardu, Shigar, and Skardu.]

----- Motor Road
------- Road in 1935 and 1938
------------- Road in 1937
------------- Road in 1934

Scale:
0 20 40 60 miles
The Everlasting Hills

BY

JAMES WALLER
("J. W.")

WITH 64 FULL-PAGE ILLUSTRATIONS

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FOREWORD

There is an impression that Himalayan climbing is only for the expert and the superman. The many fine books written of recent years about the adventures of single expeditions have been bound to leave this impression. But, in the opinion of the author, it is an idea that is harmful to the sport of mountaineering, in that it deters men who have the opportunity from taking part in one of the greatest of sports. Admittedly the Himalayas are a long way from England, and to climb in them is therefore expensive for men living in England; but the expense can be less than would be expected; and for soldiers and others stationed in India, climbing can be carried out at no greater cost than other sports, like shooting, pigsticking, and hunting. The author has keenly followed these sports, and is of the opinion that mountaineering is the finest of them all.

The reader may not agree with this; but this book is written in an attempt to convince him that mountaineering is a worth-while sport for the ordinary man. It sets out to show the
mountaineering progress of a gunner subaltern between the ages of twenty-one and twenty-seven; a subaltern who has not yet achieved the rank of expert, but who has had experiences in the hills which have determined him to go on and so qualify. It is a plain story, attempting to show the author's increasing perception of the marvels of the Himalayas, and his increasing experience as each season passed.

It does not in any way set out to be a guidebook to the peaks mentioned. The reader will find few details of routes; and few hints on how to organise an expedition: all that has been covered by the author in the Alpine and Himalayan journals would be out of place in the present work. But if it should encourage any young man to go climbing in the Himalayas, its object will have been achieved.

J. WALLER.

H.T. NEURALIA,
18th February 1939.
# CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAP.</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. FIRST SCRAMBLES, 1933</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. NUN KUN, 1934</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. SALTORO KANGRI, 1935</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. SALTORO KANGRI, 1935—continued</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. SWITZERLAND, 1936</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI. THE KASHMIR ALPS, 1937</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII. MASHERBRUM, 1938</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII. MASHERBRUM—continued</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IX. MASHERBRUM—continued</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X. THE FUTURE</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plate</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Facing page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>The 15,928-foot high peak above Thajiwas</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>The great north-face couloir of 15,928 feet</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>I was forced to look downwards</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>The final ice-cliff</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>The Buttress Peak</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Our road towards Kargil</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>The single winding street of Kargil</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Camp 2 at 17,000 feet on Nun, with Z I in the background</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>The 20,000-foot Camp and the slopes leading to the Plateau</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>The Saltoro Spires</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>The path crawled along the faces of high, red precipices</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Paying off the coolies, and engaging new ones</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(The photograph shows Hunt, Brotherhood, and Noor Mohammed)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>The Kondus Valley at its junction with the Saltoro, at Dansam</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Granite peaks above the lower Likah Glacier</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>The men of Khorkondus</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>The coolies leading up the uninteresting moraine</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

17. Dawa Tandup leading his party of coolies .... 66
18. Camp 3, Saltoro Kangri, at about 18,000 feet, on top of the Likah Col .... 68
19. Camp 3A was pitched near the point where the coolies are shown in the photograph .... 70
20. Camp 3A and Saltoro Kangri from the south .... 74
21. June 1st in Camp 3A. John Hunt coiling a rope, with Saltoro Kangri and its plume behind .... 76
22. The ice-slopes on the east of the south-east ridge of Saltoro Kangri .... 78
23. Palden climbing on the east side of the south-east ridge of Saltoro Kangri .... 80
   (The rock face on the left is vertical)
24. Camp 4 was pitched on the snowfield at the foot of the snow-ridge, leading to the sunlit ledge. Camp 5 was set on this ledge. Camp 6 was about half-way up the farther face .... 82
25. About 2000 feet of the face above Camp 5 .... 84
   (The 'trace' over the 'first' and 'second waves' is clear)
26. Hunt and Brotherhood led .... 86
   (The 'first wave' above Camp 5)
27. The Matterhorn from the top of the Dent Blanche .... 92
28. View from the top of the Ober Gabelhorn .... 94
29. View from the top of the Täschhorn .... 98
30. The Dent D'Herens .... 100
   (There is a party of three climbers in the deep shadow)
31. Sigismund on the Weisshorn .... 102
32. Baggage ponies fording a river on the Deosai Plains .... 104
33. The highest point reached was the foot of the pyramid, just over 16,400 feet .... 106
34. The west ridge of Nun from Camp 3 .... 108
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Illustration</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>35. Camp 2 at about 16,500 feet, and the west ridge of Nun</td>
<td>p. 110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36. The gorge of the Zoji La</td>
<td>p. 114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37. The Zoji La</td>
<td>p. 126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38. Matayan, the top village on the Ladakh side of the Zoji La</td>
<td>p. 130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39. Archery in Baltistan</td>
<td>p. 132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40. Baltis ploughing with Zos just below the village of Hushe</td>
<td>p. 134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41. Near Kargil, showing the apricot blossom</td>
<td>p. 136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42. The Indus Valley</td>
<td>p. 138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43. Crossing the Indus</td>
<td>p. 140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44. The boatmen blowing up the skins preparatory to embarking</td>
<td>p. 142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45. Smoking a ‘sand-pipe’ in the Shyok</td>
<td>p. 144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46. One of the Gurkhas and the Reconnaissance Camp on the Masherbrum Glacier</td>
<td>p. 146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47. Masherbrum from above Hushe</td>
<td>p. 148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48. Hussein, a Balti porter who is as good as a Sherpa</td>
<td>p. 150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49. Masherbrum falls sheer to the head of the glacier</td>
<td>p. 152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50. The Sérac Glacier, the Dome (in centre) and Masherbrum (on left)</td>
<td>p. 154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51. The rocks in the highest snow face were those reached by Harrison and Hodgkin (The right-hand peak (north) is the higher)</td>
<td>p. 156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52. The foot of the Sérac Glacier, the Dome and Masherbrum</td>
<td>p. 158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53. Approaching Camp I with the second relay of loads on 1st June</td>
<td>p. 160</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

54. Hodgkin and Graham Brown, with two porters, returning to Camp I on 1st June . . . 162

55. Camp 4, after the twenty-four hour blizzard, showing how the snow had piled up . . . 164
   Photo by R. A. Hodgkin

56. The view E.N.E. . . . . . . 166
   Photo by R. A. Hodgkin

57. View from Camp 6 . . . . . . 168
   (The full length of the Hushe Nala, almost fifty miles to its junction with the Shyok, can be clearly seen)
   Photo by R. A. Hodgkin

58. Camp 7 . . . . . . . . . . 170
   Photo by R. A. Hodgkin

59. Approaching the rocks above Camp 7 at almost 25,000 feet . . . . . . 172
   Photo by R. A. Hodgkin

60. View from Camp 6, looking E.S.E. . . . 174
   Photo by R. A. Hodgkin

61. Harrison was carried on a stretcher . . . 180

62. My mother and Hodgkin rode their ponies over these places . . . . . . . . . . 182

63. An old man weaving in the open air . . . 186
   (Scene anywhere in Baltistan)

64. "Baksheesh, sahib!" . . . . . . . . . . 188
   (A study anywhere in Baltistan)

SKETCH-MAPS IN TEXT.

Sketch-map of the Journeys described . Front board

Nun Kun . . . . . . . . . . . 44

Saltooro Kangri (PK 36), 25,400 feet . . . . 82

Masherbrum, 25,660 feet . . . . . . . . 146
CHAPTER I.

FIRST SCRAMBLES, 1933.

I was twenty and young for my age when, in 1932, I joined my regiment in India. I was the sort of youngster who sports an aggressive moustache and lays down the law. I started off by considering myself a mountaineer on the strength of three weeks' guided climbing in the Alps at the age of seventeen; and when I was sent up to the Murree Hills on duty during the hot weather, I made myself thoroughly unpopular with the troops by making them do long walks and runs up and down the khuds. I was no good at games, and hill-walking was the one thing at which I found I could beat them. Altogether I was a pretty unpleasant piece of work.

From Murree I saw Nanga Parbat, dim and misty as a cloud, a hundred miles to the north. It fired me with the desire to get nearer the snows, but it was not until the following June that I managed it, when I joined my parents who were out trekking in Kashmir. I motored up to Srinagar from Rawalpindi, and picked up a tent and some stores at the Agency which
my parents patronised, and started off to join them. A lorry took me to Woyil Bridge, where my baggage was loaded on to ponies, before I continued up the wide Sind Valley. It was June and the valley was hot. A trout-stream flows down its centre and the path winds lazily up through little wooden villages, woods, and cultivation. The hills on either side of the valley are clothed in dark-green forests. After marching seven miles I pitched my tent on some grass beside the river. It was a lovely setting, but a damp camping-place. I was on a lawn set upon an island in the river and surrounded by willow trees. Some miles up the valley were pointed peaks, on which lay isolated snowfields. I felt on this first night when I camped in the hills that I was on the threshold of adventure, and so excited was I that I slept badly, and when dawn arrived I put my sleeping-bag in my rucksack, and, leaving my ponies to come slowly along behind me, decided to do the two marches to my parents’ camp in one day. Not even the beauty of the valley could stop my soon getting tired. By afternoon I was approaching the deep gorge through which the Sind River flows below Sonamarg. One side is sheer precipice; the rocks on the other are clothed in trees. The river thunders below in a series of cascades. Once above the gorge I found myself on the wide meadows of Thajiwas, near Sonamarg, and before long I had located my
parents' camp, set not far from a number of others. I was very tired, and after a hurried supper I bedded-down on the floor of their tent and slept for twelve hours. Next afternoon my baggage arrived.

I went to Kashmir with the intention of climbing. For equipment I had brought an old ice-axe, a hundred feet of rope, and a pair of boots. The only time I had done any mountaineering had been at the age of seventeen, when I had spent three weeks at Arolla in Switzerland. My ideas on the subject were consequently somewhat vague, and my real motive in wishing to climb was to be able to talk about my ascents of virgin Himalayan peaks on my arrival back in the Regimental Mess. The 'Valley of Glaciers' at Thajiwas is a famous beauty-spot, and the Thajiwas Range, overlooking it, is as fine a range as any of like size in Kashmir. The range culminates in the 15,928-foot high peak above Thajiwas, which looked to me to be well worth climbing; but slightly frightening. It was, anyway, the nearest peak to camp, so that even before I had been to see Dr Neve I had decided to have a shot at it.

Dr Ernest Neve has run the Mission Hospital in Srinagar for many years, and is a veteran climber in Kashmir. To his credit is the first ascent of Kolohoi, often called the 'Kashmir Matterhorn,' and many other fine climbs and explorations. He and Mrs Neve were encamped
near-by, and to him I went for advice. He encouraged me to try 15,928, which he told me had never been climbed; and he said that he thought that a way could be made up the great couloir in the northern rock face. He even lent me an ice-axe, which, in spite of its having a cracked shaft, did sterling work for the rest of my leave.

For a climbing companion I had to rely on a Kashmiri youth of twenty called Abdulla Mir. He had appeared on a hillside and offered his services in any capacity to my parents, and had agreed to climb with me. He had never done anything of the sort before, so that my first task was to teach him what I could remember of the use of the rope and ice-axe. We spent an afternoon on a steep grass slope near camp, where I showed him that I could hold him on the rope when he fell, and what the various parts of his cracked ice-axe were for. I put in a little surreptitious practice myself, as I had never climbed without a guide, and had, anyway, forgotten most of the little climbing technique I had ever learned. Although I had to appear full of confidence in front of my parents, I must admit that the whole venture was frightening me. There was intermittent rain in the valley, and I made it an excuse for putting off the start of the expedition, and spent a further day or two practising ice-axe and rope work on the

1 Ice-filled gully between rock walls.
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\(^1\) Ice-filled gully between rock walls.
snow slopes in the valley. At last I could put off the start no longer, and arranged to be called at 4 A.M. It was raining. By half-past six it had cleared, and we started off.

Our camp was at about 9000 feet, and there were almost 7000 feet to be climbed in the day; to start at six-thirty was optimistic. It was nine o'clock before we arrived at the first snow, below the snout of the glacier. We ate a meal of prunes and biscuits, and roped up. The glacier was easy, and covered in snow, but I went up cautiously, it being the first time I had led on a rope. We went up two little ice-falls,¹ on the second of which my diary states that I had to do a considerable amount of step-cutting; in actual fact, it was probably about twenty steps. After that we crossed a snowfield, only to find our way blocked by a crevasse. Where we came to it, it was bridged by a large block of ice, and I thoroughly enjoyed myself scrambling over it. Above was a steep snow slope leading into the couloir. We went cautiously upwards, kicking steps in the snow. A stone or two sang down near us. The slope seemed to get steeper and steeper, and we were shut in by vertical rock walls. The snow petered out into ice, and when I tried to cut steps in it my blunt ice-axe bounced off without even chipping the ice. The time was two-thirty; clouds hid the peak above, and it was raining. Abdulla, who had no boots, but

¹ Steep and broken part of a glacier.
was clad in local *chapplis*,\(^1\) was complaining plaintively that his feet were cold. I found that I was glad to take the excuse offered by all these factors and give the word to go down. We turned round carefully in our steps, and for the first time I was forced to look downwards. The slope immediately tilted almost to the vertical. I steadied myself on my ice-axe until I had got used to it. Then we started down. We were afraid to stand vertically in the steps, the only safe way to descend, and instead we slid our seats down the snow, our bodies parallel to the slope. Had Abdulla slipped I would have had no hope of holding him; I had enough sense to realise this, and it did not improve my appreciation of the descent. I was glad to regain the comparatively level snowfield, which now seemed to have become very much easier than it had been on the way up. By nightfall we got back to our camp, where we were received with open relief. Our attempt had failed at about 14,000 feet. Dr Neve was most encouraging. He congratulated me on getting as far up the north-face couloir as we had done, so my tail was up.

I was still determined to bag my virgin peak, but both Abdulla and I had had quite enough of the couloir. We spent a morning lying on a green hillside, looking at the glacier to the south of the mountain. At the end of that time, with the aid of glasses, I had worked out what looked

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\(^1\) Sandals and leather socks.
a possible route up the ice-fall which fell from about 13,000 feet to 10,000 feet. By zigzagging up we should be able to get to the final ice-cliff which stretched across the entire width of the glacier; how to climb the cliff we would have to decide when we got there.

For our second attempt on the peak we started at about five in the morning, but we had a long walk up the valley, and did not arrive at the glacier until eight-thirty. The glacier proved much more difficult than that on our previous attempt, but I was gaining confidence and began to find that I was welcoming difficulty. At one place we came to a crevasse which stopped our advance. Over it was a flimsy, steeply sloping snow-bridge, ten feet square, and with a hole, a foot across, in the middle of it. I drove Abdulla's axe deeply into the snow of the lower lip of the crevasse, and wound the rope round it. I then stationed Abdulla below the ice-axe and facing it, and told him to pull the rope tight round the axe. After instructing him to pay the rope out carefully as I proceeded, I went to the edge of the bridge, where I dropped on my stomach in the snow, and slowly wormed my way upwards. The bridge held. Firmly belaying the rope round my axe from above, I made Abdulla cross as I had.

We went on up through towers and chasms of ice. One or two more crevasses gave trouble before we arrived at the final ice-cliff,
stretched right across the head of the ice-fall. Directly above us, where we were on the south side of the glacier, the cliff was fifty feet high, and vertical. Towards the centre of the glacier it increased to a hundred feet, and a great block of it had broken away from the upper snowfield and was tottering drunkenly over the ice-fall. In the end of this block was a large hole through which I could see the main cliff behind, where it continued over to the other side of the glacier, which was much more broken. The only possible place to get up the cliff seemed to be at the junction of the firm cliff and the part that had peeled away. To get there meant traversing for two hundred yards right along under the tottering block of cliff, whose top overhung our route. We traversed at a run. As I had hoped, we found a way up behind this cliff, where it joined the main cliff; the gash in the ice had been filled with powder snow for fifty feet, and we were able to scramble up the powder. We found ourselves on a wide snowfield, with a long tongue running northward towards the top of 15,928.

We were above the difficulty, and the time was about eleven-thirty. The sun was beating down hotly, and stones were hurtling down from the pointed rock ridges which enclosed the glacier. We ate a meal, then dumping rucksacks, coats, and rope, started off as fast as we could to reach the summit. By the time we reached a height
of 15,000 feet, almost as high as the summit of Mont Blanc, I was tiring badly, and every twenty paces I had to pause to regain my breath. I was experiencing altitude distress for the first time; having risen 6000 feet in the morning, it is not surprising. We reached the top of the north-face couloir by two-thirty. I was very tired, and although we only had about five hundred feet more to climb to reach the summit, I felt that I could not achieve it. I looked down over the edge of the couloir by which we had made our first attempt, and saw how much steeper it was at the top than down below; and that the upper lip was composed of loosely cemented boulders, which were unnerving to look at. Four years later, when I returned to 15,928 and made the first ascent of it, using the couloir route, this impression was confirmed: its top is quite difficult.

We gave up five hundred feet from the top of the mountain and glissaded\(^1\) down the snow slopes to our equipment. It was five years since I had glissaded, so that I lacked confidence, and on the steepest pitches we proceeded very cautiously. We roped up again for the ice-fall and went slowly down. As usual I was finding descent, where I had to look downwards, very much more frightening than ascent. The hole in the snow-bridge had doubled in size. I made

\(^1\) A standing slide, something like ski-ing, and using an ice-axe as a brake.
Abdulla slide over it first, lying flat on his back; then followed myself. The bridge again held. Night had fallen before we reached the valley, where we were met by an anxious search-party, armed with lanterns, who had brought out thermoses full of hot tea, and a lot of food. I had lived all day on prunes and sugar, but was too tired to eat.

The weather deteriorated. It rained frequently in the valley, while thunder-storms played about the peaks above us. My parents were becoming tired of Sonamarg, so we decided to move over to the Liddar Valley. They took the main camp on ponies over the Yamhar Pass, while Abdulla and I, with six coolies, and one of the servants' tents, crossed the less frequented Basmai Pass. Only one incident of that journey is worthy of record, because it was the first occasion on which I experienced a mountain bivouac, and it left a deep impression on my mind. My interest in climbing at this time was mainly sensational. I enjoyed the excitement, and I liked to feel that I was treading ground on which man had never before set foot. At my bivouac, two thousand feet above the Sind Valley, I got one of my first insights into the spiritual joy of the mountains; and the uplifting that their peace and beauty brings to their lovers. The tent was set in a little clearing among tall pine trees. The hillside dropped away steeply below to the hidden valley. A stream tumbled near
the camp. As the sun was setting the coolies built a great wood fire, and when darkness fell the trees around the clearing were lit flickeringly, so that they seemed to be taking part in a fairy dance. The sparks from the fire cascaded upwards till they were lost among the high branches, or seemed to join the brilliant stars. One of the coolies began a slow, repetitive chant. The others joined in the chorus. For hours they sang the Kashmiri hill-songs, monotonous to a degree, but forming a part of this lovely country to which they owe their origin. Across the valley a long fall of rock echoed through the silent hills. A shooting star seemed to pass very close. At last I turned into the tent to bed, Abdulla beside me. The coolies were still singing when I fell asleep.

After I had rejoined my parents, we spent a fortnight moving leisurely up the Liddar Valley till we got our first view of Kolohoi from the north, then back again southwards to a camp in the Armiun Valley. The country was very lovely, but the monsoon had set in, and rain fell interminably, with only a few bright intervals. When it cleared a little, I set off with Abdulla and three coolies to attempt to climb the 16,400-foot high Buttress Peak above Armiun. This time I had decided to bivouac at the foot of the approach glacier, at about 13,000 feet. We carried up a small servants' tent and blankets.

Above our bivouac the Buttress Peak rose
from its glacier in a great rock slab like the roof of a house. Abdulla and I started off before the sun had risen, and made our way up the glacier and under the slab to its northern end, where we began to climb the rock on its edge. The route was easy and the slope by no means excessive, but the rock was very smooth, and I had a feeling that should Abdulla slip I might be unable to hold him. We had reached a spot near the head of the slab when snow-clouds descended on us. We had to take to the snow of the summit ridge, and visibility was bad. I noted in my diary that "a blizzard here descended on us." It seemed like that; but, in fact, there was no wind, and we were merely surrounded by mist. We went slowly up the crest of the ridge till it turned into hard ice; so we descended a little way to the south, where we were again on rock. The mist cleared off, and I saw above us a mass of pointed boulders, balanced one on the other. I was fearful for their stability, but when we reached them I realised that the storms of ages had not shifted them, and that two little men scrambling over them would not move them either. And once above them we were on the top. My first virgin peak: it was a great moment.

For half an hour we sat and gazed at the view. To the north was Kolohoi, a thousand feet higher. Away to the west of it Nanga Parbat was hidden in billowing storm-clouds. Immediately below, to the west, were two intensely
blue little lakes, looking like gentians from our eyrie, 4000 feet above. Thunder-clouds, black and ominous, filled the Liddar Valley. Away to the east were fine snow-peaks, the highest of which I knew must form the 23,410 foot high massif of Nun Kun. It was while I sat in the sun on the top of the Buttress Peak that I suddenly conceived the idea of trying to climb Nun, which, save for Nanga Parbat, is the highest Himalayan peak in Kashmir; it would be a worth-while adventure.

The thunder-clouds in the Liddar Valley were blowing up quickly. At ten-thirty I decided that it was time to think of getting down. I can remember little about the descent, which must have seemed easy. Arrived on the glacier, we ate a meal of sugar cubes soaked in whisky. Soon after mid-day we were back at our tent at the foot of the glacier. The clouds were right down about us, and as we reached the bivouac it began to sleet, and a gusty wind beat the tent. During the afternoon it sleeted and snowed alternately, and the cold seemed intense. When we woke in the morning there were two inches of new snow on the rocks around the tent, and the great rock slab of the Buttress Peak was plastered white. I cannot remember whether thunder still echoed round the hills.

That finished my climbing in 1933. From the point of view of ascents, I had done little;
but I had gained greatly in confidence. I no longer looked to a guide to ensure my safety and to choose the route. I had learned to lead and to reconnoitre a mountain for myself. I had gained sufficient confidence to be happy when I shared a rope with a novice. And I had begun to appreciate the Himalayas, not only as a means of getting excitement, and doing something which other people did not do, but for themselves: for the grandeur of their views; the peace of their heights; and the solitude of their valleys and their hills. My first season had given me a glimpse through a curtained window of secrets of the spirit of which I had previously been almost unaware; it had sown the seeds of an enduring love.
CHAPTER II.

NUN KUN, 1934.

On 10th May 1934, Jock Harrison and I motored up to Srinagar together in a hired car; we had met in Nowshera during the cold weather and had agreed to try and climb Nun, the highest mountain in the Nun Kun group, and 23,410 feet in altitude. It had never been climbed. Kun, the second highest peak in the group, had been ascended by a large Italian Expedition in 1914; in 1909, Dr Hunter Workman and Mrs Bullock Workman had explored the massif, and climbed Pinnacle Peak, 22,800 feet high; before them Mr Sillem had explored up to 21,000 feet; consequently we had a good knowledge of the ground on which we were to climb. We wondered why neither of the big expeditions had attempted Nun, and were determined to find out, and, if possible, to climb it.

Jock is a man of six feet four inches in his socks, and he weighs about fourteen stone; I am a mere five feet seven inches, and at that time weighed nine stone, as I had only just finished a month's 'banting' for the races at Rawalpindi
and Peshawar, where I had been riding ‘over the sticks’ and on the flat; we made a funny-looking couple. Jock had about as much experience of climbing as I had, certainly no more. We had neither of us ever camped above the snowline. It was before the time of Shipton’s and Tilman’s splendid exploration of Nanda Devi, and the only small parties that had recently achieved anything in the Himalayas, as far as we knew, were Smythe’s Kamet Expedition, and Oliver’s second ascent of Trisul, 23,400 feet high, which had first been climbed by Dr Longstaff in 1907. We felt, consequently, that we were striking out on something of a new line in going alone to attempt to climb a mountain over 23,000 feet high, and at the same time we were slightly ashamed of it; so that when Jock recognised an iris from the motor, we suddenly decided that we must have scientists in the party. He was appointed ornithologist and botany expert. I took on archæology and photography. We could not remember any more sciences.

The hills about the Vale of Kashmir were misty with blue forget-me-not. The air was crisp and sweet after the dusty plains. The snows were low on the mountains round the valley.

We spent four days in Srinagar packing stores before starting off by lorry for Pahlgam. We only had two months’ leave and had decided to take the shortest route to Nun Kun, although
it would not be officially open until a month later. We had written ahead for coolies to meet us at Pahlgam, and found them waiting at the bridge above the village. They were a vociferous crowd, who immediately started clamouring for higher wages than had been agreed. When that dispute was settled, we found that they had not brought the ten days' food which they had been told to carry for themselves, and they had to be sent to their homes to get it. When they had all regathered at the bridge, two hours later, they complained that their loads were too heavy. About a further hour later, when the party of twenty-three coolies started off, we, marching behind, were accompanied by a bevy of ancient women, constantly beseeching us to look after their sons, and not to lead them into danger. One lady was certain that none of us would return from the snows alive; we got rid of her at last.

After marching five miles we pitched camp in a little glade beside the river. Flowering shrubs surrounded the camp, and a wood fire was soon blazing. It was a lovely, cold evening, with the snow covering the wooded hillsides down to within a few hundred feet of our camp. We were in holiday mood and were treating the whole adventure as a joke. The fact that the two 14,000-foot passes ahead of us would not be open for another month did not matter; we were supremely confident that we would get
over without any difficulty, and that the way was only supposed to be closed because nobody had tried to cross so early in the year; or, if they had, they had not been mountaineers like we were, and so had been deterred by imagined difficulty.

We had not gone a couple of miles the following day before we came to a large patch of snow. It was grand. Jock and I climbed solemnly to the top and slid down again. We even had a competition in hurling snowballs at a rock in the river, by which time the coolies had caught up and we went on. The valley narrowed and the path, which ascended a steep rise for eight hundred feet through the woods, was hidden by slippery winter snow. The coolies made heavy weather of it, and Jock and I began to think that perhaps the way was not going to be quite so easy. Above the rise was a wide snow-field leading to the first 14,000-foot pass, the Gulol Gali, about eight miles farther on. There were tracks of snow-leopard and bear crossing the plain. We went on up to a point where the valley narrowed and the river flowed in a deep cut in the rock, where we found a patch of bare earth on a juniper-covered slope. We pitched our tents on the path which showed here, and the coolies camped out in the juniper. While our Kashmiri cook, Noor Mohammed, and Abdulla Mir prepared our evening meal, Jock and I carried our skis over the river by way of a snow-bridge, and had some excellent practice on the
slopes opposite camp. An evening snowstorm drove us to our tents.

Next morning was overcast. The snow was iced, and Jock started by taking an imperial toss on his skis, and driving the point of a ski-stick into one of his knees. The coolies rattled along over the hard snow at a great rate. By about twelve o'clock Jock and I reached the Shishram Nag Lake, which was frozen and covered in snow, so that only its level surface showed us that it was not a snowfield. Getting off the lake, we ascended a steep little slope about three hundred feet high. It was covered in deep powder snow, a strip of which immediately peeled off in an avalanche. We took off our skis and carried them, while we plunged upwards, sinking to our knees. Above us a snow-lip at the top of the slope hung out over us in a cornice. We were half-way up when Abdulla appeared on the very edge of the lip, with nothing save about a yard’s thickness of snow beneath him, and hailed us cheerfully. Jock’s very rudest urchin drove him hastily back to safety, and we achieved the top of the slope without anything falling on us. Near-by were some huts for the use of pilgrims in summer; in these the coolies had camped. We drove them out again, made them pick up their loads, and took everything save what we needed for the night on up the

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1 An overhanging lip of snow at the top of a slope. It is caused by the action of the wind, and looks like a wave which is just about to break.
pass, which rose 2000 feet above us. Clouds had been low all day, and we had not been climbing for half an hour when they suddenly came down about us, driven by a bitter wind. Snow fell. We hastily dumped the loads in a pile, marked the spot with a standing tent-pole, in case much snow should fall, and ran back to the huts, where hot drinks were ready for the whole party.

Noor Mohammed had chosen the best hut, which was buried to the eaves in snow. In the centre of the floor was a large mound of snow which had blown in through a hole in the wall, and which made a useful stand for skis, ski-sticks, and ice-axes. The floor of the hut was covered in a sheet of ice, and there was no chimney. Noor Mohammed had unearthed a large store of green juniper fuel, and had a fire burning merrily; the inside of the hut was filled with a blue haze of pungent smoke. Jock and I found places as far removed from the pile of snow as possible, and laid out our sleeping-bags. These, it should be added, were our own inventions. Jock’s weighed twenty-five pounds, was made of cotton-wool in the bazaar, and had cost about £1. Mine only weighed fifteen pounds, was made of wolf-skin, and had cost the exorbitant price of £2; in addition, it entirely failed to keep me warm.

Jock’s knee had stiffened badly, and I did what I could to poultice it. It was snowing outside.

Next morning was fine, but Jock was not fit
to go on. I collected all the coolies and took them up to the loads, which they then carried almost to the top of the pass. I led an intricate route up most of the steepest slopes I could find, under the impression that I was avoiding the possible danger of avalanches. The coolies, having dumped their loads, went down the best and easiest way; I think I must have lost caste in their estimation. Abdulla and I, with the coolie sirdar, went to the head of the pass, and looked down to the Wardwan Valley, 4000 feet below. The pass drops that amount in less than a mile horizontally. It is overlooked by high ridges which were the very sort to avalanche when the sun shone on them. Standing on the crest of the pass the ground dropped away so steeply below that the first thing we saw was the river at the bottom of the valley; it might have been sheer between. I noticed that the coolie sirdar was looking thoughtful. We arrived back at the huts before mid-day, and only a short time after the coolies. I was feeling a little scared about the descent of the other side of the pass, but I did not say so. I was also feeling worried by a thought which had struck me on the way down the pass: we had been continuously on snow since reaching a height of 9000 feet; the way, once over the pass, never dropped below 10,000 feet; in summer it would take four days to cross the second pass; at this rate at least a week. We would be on snow for
the whole of that time and we had insufficient tents for the coolies. However, it did not worry me unduly, and I went to bed to nurse my stomach, which had gone wrong on me.

At tea-time the door of our hut was opened and all the coolies crowded in; they were on strike and refused to continue. After a long argument, during which Jock and I both lost our tempers, we found that we were beaten; we should have to turn back. It was a bitter moment; for we had already spent a week of our two months' leave, and we reckoned that to reach Nun Kun by the longer route over the Zoji La would take at least a fortnight from Srinagar. However, there was nothing else for it but to try the Zoji La; the only consolation was that it gave me an opportunity to take a dose of castor oil, which I badly required to cure my chill. Next morning the coolies brought all the loads down to the huts again, and, while Jock escorted them down the valley, I skied on alone to fix up a lorry to take us from Pahlgam to Srinagar. By evening a thunder-storm was beating up the valley, and I was approaching Pahlgam. The whole village turned out to greet me. I must have been a woe-begone spectacle: the rain had just soaked me to the skin; I was tired from carrying a heavy rucksack all day; and I had taken three of the most magnificent purlers while I skied down the valley. Men and women clustered round me, screeching at the tops
of their voices and lifting beseeching hands towards me. My urdu has never been very strong, and it was worse then; I could not understand what all the fuss was about; did my best to tell the people nearest me that the others were coming; and strode on towards the hotel. By the time I reached it the crowd had assumed the proportions of a mass meeting. The Anglo-Indian hotel manager came out and met me on the doorstep. "It is terrible, sir," he said in a sepulchral voice. "I have heard about it. They have all been killed, have they not? To-morrow we must go out and recover their bodies." I am afraid that the guffaw with which I greeted this speech must have seemed like the raving of a delirious man, but when I could speak I told him of the true state of affairs; and as soon as he believed me, he harangued the crowd. I do not think that they believed him, because when the whole party strolled into the village at about ten o'clock next morning they were greeted with the warmth that one might expect to be reserved for men who have arisen from the dead.

We were back in Srinagar in time for tea, which we ate in a back room of Nedou's Hotel, as the management would not allow tramps like us in the front; and by evening we were camped at the bottom of the Sind Valley, where we had arrived on another lorry.

The next day, 21st May, was one of rest. We washed our clothes and lazed. At tea-time
another lorry drove up, and out of it stepped a man and a woman. Their clothing was bizarre. Each wore a grey coat, green shirt, blue plus-fours, white stockings, and 'co-respondent' shoes. The man wore a white cap; the lady was bare-headed, and even at fifty yards' range we could see that she was decidedly decorative. Jock and I strolled over, a week's stubble on our chins, and asked them to tea. We soon discovered that they were a film party on their way to join the International Karakoram Expedition: the lady was to act as heroine in a best-seller film which they were making; her husband was to direct it. They had reached Srinagar in six days from Germany, having flown from Berlin. After a single morning in Srinagar they had set out. They appeared to have only one sleeping-bag between them, little food, no nails for their boots, and no hats. They were charming people, with a fund of splendid stories, and, apparently, a complete disregard for comfort. After tea they marched off up the valley, and we did not catch them until the top of the Zoji La.¹

Jock and I and our string of baggage ponies reached Gund the first evening of our march, where we were told that ponies could not yet cross the Zoji La, and that coolies would cost six rupees each for the journey to Dras. We added it up and discovered that we could not possibly

¹ 'La' means 'Pass.' The Zoji La is the main Central Asian trade route from Northern India, sharing that honour with the Gilgit-Kashgar route.
afford to pay so much; and when we went to bed, late that night, we had fully determined to give up all thought of reaching Nun Kun, and to stop at Sonamarg instead. As we had already written a despatch to the ‘Statesman’ about our journeyings to date, this seemed rather an ignominious way in which to finish our attempt to climb a 23,000-foot peak: I do not mean that the publicity in the ‘Statesman’ was the only reason for our despondency; but it certainly added to our feeling of futility.

 Luck changed. Before dawn a woolly man, pulling a woollier pony, poked his nose into Jock’s tent, and assured him that he would take all our baggage over the pass on his ponies, and that he would do it cheaply: he was a trader from Ladakh looking for a return fare. We seized the opportunity gratefully and started off, and by evening had done a march and three-quarters, and were camped within two miles of Baltal, at the foot of the Zoji La. Next day we went up the gorge, on snow, the little ponies sliding along gallantly. Ahead of us was another caravan, one of the ponies of which suddenly rolled down the hillside, losing its load in the river. We had no adventures, other than the fact that Jock and I were put in charge of three ponies each, and had to help haul them up difficult snow slopes by their tails and heads. We were too busy to appreciate the beauty or the grandeur of the gorge up the bed of which
we were ascending. At the top of the pass we met the Martons, our cinema friends, sitting on some rocks. We shared our breakfast with them, as they seemed to have no food. In return Mrs Marton offered Jock and me the use of her bottle of invaluable sunburn lotion, which we rather rudely refused, because the lady's face was already that most becoming shade of pink, which is the herald of worse to come.

In the early afternoon the hot sun made the path impassable for our ponies, which sank to their bellies in the melting snow. The Martons, who had coolies, marched gaily past us, much to our annoyance, as we had been sure that we could march faster than a lady and had discovered that we could not; we did not catch them up again, although we followed them for the next three days.

It rained during the night, and next day the snow was in little better condition. The poor little ponies plunged on through the snow, often sinking to their bellies. During the afternoon we had to ford the main river, flowing swiftly between high snow-banks, and as we only had three pony-men to thirteen wild little ponies, Jock and I each made two journeys across the river, clinging to the ponies' heads. The water was very cold and reached our waists; we continued the march dressed only in our shirts and boots, while the rest of our clothes were festooned round the ponies, drying in the sun.
When we left the snow the following day, we found ourselves in a country very different from Kashmir. Gone were the wooded valleys and soft colouring. In their places were brown, barren hills, red boulders, and a complete lack of cultivation. During the next days, as our road descended towards Kargil, we went beside a river which flows ever deeper through barren valleys, with very occasionally oases on its sides, where a rare side stream makes irrigation possible; and there are a few miserable hovels, set around by terraced fields. Kargil makes a break in the desolation; for miles there are fields of young corn and beds of iris. Slender poplar trees are surrounded by apricot orchards. The single winding street of Kargil, lying on a steep slope, was most picturesque, and was colourful with people from all the surrounding hills and from far-off Central Asia, Yarkand, and Kashgar.

The Suru Valley, by which we continued the march, was much more open than had been our way since the Zoji La, and cultivation was more frequent. Three days after leaving Kargil we reached Suru, the last big village below Nun Kun, and set at 10,000 feet.

Jock and I had started out light-heartedly to climb Nun; our outlook was that mere altitude could not have as much effect as is normally attributed to it, and that if a lady, Mrs Bullock Workman, had achieved 22,800 feet in 1909,
Jock and I should be able to reach 23,400 feet in 1934; Mrs Bullock Workman had climbed in a long tweed skirt and a large hat with a veil; we could not believe that anyone so clad could have done anything of great difficulty, and we were fairly sure that the fuss made about high altitude climbing must be some sort of a racket designed to keep other people from trying it, and so spoiling the market for those who had already been high. We were young and very inexperienced.

Our first evening at Suru we received a setback in our mental attitude. Nun towered high above an intervening snow ridge. It was a giant snow pyramid, soaring high above the other splendid mountains which surrounded us, and from its pointed summit floated a plume of cloud, flying horizontally like a banner. As the sun set the snows of Nun were touched with pink, while the banner became a long tongue of fire. The valleys below darkened quickly, so that the glowing peak and its flaming tongue floated in the clear evening sky. It seemed infinitely high, and as inaccessible as a dream; it was very lovely, but for the first time we began to have some realisation of the scale of the task before us.

The night was crisp and clear when we went to bed; three inches of snow covered the grass in the valley by morning. There was no object in going on until the fall had melted. After we had arranged with the village headman that
he would have twenty men ready to carry for us the following day, Jock and I went off separately to examine the mountain; he crossed the river and ascended the ridge which lay between us and Nun Kun, while I climbed up a snow-filled gully to the top of a 13,000-foot peak behind the camp, from which I spent the rest of the morning studying Nun through a telescope. The more I looked, the more sure was I that the final arête of Nun, which had never been attempted, would not be easy. Jock from his nearer viewpoint came to the same conclusion, and the impression we had gained on the previous evening was deepened in our minds.

By next morning the snow had all melted from the valley, and we started off to pitch our Base Camp. We forded the river and crossed the ridge beyond it. We camped that night at about 11,000 feet, near the highest village in the valley. Above us the Nun Kun massif rose steeply.

The following day we pitched our Base Camp at 12,000 feet on a little headland of dry earth surrounded by snowfields. On the way up we had passed the foot of the Ganri Glacier, which tumbles steeply down from the basin between Nun and Kun, and which ends in an ice-cliff, along the base of which rushes the river. Blocks of ice frequently fall into the water from the glacier and are carried down like miniature icebergs. We sorted out the blankets and goggles we

1 Ridge.
had brought for the coolies, and chose the fifteen strongest men to carry for us on the climb.

We were following the route that had been discovered by Mr Sillem, and the country is accurately mapped; in spite of this, when we set off next morning, we misread the map, and spent the whole morning in ascending three thousand feet up the wrong glacier. We did not realise our mistake until we came in sight of its head basin, which was surrounded by unclimbable precipices. It had been a weary trudge through deep snow. Some time after mid-day we gave the word to go down again; the coolies were very nice about it, and an old man came up to Jock and asked him where we were really trying to go. Jock told him that we were trying to follow the Workman Memsaib; the old man beamed, and said that he would be pleased to lead us; he had gone with the Memsaib when he was a boy, and he knew the whole way; all we had to do was to follow him and forget about the map.

Jock and I ski’d down the glacier again, and Camp ‘o’ was pitched early in the afternoon about half a mile farther up the valley than Base Camp, and practically at the same height. We could find no ground clear of snow, so that we had our first experience of sleeping above the snowline. We cooked some sort of a meal over our primus stove, and before we went to bed we laid out bread, butter, and golden syrup,
ready for breakfast. It was just growing grey in the east when we tried to eat. The bread was frozen solid. The treacle had to be cut in cubes and eaten like toffee. The butter we could do nothing with; and the frozen eggs, which we peeled as though they had already been hard-boiled, exploded violently when we dropped them into the frying-pan. We had not expected any of these contretemps, and finally had to start off after only the meagrest of breakfasts; but the snow was firm, and we were able to make a great pace; in fact had to, in order to try and get warm.

Three miles up the valley the old coolie led us over a snow-bridge spanning the river and up the foot of the Shafat Valley to the base of the glacier, which we reached at about the same time as the sun did. The coolies, who were clad in a vast number of dressing-gown-like coats of puttoo material, insisted on eating a meal. From the depths of his clothing each man produced a flat baked cake, which he placed under his armpit; while their breakfasts were being so heated, they smoked, passing a wooden hukka from man to man. The tobacco was pungent, having a good admixture of cow dung in it. After breakfast they shouldered their fifty-pound loads again and rattled away over the crisp snow that covered the hummocky moraine. I found it difficult to keep up with them. All the morning we followed their lead, sometimes along the moraine, sometimes over the easy
slopes of the hillsides. By early afternoon we reached a patch of hillside that was clear of snow, and on which were two large cairns. The coolies put down their loads, informed us that this was where we should have put our Base Camp, as the sahibs always did so, wandered away, and went to sleep. We pitched our tents, cooked a meal, and spent the rest of the warm afternoon admiring the view. We had reached a height of 15,000 feet, and the country round the glacier was opening up. Across the valley was a lovely, fluted ice-ridge, its top so thin that we could see the sun shining through the green ice, which led up to the 22,000-foot high ZI peak. On our other side high rock peaks and ridges rose steeply, and between the two the Shafat Glacier led on smoothly upwards to the Fariabad Ridge, which joins Nun Kun to ZI. We could not see Nun. The weather was perfect.

The next day's climb was a repetition of the last. The old coolie led the way up the gentle glacier slopes. As the morning advanced the snow began to soften, and we sank to our ankles, and found it laborious work. Nun began to show above the intermediate ridges. Soon after midday clouds blew up from the west, first hiding Nun, then sweeping down the glacier. We reached the spot where the Workmans had pitched their Camp I, at 17,000 feet, at about two in the afternoon, and insisted on pushing on. The old coolie was hurt about it, pointing out querulously
that where the Memsahib had camped ought to be good enough for us; we went on, however, for about another hour, till the clouds had so shut down about us that we could not see where we were going, and we began to find our way littered with blocks of ice which had fallen from above in some avalanche. Quite unperturbed, Jock and I set up our three tents, for Abdulla and ourselves, among the ice-blocks, while the coolies went off a couple of hundred yards and pitched their tent on a mass of rock rubble at the base of a precipice. We were concerned for the safety of their camping-place and not for our own, although they had the better spot.

During the evening the wind rose and began to sweep the glacier in gusts. It boomed dully along the precipices above, and several times Jock and I started up, imagining we heard an avalanche. Snow pattered on the canvas of the tents. We slept badly, firmly convinced that we were experiencing a blizzard; and by morning we had made up our minds that, with the depth of new snow which must have fallen, it would be too risky to advance the camp that day, for fear of avalanches. When we turned out of our tents the sun was shining brightly. Jock and I unpacked our rope for the first time, and started cautiously up to find a way across the Fariabad Ridge, which ran like a wall, three hundred feet high, right across the width of the glacier above us. We climbed up its snow side
directly above our camp to a point where it joined the higher ridges of the massif. We were surprised to find the climbing easy, and to discover that not more than three inches of snow had fallen during the night. We reached the top of the ridge and climbed slowly down its far side, which was of rotten rock, covered in powder snow. We had ascended too far up the ridge towards the hillside, and once we were down we saw that we could have made a way lower where no descent at all would have been necessary. Jock and I separated. He went on up towards the Workmans' Camp 2, while I traversed the hillside in search of photographs. I had a feeling, I cannot imagine why, that this was going to be the last time that I would achieve this height on Nun, and that bad weather, or some other cause, would drive us downward before we could pitch a higher camp. I think that a combination of altitude, the strangeness of our surroundings, with their immense solitude and tremendous views, and the strain of passing a bad night in a snowstorm, had affected my nerve. Probably I had never felt so small and puny before; the gaining of a new sense of perspective, and the mental reactions consequent on it, were bound, at first, to be frightening. Big things are.

The view was magnificent. We were at about 19,000 feet. Below us the snow slopes dropped steeply to an unseen valley, beyond which were
wave on wave of snow-covered peaks. Many miles of the Zaskar Range were spread before us, and, as we were as high as any of the nearer peaks, those of 20,000 feet beyond stood up boldly. Above us, to the north-west, was the humped peak of Nun, and directly in front of it was a pointed snow-peak which the Workmans had christened White Needle. Kun and the other peaks of the massif were hidden by nearer rock ridges.

Jock and I met near a great boulder perched on the top of the Fariabad Ridge. We came carefully down the face of the ridge, making a track for the next day's route. Clouds blew up during the evening and it snowed very lightly. Next morning we and the coolies went on up. We reached the boulder on the top of the ridge, and, when all the coolies had arrived there, they put down their loads and formed a group. Then they chanted a prayer to Nun, which rose high ahead of them. The music was moving because its import was so clear, and the look in the men's eyes, as they gazed at the peak, left no doubt of the reverence they felt for it.

The ceremony over, Jock led on up. The clouds which had been massing over the valleys to the west swept up swiftly, and by eleven o'clock we were surrounded by a thick mist through which the sun shone scorchingly. The snow was softening badly, so that we sank to our calves with each step we took. Visibility
was limited to about fifty yards, and crevasses were beginning to cut the slope across our line of advance. By one o'clock we had reached a place where the slope began to steepen considerably, and there were signs that avalanches had fallen near-by. We had reached 20,000 feet and knew, although we could not see, that we were in a sort of amphitheatre below White Needle. Here the Workmans had pitched their Camp 2; and we set up our three tents. Our plan was that the coolies should leave us at this camp for a week, then return to take the equipment down. The Workmans had not taken local men above this height. We only had 3400 feet to climb to reach the summit of Nun, and reckoned that with the help of Abdulla we would be able to pitch a bivouac of a single tent higher up, and that he could return alone to this camp. From the bivouac we should be able to climb the mountain, if we could find a way.

Before going down the coolies again collected in a semicircle and chanted to Nun. When they had finished, Abdulla went to each man and shook him sadly by the hand, bidding him a touching farewell. Then the coolies turned and disappeared downwards into the mist, while Abdulla immediately crawled into his tent and said that he was sick. We melted snow to give him and ourselves a drink, and gave him a couple of aspirin tablets. By the time we had done this the clouds were clearing again, and
Jock and I started off to make a route above our camp.

I have said that we were enclosed in a sort of amphitheatre. To our west a long snow-ridge ran down from White Needle. To the east of White Needle is the lip of the great plateau which forms the heart of the Nun Kun massif, and which was our next objective. The lip was only about a thousand feet above us, and although the slope to it was steep it did not appear unduly difficult. Part of it, between an ice-cliff on one side and White Needle on the other, was obviously powder snow, and the other part appeared to be hard snow or ice. I wanted to try the ice-slope, Jock the powder, but as we ploughed slowly upwards that evening, panting through snow that was knee-deep, and at a height of over 20,000 feet, we soon came to the conclusion that we could not hope to reach either that night, and returned to camp. Abdulla was groaning dismally; he complained of a bad headache and thought that he was going to die. When we unsealed his tent to look at him we discovered him buried deep in his sleeping-bag and blankets. He must have been suffering a little from the altitude and a good deal from funk. Jock and I cooked ourselves a supper of 'stoup,' which consisted of porridge, sausages, onions, potatoes, tongue, bully beef, powder soup, and anything else to hand all stewed up together. It was a dish which might be guaranteed to give anyone
indigestion within twenty-four hours; Jock somehow continued to thrive on it during our stay on the mountain, but it had me beaten very soon; and was the chief cause of the passionate interest I later took in the designing of a scientific ration for high climbing, which is discussed in the later chapters. Abdulla groaned frightfully all night, and I, in my wolf-skin sleeping-bag, was colder than I would have believed possible; I have scarcely ever been so miserable.

After a breakfast of dry Quaker oats and fried eggs (which exploded) mixed together, Jock and I started off on skis to reach the lip of the plateau. We soon had to take off our skis and carry them, and then the slope got so steep that we had to leave them behind. We came to a place where a schrund cut right across the slope, and after an abortive attempt, Jock hoisted me, by way of his head, on to the ice above its upper lip, himself standing in the powder snow which bridged it at this point. I cut a few steps up the ice above, and came to the end of the rope without discovering anywhere from which I could pull Jock up. It was steeper and smoother ice than any I had ever been on, and I disliked it thoroughly. Jock seemed relieved when I started to return and slid down on top of him. We agreed without any hesitation that the climbing to the plateau was too difficult for us, and con-

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1 A cut in a steep snow slope, which may stretch for its entire width, and is presumably caused by the settling of the mass of snow forming the lower part of the slope.
soled ourselves with the thought that the slope must have changed for the worse during the last twenty-five years since Mrs Bullock Workman went up it. We returned to camp.

In the afternoon Jock energetically ski'd off up the ridge to our west, leading towards White Needle. This seemed much easier; so, on his return, we abandoned all intention of reaching the plateau, and concentrated on getting to the top of White Needle. Next day we made an attack on it. We went up the powder snow slopes of the side of the ridge and crossed a great crevasse by a snow-bridge with two ominous cracks in it. Higher up we had to traverse along steeper slopes, following a route which was probably bad, owing to the danger of its avalanching, but which we never even appreciated as being dangerous. Jock was in the lead the whole way, as he sank deeper into the snow than I did, and had to do almost as much work if he followed me. We went unroped. By the middle of the day clouds were about us, and we were within five hundred feet of the top of White Needle. We pushed on along the summit of the broad ridge in a snowstorm. Slowly we gained height, and at last came to a point where the ridge terminated in an ice-bulge, overhanging the plateau to our right. It was the top. The wind was cold; so we descended a few feet and sat for half an hour in the hopes of getting a view of the final arête of Nun, which began two hundred feet below us.
We could see a little way, but got no useful view of the higher parts, where rocks might be expected to cause difficulty. We went down again to camp, having made the first ascent of a 22,000-foot high mountain more or less by mistake. It is still the highest summit I have trodden in India, although on two expeditions I have been considerably higher.

Abdulla was still groaning and out of action. It was clear that with our heavy equipment Jock and I could not alone carry sufficient for a bivouac near the top of White Needle, from which we might have climbed Nun. ‘Stoup’ was having its inevitable effect on my stomach. We decided to send Abdulla down alone to Base Camp to tell the coolies to come up again. The only brief I can hold for the decision was that Abdulla was not really sick, and that the route below was entirely without danger. He started off in great heart to be getting off the snow. Jock and I went up, the same morning and the day after our ascent of White Needle, to fetch down our skis, which we had left on the side of the ridge, and on the way down again we decided to climb to its crest above the camp to get a view of Nun’s final arête. We ski’d along gaily, Jock carrying the rope around his shoulders, three hundred yards ahead of me. Suddenly he disappeared. Ski tracks led to the mouth of a gaping crevasse which had only just appeared, and into which he had evidently fallen. I dashed
down towards him, expecting the worst, and cursing the fact that he had the rope with him. Suddenly a hat, balanced on the top of a ski-stick, appeared out of the crevasse, and waved. Jock had broken through the snow-bridge covering the crevasse and had fallen twelve feet, feet foremost. There his skis had caught in another flimsy bridge over the chasm, and he had stopped. By the time I reached him he was crawling out. It gave us both a fright and made us more respectful of crevasses.

The next day passed unpleasantly. We were beginning to worry about Abdulla, although it was a bit late to do so. We were tired. We sat in the sun with our shirts off during part of the morning, and in the afternoon went down to the Fariabad Ridge to see whether there was any sign of the coolies who should be coming up. I was feeling thoroughly ill from unsuitable food, and was subject to anxiety; I was afraid that something might have happened to Abdulla; that the coolies would not come up, or had been swept away in an avalanche; and that Jock or I would fall down another crevasse, and would be less lucky than before. I was dreading the night; ill-health seemed to make each night more interminable and more intensely cold, so that my one desire was to get down to the valley again. By evening we still had seen no sign of the coolies and could stand it no longer. We decided to retreat next morning, carrying only
our sleeping-bags, and to try and reach Base Camp in the day.

Early in the morning we packed the sleeping-bags into our rucksacks and, leaving the tents standing, started to descend. We dared not ski, for fear that one of us should become injured; a thought which had never struck us before. We reached the 17,000-foot camp site at about ten o'clock in the morning and found the coolies sitting there, having arrived up the previous night; and still trying to make up their minds to come up to us. We sent them up to get the camp, and sat ourselves on the warm rocks to eat the cake which Noor Mohammed had sent up, and to read our mail. Our normal perspective returned and our nervous anxiety left us. As the coolies reached the top of the Fariabad Ridge for the last time, they again gathered in a semicircle to chant a farewell to Nun; it seemed a most understandable and fitting gesture.

We got through to Base Camp next day, and the adventure was almost over. The valley below the glacier had melted out, and there was green grass and little crystal streams which flowed over beds of coloured pebbles. The stems of the dwarf willow, which grew in profusion, were red. Colour seemed vivid after days spent in the intense white of the high snows, where the only colour was the deep, cold blue of the sky.

Our snow-bridge had vanished, so that we had to ford the river. The first little arm looked
a mere trickle. Jock went across with ease. I followed light-heartedly and was immediately swept off my feet and carried down the stream. Jock threw me a rope and pulled me out, but not before I had lost my ice-axe. The main river was a hundred yards broad and looked difficult. Our coolies tucked up their clothing, formed up in a line, and, clinging to each other's waists, went across. So anchored to each other, they reached the other bank with a struggle. Jock and I foolishly waited for them to cross while I took photographs. When they were safely over three coolies from the opposite bank started off arm in arm to meet us, held from the bank on three hundred feet of rope. I roped to Jock, and together we went to meet them. The river flowed more swiftly on the coolies' side, and I had not yet been swept off my feet by the time Jock reached them, and, clinging to them, went on across the swifter portion. I immediately lost my feet, and made the crossing being played like a trout on the end of my hundred feet of rope, with my feet uppermost and my head under water, being weighed down by my rucksack. Snow lay on either bank of the river, and the cold was numbing. When I recovered on the opposite bank, having drunk more water than was good for me, Jock was still looking rather exhausted. We laid ourselves out naked on a big rock to thaw and dry in the sun. The coolies went off to the river to catch fish for our dinner,
and half an hour later they returned with a blanket full of snow trout; I do not know how they caught them.

Supper at Base Camp that night was such a glorious meal that I was as sick as a dog during the whole of the following day’s march.

We came back to Srinagar by the route by which we had originally started out, and had to turn back from; and we had no difficulty. The 'Statesman' published a long account of our climb; unfortunately I have lost the cutting, but the headlines were in the nature of: "ASSAULT ON NUN. YOUNG OFFICERS’ GALLANT ATTEMPT." Jock and I have never been able to live this down! We rather enjoyed the publicity and the knowledge that to the Indian
public at least we were mountaineers of note, and I must admit quite frankly that it made a greater impression on me than it should have done; so that I almost came to believe it, just when everyone else had forgotten all about us; it was an indirect cause of my next venture.

I have rattled through the story of our attempt on Nun Kun at such a rate that I have left out some points of interest. We had set out to try and climb Nun, or at least to discover why the other expeditions had not attempted it, the highest peak in the massif. On our return to Srinagar we borrowed the Italian Expedition’s book from Dr Neve and compared it with Mrs Bullock Workman’s ‘Peaks and Glaciers of Nun Kun,’ and came to the conclusion that to climb Nun from the plateau might be both difficult and dangerous. To reach the final arête of Nun it would be necessary to traverse White Needle, whose face above the plateau is very steep and broken snow, which it might be possible to climb, but which would probably be liable to avalanche. With this face above them both expeditions must have turned to the easier and only slightly lower peaks around the plateau. We, because we could not reach the plateau, the climbing being too difficult for us, had taken White Needle in the flank, and walked easily to its top; and in so doing had come a thousand feet nearer the top of Nun than had the other expeditions.
From the various views we got of the arête above White Needle, Jock and I were convinced that it would have been too difficult for us. I am not so sure about it now. I do not think that the east ridge of Nun is of any difficulty, and the rock outcrop about half-way up it, of which we were chiefly frightened, would not, I believe, cause any trouble. What really frightened us was the exposure of the ridge, which to the south falls sheer for thousands of feet; while the south face of Nun, directly below the summit, sweeps down unbroken for 8000 feet. The structure was on an altogether vaster scale than anything we had seen before.

Jock and I undoubtedly had beginners' luck throughout the climb. I have become a great believer in luck; it seems to me that the mountains are kinder to those who cannot be expected to know their dangers. With each season's climbing I have grown more cautious, luck has favoured me less, and my companions and I have come more near to accidents.

We had splendid weather throughout our Nun Kun climb. We were too inexperienced to appreciate it, and were fully convinced that we had suffered from unusually bad weather. It is surprising how many mountaineers in the Himalayas have had the same delusion; from my own experience I would say that any period of good weather is extremely fortunate, and bad weather is only to be expected on any great
mountain. I may be slightly cynical in this outlook, but on only one other big climb have I experienced such uniformly good weather as we did on Nun Kun in 1934; and that was when I returned to the massif in 1937, and the weather was even more perfect.

Some time after the climb I read a review, in an English mountaineering journal, of the account which Jock had written in the journal of the Himalayan Club. The reviewer was kind to us, but he expressed surprise that we had not achieved more from our 20,000-foot camp, and in particular that we had spent a whole morning sitting in the sun outside our tents, sunbathing with our shirts off. He seemed to have taken the climb seriously, and to have imagined that we were mountaineers who knew what we were doing, and that we had shown most regrettable laziness. I could not help laughing when I read the review; for it showed that we had, in part at any rate, deceived even the mountaineering world about our climb and our qualifications to undertake it; which was funny, seeing that at the time Jock and I were not even quite sure what was the difference between a crevasse and a bergschrund, and were far from being mountaineers.

Jock and I did not get an opportunity to climb together again until 1938, by which time we had both learned a lot.
I ARRIVED back from Nun Kun with a passionate love for the life we had been leading. It had been entirely novel to me and was an experience which changed my whole outlook, so that the time I spent away from the hills seemed wasted. It had given me a mental stimulant and had developed me physically. For the first time I began to bury myself in the mountaineering classics, and to read with breathless interest the adventures of the first climbers on Everest, Kangchenjunga, and Nanga Parbat. They fired me with the desire to reach the higher places of the earth, and I began seriously to consider whether I was not already qualified to attempt something big. The highest peak to have been climbed was Kamet, 25,447 feet high, and I felt that I should be justified in calling any peak of over 25,000 feet 'something big.' I was due for six months' leave the following year, and during the end of the hot weather and the beginning of the autumn the idea of collecting together a party to climb a 25,000-foot mountain
was shaping in my mind. It received encouragement from the interest my friends were kind enough to take in it. On the Club lawn at Nowshera I met Flight-Lieutenant W. R. Brotherhood and Dr J. R. Carslaw, also of the R.A.F. Both men shared my passion for the hills, and we spent many long evenings together during which we discussed ways and means. Carslaw had Alpine and Norwegian experience; Brotherhood had been to the Himalayas to shoot, and had journeyed to the Baltoro Glacier in the Karakoram, but had done no climbing. They were both men who loved the hills and liked living hard. I showed them my extremely bad cinema film of the Nun Kun climb, and told them of my idea to tackle a 25,000-foot peak the coming summer. Little by little they became enthusiastic, and I was able to tell them the ideas which I had been formulating. Over drinks and dinners we had long discussions, and at last a plan was evolved: it was entirely theoretical; we had not yet chosen our peak. A fourth man joined our circle, and listened to our talks, then suggested that a friend of his might like to join us: his name was John Hunt. and he had extensive experience in the Alps, and so would be invaluable to us. We readily agreed, and I wrote a letter to him in Bengal. The answer was satisfactory; he was getting eight months’ leave and would be glad to spend four months of them attempting anything in the
Himalayas. We now had a party of four young men, all except Hunt extremely inexperienced, but all filled with enthusiasm.

We had thought out what were the essential conditions for our climb if it were to be successful. We must find a mountain of over 25,000 feet where the weather would be good, and whose approaches would not be too difficult. The mountain itself must be easy. We were going to finance the expedition ourselves, so cost must be kept to the minimum, which meant that our transport, both on and off the mountain, must be as light as possible. We decided that we could not afford to take the army of Sherpa porters from Darjeeling, which was then the fashionable craze in Himalayan climbing, but that we would have to be prepared to carry most of our equipment for ourselves once we got higher than we could take local, untrained coolies. As a slight compromise to fashion we decided to take a pair of Sherpas to help us carry. Food was the next problem. 'Stoup' had proved an entire failure, and I felt strongly that we must have good food throughout the climb. We decided to pitch our Base Camp as high as possible on the mountain's glacier system, and to take Noor Mohammed up to it. We would live on fresh food up to Base Camp; above it we realised that we would have to leave Noor Mohammed behind, and look after our own cooking arrangements. Rutledge’s 'Everest,
1933,' had been published, and we took it as our bible; but on one point we decided to depart from it: Ruttledge said that a scientific diet, on Arctic lines, was unsuitable for high Himalayan climbing, as oxygen-lack made the circumstances entirely different; and that each individual must be allowed to eat what he wished. We felt that we could not accept this, and my stepfather, Dr G. A. J. Teasdale, to whom I wrote, consulted Professor Mottram on the subject, and decided that an exact scientific diet could be evolved; and that it should be the most suitable under the circumstances. I wrote the specification of what was required to my stepfather; it must be the very lightest and most concentrated ration on which it would be possible to live and work up to heights of 25,000 feet, because we would have to carry it ourselves; it must require the minimum of cooking; and we must be able to live on it, without loss of condition, for a maximum period of a fortnight. I did not stipulate that it must be appetising; that came later from experience. Dr Teasdale and Professor Mottram, with the assistance of Messrs Glaxo and Rowntree, finally evolved a ration of one and a quarter pounds a man a day, which proved satisfactory. The ration is not given here, as it has been further modified after three seasons' experience, and the present answer is much better.

We chose the peak we were going to try almost entirely from a consideration of the weather
factor. The Karakoram Range, lying east of the Northern Himalayas, is the most centrally placed range in Asia which answered our purpose. It was reputed to be beyond the reach of the monsoon, and so we hoped that its weather would be fine. The Workmans’ book, ‘Two Summers in the Ice Wilds of the Eastern Karakoram,’ showed pictures of a mountain which they called Peak 36, 25,400 feet high, which has since been named Saltoro Kangri. It is forty-seven feet lower than Kamet, so that we could not be accused of sensationalism in attempting to attain the record for the highest peak climbed; and one snow-ridge, the south-east, looked as though it should not be excessively difficult. It was a humped mountain which appeared to grow easier on its higher slopes. It was isolated from other mountains of like size, and it was set about by some of the greatest expanses of ice in the world, outside the Polar circles. Its neighbourhood was almost unexplored, and altogether it seemed rather fascinating; nobody had attempted to climb it.

Salvor Kangri was probably first seen at close quarters by Dr T. Longstaff in 1909, when, with Dr Arthur Neve and Lieutenant Slingsby, he was looking for the fabulous Salvor Pass, reputed to lead across the Karakoram Range to Central Asia. He found it in the Bilaphond La, but also discovered that it led not to Central Asia, but to the great Siachen Glacier. While
Plate 11.—The path crawled along the faces of high, red precipices.
he was making his passage of the Bilaphond La, he caught a glimpse of the higher parts of Saltoro Kangri from the top of the pass, over an intermediate ridge. After Dr Longstaff came Dr Hunter Workman and Mrs Bullock Workman, who, with big expeditions, quite unlike the small one which had preceded them, visited the area in two consecutive years. In 1911 they reached the top of the Bilaphond La, and explored the valleys to the west of Saltoro Kangri, right to the foot of its western precipices. They returned the following year to carry out the important work of mapping the entire forty-six mile length of the Siachen Glacier, to the east of Saltoro Kangri, and penetrated for the first time to its upper reaches. During this exploration they ascended the Saltoro Kangri Glacier (called by them the 'Peak 36 Glacier') under the east face of the mountain, and reached a point directly beneath the north-east buttress of Saltoro Kangri.

Since the Workmans' time the area seems to have been entirely neglected, until Professor Dainelli visited the Siachen Glacier from its snout in the Nubra Valley, in 1930. He ascended the Siachen to the point where the Terram Kangri Glacier joins it from the east, and he succeeded in making a passage from the head of this glacier over to the Rimo Glacier, which he descended eastwards in the direction of the Karakoram Pass, on the Leh to Yarkand trade route. In an article in the 'Himalayan Journal' he showed
a picture of Saltoro Kangri taken from about ten miles away on the Siachen Glacier. From the Workmans' writings it is plain that Saltoro Kangri impressed them; they even state: "Could one but be borne by an aeroplane to the dip between them (Saltoro Kangri's twin summits) both would probably succumb to the foot of the mountaineer. Whether seen from the Dong Dong Glacier or from different places on the Rose (the Siachen) and its affluents, one always feels inclined to pause and admire this mountain, so noble is its build, so supremely picturesque and beautiful its varied aspects. Like a few people one meets on life's journey, it possesses a commanding personality."¹ As far as we could discover nobody had approached the mountain from the valleys lying to the west since the Workmans in 1912. The coolies would not, therefore, have been spoiled by over-payment. The approaches, probably via the Bilaphond La, did not appear too difficult, and the photographs of the mountain seemed to show at least a possible route up the south-east ridge.

We next considered the problem of reducing the weight of our equipment to the lowest possible level, and finally obtained tents, which weighed only eight pounds for two men, from Burns of Manchester. He also made sleeping-bags for ourselves and the porters, which weighed a mere

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¹ 'Two Summers in the Ice World of the Eastern Karakoram,' page 175.
seven pounds; both these seemed incredible to me after the equipment we had used on Nun Kun, where the sleeping-bags weighed fifteen to twenty-five pounds, and the tents fifteen pounds. The price of the new equipment seemed as high as its weight was low. We bought Li-Lo mattresses, which had recently been introduced to the market, and felt ourselves pioneers in doing so, as we very nearly were. We borrowed tents and ice-axes from the Himalayan Club to complete our equipment. I invented a carrying harness, with bags fore and aft, in which to carry all our equipment on the climb. The harness was not successful. When I arrived in Srinagar in March I had a sledge with ski-runners, on the Arctic pattern, made for dragging loads over glaciers. It also failed. I borrowed snow-shoes, which we lost, without ever having used them. Our preparations were unorthodox and thorough; and few of them were really satisfactory.
CHAPTER IV.

SALTORO KANGRI, 1935—continued.

John Hunt and I left Srinagar a few days ahead of Carslaw and Brotherhood, who had volunteered to wait for a couple of packages of equipment which had not yet arrived from England. It was the end of April and there were fifty miles of snow on the Zoji La. We all marched out to the Karakoram at speed, so that we had little time to gain more than a general impression of the country through which we were travelling. After the Zoji La we dropped down to Kargil, then continued down the Suru River to the Indus. All the patches of cultivation were lakes of apricot blossom. The heat in the Indus Valley was great, and the path crawled along the faces of high, red precipices. The Shyok Valley was more open and was bedded with even hotter sand. We stayed a day opposite Khapulu, and then crossed a little ridge in the Saltoro Valley. On our way we caught our first glimpse of a great Karakoram mountain, Masherbrum, which rose high above the head of the Hushe Nala. It was a splendid looking peak, partly hidden by filmy
clouds, and the desire to climb it was inevitable; in 1938 the attempt was made.

The north wall of the Saltoro Valley, throughout its ten-mile length, is made up of granite precipices, many thousands of feet high. Half-way along the wall is a break in which stand the Saltoro Spires, 5000-foot needles of rock, rising sheer from their bases to their pointed tops. Of these Dr Longstaff has written: "Long after the last precipice in the Alps has been spiked into submission, long after Ushba has become an easy day for a lady, the Mustagh Tower will remain inviolate and the Saltoro Spires will await assault."

The Kondus Valley breaks through this wall of granite from the north, and at the junction is the village of Dansam, where Hunt and I arrived on 14th May, eighteen days after leaving Srinagar. Dansam is 9000 feet up, and the blossom was still on the apricot trees. It was here that we had decided to pitch our Reconnaissance Base Camp from which to explore the approaches to Saltoro Kangri. We expected to find an easy way to reach the south-east ridge by going to the head of the Saltoro Valley, whence we would ascend the Bilaphond Glacier to its head at about 18,000 feet. The Bilaphond La was apparently separated from Saltoro Kangri by a low mountain ridge, which Dr Longstaff had called the 'Bilaphond Wall,' and in which were breaks, one of which should give a possible
route to the base of the south-east ridge of Saltoro Kangri at about the same height as the top of the Bilaphond La. But since this route was not certain, and would have to be explored before the expedition embarked on it, we had decided thoroughly to explore the western approaches to the mountain in addition; the Kondus Valley led up to the west face of Saltoro Kangri. The main glacier at the head of the Kondus Valley, the Sherpigang, had been explored by the Workmans, and they had even ascended one of the subsidiary glaciers, the Dong Dong, which descended from the western face of Saltoro Kangri; but no exploration of the remaining subsidiary glaciers in the Saltoro-Kondus dividing range of peaks, between 20,000 and 22,000 feet high, had been made. This dividing range appeared to connect directly to the south side of Saltoro Kangri, but the photographs had shown that it was just possible that there might be a break, which might give an easier route to the foot of the south-east ridge. Admittedly the prospect was unlikely, but we had decided that it was worth investigation.

Before light on the morning of the 15th May a note arrived from Carslaw to say that he and Brotherhood would arrive at Dansam that day. Hunt and I hastily decided that he and Palden, one of the Sherpas, with three coolies, should start immediately to explore the Bilaphond approach, which was the longer; while Dawa
Tandup, the other Sherpa porter, and I waited for Brotherhood and Carslaw at Dansam, so that we could then split into two parties to explore all the subsidiary glaciers above the Sherpigang. Hunt set out.

It was quite difficult to recognise Brotherhood and Carslaw when they arrived, disguised as they were in over a fortnight's growth of beard. They had marched even faster than we had, but were very fit. We had a great re-union dinner that night for which we broached one of our precious bottles of rum, and drank milk-punch far into the night, sitting beside the camp-fire, yarning about the journey and discussing plans. Next morning I set off with Dawa Tandup and two coolies up the Kondus Nala, while the other two rested for a day, which would allow me time to do a hasty exploration of the Sherpigang Glacier, and to decide which of the side glaciers were worth closer examination.

The scenery in the Kondus Valley is as impressive as that in the Salторo. Spiked rock peaks were silhouetted against the brilliant blue sky, giant boulders scattered about the feet of the precipices. There was a profusion of apricot blossom along the valley floor, where are three little villages. It is the wildest rock scenery I have ever seen, and must be hard to equal anywhere in the world.

By the time that I reached Khorkondus, the highest village in the valley, set at 11,000 feet,
clouds had come up and shrouded the feet of the precipices. Khorkondus is a collection of miserable stone hovels. There are no trees round the village, and the soil in the fields is very poor. Three miles above the village the snout of the Sherpigang Glacier could just be distinguished through the mists. It was depressing. I pitched my single little eight-pound tent just above the village, and heated a drink for Dawa Tandup and myself; we were living on our high altitude ration of one and a quarter pounds of food a man a day, in order to try it out, and no other cooking was necessary.

Next morning, in weather which had not improved, I moved camp up the western moraine of the Sherpigang. The going at first was very trying, for the moraine was composed mostly of coarse sand which offered little purchase for the feet. Higher up we found ourselves in a trough between the moraine and the mountain wall, and down its centre flowed a stream. There were signs of glacier action on the precipices a thousand feet above our heads. Three miles up the glacier, and in the trough, I pitched camp again, and sent the coolies down to Khorkondus, to direct Brotherhood and Carslaw, who joined me before evening. The clouds were still low, it had snowed a little, and we had as yet had no view of Saltoro Kangri, which we knew must be directly to our east, across the Sherpigang.

After a meagre tea of ginger-nut biscuits and
butter, we put on all our available clothing and sat on a rock. The clouds suddenly swirled apart, and, unbelievably high above the intervening rock ridges, we caught a glimpse of the twin summits of Saltoro Kangri. The clouds drew apart quickly, so that we could see the rock precipice which falls 10,000 feet from the summit ridge. A great rock gendarme\(^1\) stands on the skyline to the south of the higher peak; this was to become a landmark later. The clouds still swirled around the valleys at the foot of Saltoro Kangri, increasing its apparent height; its precipices were cold and awe-inspiring. After a quarter of an hour, when the evening sun played on the mountain and on the shifting mists, the clouds closed down again.

We returned silently to our tents. In silence we prepared for bed. We were in no mood for conversation.

The weather during the day had just been good enough to give me an idea of the topography of the glaciers falling towards the Sherpigang. The mountain was plainly inaccessible from the Dong Dong Glacier directly beneath its western precipices. There were two other glaciers south of the Dong Dong with their heads in the Saltoro-Kondus dividing range. Neither appeared to be big, and the one nearest the Dong Dong alone looked as though it might lead to a high pass. The other, which the coolies called the

\(^1\) Rock tower.
Likah, appeared to be a cul-de-sac, a mere three miles or so long, with its snout about a thousand feet above the Sherpigang. I was anxious to get back to Dansam to prepare for the climb, so it was decided that the other two climbers would explore the glacier next the Dong Dong, while Dawa Tandup and I took the Likah.

We crossed the Sherpigang next morning and separated. I pitched my camp at the snout of the Likah Glacier at about mid-day, and Dawa Tandup and I went on up to have a look at the head of the glacier. When we got there, about an hour and a half later, I was surprised to find that far from being the head, it was merely a bend, and that the glacier grew bigger, and descended from a high basin more than two thousand feet above us. Behind the lip of the basin we could see two snow-peaks. The impression I received was that the basin was not the true head of the glacier, but that it again bent in a northerly direction. If this surmise was correct it was possible that the glacier would lead directly to the foot of the south-east ridge of Saltoro Kangri. We returned to camp. I was very excited.

Next morning we left the coolies behind, and, starting very early, ourselves carried our camp and three days' feed up the glacier. We passed an easy ice-fall and crossed a quarter-mile square, level snowfield. Above was a broken ice-fall which rose for 2000 feet. It took us two hours
to find a way up the first five hundred feet of it, through the intricacies of crevasses and *seracs*,\(^1\) the smaller crevasses neatly hidden under a foot of powder snow. After that, I found that we could take to the hillside to the north, up which we ploughed through melting snow, which was sometimes knee-deep, but which more often let us down with a jerk on to the rocks below, with the snow surface about our waists. It was a weary trudge. By late afternoon we were approaching the top of a col, its height about 18,000 feet, from which I hoped we would obtain a view of the upper course of the glacier; if it had one. About five hundred feet from the top of the col we threw off our loads, which had been impeding us, and went on up as fast as we could; which was slowly, seeing that we were completely unacclimatised. At last, after being false-crested several times, we stood on the top of the col. A bitter wind whistled over. The clouds were down to within a thousand feet of our heads. It was trying to snow. But we saw that our hopes had been fulfilled; ahead of us, and eight hundred feet below, stretched a wide, even snowfield, some three miles long, walled by high snow-peaks, and terminating in what was undoubtedly the foot of the south-east ridge of Saltoro Kangri; although it had never been seen from this side, I was positive about it,

\(^1\) Towers and upstanding blocks of ice on the uneven surface of an ice-fall.
owing to the scale of the mountain from which it descended; the higher portions were hidden in clouds, but they could not conceal its size.

After half an hour's wait in the hopes that the clouds would clear, Dawa Tandup and I ran down to our loads and carried them down to 17,000 feet, where we pitched camp beneath a boulder. Night was already falling. We had only brought the outer sacks of our sleeping-bags, weighing some three and a half pounds, and I spent almost as cold a night as those at the 20,000-foot camp on Nun Kun; but it was worth it; we had discovered a new glacier, and an easy route to approach Saltoro Kangri.

When I got back to Dansam I found that the others had been less lucky. Brotherhood's and Carslaw's glacier had ended in precipices. Hunt had twice reached the head of the Bilaphond La in heavy snowstorms, and had decided that a route could not be made from it. He was convinced that Saltoro Kangri fell in sheer ice precipices to a point only half a mile to the north of where he stood. My Likah Glacier discovery had shown that this was unlikely, but it did not make the complicated topography of the area any clearer, and we came to the conclusion that he must have been the victim of an optical delusion. During the two days of rain which followed, we decided to advance by the route I had discovered, and we spent the time in repacking stores, and developing the photographs which
Plate 16.—The coolies leading up the uninteresting moraine.
we had taken during the reconnaissance. It rained continuously.

On 23rd May the whole expedition reached Khorkondus, where we had to recruit fifty coolies for the climb. The men of the village were very ugly; their coarse black hair fell wildly to their shoulders and mingled with their beards. Many of them were cripples, or stared vacantly, owing to in-breeding. Their average height was about five feet, and even the best of them were of poor physique. Their clothes were ragged and inadequate. We should have been warned by their appearance and ought to have sent down to the lower valley for men; but we were in such a hurry to start that we took them. They had one engaging feature; when they smiled, which they did frequently, their bestial faces were lit with something approaching charm.

The clouds were still low when we set off on the morning of 24th May to pitch Camp I at 14,000 feet near the snout of the Likah Glacier. We were starting on the assault of a great mountain, and we had a feeling that the expedition should have looked impressive; but for a variety of reasons it failed to do so. The halt and the maim among the coolies hobbled off ahead in groups of two and three; they knew the way up the uninteresting moraine, so they led. The mail arrived at the moment of starting, and in the ensuing scramble for letters the climbers were left behind. When we did start we scarcely
looked the part; clad in khaki shirts and shorts, with anything from deer-stalker hats to battered *topis* on our heads, we wandered slowly up, reading our mail. Brotherhood carried a gun over his shoulder, and a coolie carried his rifle behind him. Tony, my big Golden Retriever, completed the unusual picture; he was accompanying us up the mountain to our Base Camp at the head of the Likah Glacier, because we had nowhere to leave him below. For all the humour in the situation we were feeling very solemn.

We spent two nights at Camp 1. During the day between them Brotherhood stalked the ibex of his dreams, while Carslaw, clad in a brilliant red sweater, clambered about above camp taking photographs. Unfortunately, although Carslaw failed to see it, the ibex saw him, and made off just when Brotherhood was preparing to shoot it. Hunt and I went on up the glacier to make a trace for the next day.

The climb to Camp 2 at 17,000 feet started very early on a cold morning, long before the sun reached the glacier. After an hour’s climb above Camp 1 the whole party had to be roped up on six one-hundred-foot long ropes. There were fifty coolies, Noor Mohammed and Karima, the cooks, the two Sherpas, four climbers, five live sheep, and the dog, Tony. The coolies were sorted into six parties and were made to sit on the snow, on which the sun was not yet shining, while we tied them in. They were half-witted,
and kept on moving their positions. The sheep escaped and were chased by Tony, who was having a game; and by half a dozen coolies, who were not. When they had been caught and tied up, and three ropes had already started up the glacier, six more coolies suddenly appeared and the remaining three ropes had to be retied. Tony had two yards of the end of my rope, which I tied round his chest, and, in order to stop the rope slipping over his tail, I had to tie on a breast-plate made from a handkerchief. In spite of the fact that there was only a yard between men on the ropes, the coolies and Tony took kindly to it, but the sheep were unaccustomed to the cold, and were obstreperous. Hunt led the way, and the other ropes crawled after him up the glacier, looking like serpents.

Steady progress was made until we reached the pitch where we had to climb for five hundred feet through the ice-fall. Here the going was altogether too much for the coolies, and, in spite of their having vast steps dug for them in the ice, they slipped and slid, and hauled themselves up on the rope. They broke through the thin bridges over crevasses. When we left the glacier one man, who was more of a cripple than his friends, collapsed, and another coolie had to help him into camp, both their loads being abandoned on the glacier. A number of the coolies seemed determined to commit suicide by spending the night out on the snow slope above the glacier,
without shelter and in a place where rocks fell frequently: Brotherhood and I put in some hard work with our ice-axes; we were not cutting steps; the suicide club was dissolved, and by afternoon everyone had reached the Camp 2 site, and had cheered up remarkably. It was free from snow, and platforms for the tents were soon built of boulders, as were sangars,¹ which we roofed with tarpaulin. By nightfall, when it began to snow, everyone was under cover and all had blankets. We gave them each a warm drink, which further cheered them. Carslaw went among them looking for doctoring work to do, and discovered the man who had collapsed. He called over Hunt and Brotherhood to help him set the man’s shoulder, which appeared to have been dislocated by a fall on the way up. After considerable hard work on the part of the three climbers, the doctor came reluctantly to the conclusion that the man’s shoulder had not been dislocated; it just grew that way.

Next morning, when we were ready to start, we found that half the coolies were unfit to go higher. A hasty plan was made whereby the fit men should carry all the loads in two relays to the top of the col above us, at 18,000 feet, and should dump them there, while Carslaw and I made a route down the eight-hundred-foot high slope on to the snowfield on the other side of the col. We arrived up with the first relay of

¹ Frontier warfare term meaning a circular stone breastwork.
loads at about nine-thirty, and, while Brotherhood took the coolies down again, Carslaw and I set to work to cut a hole through the cornice, which curled out over the snowfield like a breaking wave of snow. We worked for an hour, the one holding the other on the rope, while he hacked away at the snow-lip beneath his feet. A cold wind was blowing, and the man who acted as anchor was so chilled that we had to change over every ten minutes. Hunt arrived up during the process and showed us a safer way of securing the rope, for which advice we were surprisingly ungrateful, although we adopted it. At length we had cut a hole about three feet square, and Carslaw lowered me through it. The powder snow beneath reached to my armpits, and I could find no firm footing. After slithering down for thirty feet the layer of snow thinned to a foot, with ice underneath. I anchored myself and Carslaw joined me. We worked our way down slowly to the snowfield.

While this was in progress a snowstorm had blown up. By the time we regained the top of the col the wind and snow had increased almost to blizzard strength, and the loads were becoming rapidly buried. We found the others sitting on boxes and eating lunch in the shelter of a partially pitched tent. We decided to send all the coolies, save only seven picked men, straight off the mountain, and detailed Dawa Tandup and Palden to take them down in roped parties as far as
Camp 1. After lunch we pitched Camp 3 where we were, on the top of the col, and turned into our tents, while the storm continued to grow stronger. That night we slept badly, for it was the first blizzard any of us had experienced under canvas; and we had a quite unfounded fear that the tents would not stand the strain.

When we awoke next morning the wind had dropped and snow fell lightly. We and the coolies carried all the loads the hundred yards from the camp to the break in the cornice. Carslaw and I, with Noor Mohammed and three coolies, started down the slope to assist with the loads, which we intended to lower one by one on a six-hundred-foot length of rope. Carslaw remained a hundred feet below the cornice, while I took the others on down, roped to me. None of them had ever been called upon to descend a slope so icy and so steep, with the result that with one accord they sat; and when they sat they slid. Progress was very slow and most tiring for me; and twice I was unable to hold them, and slid too. I had got about half-way down when the first load to be lowered reached me, and stuck in a snowdrift. I quickly untied the rope from my waist, tied it on to the load, shoved it off, and saw the four men sliding down with it, all in a glorious heap, steadied by the long rope stretching from the top of the col. I followed more slowly. The four men sorted themselves out at the bottom and sat in a huddle
Plate 19.—Camp 3A was pitched near the point where the coolies are shown in the photograph.
trying to shelter from the blizzard which had by this time come on again.

The climbers spent a miserable day. The blizzard increased hourly in intensity. Gloves had to be removed to tie and untie loads. Goggles became so iced up that they had to be taken off. Clothes, beards, faces, and eyelashes became sheeted in ice. The wind tried to pluck us from the slope, and became so strong that a sheep was blown bodily from the top and arrived at the bottom in three bounces; and was unhurt! We spent the day ranging up and down the slope, ploughing through snow which sometimes reached our waists, and heaving at the loads which had stuck.

By evening the situation was becoming bad. Hunt and I, down below on the glacier, tried to pitch one of the tents, but found that in such a wind it was impossible for two men to do so. Leaving the tent flat and weighted with a box, we tried to prod the coolies into action, but they were convinced that the end had come, and would not move. To get them back to Camp 3 was beyond us. On the glacier we had three tents, a few blankets, no food, and one or two sleeping-bags. At this moment Brotherhood and Carslaw descended out of the storm. On the rope they had brought a further tent and all the sleeping-bags. In their rucksacks were crammed clothing and some chocolate. The four of us succeeded in pitching the tents, one man standing
inside on the sewn-in ground-sheets to anchor each tent while the other three men drove the tent-peg home and attached the guy-ropes. We heaved the coolies and the blankets into one, and threw chocolate after them. We bedded down ourselves in two others. We had had neither food nor drink since seven o’clock that morning, and still could obtain no water, as we had no stoves. Our food was chocolate, which only made us more thirsty. We ate a little of the powder snow which had blown into the tents, and went to sleep.

In the morning conditions were no better. Hunt and Brotherhood were snow-blind. We spent the day in our tents, still without anything to drink. The wind dropped slightly in the evening, and I went to the bottom of the fixed rope to look for food. I also paid a call on the coolies, who seemed to be in a bad way. I determined that we must obtain stoves the next day, and that Carslaw and I, whatever the weather, would have to climb to the top of the col to fetch them.

The next morning, our second in this camp, and the third since the blizzard started, was a little finer, and Carslaw, the three coolies, and I started off to climb the col. The coolies collapsed almost immediately and had to be sent back. A hundred yards farther on Carslaw was so violently sick that he had to return. I reached the foot of the six-hundred-foot long rope hanging from the
col, and pulled myself up it through waist-deep snow. Once I paused to be sick; near the top I halted for ten minutes while I rubbed the hand round which had been wound the rope, and in which I had lost all sensation. The powder snow on the highest stretch to the cornice was bottomless, and when I reached the top I found that the cornice had re-formed above me. I no longer had the strength to beat it down. At this instant a coolie looked over the edge, saw me, and, lying down, seized me by the collar and heaved me bodily through the snow-lip. I lay panting for a moment before being supported into the standing tent. A primus stove was roaring and scaldingly hot tea was ready.

The two Sherpas, Dawa Tandup and Palden, had arrived up through the blizzard at nine o'clock the previous evening; in spite of which they were full of energy, and immediately turned out into the storm to unearth Meta stoves and fuel; and with these and food bulging their rucksacks, slid down the fixed rope towards the camp below. My descent was more stately, as I was very tired. Hunt and Brotherhood, whose eyes were a little better, turned out to help me into camp, before they would light the stoves. We gave the coolies water and left a lighted stove with them, before gathering in the largest tent and melting snow for water, then tea, then water again.

Next morning, the fourth of the blizzard,
the weather was brighter, but a high wind still swept the glacier and snow still fell. The other climbers all went out to continue the work of lowering loads from the col; I remained in camp until the afternoon, when I took the place of Carslaw, who was still feeling sick. By evening most of the loads were down, and our camp (3A we called it) was becoming almost habitable. The two porters assisted greatly during the day's work.

June 1st dawned fine. The sun shone brilliantly on the whiteness of the new snow. The sky was intensely blue. Saltoro Kangri stood high above us, its top flaunting a long plume of wind-driven snow. We lay in our sleeping-bags, while the sun warmed us; and the tents dripped gently as they thawed. Hunt set off on skis to reach the head of the glacier, and went beyond, over the ridge that closed it, over a snow plateau the other side, and on to the top of another pass below the eastern side of the lower end of the south-east ridge, from which he could see part of the east face of Saltoro Kangri. The rest of us packed up Camp 3, and by evening the whole strength of the party, which consisted of four climbers, two porters, Noor Mohammed and Karima, seven coolies, and Tony, were established in Camp 3A.

Next morning we began to take the loads up the three miles of snowfield to our Base Camp site. The porters and coolies were loaded up
and sent off ahead, while the climbers packed the sledge, only to discover that the united efforts of the four of us would not move it through the soft snow. We unloaded it and sat down on it to discuss plans. We had almost fifty loads, and only seven coolies to carry them to Base Camp. The way over the Likah Col, during the blizzard, had proved trying. I was becoming slightly panicky about the fuel situation, as we seemed to have lost about half our paraffin through leakage. Hunt had reached the plateau beyond the south-east ridge, and he thought, from the conformation of the country, that it looked remarkably like the top of the Bilaphond La; which also seemed to fit in with the fact that he had thought that Saltoro Kangri rose only half a mile away from the highest point he had reached during his Bilaphond Glacier exploration. If this were correct, it was plain that the Bilaphond would make a much better line of communication, and we unanimously agreed to change to it immediately. Brotherhood and a coolie, carrying a tent, started down again to Dansam to open up the new route, and bring up a dozen men from Goma carrying wood for fuel. It seemed to us to be the sanest decision in the world, but we had overlooked the fallacious assumption on which the whole plan was based. We had assumed that Hunt’s plateau and the Bilaphond La were identical; which, in fact, they were not.
Brotherhood rejoined us a fortnight later, although he and Hunt got within shouting distance of each other on 7th June.

It took till 8th June fully to establish Base Camp at the head of the Likah Glacier, but on 4th June the climbers, the porters, Noor Mohammed, and Tony occupied it. We found a glacier pool just over the ridge above the camp, so that water was unlimited. The single surviving sheep was killed and joined its brothers in cold storage. We carried on with the dual job of finding how to climb higher on the mountain, and discovering the route by which Brotherhood would join us. The weather was not too bad, but it snowed every afternoon, and after mid-day there was always a cold wind. The minimum temperature at Base Camp averaged 4° F., while the day temperature in the tents at times rose to 89°. The snow deposited on the mountains by the afternoon snowstorms poured off every morning as soon as the sun shone on them, in a series of powder snow avalanches.

The south-east ridge, on closer inspection, proved unpleasant. About a thousand feet up were high ice-cliffs, which had the bad habit of breaking off frequently; sometimes the avalanches swept down towards Base Camp; and sometimes they roared out of sight, round on the east side of the mountain.

On 5th June, Hunt and I tried to climb some way up the east side of the south-east ridge,
Plate 21—June 1st in Camp 3A. John Hunt coiling a rope, with Saltoro Kangri and its plume behind.
but we came to ice-slopes which required much step-cutting at above 19,000 feet, and some comparatively difficult rock; and we had ascended less than a thousand feet when we gave up. On the same day Carslaw went southwards down Hunt’s plateau with the idea of getting on to the Bilaphond La, but after half a mile it dropped away in a steep and broken glacier, which descended two thousand feet to the valley, probably at Naram. Brotherhood was expected up at the top of the Bilaphond on the 7th, and by the evening of the 5th we knew two things: that the Bilaphond La did not lie where we had thought it did; and that the south-east ridge, on which we had banked all our hopes, was useless. In addition, Carslaw was sick.

Hunt and I decided that our first task was to discover the Bilaphond La. Brotherhood had only a week’s food with him, and was expecting us to meet him. It was plain that the Bilaphond La must lie farther eastwards, so next morning the two of us with the two porters crossed the passes which Hunt had discovered, and descended to the basin at the head of the Saltoro Kangri Glacier, to the east of the mountain. From it we saw what was undoubtedly the northern side of the Bilaphond Wall, which dropped steeply to our level from a thousand feet higher at its lowest point, and in which were two cols, either of which might be Brotherhood’s approach. Our only course would be to pitch a camp half-way
between the cols, and wait to see on which he would appear. Whichever it was, we realised that the chance of his being able to descend to us was slight. We returned to Base Camp for the night, and on the morning of the 7th we carried a camp of three tents over to the Saltoro Kangri Glacier. Hunt started off with Palden an hour before Dawa Tandup and I did, owing to my having to pack the tent in which I was living at Base Camp. Hunt had hardly chosen a camp site when Brotherhood and his party appeared on the top of the col nearest Saltoro Kangri. Hunt and Palden climbed up to try and join them, but after going a thousand feet they were stopped by the bergschrund. Brotherhood had three loads of wood thrown down the slope from the col, but all were engulfed in the 'schrund. Hunt shouted to him that he would have to return by the way he had come, and that wood was getting more vital. Brotherhood turned and started back. A week later he rejoined us. Hunt came back to camp, which he reached exhausted, supported by a porter. The weather was for once perfect, but the powder snow through which Hunt had ploughed the trace all day was still knee-deep.

Perfect weather continued next day. From our camp we could at last see a way by which we might hope to climb Saltoro Kangri, up the steepness of the eastern snow face. In one place only were the ice-cliffs interrupted. A
snow-ridge led up to a large snow ledge at about 20,000 feet. Above were slopes which looked very steep, but which were definitely not cliffs. Above them the mountain eased towards the crest of the south-east ridge. This would have to be our line of assault. We would have to press on immediately and pitch Camp 4 at the base of the face. If we were quick the paraffin might just hold out.

While the rest of us ploughed across to the foot of the face, Dawa Tandup was sent back to Base Camp with a note for Carslaw, telling him of our decision and the news of Brotherhood, and asking him to send all available coolies through to the Camp 4 site without delay. An hour after Dawa Tandup had crossed the pass above the glacier, a great ice avalanche from Saltoro Kangri swept over both sides of it, and ice-blocks poured six hundred yards out over the level glacier. The cloud of driven snow, which preceded the avalanche, rose to a height of a thousand feet, hiding the pass behind. Our route was clearly unsafe, but when we tried to force another the next day, on our return to Base Camp, we found that it was impossible.

After our three fine days a new four-day blizzard settled on the mountain. Two attempts to advance to Camp 4 failed. When the weather cleared, Brotherhood arrived up with his party, carrying wood, and the fuel shortage no longer mattered.
On 14th June we started off with four coolies to assault the summit. We planned that it should take a week above Base Camp. The morning was fine, and only a few clouds hung far away to the south. The depth of new snow which had fallen made our progress slower than usual. Before we reached Camp 4 heavy clouds were about the mountain and a gusty wind blew over the glacier. Snow began to fall as we pitched our tents. By evening a new blizzard had started.

We lay all day on the 15th June in our sleeping-bags. Hunt had brought with him a magazine which he tore into four parts and handed round the party. By the time we left Camp 4 we could almost have recited even the advertisements by heart. There was a brief clearing during the morning of 16th June, and Hunt took Palden to discover the way up the ridge to the 20,000-foot ledge. They ploughed upwards through waist-deep snow, which might have been expected to avalanche, but showed no such tendency. The renewal of the storm drove them down again. Now the snow fell heavily and limply and there was no wind, so that the little eight-pound tents were becoming rapidly buried; and during the evening we all turned out to dig them out.

Next morning was fine. Hunt and Carslaw with the whole transport party set out to pitch Camp 5. They went slowly up the ridge, Hunt ploughing the trace through the deep snow.
Plate 23.—Palden climbing on the east side of the south-east ridge of Saltoro Kangri.

The rock face on the left is vertical.
The final slope to the ledge was steeper, and the snow bottomless and frothy. It took Hunt an hour to fight his way up two hundred feet, forcing his body through snow which was shoulder-deep. He fixed a line and the others followed him up. Camp 5 was pitched at the top of the ledge, protected from possible avalanches from the face above by a wide crevasse. The porters and coolies returned to Camp 4 for the night. The wind had changed from the prevailing west to east, and promised a spell of fine weather. The crucial point of the climb lay in the slopes above Camp 5, which were very steep. Brotherhood and I followed up to Camp 5 the following day with the remaining loads. Excellent route-finding on Hunt’s part allowed him and Carslaw to push a reconnaissance up to about 21,200 feet. The steep slopes were icy and were covered with a foot of powder snow, which gave little purchase for their feet. Above the first eight-hundred-foot high wave of the slope Carslaw was shaken by falling into a crevasse. Higher up Hunt also fell into one; and they decided to return to Camp 5.

We had originally intended to pitch two camps above Camp 5, but on this evening we revised the plan and determined to attack the summit from Camp 6. Camp 5 was probably at about a height of 20,000 feet; but our aneroid barometer had failed at Camp 1, and we were under the impression that we were fifteen hundred feet higher. Assuming that we could climb 2000
feet the next day, we should be able to pitch Camp 6 at 23,500 feet, from which a climb of a further 2000 feet would bring us to the summit, on ground which would be less difficult. Another factor which influenced us was the fact that we had already had two consecutive fine days; which was too good to last. Our plan was to establish Camp 6, 2000 feet higher, with the help of the two Sherpas and Hussein, a coolie, and to send them back to Camp 5 for the night.
From Camp 6 the four climbers would attempt to reach the summit alone. Our plan was doomed to failure because Camp 6 could not be pitched higher than about 22,200 feet; but we did not know this, and were confident that if we had two more fine days we would conquer the mountain. We did not even get our two fine days.

Hunt and Brotherhood led the party up the route found on the previous day’s reconnaissance. The two Sherpas and Hussein followed on the next rope. Carslaw, who was unfit, and I brought up the rear. Very soon it was obvious that Carslaw was too sick to go on, and he was reluctantly forced to turn back. It was cruel luck. I followed the others and caught up the porter party at the top of the first eight-hundred-foot high wave. Hunt and Brotherhood were two hundred feet higher. We passed the second and smaller wave, then went over a more level stretch where was the débris of a large avalanche, which we had heard falling during the night. Above this the slopes again steepened, and Hunt led up the previous day’s track. Suddenly, without any warning, the whole slope, on which were Hunt and Brotherhood, avalanched. Hunt was at the point of break, and managed to hold Brotherhood on the rope. After this experience he led upwards with the greatest care, fully prepared for dangerous slopes. A few hundred feet higher we stopped to rest. It was my turn to lead, but for anyone except the most experi-
enced climber to do so would have been most unwise. Leaving us resting, Hunt and Brother-hood traversed round the bottom of the next sharp portion of the ascent, out of our sight. As Hunt led straight up it, the avalanche which he had been anticipating happened; this time it was more serious. Both men were caught in it and carried down. Hunt jabbed his ice-axe deeply into the firm snow below, and the body of the avalanche came to rest on a providential little ledge, over which only a few blocks of crusted snow fell four hundred feet to a level stretch below. We followed the leaders through the snow blocks. A little higher I was able to take the lead, as the slopes had eased. A crevasse stretching across the width of the face gave us pause, but I forced a way up an ice-ridge to its upper lip, just above which we pitched Camp 6, more than 2000 feet above Camp 5. The porters and Hussein stayed long enough to have their photographs taken before they descended, first fixing a rope from the upper lip of the crevasse.

The evening in Camp 6 was bitterly cold. The night was colder. The wind seemed to bore through the thin fabric of the tents, and through our sleeping-bags and layers of clothing. My boots, which I took to bed with me, were frozen stiff in the morning.

We were high on the east face of Saltoro Kangri, and the sun struck the camp early. It must have been shortly after half-past six when the
three of us set out on our bid for the summit. The slopes above us were much less steep. At first there was a breakable crust to the snow which let us down to a depth of about a foot, but higher up the going improved. There was one place where we feared windsalt,¹ which, however, remained secure. By the time we had climbed a thousand feet Brotherhood was becoming tired. We sat for three-quarters of an hour while we melted snow over a Tommy Cooker to have a drink. We saw that the magnificent view below us was becoming clouded over, and at the same time realised that the wind had changed from east to west; it would only be a question of hours before the weather deteriorated. We still had not reached the crest of the south-east ridge, and it began to dawn on us that something must be wrong with our estimation of camp heights. Away to the north-west we could see a prominent snow bump, and we wondered whether it could possibly be the summit; if it were not, we were defeated.

After our halt I led on up for a thousand feet. My pace was very slow. I took two long breaths between each movement of my feet. At about mid-day, or possibly later, we reached the crest of the south-east ridge, which stretched on upwards for about nine hundred feet, past the gendarme we had seen from the Sherpigang.

¹ A particular formation of the snow surface, making it liable to avalanche. It is very difficult to detect; both the avalanches the previous day were probably 'windsalt avalanches.'
The snow on the crest of the ridge was again a deep powder, into which we sank to our knees. A bitter wind blew vertically up over the western precipices, and gusts of snow came with it.

We were beaten. The height must have been about 24,500 feet. Hunt and Brotherhood continued a little way along the ridge, but in half an hour they had only gone some three hundred yards. They returned slowly to me. Brotherhood was very tired. We roped up and began to descend. The weather was becoming more threatening. Heavy clouds surrounded the base of the peak, and the snow-squalls which blew up over the ridge were becoming more frequent. Our descent was very slow. Hunt had to support Brotherhood into Camp 6; I had gone ahead to melt snow.

We probably arrived back at Camp 6 at about three-thirty. Brotherhood was exhausted, and Hunt and I were tired; we had climbed and descended about 2000 feet in the day. But the storm signs were becoming momentarily more obvious, and the way between Camp 6 and 5 was not one to tackle during a blizzard; nor did we feel that it would be wise to attempt to weather one of the habitual blizzards where we were, and hope to be able to get down after it. We should descend immediately to Camp 5; but I must admit that when Brotherhood was supported into camp, I gave up all idea of going on that night.
We gave Brotherhood water and made him eat; and had a meal ourselves. About an hour after our arrival Hunt went out to find that the weather was growing rapidly worse. He had not given up the idea of reaching Camp 5 that evening; and he forced us to pack the tents and sleeping-bags, and continue the descent. Brotherhood had recovered much of his strength. We went slowly down. Fresh avalanches had swept our route since the time of the ascent. Our heavy loads were trying to tired men. They bumped against the slope behind us, thrusting us out of the steps. Once Hunt fell into a crevasse, and held himself by his elbows on its lip. We were too weak to help him. He heaved himself out with a tremendous effort, and, as he did so, something parted from his rucksack, and we could hear it echoing down into the depths of the crevasse. We reached the top of the eight-hundred-foot high wave above Camp 5 just as dark was falling; we could still distinguish the tents as dark dots on the lighter snow. We hailed, and the porters turned out and came to meet us. Half-way down the slope they took our loads from us, and disappeared downwards into the now complete darkness. We staggered slowly towards the camp, where the porters and coolies put us to bed and plied us with hot milk and bacon. Snow was by this time falling heavily.

By morning a foot of snow had fallen, and the weather was still deteriorating. We decided,
tired though we were, to continue the retreat as far as Base Camp. I led down the ledge. The track had vanished and visibility was limited to about thirty yards. I led too far to the right, so that we found ourselves uncomfortably close to the ice precipices that formed the lower lip of the ledge. Traversing northwards, I came to some faint indications of the track, which I followed downwards, till I found the tip of the ski-stick to which the rope leading from the ledge was fixed. I lowered myself down the rope, and was agreeably surprised that the chest-deep powder snow did not avalanche. In crossing the 'schrund at the bottom of the slope, Palden, who was following me, fell, and his load of sleeping-bags careered down the slope towards the drop to the north of the ridge. Like a flash he dived after them, and caught them. I led on slowly down the crest of the ridge, through visibility that became momentarily worse. Hunt caught me up and took the lead. We reached Camp 4, where we unearthed a bottle of limejuice. There was a temptation to stay at Camp 4, but Base Camp was now the next camp, and we went on to it. Hunt led the way over the level snowfield. Behind him came Brotherhood and the two Sherpas. I brought up the rear with the coolies. The wind had increased in fury. The track of the men three hundred yards in front of me was invisible. Snow swept the glacier in horizontal sheets. We were coated
in ice. As we approached the pass at the foot of the south-east ridge we began to think of avalanches. We went over the débris of one even larger than that we had seen falling. The wind howled along the precipices above, sounding exactly like the roar of a new avalanche. We crossed the pass in safety. When I arrived at Base Camp, Brotherhood was sitting in the snow outside a tent, his head supported on his hands.

That is just about the end of the Saltoro Kangri climb. We got down through the blizzard to Camp I a couple of days later, Karima having brought the coolies up through it, the day after our return to Base Camp. Tony was glad to see me back, and even seemed a little surprised. I found that he had not lost condition, and still seemed perfectly happy; but the rest of us had had enough, and were very glad to see the vivid colour of the valleys, after we had been above the snowline continuously for a month. It was also pleasant to wash one's face again; and the first warm bath was heaven: it took us each three changes of water to begin to get clean.

I even appreciated the civilised existence of Srinagar, when we got back there, with its bathing parties and drink parties; its lovelies and would-be lovelies; a type of life I had been rather apt to despise formerly, but which I now realised had its good points. In fact I thoroughly enjoyed it. I even quite enjoyed the little mild
lionisation which went on, and for which I alone came in, the others having left Kashmir. But what did shake me was the Press the 'Statesman' gave us. I had arranged with my friend and our agent in Kashmir, Major J. H. Lander of the Kashmir Express Co., that I would write him chatty letters about the climb as we went, and that he would rewrite them for publication, under the agreement I had made with the 'Statesman.' He, instead of rewriting my letters, typed them out verbatim, and sent them in; and the 'Statesman' published them verbatim, suitably embellished with headlines, and with full pages of photographs; and even with a poster saying, "Climbers escape from avalanche." Because we were four British Service officers stationed in India, and were undertaking the climb without official backing, the 'Statesman' seemed to think that we were worth splashing all over the news page. As I say, it shook us when we saw it after the climb, and made me vow that I would do my best to have no publicity on future climbs. It was not even worth it from the financial point of view. Admittedly they paid us well, but in the end I suppose that the nett profit for the expedition funds was only about £40, which was not worth it.

Just to illustrate why I found that I disliked publicity so much, here is a sample of the sort of question kind ladies kept asking me the first time they met me: "Please do tell me, Mr Waller,
I am so interested; how did you wash your teeth at night?" What made it even more embarrassing was the fact that personally I never did.

Here is another aspect of publicity. The others came back from Salto Kangri ahead of me. I spent a day or two at Khapulu and made friends with Mr Read and his wife of the Central Asian Mission. He told me of a legendary pass from the Thalle Nala to the valley below the Baltoro Glacier, which was supposed to have connected with the Mustagh Pass, rediscovered at the end of the last century by Sir Francis Younghusband. The possibility of rediscovering this second pass intrigued me, so I went leisurely by way of the Thalle Nala. I found a perfectly good pass without the least difficulty. It is about 16,000 feet high, is approached from the south by a snow-filled gully, which is moderately steep, and to the north descends over open snowfields. The nalas on both sides of the pass are, I discovered, called 'Chinkang'; fair proof that this was the pass for which I was looking. I wandered up to the top one morning from my camp and looked down towards the Baltoro. With me were a local man and Tony. I wrote of the discovery to the 'Statesman,' and was amused, some time later, to find a paragraph in 'The Times' about it. Ascending this little pass was given as much publicity in 'The Times' as was the complete attempt to climb Salto Kangri. Publicity is a funny thing.
CHAPTER V.

SWITZERLAND, 1936.

After the Saltoro Kangri expedition my parents took a hand in my mountaineering career. In their diet investigations they had come in contact with some eminent mountaineers in England, and, in particular, with Dr Longstaff. They wrote to me and told me that the general consensus of opinion appeared to be that it was high time that I gave up scrambling and learned to climb; that the only way I could do so was to climb with a good guide in Switzerland, and thereby gain a grounding in mountaineering technique. Although by no means given to modesty, I had vaguely the same impression myself, so that when Dr Longstaff kindly engaged Sigismund Burgener of the Saas Valley for me, I agreed quite readily to quit India for my two months' leave. The prospect became even more pleasing when I heard from Brotherhood, who had been transferred to Scotland, that he would like to join me. I sailed home on the Strathnaver, taking vigorous exercise round the decks in the morning, and drinking scarcely anything at
Plate 27.—The Matterhorn from the top of the Dent Blanche.
night; and went straight to Saas Fee, where my parents had already arrived, and Brotherhood joined us next day. It was the middle of July, and the weather was perfect. Brotherhood had stolen a march on me by putting in a fortnight's rock climbing in Wales before coming to Switzerland, so that his training was very far advanced of mine.

Brotherhood and I were rather scared of Sigismund. We were afraid that he might have been told that we had Himalayan experience, and so might expect us to be mountaineers. In order to dispel this possible delusion, we rubbed in the fact that we had come as disciples to learn the art of mountaineering, and that we wanted to be let off lightly at the beginning until we had found our feet. Sigismund took us at our word, and, allowing for our probable exaggeration of our powers, decided that we had never climbed before; and took us up the Portjengrat. At the hut, the night before the climb, we surprised him by insisting on scrambling on a large boulder; apparently this was not done by tourists, but when Sigismund joined us in the scramble, being firmly convinced we were going to fall, he rather enjoyed himself; and we made several original ascents of twenty feet.

My training was bad after a fortnight at sea. My slowness encouraged Sigismund in his belief that I had never climbed. In addition, I insisted
on carrying my little load in a lightweight high-altitude rucksack, which Sigismund was positive had been designed for a lady, and which he begged me not to use. When Brotherhood and I both left our coats in the hut, and put on sweaters and windproof smocks, he was convinced we were mad. On reaching the first patches of snow, Sigismund insisted on our roping-in, about which we demurred, but were overruled. He discovered that we did not know the correct guide’s knot for tying the rope: Hunt had tried to teach me the previous year, and Sigismund tried again; but I like my knot, which is an old friend, and I did not change it.

To show our objection to being roped unnecessarily, Brotherhood and I walked arm-in-arm behind Sigismund. After a certain amount of expostulation, he laughed, and joined us; it was only when we met other parties of climbers that we had to string out professionally over the unbroken snowfield. This ritual we observed religiously throughout our three weeks’ climbing. We quite appreciated the fact that tourists must be allowed to think that they were running appalling dangers from the moment when they set foot on snow; but after our experiences in taking coolies and even ponies over worse snowfields, the mythical dangers had no appeal.

We came to the rock ridge. It was nice gentle scrambling: an excellent training climb. But Sigismund was still convinced that neither of
us had ever been out of fen country, and insisted on hauling us bodily up each little pitch. Not content with that, he would not allow the man on the centre of the rope to safeguard the third man, but insisted on himself heaving him up. We expostulated violently, but it was quite useless.

Then I had an idea; and told Brotherhood to wait until we arrived at a point on the ridge which looked as though it might be spectacular. I had remembered how, the first time I had climbed with guides, at the age of seventeen, I had been crawling on hands and knees along what I thought was a knife-edged ridge, when my guide had threatened to unrope if I did not stand on my feet at once. Naturally I had done so, and had been surprised to find how easy it was. I decided to employ this technique of guided climbing again, only slightly improved.

When we arrived at a sharp rise in the ridge, and Sigismund had climbed it, and was preparing to haul us up, I suggested to Brotherhood that we should take the rope off. We did so, and followed the guide up unrope. It was the first bit of the climb which we had enjoyed, but poor Sigismund was overwhelmed with horror. We agreed to put the rope on again, on the one condition that he never so much assisted us again with it, unless we asked him to. He kept the bargain nobly.

After the Portjengrat, Brotherhood and I
suddenly got ambitious and insisted on going over to Zermatt to start right away on the big rock climbs. We went by way of a traverse of the Rimpfischhorn, which was great fun. Sigismund was still convinced that we knew nothing about climbing, but he had decided that we were fairly tough, and apt to be independent; and that we deserved to have our legs pulled. He discovered early that the best way of doing so was to make me descend steep rock at a run. If he thought I was going too slowly, he charged down behind me, and the first thing I knew was that I received a violent shove in the back which almost knocked me flat. I used to get quite annoyed about it, pointing out that I was going slowly because I wanted to descend under control; whereupon he would laugh, and ask me whether I thought that he could not hold a little man like me.

From Zermatt we climbed the Zinalrothorn, Ober Gabelhorn, Dent Blanche, Weisshorn, Matterhorn; Brotherhood, alone with Sigismund, by the Zmutt; I, after Brotherhood had left, by the ordinary route, intending to descend the Italian side, but being stopped by weather which Sigismund assured me was bad. Sigismund and I then did the Täschhorn and the Dom-Lenzspitze-Nadelhorn traverse. The weather throughout was perfect. My recollections of the whole are hazy, for we seemed to swarm up peaks on alternate days, and sometimes on consecutive days.
At first Brotherhood and I believed in carrying the lightest possible loads, so we fed ourselves on chocolate and raisins during the climbs. Sigismund laughed at us and ate hearty meals. After a while we came to the conclusion that Sigismund was right, and carried up gigantic meals for ourselves, but Sigismund for some reason went off his feed and began to eat only chocolate and raisins. We laughed at him.

As Sigismund and I slid down the fixed ropes on the Matterhorn we passed an old gentleman with a white beard ascending alone, his hands buried deep in his pockets. A little lower a perspiring guide strained at a rope. We glanced over the edge of the mountain and saw that to the rope was attached a vast gentleman, who was being hauled up bodily, without making the least effort to assist himself, while another weary guide pushed at the seat of his trousers.

After each climb we drank beer in wayside tea-houses.

I came to the conclusion that I did not like huts. The two things which so irritated me were the fact the people would clump round in wooden clogs during the greater part of the night; and that the huts were always so low on the mountains that we were made to get out of our blankets soon after midnight. From a study of Alpine literature it appears the long, cold trudge up moraines and snowfields by the inadequate light of a candle lantern is one of the
finer experiences of a climb; or at least that it is beneficial. The glow of dawn as the sun kisses the peaks is a moment with something to recommend it, but it can be more comfortably watched through a tent door, with the body well protected from the cold by a sleeping-bag. I came to the conclusion that I would rather pitch a tent near the head of the glacier on the previous evening and get up with the sun, than have to stumble over boulders during half the night. And while I am on this point, I cannot really understand why such an early start is necessary, even if one does spend the night in a hut. We always seemed to reach the summit in the early morning, and to be back in Zermatt before tea-time. I should have preferred to start later and be back for dinner, but for some reason this was impossible. I can understand the reason when one employs a guide for a single climb; he naturally wants to get back by mid-day in order to see if he can get another tourist for the following day; but in our case, when we were employing Sigismund for three weeks, it seemed to be without sense. I came to the conclusion that I must be soft.

In Zermatt we met an English lad of about twenty and his sister. The boy had a lisp, and Brotherhood and I were rather scornful. It was consequently annoying when the pair, with a couple of guides, passed us easily on the way up the Weisshorn when we thought we were moving fast.
Sigismund took a great joy in accidents, especially if they had happened to guideless parties. He would pause on the top of a knife-edged ridge, with a fresh wind blowing over, to show us, with graphic detail, just how and where some party had come to grief. His classic effort was when he was able to show us the actual footprints of a party who had broken through a cornice a fortnight previously, and had been killed. The explanation in this case was easy: the guides had come from Grindelwald!

One evening in a hut we fell in with a pair of young Englishmen who were paying their first visit to Switzerland, and were climbing unguided. They were a very nice pair, and most enthusiastic. They were finding the glaciers and snowfields a little frightening, about which I could sympathise. They were used to much more difficult rock in England, and thought nothing of the Zermatt rock peaks. They were not very impressed with Brotherhood and me because we were employing a guide. After a time the talk turned to the Himalayas, and they told us how they considered Everest should be climbed. They carried on with a discourse, in language suitable for beginners, on other recent Himalayan climbs. Finally they caught sight of Brotherhood’s and my slightly unusual boots, and we had to admit that they had been designed for Himalayan conditions, and so used. We felt sorry for the lads, who were unnecessarily embarrassed, and
hastily assured them that we were very nearly beginners; and were relieved to discover that they had never heard of Sal toro Kangri; or Peak 36, as it was then called.

As a result of my two seasons' climbing in the Alps and my experiences in India, I had the honour to be elected to the Alpine Club that winter.
Plate 30.—The Dent D'Herens.
(There is a party of three climbers in the deep shadow.)
CHAPTER VI.

THE KASHMIR ALPS, 1937.

Since leaving Switzerland I had been toying with the idea of returning to Saltoro Kangri during my two months’ leave the following year. Two months were not really long enough for the climb, and I had to think out how best to speed it up. My first idea was to try and reach Dansam on a light motor-cycle, but when I bought one second-hand I could never make it go more than twenty miles without breaking down. Not being mechanically minded, I abandoned the idea. I next thought of bicycling there. I knew a missionary who had bicycled from Srinagar to Skardu in Baltistan, over the Deosai Plains, in three days; a journey which normally takes ten. In order to try this and some new, ultra light-weight equipment which I had bought, I decided in March to bicycle to the Pindari Glacier in Kumaon, during ten days’ leave from Jhansi. I put up a sort of ration which would last me a week, packed a three-pound tent, which I had designed, and took one of Burns’ new Cubicell sleeping-bags, weighing
five pounds. My complete load, when assembled, weighed almost exactly fifty pounds for the ten days, and I packed it into the two bags of a carrying pannier Burns had designed for me, on the lines of my Saltoro Kangri carrying-harness. From railhead at Kathgodam I took a lorry to the end of the road, and started off on my bicycle.

I tried carrying the load on my back, and fell off. I strapped it to the carrier, which collapsed. Finally I slung it over the handle-bars. As I cycled along the path beside the river the villagers turned out to cheer; they had not seen a cycle in the valley before. After I had trundled about twenty miles the path began to switchback. On the portions where it overlooked a sheer drop to the river, the only part of the track which was level enough to bicycle along was invariably the outside edge. When I reached a spot where a landslide had carried the path away and I had to carry both my bicycle and my load, I abandoned the bicycle, which I gave to a man to keep in his hut for me. Two little boys divided my load between them and accompanied me. I had come to the conclusion that I should not like to bicycle to Saltoro Kangri.

I never reached the Pindari Glacier, for the snow in March was still very low, and I thought that the only safe time to go up one particular part of the valley would be at night; and that was too much like work. Instead, I carried my
load up another snow-filled valley, alone, and camped in it for a couple of nights, spending the days scrambling around the hills about me. The tent and equipment were satisfactory.

I did not abandon my idea of returning to Saltoro Kangri, and continued to evolve somewhat novel plans to climb it. I first decided that I would only take Sherpa porters as my companions. My reasons were that I thought that they could climb with safety anywhere I could, and that they could carry about twice as much as a white man. There would be no exploration to do, as I knew the whole route, so that what really mattered in making a dash for the summit was to have a strong transport party. I decided to take six Sherpas. These with Karima I intended to send to Dansam ahead of me; I could then follow at speed on relays of ponies, and should be able to reach Saltoro Kangri in a maximum of ten days. We would employ even lighter equipment than on the previous expedition and we would only pitch one camp, which we would carry with us; so saving the extra weight of tentage. We would live throughout the climb on a scientific ration of two pounds a day, which would save weight both in food and fuel.

My friends all told me I was mad; I agree with them now. I had all the food and equipment collected in Jhansi, when a frontier war broke out, and my leave was cancelled. When I later
got away I was told that I would have to remain within forty-eight hours recall of Jhansi, which meant that I could not reach the snows in any part of the Himalayas; so I decided to stretch a point, and went to Kashmir, with two Sherpa porters as my companions.

Our first venture was to climb the 15,928-foot Thajiwas Peak by my 1933 couloir route from a bivouac at 12,000 feet on the glacier. The climb was interesting, and near the top of the couloir I had some excitement in climbing the rocks, which I had thought looked difficult from above in 1933. They were sheer and loose; and they were covered in a foot of powder snow which overlay ice. The two porters seemed to have had little more experience than Abdulla had had four years before, and when they should have been securing my rope they spent the time moving about in the steps and chatting to each other, supremely uninterested in what I was doing. I nearly fell when I dislodged a loose rock. Once on top of the peak the porters set to work happily to build a cairn, while I looked at the view, which was becoming obscured by thunder-clouds; and more particularly at the great north ridge of Kolohoi, which would make a magnificent climb. We glissaded down the snowfield to the south of the peak, and went straight down the centre of the ice-fall which had caused me trouble on the second attempt to climb 15,928 in 1933. One of the porters
Plate 32.—Baggage ponies fording a river on the Deosai Plains.
excelled himself by sliding five times and being held on the rope; and nothing would induce him to give a warning shout. By the time I reached the bottom I realised that all Sherpa porters were not as good as Dawa Tandup and Palden, and was already feeling grateful that circumstances had stopped me from returning to Saltoro Kangri.

I was rather undecided what to do next. The inexperience of my two porters had shaken my nerve. After a day's rest I determined to go to the head of the Zoji La and see whether there was any country there worthy of attention. In the early afternoon I pitched camp on a green, gentian-carpeted meadow, beside the Dak Runner's Hut, just beyond the top of the pass on the Ladakh side. After a meal I took Tony, my dog, off to explore the valley running in from the north-west, and called the Bod Gumbar Nar.

It was much narrower than the one leading to the Zoji La, and it had precipitous sides, so that the sun had not melted the snow, which spanned the river in flying bridges.

The valley foot was deep in shadow. Small avalanches constantly rumbled down its steep southern wall. It was closed, a mile or so ahead, by a sharp bend. There was a feeling about that valley which I cannot explain. It was hostile and unfriendly. There was no difficulty about the route I was following, and it was absolutely safe.
Yet somehow the dark crumbling hills seemed to shut me in and oppress me.

I hurried along and turned the corner at the end into a wider valley, down the length of which the sun shone. The mountains enclosing it were quite fine; there was a difficult-looking rock peak, and an 18,000-foot snow mountain, which reminded me of the Monte Rosa. The scene had all the components of the normal, cheerful mountain view; yet somehow the feeling of unfriendliness remained. I suddenly decided that I disliked the valley intensely. I turned and hastened back to the camp set in its pleasant meadow. But even then I could not shake off the feeling; it was almost one of fear.

Next day we went on and camped at Machoi, below the splendid 17,600-foot peak there, which I determined to attempt. The two porters and I carried a bivouac up its approach glacier to a height of 15,000 feet. With evening, a surprising brown haze, of a sort I have never seen elsewhere, settled leadenly over the landscape. There were few clouds, yet visibility was restricted to less than ten miles. It was windless and sultry. The sun shone through the haze.

Soon after darkness had fallen a thunder-storm started. It came up rapidly, accompanied by a high wind. Lightning flashes brightly illuminated the interiors of the tents. I lay awake in my sleeping-bag, wondering, rather miserably, whether I should evacuate the camp until the
Plate 33.—The highest point reached was the foot of the pyramid, just over 16,400 feet.
storm passed; for the tent poles and pegs, and all the cooking apparatus were metal. However, inertia won, and after a long while the storm passed.

We started upwards at dawn. There was a brilliant sunrise. The sky was intensely blue, and the hills were unnaturally clear, their colours too vivid. I chose a bad route through the ice-fall. There were crevasses, and steep ice-slopes, and chasms to be jumped. By ten o'clock we had only reached a height of 16,400 feet, and were at the foot of the summit pyramid. The route upwards lay along a smooth, sharp rock ridge, with a thin covering of snow on it. The climbing looked good.

But the weather was again deteriorating. The brown haze had returned with greater intensity. Heavy black clouds were blowing swiftly round the mountain from the west. Snow was already beginning to fall. Even so I was doubtful about turning back when the summit was so near. The first sudden onslaught of the storm decided me; we started down and reached the valley without adventure. By the time we got there the grass was covered in snow, and the lower hillsides were alive with sheep dashing backwards and forwards in search of shelter. The valley in the morning was an unbroken white. For three more days it continued to snow almost continually on the peaks about it.

This same storm struck Nanga Parbat. It
held up the advance of the German mountaineers for some days, and may have been one of the causes of the whole strength of the party being together in Camp 4, when it was overwhelmed by an avalanche.

In continued bad weather I left the district of the Zoji La, and returned to Sonamarg.

I have never been able to explain the aversion I felt for the Bod Gumbar Nar. Undoubtedly it was partly due to the fact that the mountains around it were not in fit condition for climbing, owing to the frequency of wet-snow avalanches. But I think there was more behind it than that. The feeling did not leave me until after I had decided to abandon my attempt on the Machoi Peak. It is the only occasion on which I have had such a feeling of aversion for mountains.

I occupied the next few days in Sonamarg trying to get some cinema film of bears. I lay morning and evening on the top of a little grassy ridge opposite a cave which was known to be the lair of a black bear; but I never saw the inmate. Tiring of that pastime, I hired an old villager for a rupee a day, and made him take me out stalking Barasingh. We climbed up the side of a steep, shaly little ridge, covered in dwarf silver birch. We wriggled over the ridge’s crest, and scanned through glasses the opposite side of the valley, above a small snow-field. Half a mile away a big stag was feeding leisurely. It was my first attempt at stalking,
and I was anxious to try to get nearer. But the old man made me lie still for an hour, while the sun slowly rose in the sky. Then I understood the shikari’s wisdom. The stag grazed its way slowly along the hillside until it reached the edge of a little clump of silver birch trees. In the shade of one of these it lay down to have its noon-day sleep. The old man beckoned me to follow, and led the way up the ridge. Then we slid rapidly down the snow of its side, and crossed the valley a full mile from the resting stag. We toiled up the opposite hillside, then traversed cautiously along, above the stag. We crossed slippery snow slopes, where my guide’s grass shoes were inferior to my climbing boots. We crept along a shaly hillside, my cinema camera ready in my hand, my heavily nailed boots seeming to rattle like machine-gun fire. Some hundreds of yards from the clump of birch trees the shikari signed to me to crawl. It was hot scrambling along on hands and knees, my camera clutched in my left hand. Slowly we approached the trees, and after an age we were among them. We were above the stag, but I could not see him. The old man beckoned me to crawl to his side. His finger pointed; and there, not twenty yards away, I could just see the tip of one antler. We crept a little nearer. The stag seemed undisturbed. I was in a splendid position to take a shot of the animal as soon as it moved. Trembling with excitement, I checked the settings of my camera.
All was ready. The old man gently tossed a stone in the direction of the antler. In a flash the stag was on its feet and was dashing away across the hillside directly beneath us. It skidded on a patch of snow. The shot was a perfect one; for three hundred yards the animal was in full view. It vanished and I lowered my camera; and only then did I notice that a heavy cloud had obscured the sun. The film, when processed, was a complete failure through under-exposure!

I tried my hand again later at getting a film of black bear, after I had crossed into the Liddar Valley. I was no more successful. I got up very early and went to bed very late. But I never saw a bear. A picnic party, twenty strong, were wandering back from a day out in the neighbourhood, when they met a pair of black bear, feeding quietly near them. They had a splendid view; and they had spent no time at all stalking the beasts. One thing about taking photographs of mountains is that you always know where to find them: I think I will stick to mountains.

After some days at Sonamarg I decided to return to Nun Kun. The two porters and I, with a dozen coolies, went over to the Shishram Nag, by way of the Amanarth snow-bridges.

Using Shishram Nag as base, and taking six lightly laden coolies, we crossed the Gulol Gali,
Plate 35.—Camp 2 at about 16,500 feet, and the west ridge of Nun.
and set out to climb Nun from the west, the opposite side to that on which we made our attack in 1934. For two days we wandered over precipitous sheep tracks, owing to our losing ourselves while attempting to take a short cut, but by the evening of the third day we had pitched Camp 1 at 14,000 feet on the Barmal Glacier to the west of Nun. Next day we went on up to 16,500 feet, whence we sent the coolies down. There had been no difficulty in the climbing. The following two days were occupied in ascending the snow wall which closed the head of the glacier and in pitching Camp 3 at 18,500 feet on the top of the wall beneath a 20,000-foot peak called D 41. The climbing was not difficult, but there was a certain amount of step-cutting in ice, and on one portion there were a series of insecurely bridged 'schrunds. I hoped that we should be able to pitch two more camps on the west ridge of Nun which descended to a point about 500 feet below us, and a mile to our east, but the morning after we occupied Camp 3 I awoke with violent toothache and could eat nothing. We retreated as fast as we could to Srinagar. The journey was uncomfortable. For three days toothache prevented me from eating anything, and I lived on rum and milk; then when the tooth became a little better, but I was feeling weak, I burst a blood-vessel on my seat and had to abandon the pony I had been riding, and walk.
I had found that climbing alone with porters was not good enough. I was lonely. I missed the companionship of other Englishmen, and the ability to share a climb with them. The whole spiritual joy of climbing seemed to be lacking. I had a feeling that I was attempting to climb Nun alone simply to be able to say so afterwards. I did not enjoy the climb, and was consequently very glad when I was able to arrange in Srinagar to have a companion, when I returned to the hills ten days later. My companion was Miss M. V. Sanderson who had climbed Kolohoi, 17,799 feet, with the shikari Azziza the previous year. We decided to return to Kolohoi and see whether we could tackle its great north ridge, which had never been attempted; if we found it too difficult we would find some other new route. We finally climbed it by the east ridge, the lower parts of which had not been climbed, and had some good rock work low down, and spectacular, though easy, climbing on its higher reaches. We left our bivouac at 14,000 feet at seven in the morning, reached the top at three-thirty in the afternoon, and were back in bivouac by eight at night. Monsoon clouds were about the peak all day.

My scrambles in the Kashmir Alps had given me quite a lot of useful experience. I did not particularly enjoy the times when I was alone with the porters: I abandoned all idea of ever
trying again to climb in the Himalayas without European companions, because I at last realised that the charm of the mountains lies not only in themselves, but also in the company of the men with whom one climbs; and that the experience of friendship gained during the exertion of a climb and the journey to and from a peak is one of the greatest joys of mountaineering. To appreciate a good thing to the full one must share it.
In the autumn of 1937 I wrote to Harrison, Hunt, Brotherhood, and Carslaw, and suggested that we should make up a party to climb in 1938. I said that I wanted to try a peak which was higher than Nanda Devi, which the Anglo-American Expedition had climbed in 1937, and which is 25,645 feet high, two hundred feet higher than Kamet. The mountain I had in mind, but did not mention, was Masherbrum, 25,660 feet, which we had seen on our way to Saltoro Kangri in 1935. It is fifteen feet higher than Nanda Devi. I only emphasise the height to give a scale on which to base a picture of the mountain. Heights of 28,000 feet have been attained on Everest, and 26,000 feet has been reached on Kangchenjunga and K2, so that Masherbrum cannot compare with these climbs; but, in 1938, only two summits of over 25,000 feet had been conquered, and they were Kamet and Nanda Devi.

It may seem strange that having determined to return to Saltoro Kangri in 1937, I should
not have considered it in 1938. This is not really as mad as it seems. In 1937 I had intended to return there in order to try out a specific theory, which was that a single climber backed by Sherpa porters could undertake a major climb, provided that exploration was not necessary. I was not particularly anxious to reach the summit of Sal toro Kangri, but it had been the only mountain which fitted the specific condition. By 1938 I had decided that the theory was unsound, and had determined that whatever climb I undertook would be done in the company of a strong British party. In this case it seemed a waste of opportunity to return to Sal toro Kangri, on which I knew the whole route up to within 900 feet of the summit, and on which there would consequently be no exploration. By cutting out the exploration both of approaches and routes, it seemed to me that we would be losing half the pleasure of the climb, as well as greatly decreasing the value of the experience we might gain. My idea was to tackle a mountain which no one had previously thought of climbing, so that we would be starting as nearly as possible as pioneers; a state of affairs which undoubtedly increases the fascination of a climb. I must admit that I was also keen to try something a little higher than any peak which had so far been climbed. This is a deplorable statement, and shows an outlook that is very rightly condemned by my seniors; but, in spite of that,
I cannot help having a sneaking feeling that a party that does carry off a record is bound to be acknowledged as being made up of capable mountaineers; while one that climbs a peak a few hundred feet lower, so missing the record, is much less impressive, even to the mountaineering world. And also, in my defence, I would add that a party that succeeds on any peak is assured of a finer reputation than one that fails; and by choosing an unexplored mountain we were loading the dice in favour of defeat.

Of the climbers first approached, Jock Harrison alone agreed to join me. Brotherhood was very anxious to come, and even went to the Air Ministry in an attempt to get leave from England, but with the Air Force expansion programme in full swing he was unable to obtain it. Hunt and Carslaw could not get leave. Curiously enough, in his reply to my letter, Brotherhood suggested that we should attempt Masherbrum.

I asked my friend, C. R. Cooke, who had climbed the 24,000-foot peak of Kabru, near Kangchenjunga, to join us, but he, too, was unable to do so. He took a great interest in the venture, however, and placed several inventions and original ideas of his own at my disposal, for which I am most grateful.

I next asked Lieutenant J. O. M. Roberts, 1/1st Gurkha Rifles, a member of the Alpine Club, who was a close friend of Harrison's and whom I had met in Switzerland. He agreed
to join. Roberts was only twenty-one at the time, and had been elected to the Alpine Club shortly after his birthday, because of his record while still a minor.

We now had three climbers, and decided that we wanted five. Each member canvassed his friends, but although we had several bites no one was finally able to join; so I sent an appeal for members to the Alpine Club, which resulted in Dr Graham Brown, of Nanda Devi and Arctic experience, and R. A. Hodgkin, who had been with the 1937 Oxford University Caucasus Expedition, joining us. Dr Graham Brown is older than the rest of us, but his greater experience outweighed this possible disadvantage. Hodgkin is a year older than Roberts.

We were determined that the Masherbrum Expedition should have no publicity. To keep our objective secret I applied through the Himalayan Club for permission to climb Kangchenjunga, or, if that were refused, Terich Mir in the North-West Frontier Province. I then went on with preparations for climbing Masherbrum, and in due course permission to climb both the other mountains was, as I had expected, refused. Masherbrum is in the Karakoram Range, which is officially part of Kashmir. I knew that the Germans had permission to take another large expedition back to Nanga Parbat, and there were already rumours of their aeroplane, an innovation in Himalayan climbing. An American
Expedition had got permission to attempt K2, and I was told informally that other foreign expeditions had applied to climb in Kashmir and had been refused. If expeditions from overseas had been refused, it was plain, knowing the working of the Indian Government, that an expedition organised by a member of the Army stationed in India would receive no official encouragement; so that, besides being a matter of policy, secrecy became a necessity. It is a point of interest to know why an officer stationed in India should request Government permission to climb a mountain in India, when he asks no assistance of the country or State, does not ask for remission of Customs duty, as do the large expeditions from overseas; and is, anyway, allowed to visit the same area for shooting or any other purpose without asking permission from anyone. But from inquiries I made it seems that the Government does expect to be consulted. I regret to say that I did not do so; and although we later experienced a serious accident, no assistance was requested from the Government, or from Kashmir State, the Maharajah and officials of which, it is only fair to add, did all in their power to help us as soon as they heard that we had had an accident.

The expedition was organised on lines dissimilar from the Saltoro Kangri Expedition. We had five British climbing members, and I wanted to get ten Sherpa porters, as the pro-
portion of two porters to one climber seemed to allow of the climbers wasting no energy on load carrying, and at the same time being able to carry out the active work of exploration, route finding, and leadership, with a proportion of rest days, so that they should keep in the best of health throughout the climb. As also I was by this time convinced that good health is largely affected by the food eaten on a climb, I determined that we would live throughout the climb on a proper scientific ration, which I had tested during the 1937 season and had further modified as a result. No fresh food at all was to be taken above the foot of the mountain, and we would carry up stores sufficient to last us over a month. The weight of food to be eaten daily by both British and Indian members was two pounds; the two rations were different, but were so designed that, in case of emergency, both British and Indian climbers could live without great discomfort on either ration. The food was packed in three-ply wooden boxes, which, when full, weighed about thirty-two pounds, and which contained fourteen days' food for one man.

The Masherbrum ration for European climbers is given below. I can suggest no improvements, except as may be dictated by the personal fads of the members of an expedition. An additional thirty-pound box of Army biscuits was taken as far as 19,000 feet, as it was found that up to
this height the ration provided insufficient bulk; at about 19,000 feet it was correct; higher up we began to find that we could not eat the complete two pounds a man a day allowed.

**Climbing Ration: Quantity for 100 Man/Day Rations.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Lbs</th>
<th>Calories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Glaxo Full Cream Powder</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>27,720</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rowntree's Milk and Plain Chocolate</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>31,332</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polson's Butter</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>42,036</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glaxo Silver Bud Cheese</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>29,085</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lyon's Shortbread</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>72,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raisins</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biscuits</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>26,768</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barley Sugar</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>18,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tinned Mutton</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>25,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ham</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>29,736</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bacon</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14,868</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assorted Tinned Fish</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fresh Meat (not eaten)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jam (more required)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5,200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total calories per man per day, 3600.
Total weight per man per day, 1.85 lb.

*The following additional components are important:*—

Yestamin Tablets, Cocoa and Extract; to taste.

Tea. Acid Drops.
Sugar. Salt.

The Sherpas' ration was a modification of the above, which included eight pounds of Tsampa (called *Suttoo* in Baltistan, and obtainable there) in place of shortbread, tinned fish, ham and bacon.
The weight of equipment was everywhere reduced. A certain number of Meade tents, weighing about fifteen pounds, were taken for use as far as the lowest camps, and two twenty-pound coolie shelters, made by Muir Mills in Cawnpore, were also taken for use in these camps. Higher on the mountain it was proposed to use the Saltoro Kangri tents, made by Burns three years previously, and weighing eight pounds. For the highest altitudes, Camp and Sports Ltd. had made me a number of little wedge-shaped tents which they had designed to my specification, and which weighed about six pounds, and were made of the same material as our windproof clothing; these proved both warmer and more robust at high altitudes than the Burns' tents made of a much thinner cotton material. The saving in weight was achieved by the unusual shape of the tents, which were four feet nine inches broad at the wider end of the floor, and four feet high at the taller end. The other end was two feet high by two feet six inches broad. The length was seven feet, and the higher end was supported by two bamboo poles coming together at the top in an inverted V. The lower end was attached to an ice-axe. We had one tent of the same design made of a thin fabric which only weighed three and a half pounds, and was used to 23,500 feet. The thicker material was unnecessarily thick for use at heights up to 25,000 feet, and a compromise between the two
materials would save weight and give sufficient warmth and security. This tent housed two men, who could sit up in it; but was a bit cramped for a man as big as Harrison.

Food and tents were the result of Dr Teasdale's research and my own experience. We were indebted to C. R. Cooke for our clothing plan and our cooking stoves, both of which were novel and most satisfactory. The scientific idea on which the clothing was based is on the same lines as the principle of a thermos flask, except that, in place of a vacuum layer around the object to be kept warm, a layer of stationary air was substituted. Innermost came Shetland wool combinations, one or two pairs. Outside these were a pair of silk, and almost windproof combinations. Shetland wool pants and sweaters were worn outside the inner windproof, and an outer windproof suit of Jacqua material completed the outfit. The stationary air-space was between the two windproofs, where the loose woollens ensured that the space was never less than half an inch wide. The stoves made use of a Primus, but a circular aluminium shield was so constructed that a forced draught was made, and two saucepans could be heated simultaneously, held one above the other inside the shield. It was found that the stove could be lit in any wind encountered inside a light tent, and that practically no heat was lost, resulting in it being possible to melt snow and boil water in a very much shorter time than
when using a standard type of stove. Using normal commercial paraffin, without any admixture of petrol, the stoves worked most satisfactorily to the highest camp to which any were taken, at 23,500 feet. The stove has since been placed on the market by Lawrie of London.

All the preparations were made with the greatest care, with the result that the expedition finally marched from Srinagar with only fifty-three coolie loads, and we had none of the contretemps we had experienced on Salterro Kangri.

My parents, Dr G. A. J. Teasdale and Dr Elizabeth Teasdale, to whom we were indebted for the scientific construction of our climbing ration, and much help in England, joined the expedition as the medical section, who would not come above Base Camp. The final composition of the party was five British climbers, of whom one was a doctor; five Sherpa porters; two Gurkha Riflemen from Roberts' Battalion; two Kashmiri cooks, Noor Mohammed and Karima; and some camp followers. My dog Tony accompanied the non-climbers.

For the total information which we collected beforehand about Masherbrum we were again indebted to the Workmans, who had explored the area and described it in their book, 'Two Summers in the Ice World of the Eastern Karakoram.' They published three photographs of the mountain, one of which showed a ridge, low on the mountain, which we thought might prove climbable, or, as a bad alternative, a
glacier beside it; which was the route finally chosen as our line of communications. They had not considered Masherbrum as a climbing problem, and the only useful information we could obtain from the letterpress was the fact that, surprisingly for the Karakoram, wood was available near the main glacier moraines to the south of the peak—the side from which we proposed to approach. The north of Masherbrum falls towards the Baltoro Glacier, is very sheer, and was ‘out of bounds,’ owing to the Baltoro being reserved for the American Expedition attempting K2.

I arrived in Srinagar from Jhansi at the beginning of April, and spent my first fortnight personally packing all the food for the mountain and for the trek, and supervising the packing of our equipment in coolie loads. By the middle of April I was able to send half our loads ahead over the Zoji La to await us at Dras. Graham Brown and Hodgkin arrived up soon after and spent a busy week sight-seeing with the Teasdales. Harrison arrived from Rawalpindi on 27th April, and Graham Brown, Hodgkin, Harrison, and I, with the remaining expedition equipment, the five porters and Karima, left Srinagar next day. Roberts started four days after us and caught us up at Bagicha in the Indus Valley. The Teasdales marched separately a fortnight later, and camped below the mountain after we had already started the climb.
CHAPTER VIII.

MASHERBRUM—continued.

I make no apology for describing the Masherbrum Expedition in greater detail than the others. The plan and organisation were in general sound; the party was made up of experienced members, and everything, until the moment of the accident, went with unusual smoothness. It cannot be emphasised too strongly how important is thorough practical organisation to ensure this. The attack on a large mountain is like a military campaign: an 'appreciation' \(^1\) of the 'object' and 'the methods of attaining the object' must be made a long while ahead. The 'factors' of comfort, lightness, communications, 'manoeuvribility' and flexibility, the size of the party and the transport train, considerations of cost, and to the quality and quantity of equipment and food to be taken, the divergent claims of acclimatisation and deterioration,—all these factors and many others must be considered, and from the 'appreciation' a compromise arrived at. On the strategy of the plan, as

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\(^1\) Military misnomer chiefly employed in Promotion Examinations.
much as on its tactics and the actual method of carrying it out, may depend final victory or defeat.

We went by lorry as far as Woyil Bridge at the bottom of the Sind Valley, where our baggage was loaded upon ponies. The path lies up the foot of the broad valley. Forests clothe the hills and a sparkling trout-stream flows beside the path. Little wooden villages nestle among the orchards and cultivation. When we went up the valley at the end of April the snow was low on the hills. A delightfully cool breeze blew down the valley, and silvery clouds floated in the clear blue sky.

According to our predetermined training plan we marched out by short stages, in order that we might become fit progressively, and run no risk of getting over-tired at any time before reaching Masherbrum. The first day we only walked seven miles, and a twelve-mile march the second day brought us to Gund, where we lived in the house of Habib Lon, who always provides my coolies for crossing the Zoji La. We were put up in a large upstairs barn. Yarkandi carpets and rugs had been spread on the floor of the barn and its wooden verandah. There were beds, also covered with rugs, and the village carpenter was busy making stools and a table as we arrived.

We spent the afternoon bathing in the village bath-house, through which flowed a stream, and
in working out an intricate problem about fourteen trains and a journey across the United States. Our educated members, Graham Brown and Hodgkin, finally arrived at the answer by drawing America on the hillside, and making trains, represented by matches, cross it. Even then there seemed to be doubt whether the solution was correct. In the evening we waxed our skis, and ate a four-course Kashmiri dinner, made up of delicious mutton curries, and one dish of mutton cooked in rich hill milk, which was a joy. After supper, and while the sun sank behind the hills across the valley, we lay on our mattresses on the verandah, and Hodgkin read aloud from a hair-raising novel about the Secret Service. Occasionally he would break off to watch the sunset. By the light of a candle he went on reading, until the cold drove us to our sleeping-bags.

We went leisurely up the valley next day, encountering patches of snow, and camped that night in the Rest House at Sonamarg, where the fires smoked and the rooms were dark and cold. The following evening after an easy nine-mile march we reached Baltal, where we found that a large avalanche had buried the Rest House. We borrowed the mail runner's hut across the stream, and spent a delightful evening sitting in the sun with our backs against a sun-kissed wall. It was so warm that we had supper in the open, and sat on watching the sun set and
the moon follow it. The moon was a shining crescent which we were forced to greet with song; but as it set towards a spiked rock peak down the valley we became silent. Glowing red as it dipped, it finally settled in a trough between two rock points; its crescent disappeared swiftly, and after it had gone we could still dimly see the outline of its unlighted portion. We did not go to bed until the sky had darkened above the rock peak; it was a perfect night when all nature seemed at peace.

The ascent of the Zoji La gorge next morning was as unpleasant as it usually is at that time of year. It seemed very cold at one in the morning, when we ate our breakfast and got dressed by the light of a single candle. By two-thirty the whole party was on the move. The sky was cloudless and the stars very bright; the Milky Way lighted the snow vaguely. We stumbled slowly up over the avalanche rubble in the bottom of the gorge, the walls of which closed blackly about us. A cold breeze was blowing. Occasionally a torch flashed, but for the most part we ascended in the dark. The coolies went up in a series of fifty-yard rushes, after which they would sit down on the snow and rest. Graham Brown and I followed slowly after them; the other climbers were in front. I got sleepier and sleepier and could only keep awake by thinking about hot weathers in the plains, when I had been warm. By the time
we reached the top of the pass the sun was colouring with gold the snow-peaks above us. As soon as we began to descend the climbers put on their skis; all except Graham Brown, whose bindings had been lost, and who had to wait until we could unearth some string. Hodgkin was our expert skier; the only time he fell during the day was when I was taking a carefully staged shot on my cinema film! Harrison was the next best, getting along at a great rate, but looking and being more insecure. Graham Brown had only worn skis on one occasion previously, and he found that two Sherpas were required to keep him on his feet; his progress was somewhat stately. I insisted on using an ice-axe in place of ski-sticks and had to evolve a new technique. I found it necessary to carry my skis up all the hills, but I discovered a most effective way of coming down. I employed the glissading technique with my ice-axe, which I drove heavily into the snow behind me, and on which I leant. My progress was also stately, but that did not prevent me from falling more frequently than anyone else. By afternoon we had reached Matayan, the top village on the Ladakh side of the pass; it was the first time I have seen Matayan in fine weather.

After the Zoji La the march continued without incident. In the Rest House at Dras I found a delightful pre-war novel of romance, and could not leave until I had read it all, so that I set
out about an hour after the others; I had, however, a woolly little pony, which I christened Jane, in spite of its being a male, and soon caught them up. Hodgkin had a ride on Jane later in the day, and his efforts at making him go where he wanted were almost as funny as my attempts at ski-ing. Snow lay in isolated patches, and when we got out of the red-brown plain in which lies Dras, we had to cross a number of avalanche tongues. Graham Brown and I dismounted for them, and our little ponies followed us across like dogs; Jane took an independent line of country on one occasion, but I only had to call to him to bring him back into my footsteps; it was quite unnecessary to lead him. Graham Brown's little beast was most affectionate, and whenever he stopped to take a photograph, which he did about every five hundred yards, it nuzzled its nose up under his armpit from behind and went to sleep. We took photographs and cinema film of the country and the people, who were busily engaged in ploughing the brown earth with the aid of Zos and wooden ploughs. We idled pleasantly along at our own pace.

Near Kargil we came to apricot blossom. The cultivated fans were hidden by a pale pink sea, which contrasted strongly with the red-brown hues of the barren hills. It was growing hot; the paths through the apricot blossom were delightfully cool.

We each had our own jobs to do. Harrison looked after the coolie and transport arrange-
Plate 38.—Matsyan, the top village on the Ladakh side of the Zoji La.
ments; Hodgkin was responsible for the cash and for paying out daily when we changed coolies. I looked after the feeding arrangements, which was a sinecure, as Karima did all the work. Graham Brown was doctor, and he also was not over-worked. We would bathe daily in the river before we had our lunch, and with our start at eight in the morning we were usually in camp in time for tea.

We stayed a day at Bagicha in the Indus Valley, where we waited for Roberts. The first night when all the climbers were together was an obvious one on which to celebrate. We broached one of our six bottles of rum, our only alcohol for the expedition, and Hodgkin produced a bottle of liqueur which he had secretly carried in his rucksack all the way from Srinagar. After supper we sang sentimental songs to the almost full moon. We were sitting on a little sandy beach beside the Indus, in the swiftly eddying water of which the moon was reflected as a long path of brilliant light; the high hills about were so brightly lit that we could distinguish the shadows in the ravines, and the gleam of the rock faces. The evening was delightfully cool; it might have been an English summer night except for the scenery by which we were surrounded and the brilliance of the moon above; and we stayed on the beach for a long while before turning into our sleeping-bags.

The marches through the Indus Valley would
be a constant pleasure were it not for the temperature. The red rocks of the ravine reflect the heat, which is surprisingly intense when it is realised that the river flows at a height of over 7000 feet. The path is almost always interesting; it climbs along rock faces above the river; it drops down to pass through fans of cultivation; it passes a rope-bridge which spans the Indus, here about a hundred and fifty yards broad. On the river’s banks are villages, and at one place a ruined castle is set on the summit of a crag eight hundred feet above the river. Below the crag is the more modern palace of the Raja whose ancestors built the castle. At the bigger villages in the valley polo is regularly played. We pitched our camp beside the polo ground at Parkutta on an afternoon when a game was in progress. It was not the game that I have played in the plains. The ground was over two hundred yards long and thirty-four yards broad. It was surrounded by a stone wall, two feet six inches high. The main path up the valley ran along the side of the ground. The ponies were diminutive and woolly, with flowing manes and tails. Their bridles were elaborate, and the humped wooden saddles were set upon gaily coloured saddle-cloths; and mainly tied on with local string. Some of the polo-sticks were recognisable as such, but the majority bore a vague resemblance to a hockey-stick with an enlarged blade.
There were no chukkas. When the ball went out of play one of the horsemen took it in his hand, galloped with it from the goal-line to the centre of the ground, threw it in the air, and hit it as it was falling. There was much wild galloping. After they had been playing for a long time a truce took place, during which children were mounted on the ponies, and a species of slow chukka took place, in which the children learned to hit the ball. When the game was continued, the ponies having had no rest at all, two merchants' caravans wandered the length of the ground, while the polo went on through and around them. The first caravan was composed of Zos, who took no interest; the second was made up of a number of small donkeys, which were slightly upset.

We ate tea beside the ground. The spectators and the players divided their interest between us and the game. Most of the spectators, who were numerous, sat on the wall and watched us. The players wandered their ponies off the ground at intervals to come and talk to us; the village schoolmaster left the ground altogether and had a long conversation about his boys.

We crossed the Indus, in a large wooden punt, at its junction with the Shyok, which flows in a wide bed of burning sand between rough hills. From this point we began to speed up the march, and on 12th May we reached Saling, a little village opposite Khapulu. That day I went on
ahead; crossed the Shyok on a *zak*, or raft made of goat-skins attached to a framework of poplar tree branches; and called on Mr Read, to whom I had written, asking him to collect supplies of grain, sugar, potatoes, salt, and so on, required for our coolies. He had everything ready for me, and the expedition had only to wait one day at Saling to collect the stock. For the first time we had a taste of bad weather, rain beating down the valley from the direction of the precipices which we could see above the Saltoro Valley.

Harrison and Karima set off alone with three coolies to visit the village of Goma, at the head of the Saltoro Valley, from which we had obtained our coolie reliefs on Saltoro Kangri. These men had proved themselves tough and good carriers, and, as the men of the Hushe Nala below Masher-brum were an unknown quantity, we decided to take a stiffening of eight men whom we knew had previous experience. Harrison camped at Dansam and went on with Karima up to Goma next day, and camped there while he recruited men from the three villages at the head of the valley. At the end of a day’s wandering around the villages the selected men accompanied him back to camp and immediately tried to take his boots off. He suggested that if they wanted a job to do they should blow up his pneumatic mattress. He was just going to show the wild-looking men how to do it, when he noticed that their leader was going through a curious panto-
Plate 40.—Baltis ploughing with Zos just below the village of Hushe.
mime in dumb show: at last he realised what the man was wanting; he was attempting to indicate that he could not find any of the wooden bellows which we had employed on Saltoro Kangri: Jock was amused.

The rest of us marched up the Hushe Nala with fifty-one coolie loads. As we came to the foot of the valley we saw Masherbrum, which was at first almost clear of cloud, but which became hidden after half an hour. The valley led straight up to it for over forty miles, the mountain walls narrowing as they approached Masherbrum, which towered high above the smaller peaks. There is quite a good path up the valley. The inhabitants were very friendly and turned out to greet us at every village.

By the second day we reached Hushe, two miles above which we pitched our Reconnaissance Base Camp, from where we would explore the mountain. The road had deteriorated badly in the upper half of the valley. It was always narrow, and it climbed up and down great vertical banks of rubble that lay beside the river. There were airy bridges to cross. They were composed of three whole poplar trunks laid side by side. In places there was no path, and a way had to be found among the boulders along the river bank, or on the higher hillsides. Through this country, on the return journey, Harrison had to be carried on a stretcher. The passage of the bridges and the worse pieces of path he made
carried on the back of a porter. He was in pain. Hodgkin, who was also injured, rode his pony over the swaying bridges, following Mrs Teasdale, also mounted; and over the steep scree hillsides.

Hushe is the highest village in the valley. It is set at about 10,500 feet, overlooked by high precipices. The people are a wild-looking lot, but are physically far finer than the ‘Khorkondus Cripples.’ There were more inhabitants in the village, and the women and children all came out to stare at us. Our camp was far enough away from the village to ensure that only the men visited us. They sat about all day contentedly watching everything we did.

Camp was pitched in a delightful jungle two miles above Hushe, on the east bank of the river. It is a surprising spot to find in the Karakoram, where trees are normally almost entirely absent. There is a mass of tangled bushes on each side of the river, some giant juniper rising to a height of twelve feet and some dwarf trees. Springs are scattered over the valley floor, on which grows grass, a thing we had scarcely seen since leaving the Sind Valley. Dotted about the faces of the precipices around the valley are trees, growing on tiny ledges and out of cracks, and breaking the steep skylines 2000 feet above the valley. To the north is a fine precipice-bound gorge, and through it, over pointed intervening rock ridges, we
looked straight at the face of Masherbrum, soaring almost three miles above us. Eastward another deep valley runs away from the point where we pitched camp, and about four miles along it we could see the snout of the Khondokoro Glacier, flowing down from the north-west, and overlooked by another palisade of pointed rock mountains. From above Hushe, Masherbrum shows its west, south-east, and east ridges, with the snowy south-east face between the latter pair; only the highest 3000 or 4000 feet can be seen above the lower mountains. On the afternoon of our arrival clouds covered the mountain, but with evening they cleared, and we saw its dark outline clear-cut against the sunset sky.

We were eager to start exploring the valley which leads up through the gorge, but there was a lot of work to be done in unpacking warm clothing for porters and coolies, getting out the mountaineering equipment and tents, and sorting food; so we decided to spend an idle evening and to start unpacking next morning. After supper we opened our second bottle of rum and joined the porters round their fire, where the complete party, climbers and porters, shared the contents of the bottle. As it circulated we sang; the party had adopted the "Wearing of the Green" as its battle-song, and Hodgkin gave a fine rendering of it, backed up by the rest of us, who did not mind much whether we were in tune or not. The porters kept the
ball rolling with a song from their homes, somewhere in Tibet. We were all in high spirits and eager to begin the exploration. We discussed our plans with the porters, as we had done many times on the way out. Dawa Tandup was again with us, and he and I were old friends after the Saltoro Kangri climb. Graham Brown knew Nima Sherpa and Passang Phutar, who had both been on Nanda Devi. By this time we all felt that we were friends, and the relationship between the porters and climbers of paid servants and masters had entirely passed; if indeed it had ever existed. They were as eager for the success of the party as we were.

In the morning three of my old friends from Saltoro Kangri joined us. They were Hussein, the coolie who reached Camp 6, and Raheem and another who had reached Camp 5. The fourth man to have reached it was dead, and only Hussein and Raheem were fit to accompany us on Masherbrum, as the third man had scarcely recovered from a serious illness; he later attached himself to the Teasdales, who were very pleased with him. I was very glad to see them, but I soon found their attention somewhat embarrassing; Hussein sat in front of me, whatever I was doing, gazing into my face the whole time, and whenever I picked anything up, leaping to his feet and trying to carry it for me. I had a job of work for him to do; we could not get all the suttoo (tsampa) and flour, which we required
for our men during the reconnaissance and climb, from Hushe, and the amount which Mr Read had obtained for me was only about a third of what was necessary. I explained this to Hussein and asked him to go off down the valley to collect more for us. He was perfectly willing to go, but refused to move. At last I discovered the reason; he was afraid that we would start the climb without him and would leave him behind. I assured him that we would not start the actual climb for another fortnight, and that if he came back in five days' time he would be able to help us in the main part of the reconnaissance. After a great deal of talk I convinced him, and he and Raheem went off down the valley for the grain. They arrived up again after four days with more than I had asked for, and they had paid less for it than had been agreed.

While Graham Brown and I unpacked and sorted, Roberts and Hodgkin went to discover how to reach the snout of the Masherbrum Glacier, which terminated in the gorge. About half a mile below camp they found a snow-bridge which crossed the river, and made their way through the jungle as far as the foot of the glacier. By the time they returned everything was ready for the party to start.

We expected that Harrison would not be able to reach Hushe for another three or four days, so we had decided that, in order not to waste time, we would all make a preliminary
exploration of the Masherbrum Glacier. We decided to go together so that we should all have the same ideas of difficulty on which to base the conclusions of later individual reconnaissances. We found our way easily up the moraine on the south of the glacier. There was a goat-path along its top, as the villagers graze their flocks on the hillsides above the glacier later in the year, when the snow has melted. By about three o'clock we had reached 13,600 feet, and from this point the winter snow seemed to stretch continuously, so we pitched our camp. We could see the higher part of Masherbrum and a steep glacier running down in front of it, but we could get little idea of its topography. We saw that the head of the Masherbrum Glacier was closed by a high rock and snow cirque\(^1\) about five miles farther on. The weather was fine and the sun delightfully warm. We had come up slowly and there was no sign of tiredness.

Next morning we all went up the side of the glacier for about a mile, when we separated. Hodgkin and Roberts and a Sherpa climbed a small peak on the south side of the glacier, while Graham Brown and I went on with a Gurkha to within a mile of the head of the glacier at a little over 14,000 feet. Snow conditions were unpleasant, as the winter snow was melting; the climbers on the peak found dangerous slopes, and Graham Brown and I had a weary day

\(^{1}\) Ring or wall of peaks enclosing the head basin of a glacier.
trudging through rotten snow. On our arrival back at camp we compared notes.

Masherbrum falls sheer for 12,000 feet to the head of the Masherbrum Glacier. The ridge by which we had thought, from the Workmans' photographs, that we might be able to climb turned out to be a series of isolated rock spikes, with a cut between them and the snow-ridge behind. There is a steep glacier flowing down from the south-east of this snow-ridge, on the side farther from Masherbrum. Because of their conformation we called the snow-ridge the 'Dome,' and the steep glacier 'Sérac Glacier.' We all decided that Masherbrum could not be directly attacked from this side, but it was possible that a safe route might be made up the Sérac Glacier, and from it to the Dome, which might in turn lead to the higher slopes of Masherbrum. But the Sérac Glacier was most uninviting. We could not yet say how high was the basin at its head, and estimates varied between 16,000 feet and 19,000 feet, which meant that for between 2000 and 5000 feet we would have to find a way to climb through an ice-fall, which was steep, very broken, and whose sides were overhung by the dangerous-looking slopes of the ridges enclosing the glacier. We had little doubt that climbers would be able to find a way to the basin at the head of the Sérac Glacier, but whether we could get coolies up it, and could make it a safe line of communication was much more
problematical. We came to the conclusion that we would look upon it as the last choice of a route, and would only attempt to employ it in the unlikely event of our failing to find a better one on the east side of the mountain.

The Ayling Glacier lies over the wall of mountains to the south of the Masherbrum Glacier. It had never been properly explored, and we felt that it might possibly give access to the great west ridge of Masherbrum, which makes an unbroken sweep to the head of the cirque enclosing the Masherbrum Glacier. While the other climbers, with three porters, set off to force a 16,000-foot pass over to the Ayling, I took the rest of the party back to our Hushe Camp, to prepare for further explorations. The other party ploughed slowly through the melting snow to the head of the pass, which dropped more steeply on the far side. They descended a snow-filled gully which continually steepened and grew more narrow. By evening they were only three hundred feet above the Ayling Glacier, but they had come to a place where the gully dropped away sheer beneath them, and a waterfall tumbled to the glacier. A herd of startled ibex made off along the precipitous hillside, and Hodgkin tried to follow their lead, but it proved impossible. They had to admit that they could not reach the glacier, and they camped for the night on a little ledge from which the snow had melted. It was too small to allow them to pitch
Plate 44.—The boatmen blowing up the skins preparatory to embarking.
their tents, so they slept in the open. Luck was with them, as juniper grew near the ledge, and they were able to make a fire; no stoves had been brought on the preliminary reconnaissance because we had not intended to sleep above the wood-line. Next morning the weary party climbed up again to the head of the pass and descended to the Hushe Camp. The snow-bridge just below camp had collapsed, and they had to walk down to a bridge near the village and two miles up again. It was hot, and they had had two long days; they were glad of their tea on arrival in camp.

Harrison, Karima, and the eight Goma men had arrived up at Hushe the day after we left to explore the Masherbrum Glacier. Harrison had made a day's trip up the Khondokoro Glacier to our east, but had not gone high enough to get a clear idea of the lie of the land around the east side of Masherbrum. He was, however, definitely of the opinion that the east side looked even less inviting than did the south. We, from the south, had come to the conclusion that some sort of a plateau, or possibly a snow basin, must connect the Dome to the foot of the south-east ridge of Masherbrum, and that the plateau seemed to continue at a higher level along under the highest south-east snow face. Harrison from his hurried examination of the east side was unable to confirm our impression; it had seemed to him that the south-east face fell
direct to a high rocky ridge between two subsidiary peaks, and that the ridge in turn fell sheer to the Khondokoro Glacier. The whole of the east side of the Masherbrum massif was, he said, extremely steep, and was heavily plastered in ice and ice-cliffs. He was inclined to think that the southern approach was the only possible one; which opinion directly opposed that of the rest of us, who had been pinning our hopes on the eastern side. It did, however, make us realise that it was possible that the Sérac Glacier would prove to be the only line of advance, and that a serious attack on it, and an attempt to reach the top of the Dome, must be made immediately, to establish whether it could be used as our line of communication. Harrison and Hodgkin were deputed for this duty, taking with them two Sherpas and some coolies to carry for them as far as the foot of the Sérac Glacier. None of the high altitude ration could be spared for this preliminary climb, so I hastily improvised one for them from our other stores. I am afraid it was not a very good substitute. Graham Brown, Roberts, and I, with the other Sherpas and Gurkhas, and Karima made up the party to explore the Khondokoro Glacier to its head.

Both parties set out next morning. We marched eastward along the valley floor through thickets of dwarf trees and flowering rose bushes. Wild rhubarb grew in abundance beside the
Plate 45.—Smoking a ‘sand-pipe’ in the Shyok.
track, and everyone was busy picking it until we had gathered as much as we could carry. After about four miles we crossed the river by a snow-bridge and turned northwards up the eastern moraine of the Khondokoro Glacier. The angle of its rise was gentle, and when we pitched camp in the afternoon we had only reached 12,500 feet, and were some three miles up the glacier. Masherbrum hung immense to the north-west; from this side it had changed its shape and no longer rose as a wedge. A great ridge was thrown out eastwards across the head of the glacier from the smaller peak to the east of Masherbrum. In the early morning the massif had been clear of clouds, and Harrison's impression of the impregnable look of the mountain from this side had been confirmed; but by the time that we pitched camp the clouds were low upon the precipices. We could, however, see one apparent break in the ridge guarding the foot of the south-east face from this side, and we thought from this distance that it looked more hopeful than had the Sérac Glacier.

In the morning we went on up. The clouds had cleared away again, but the going had deteriorated, as this moraine was apparently not used as a pathway for the village flocks. It crumbled away beneath our feet, and the boulders that fell from its summit sent up a flying cloud of dust. Soon after mid-day we reached a lovely little tarn, enclosed on one
side by snow, but with a grass basin above it, in which we pitched camp. The height was 13,800 feet; and the valley above us opened out. We were directly opposite the break in Masherbrum, 25,660 ft.

The ridge, of which we had hopes, and, in spite of the fact that the clouds had again descended, we scanned it eagerly. Our hopes soon vanished. A steep gully led up to the break. At its head it was overlooked by lumpy ice-cliffs. To
approach it from below would necessitate climbing a glacier almost as broken and as steep as the Sérac Glacier, but, as an additional deterrent, it was overhung by the great ridge thrown out eastwards from the massif. The ridge’s highest point was at about 24,000 feet, and the whole of it was plastered in ice, which obviously avalanched on to the glacier. Two avalanches actually fell during the day. That route would have been suicidal.

Just above the tarn the Khondokoro Glacier forks into three main tongues. One area of ice falls from the east of the Masherbrum massif; one appears to flow past it from the north; the last comes from the east. We wandered up to the junction of the eastern glacier and looked up it. It flows almost level for some miles. The hills about it are low and crumbling, with none of the bold rock formations of the Masherbrum massif. It is closed at its head by low rock and snow peaks. From a study of the map it appears almost certain that on the other side of these must lie the Vigne Glacier, which flows northward to join the Baltoro Glacier near its head. There is a persistent belief that somewhere in the Masherbrum area a pass leads over to the Baltoro Glacier from the south. I think that this must be the pass, but unfortunately our plan of exploring it after climbing Masherbrum had to be abandoned owing to events which happened later.

The glacier flowing from the north was of even
greater interest to us. We could not see its head basin, and after it had skirted the long eastern ridge of the massif it disappeared against the sky. It seemed probable that the glacier must bend in either a westerly or an easterly direction; if the former, it might lead round under the northern side of Masherbrum. It was unlikely, from the photographs which we had seen of the north of Masherbrum, that any climbing route could be found there, and the glimpse which we caught of its northern precipice just below the summit was uninviting in the extreme, but it would be interesting to get a view of the mountain from the north, and it was just possible that an easy glacier approach might lead up to the head of the plateau beneath the south-east face from the north; the head of this plateau had appeared to lie between the main peak of Masherbrum and the subsidiary 24,000-foot peak to its east; even now I am not prepared to state definitely that a possible route might not lie up this glacier.

The exploration of the northern glacier was only work for two climbers. Graham Brown and Roberts took it on, with two porters, while I went back with the rest of the party to Hushe, to form a headquarters there from which I could get the main baggage of the party moving as soon as I received a message that either side was definitely possible. The weather deteriorated. A high wind blew down the valley at Hushe,
and rain beat down with it. The clouds were right down to the feet of the precipices.

I spent two days of indecision alone, feeling that neither party could hope to succeed in such weather, worrying for the safety of the men on the Sérac Glacier, and trying to decide whether to rig up a rope-bridge to sling loads across the river near camp, and so cut out the necessity for the trudge down to Hushe and up again in the event of our choosing the Sérac Glacier route. I was pretty certain that this would have to be our way, if we were going to be able to climb Masherbrum at all, and on the morning of the second day I sent up a party of coolies with a note to Harrison, suggesting that if there were any possibility of climbing the Dome, he should send me a message and I would move the baggage up to him and Hodgkin. I sat most of the day in my tent, while it rained intermittently, and worked out complicated graphs of how to get our forty-five or so loads up the Sérac Glacier in the event of it proving too difficult for local coolies, and our having to rely entirely on our own transport party of five Sherpas, two Gurkhas, and Hussein and Raheem. After several hours' work I had come to the conclusion that at best it would take some ten days to get all our loads up to the basin at the head of the Sérac Glacier, at an estimated height of 18,000 feet. The prospect was not pleasing, and my thoughts began to stray somewhat tenderly
to Saltoro Kangri, which I knew we could reach in about five days. No word arrived from either party.

At tea-time Roberts and Graham Brown trudged into camp, a day before I expected them. Their news was much what I had feared it would be. They had set off up the glacier to the north, and had had difficulty in finding a way through the maze of crevasses and séracs. At about 15,000 feet, and some half-way up to the highest point we had seen, they pitched camp; but in the morning the weather was threatening, and, as they had insufficient food to wait for it to clear, they decided to return. They had had a spell of most interesting climbing, but had gained no further information. I told them of my deliberations about the problem of getting our baggage up the Sérac Glacier, should Harrison and Hodgkin declare the way possible, and Graham Brown asked what happened if it were not. We discussed the relative merits of climbing some of the many fine, smaller peaks about us, or going to Saltoro Kangri, and I had just won the day and a decision had been reached that it should be Saltoro Kangri, when Harrison and Hodgkin, looking distinctly weary, came into camp. After they had had tea the conference started again.

Harrison and Hodgkin with their party had gone up the south side of the Masherbrum Glacier, and then crossed over to the foot of the Sérac Glacier, where they left their coolies. They had
Plate 48.—Hussein, a Balti porter who is as good as a Sherpa.
cut their way up a steep ice groove, which they called 'Scaly Alley,' at the true left edge of the Sérac Glacier. It had been interesting and rather frightening work, as the groove was a funnel for stones falling from the enclosing ridge above. The other flank of the groove was made up of unstable-looking ice pinnacles, and it was guarded at the bottom by a wide crevasse. Once they had cut their way up Scaly Alley the climbing had been easier. Snow overlay the ice, and the chief difficulty was to make a safe crossing of the numerous crevasses which were hidden by the snow. At about 15,000 feet they had climbed a little rock outcrop, and, above it, ascended steep snow slopes, which were covered with débris from avalanches that had fallen from the ridge. They traversed these slopes up to about 16,000 feet, where they were able to make out into the glacier and away from the enclosing ridge, and pitch camp in a safe place. They were above the steepest part of the ice-fall, and it looked as though the centre of the glacier, although still very broken, could be climbed to the head basin, about 2000 feet above. In the morning they went on up the glacier, glad to be well away from the avalanche slopes below the enclosing ridge; but, when they had got about half-way up to the basin, they became involved in a difficult ice-fall, with ice formations of some grandeur, and after a bit their way was closed by an unclimbable ice-cliff, the flanks of
which could not be turned. They had to retrace their footsteps almost to their camping-place and start up again along the edge of the glacier, and along the avalanche débris. They camped for the night in a little basin at the edge of the glacier, partially protected from above by a rock bluff, and enclosed on the other side by séracs and ice mounds a hundred feet high. The weather was growing progressively worse. In a snowstorm the following day they forced a way up a steep, eight-hundred-foot high, débris-covered slope above the rock bluff, to the head basin at a height of 18,000 feet. The weather was such that they could see little of the remaining route to the top of the Dome. They went over the basin and reconnoitred the foot of the broken snow slopes leading up the face of the Dome, came to the conclusion that they would be less difficult than the route they had already followed, turned back, and reached the Hushe Base Camp in the day; no wonder they looked weary. Their chief complaint was that their 17,000-foot camp, set in a hollow, had been unbearably hot and stuffy during the afternoon they had spent there.

This had been cheering news, but their conclusions were even more so. The Sérac Glacier, they said, could be climbed by coolies. It would mean a lot of step-cutting in Scaly Alley and below it; ropes would have to be fixed for the coolies to use as handrails, and a ladder must be obtained to bridge the crevasse in Scaly Alley;
Plate 49—Masherbrum falls sheer to the head of the glacier.
and it was probable that another would before long be required for a higher crevasse, whose snow-bridge was already crumbling. If the lower parts of the climb were then done in the early morning, they believed that it would neither be too difficult for local coolies, nor too dangerous for their employment to be justified. Of course they had not really established that a way could be made to the top of the Dome, nor were they sure that, once there, we would find any further way by which to reach the foot of the south-east ridge; but, taken all in all, the Sérac Glacier did appear to be the only possible way of climbing the mountain, and, if we were not going to abandon the project altogether before it had started, we might as well go for it. This was all eminently sound, and a unanimous decision was reached to pitch Base Camp near the foot of the Sérac Glacier, and to get the Hushe villagers to build ladders immediately. The decision was passed on to the porters and the camp staff; the village carpenter got to work; and for two days we sat waiting for the weather to clear, while it seemed to be doing its best to frighten us off by becoming worse and worse.

On the evening of 26th May, Roberts and I made a bet as to when it would clear. I said, from previous experience of Karakoram weather, that the morning of the 28th would be fine; Roberts said that it would clear on the afternoon of the 27th. The coolies, when interrogated,
seemed to imply that they did not believe it would ever be fine; so to cheer them up Harrison assured them on behalf of 'Waller Sahib' that he had divine information that without any shadow of doubt the 28th would be fine. Roberts had to be stopped from changing the date to the 27th. Excitement about the bet and the divine prophecy ran quite high in camp; I was anxious that it should not work out too wrong, as I knew that, if I pulled it off, the coolies would have a superstitiously encouraged faith in the rightness of the sahibs; and a feeling that the gods were on our side, and that the spirits of Masherbrum might be in our pay.

Neither Roberts nor I won the bet, but the moral effect worked all right. There was a brief flash of sunshine on the afternoon of the 27th, but the clouds did not clear from the precipices. By dawn on the 28th they had turned to white cotton-wool, which within a few hours had been whipped away in long streamers by a brisk wind which blew from Masherbrum. The gods were evidently favourable. The coolies took up their loads cheerfully and we went up towards Base Camp, which the whole party reached at about nine-thirty on the morning of 29th May, having camped the previous night a few miles farther down. Base Camp was set at 13,800 feet in a trough between the moraine and the rocky hillside above, and was about an hour's walk over snow from the foot of the Sérac Glacier.
Plate 50.—The Séra Glacier, the Dome (in centre) and Masherbrum (on left).
CHAPTER IX.

Masherbrum—continued.

I have said that the arrangements and organisation for the Masherbrum climb were mostly satisfactory, and that the climb itself went much more smoothly than had our attempt on Saltoro Kangri. There can be no comparison in this. The lower parts of the route were less difficult than their appearance had at first led us to believe; and once Harrison and Hodgkin had found the way up Sérac Glacier; and, on the day we first took coolies up it, Hodgkin and Roberts had cut steps in Scaly Alley and fixed the ladder and the ropes;1 there was nothing more to worry about. The coolies were a sturdy lot and had a strong stiffening in our five Sherpas, Raheem and Hussein, and the eight Goma men; and we did not make

1 Ropes were left fixed to the mountain-side at all the places where the climbing was difficult. These ropes made an additional safeguard: the leader of each roped party had something to which to anchor himself should one of the men below him on his rope fall; and the men below could use the rope as a handrail by which to pull themselves up, and so place less strain on their leader and themselves. About 800 feet of rope were left fixed on various parts of the mountain when we descended.
the mistake of taking too many of them up the mountain, only twenty-one coolies all told accompanied us. It was a long day, as we pitched Camp I below the rock bluff at 17,000 feet; and practically no halts, for fear of avalanches or rock-fall, could be allowed until the party reached the safe part of the route at 16,000 feet, where we all ate a meal. The climbing near Scaly Alley had been spectacular, but no more, once the advanced climbers had done their work. Camp was soon pitched; there was ample tent accommodation for everyone, and before the sun went down I had been able to give everyone a hot drink, and the British climbers and Sherpas a hot meal, using two of Cooke’s invaluable stoves. Two men only had collapsed on the way up; the climbers had divided their loads between them, and the men had reached camp without assistance. The weather was fine, and the view over the valley, especially of a pointed snow-peak which we called White Sail, was magnificent. Next day Graham Brown and Hodgkin were to advance up the Dome with two days’ food and two porters, while the rest of us took the transport party down again to Base Camp for the second relay of loads. Indeed, the only thing that could have worried us was the fact that Camp I had been established too easily; and, looking back, I realised that the whole expedition, since its start from Srinagar, had had too easy a time:
Plate 51.—The rocks in the highest snow face were those reached by Harrison and Hodgkin.

(The right-hand peak (north) is the higher.)
I had a feeling, a superstition born of experience, that the hills did not normally treat a party to uniformly good fortune, and that I should prefer whatever bad luck was in store for us to be spread out over a long period of the expedition, and not applied in concentrated form. That everything could continue to go with this smoothness, I found it impossible to believe; it never does.

Two days later we were all back in Camp 1, complete with the transport party, and we had all the loads there. Graham Brown and Hodgkin had reached a point quite near the top of the Dome, and reported no great difficulty. The weather had deteriorated, and in the evening a light snowstorm came on. Our plan for the next day was to send all the transport party, about twenty-five men in all, through to a Camp 2 site at 19,200 feet on the Dome face. The following day should see Camp 2 fully established and stocked.

But minor contretemps upset our plans. When we tried to turn the coolies out of their tents in the morning they would not leave them. When at last they did, they stood about the camp, looking as sullen as the clouds above our heads. We might go on, they said; they did not mind waiting for us where they were, but they were going no higher. We argued, and at last I lost patience and told all the men who wished to go down to give me, immediately, all
the warm clothing with which they had been equipped, as no men were going to wait for us at Camp 1, and those who would not go higher might go down; in which case they would not require their clothing. Some of them hesitated, but for a time it looked as though all the men would desert. Finally, all save eight men handed in their clothing and started down. We were not worried about them going down unaccompanied, as the ice-steps would not yet have melted, and ropes were fixed at points where there was any danger. After they had started, two men suddenly turned and came back to us, giving us a party of ten coolies, including Hussein and Raheem, who had stood aloof from the argument. These men were immediately given climbing boots in place of the local goat-hide and *puttoo* boots which they had so far used, and more warm clothing, and were sent up with the porters to carry to Camp 2. Roberts and Hodgkin went with them.

Our Camp 1 site was obviously going to become unsafe after prolonged snowfall. Avalanches had already fallen down the slope immediately above the camp. The previous evening we had shifted some of the tents farther on to the glacier.

When Roberts and Hodgkin arrived back with the party from Camp 2 we discussed the immediate plan. Graham Brown and Hodgkin had reached a spot near the top of the Dome, but not its actual summit, nor had they obtained
any view of the route above. As we were not sure that there would be such a route, it was decided that the most important task for the climbers was strongly to attack the Dome and to reach its summit. To do this all the climbers, with a transport party of ten men, would advance with a week's food, while the remaining men, under Dawa Tandup and Passang Sherpa, would continue to carry loads from Camp 1 to Camp 2.

We put this plan into execution the following morning, but before long it began to snow heavily, and by the time we reached Camp 2 it was obvious that too much responsibility lay with the two porters, for more avalanches had fallen above Camp 1. It was plain that the camp should be evacuated and a Camp 1A established in the Sérad Basin, at 18,000 feet, as soon as possible. Graham Brown and Roberts, who were acclimatising slightly more slowly than the rest of us, went down again.

The climbing between Camps 1 and 2 had not been difficult, although the first steep slope above Camp 1 was icy and exposed. The Sérad Basin was a walk through snow which reached up to our calves. The lowest pitch of the Dome face below Camp 2 was interesting and rather laborious. The slope was steep and the powder snow waist-deep. There was one concealed 'schrund, which was revealed when a coolie broke through into it; but, being roped, was none the worse. We fixed a rope for this passage
and then continued up a little snow-ridge to where Camp 2 was pitched on the top of a firm sérac which fell for about a hundred and fifty feet below.

When we advanced next day, the climbing was again interesting. The whole party continued on up the slopes, the leader sinking almost to his knees in powder snow. Hodgkin and I led on the first rope; Harrison brought up the transport party. We found no serious obstacle till we started to traverse diagonally upwards across the last eight-hundred-foot slope to the crest of the ridge, following Graham Brown's and Hodgkin's previous route; whereas it had then been safe, the slope was now in condition to avalanche; and before we had gone far Hodgkin and I decided that to continue was too dangerous. We turned back and descended to the rest of the party, who had been sitting watching us. The prospect seemed gloomy, because unless we could find a safe way up this slope, and one that would remain safe throughout the climb, to advance over it would be unjustifiable; and that meant that we would not be able to reach the top of the Dome. One of us suggested returning to Camp 2 and trying again next day, but I thought that there was still a chance of making a safe route if we went straight up the slope in a bee-line. I started off alone to test my theory, the rest of the party sitting well out of the way of any possible danger, and
Plate 53.—Approaching Camp 1 with the second relay of loads on 1st June.
after I had gone up about two hundred feet I felt confident that the route would go.

The others followed me. In two places the slope was in unpleasant condition without being actively dangerous. The powder snow covering the hard snow beneath thinned to a few inches, and it was hard to find any purchase for our feet. Steps could not be cut or kicked. Hodgkin led, while Harrison and I brought up the two roped parties of laden men. Surprisingly, the coolies, who were roped to Harrison, needed less assistance than did my party of Sherpa porters, all of whom were on one occasion lying in the snow at the same moment, being held solely by the rope. I had to call back Hodgkin to help me pull them up the final pitch to a ledge near the crest of the ridge, where Harrison and I pitched a temporary Camp 3 (20,600), while Hodgkin took the rest of the party down again, to bring up a second relay of loads next day. He fixed two ropes on the most difficult passages.

Harrison’s and my camp was set on the edge of the world, which dropped away steeply to the bottom of the Sérac Glacier, almost 7000 feet below, and less than a mile away horizontally. We were almost on the crest of the ridge, but further progress along it was blocked by a thirty-foot high ice-cliff, which continued back along each side of the ridge. The two of us were living in one of the little six-pound wedge-tents,
so that we had to cook with the stove and cooking utensils balanced on our sleeping-bags; we made supper successfully, but in the morning I upset two saucepans over everything, just when our cocoa was nearly ready, which so disorganised us that Hodgkin had almost arrived up again before we started on our task of making a way to the top of the Dome. About an hour and a half later, when Hodgkin went down, Harrison and I had not managed to get more than thirty yards from camp, and had had to return to it. We tried to turn the northern flank of the ice-cliff by way of a knife-edged ice-ridge, but had to give up, as we could never have made a route along it fit for porters. A frontal attack on the cliff had also failed, and the last alternative, a traverse of five hundred yards along the Dome face above Camp 2, under the ice-cliff, and on steep powder snow slopes, into which we sank to our knees, was one we hesitated to tackle, for fear of avalanches. Finally we did work our way along the base of the cliff. It was not difficult and the slope showed no desire to avalanche, but even so we were anxious to leave it, and I twice attempted to climb up the ice-cliff in places where I failed utterly, before we managed to turn its northern flank.

Here a steep ice-slope led up for fifty feet. At its bottom was a bridged crevasse. Its surface was covered in two feet of powder snow, which had to be scooped from the ice with an
ice-axe held horizontally at head or chest level. By the time I had cleared a path and cut steps up the ice, I was pretty tired. Above was a small snow-ledge nestling under the end of the ice-cliff and an almost vertical snow slope rising to a small cornice twenty-five feet above. On this ledge Camp 3 was later pitched; Harrison led diagonally up the final snow wall, buried to his shoulders in snow on the higher side and to his waist on the lower. He hacked down a piece of the cornice and pulled himself on to the broad top of the snow-ridge above. We had conquered the Dome, and a slow trudge of about two hundred yards brought us to a point where we could see our further route.

Greatly to our relief it was obviously easy as far as the foot of the south-east ridge; a snow-field about half a mile across rose gently towards it. Above the snowfield and near the south-east ridge some moderately steep slopes led up for about eight hundred feet to the plateau along the foot of the south-east face. Clouds were low, and we were tired, so that we failed to absorb any more information than this; but it was enough to know that once we had established a further camp at the head of the snowfield, underneath the south-east ridge, we should at last be up against the final stage of the climb. We would be within 4000 feet of the summit; and from there the mountain rose in clear-cut ridges and faces.
We returned that night to Camp 2, and next day everyone went down to Camp 1A, from which all loads were carried to Camp 2. Several of the coolies had become unfit, and we decided that their work was over; so, at mid-day and in a snowstorm, Hodgkin and I took them all down to Base Camp, while the rest of the party went up again to Camp 2, with the tasks of fixing ropes below and above Camp 3, fully stocking Camp 3, and pushing forward to establish a Camp 4 as high as possible.

This point in the climb is clear-cut; it divides the time when everything was in our favour from the moment when things began to go against us. Not that our luck changed in one moment, but the weather turned against us and gradually worked up to its climax: weather and luck on a high mountain are so much alike as to be almost the same thing; only luck embraces factors other than weather.

While Hodgkin and I rested a day at Base Camp and then returned to Camp 2 the next day, the others established Camp 3 and got it stocked with all the remaining loads; but the clouds were about the summit of the Dome, and attempts to advance beyond Camp 3 failed through lack of visibility. Another attempt was made the day after Hodgkin and I arrived at Camp 3. It was slightly more successful, and a temporary camp was pitched some four hundred yards across the snowfield, where Graham Brown
Plate 55.—Camp 4, after the twenty-four hour blizzard, showing how the snow had piled up.
and Roberts with two porters spent the night, while Harrison brought the remainder of the men back to Camp 3. The clouds were still down about us the next day, and it was snowing when Harrison, Hodgkin, and I advanced again with porters, and reached Graham Brown's and Robert's camp just as the clouds lifted slightly. Harrison and I, with our previous knowledge of the lie of the land, were able to lead the way onwards and pitch Camp 4 at 21,500 feet, not far from the foot of the south-east ridge. I returned to Camp 3 with all the transport party, ready for the next day's carry.

The 12th June, the following morning, was fine, and while I brought up my party again to Camp 4, Graham Brown, Roberts, and Hodgkin were able to make a short exploration upwards to the lip of the basin under the south-east face, about eight hundred feet above them. Harrison spent the day in his sleeping-bag, suffering from slightly frost-bitten feet. By early afternoon the weather was deteriorating; a brisk wind, almost the first we had experienced, was whipping the snowfield, and snow-devils were whirling up from the rocky south-east ridge above us. Clouds followed hard on the heels of the wind, and during the night an intense blizzard started. We had luckily pitched the camp with all the tents in one line, end on to the wind, and with one of the little wedge-shaped tents each end, streamlining the camp. There were real grounds
to fear that a wind of such strength would tear the thin fabric of the three-year-old Burns' tents, or break their old aluminium poles.

All that night and all the next day the wind howled over the glacier and roared like the boom of surf along the precipices above. The tents flapped wildly. "What do we do now, James?" Harrison had shouted above the storm in the early morning. "Stay put!" I had yelled back. We lay all day in our sleeping-bags. The temperature the previous night had sunk to $-13^\circ$ F.; during the day it was probably about $20^\circ$ F. Graham Brown, Harrison, and Hodgkin did cross-word puzzles; I could hear them yelling for words meaning "something in three letters." The only time during the day that I turned out of my tent, one of my gloves was blown away, and two minutes' exposure was long enough to make me lose all sensation in that hand. It was painful while I rubbed the circulation back again.

Towards evening the wind dropped, and we discussed plans. On account of the weather our progress for the past week had been very slow. We were all sick of inactivity, when the mind is apt to dwell on minor points of discomfort, such as the snow which has blown into one's tent, and the weight of snow that is burying the tent to half-way up its roof, which consequently rests on one's sleeping-bag. The mere fact of height has its mental effect as well as
its physical; and dreamless sleep is unusual without a sleeping draught. We were all anxious to push on. The south-east ridge directly above Camp 4 turned due south; it was precipitous granite, and we had seen no way to climb it. Our onward way must lie by the south-east face, from which we hoped that we might be able to get on to the far side of the south-east ridge. It was decided that as soon as the weather cleared Harrison and Hodgkin should explore the south-east face; should attempt to find a way from it on to the south-east ridge, and that, if all went well, they were to have a shot at the top 4000 feet above us. They would take two porters and four or five days' food. The rest of us would follow behind in support of their advance.

The early morning of 14th June was fine; too fine to last. We dug the tents for the advancing party out of the snow which covered them to half-way up their roofs, and laid them out upon the snow to thaw. While this was happening we stood about the camp and took photographs and cinema film. The view was truly magnificent. Southward we looked over the edge of the Dome straight down the length of the Hushe Valley to the point where it joins the Shyok. Eastward was a magnificent jumble of peaks, broken palisades of snow and rock; and soaring above them all was Saltoro Kangri, looking even more splendid from this height than in any of the other views I had had of it.
When everything was packed up, I led the way for the advanced party, making a trace for them under some pointed ice séracs, five hundred feet above, and through the newly fallen powder snow which engulfed me to my thighs. Before long clouds had again descended on the mountain, and a gusty wind drove a spray of powder snow past us. At the crest of the lip, eight hundred feet above camp, I said good-bye to my friends and turned downwards again, as the driven snow was already filling the upward track, and I did not want to get lost. Visibility had so decreased that less than an hour later Harrison and Hodgkin had to pitch Camp 5 at 22,500 feet. As I went downward through the mist I suddenly heard the loud roar of an avalanche which passed close beneath me, and a little later I walked for two hundred yards over ice-blocks which had fallen when one of the séracs above Camp 4 collapsed, and which swept our route; ice particles reached Camp 4.

The following morning was slightly finer, although clouds still hung low about the peak. Harrison and Hodgkin could see that the snow slopes of the face above them offered no way of ascent; they were broken by great ice bulges which were divided by crevasses, and the angle was steep. But towards the east the face became less broken and the angle eased. All day they ploughed slowly across the face through powder snow that reached their thighs. By afternoon
Plate 57.—View from Camp 6.
(The full length of the Hushe Nala, almost fifty miles to its junction with the Shyok, can be clearly seen.)
visibility had again decreased, and they pitched Camp 6 at 23,500 feet when they reached a comparatively level little snow-ledge, below which yawned a great crevasse. The day's climbing had been very tiring and they were becoming depressed; but next morning their luck changed; the weather was perfect and the sun shone from a deep blue sky, so much darker at this altitude than down below. They saw that the way above them, although broken and fairly steep, was reasonably safe and easy. The porters were, however, slow in turning out of their tent; Passang Phutar was sick. His stomach was out of order, and the two men decided that he was too weak to continue. They left him lying in his sleeping-bag in the porters' tent, and the three fit men packed the remaining tent and started upwards.

The snow was waist-deep and the way zigzagged through séracs and crevasses. In the early afternoon they reached a safe camp site at 24,600 feet, from which the climbers sent the other porter down to join Passang Phutar in Camp 6, and to remain there until they returned to them. They set up the single six-pound tent on the lower lip of a great crevasse which gashed the slope above them. The weather all day was perfect, and they decided that if it remained so the next day they could probably reach the summit, only a thousand feet above them, by way of the east ridge. They would have to
go up some two hundred feet on snow, then climb the rock side of the ridge till they reached its crest, up which they should be able to climb easily to the saddle between the north and south peaks; and so to the summit. They had climbed a thousand feet a day for the last three days, carrying loads, so that their chances of achieving the last thousand feet of the climb, carrying no load, seemed bright.

The early morning of 17th June was again fine. They started out to reach the summit. For two hundred feet they ploughed through powder snow, buried to their waists. Then they came to the red granite side of the ridge. The rock was loose and crumbling, it was overlaid by powder snow, and it was steep. Two lines of advance were open: a snow-filled gully, and the poorly defined rock ridge beside it. Although the latter would be the more difficult, they decided to attack that way, as it would be safer. The rock proved surprisingly difficult at the altitude at which they were climbing, and very soon the two men found that they were becoming exhausted. At the same time a high wind was getting up, blowing powder snow about them, and sweeping the ridge in bitter gusts, so that their hands and feet became slightly frost-bitten. At 25,000 feet, having only climbed four hundred feet above Camp 7, and being still six hundred feet from the summit, they decided to turn back. Descent on the crumbling rock was even more
difficult than ascent, and when they finally staggered into Camp 7, soon after mid-day, they were completely exhausted. After they had recovered slightly they set to work to try and rub the circulation back in hands and feet; their tent door was sealed, so that they failed to notice the storm signs, high hazy clouds, which appeared during the early afternoon. By nightfall they realised that the wind had increased greatly in strength and that it was snowing.

Meanwhile the rest of us had not been idle. We had been busy relaying loads from Camp 3 to Camp 4, and from Camp 4 to Camp 5. Raheem went sick for a couple of days, and Roberts and I carried his loads for him. On 16th June, the day that Camp 7 was established, the whole remaining strength of the party occupied Camp 5, which was practically fully stocked with a fortnight's food by the next day, when I, with three porters, went up to Camp 6; the day when Harrison and Hodgkin made their attempt on the summit. Our plan was this: we had decided that it was unlikely that Harrison and Hodgkin would be able to reach the summit in one day from Camp 7, and that a higher Camp 8 would probably have to be pitched. I still retained the intention of attacking by the south-east ridge, although this necessitated the making of a possibly dangerous traverse across the face at the level of Camp 7; and would be the longest route to the summit, owing to the necessity of
first climbing or traversing round the lower, south rock-peak, and then making a passage along the quarter-mile long ridge connecting the two summits. I took Dawa Tandup with me as my climbing companion, and the other two porters were to carry for us and establish a camp for us on the south-east ridge, from which Dawa Tandup and I would alone attack the summit. We would advance on 17th June, and would stay at Camp 6 in support of Harrison and Hodgkin until they retreated, then go up to Camp 7. Graham Brown and Roberts would advance as soon as they could in support, and would make up the third and last assault party.

Although I got out of my sleeping-bag early in the morning, it was late before it became warm enough to be able to pack our loads, as our camp was pitched in the shadow. We did not start until after ten o'clock, and the long wait had so chilled me that we had not been climbing for more than an hour when I found that I had lost all sensation in my feet, and had to stop for half an hour while Dawa rubbed them to restore the circulation. We reached Camp 6 late in the afternoon; my feet were again frozen, and I seemed to have lost control of them, so that I did the last fifty-foot high rise into camp partly crawling on hands and knees. I had my feet rubbed while the tents were being set up. I noticed early in the afternoon that a high haze was forming over Masherbrum, and by the
Plate 59.—Approaching the rocks above Camp 7 at almost 25,000 feet.
time that camp was pitched clouds were blowing swiftly around the mountain from the west. A blizzard was coming.

During the night the blizzard came on in full fury. By morning the tents were flapping and straining in a tearing gale. Snow had fallen very heavily during the night and continued to fall; but the powder snow of the slope was so wind-whipped that it had no surface, and it was impossible to tell what was falling snow and what wind-driven powder. Visibility had closed down to about five yards.

The climbers in Camp 5 spent an anxious day. They took it in turns to steady the poles of the old tents, which had been left at the lowest camp. They expected all the parties above them to attempt to retreat to them through the blizzard, and throughout the day they kept the stove ready to light. Nobody appeared; but at about five in the evening they suddenly heard a shout, very faint and far away. They shouted back, and set to work to melt snow and prepare water for the returning parties. By nightfall nobody had appeared, and they had heard no more shouts. The blizzard continued unabated.

I spent a no less anxious day in Camp 6. I was worried for the safety of the men above; I did not expect them to try and retreat, but I knew that their food and fuel must be running short, and that if they were pinned to Camp 7 for some days their situation might become
dangerous. New snow already half-buried the tents, which sagged uncomfortably on our sleeping-bags. The porters remained imperturbable, but I did not like to discuss my worries with Dawa Tandup, who shared my tent, for fear that I infect them with my anxiety. We lay all day in our sleeping-bags, in a sort of uncomfortable trance; it was, I found, too much effort to unpack food for lunch from my rucksack.

The afternoon was drawing on when I heard a faint hail coming from the storm above. Harrison and Hodgkin must be retreating, and were shouting to get their bearings. I shouted back, and turned out all the porters, save only Passang Phutar, into the storm to help the two men into camp. We went up slowly through the waist-deep snow. Each man led a pace or two in turn. The others shouted and waited for an answer. We only heard three or four more shouts. By the time we had gone twenty paces from camp the storm had swallowed it up. The wind blew violently, and filled our track with driven snow almost as soon as the last man had passed. In a closely formed file we fought our way upwards. The cries above had ceased, and we must have gone about three hundred feet when I heard a cry from below. I thought that we must have passed the men in the storm, and that they were below us. We turned. The cry probably came from Camp 5; or perhaps we did pass them. Anyway darkness was falling,
our track had vanished, and we did not know where our camp was, so to turn back was the only course. We somehow found the way back. I was too tired to make the party a drink.

Up above me, the storm had taken Harrison and Hodgkin, in Camp 7, unawares. Early on the morning of 18th June they were awoken from their light sleep by a weight of snow which suddenly descended on their tent. In pitch darkness they fought to open the tent door and release themselves from beneath the snow. After a long time Hodgkin managed to unfasten it and clear a passage into the open air. It was just growing light. They saw that their tent had been buried beneath a mass of snow which had slid down from a bump about twenty feet above them. The blizzard continued, but visibility was comparatively good. They searched for Harrison’s ice-axe, which they failed to find, and tried to dig the tent out of the snow, but the task was too great for them. They decided to retreat to Camp 6. They took their sleeping-bags and mattresses out of the tent, and started down. The visibility, which had been comparatively good, grew rapidly worse. After an hour or so they had to admit to each other that they were lost, and they took shelter in a shallow crevasse to await a slight clearing in the storm. Twice they thought that they detected one, but on both occasions they were driven back into their crevasses by the storm, which was
beating up the slope into their faces. As the afternoon progressed they realised that they would probably have to spend the night in the open, and they started shouting, without much hope of anyone hearing them. They heard no answer, and after a time they desisted. They searched for a better place in which to spend the night, and found a deep crevasse, fifteen feet down one side of which was a narrow snow-ledge. They climbed down to it and found that their quarters were cramped, but that they were better sheltered from the wind. They crawled into their sleeping-bags, but got no sleep that night, during the whole of which little cascades of snow were falling on them from the lip of the crevasse above.

As it grew light in the morning Hodgkin looked out of the crevasse. The storm had cleared momentarily, and four hundred feet below he saw the tents at Camp 6. As the men descended they shouted. I heard the shouts from Camp 6 and sent the porters out to help them in, while I melted snow to give them water. Harrison and Hodgkin were very exhausted and extremely thirsty. The porters put them into one of their tents, and tended their badly frost-bitten hands and feet. It was not until almost mid-day that I was able to obtain a proper idea of the two men's condition; when I did I decided that an immediate retreat must be made to Camp 5 for medical aid. Harrison and Hodgkin, in spite
of their exhaustion and their injuries, responded magnificently, and an hour later we started downwards, having had to abandon one of the tents, which had become so torn while I tried to dig it out of the burying snow that it was useless. I led down. It was impossible to see through the storm. I was slightly shaken by falling and sliding fifty feet down an ice-slope I could not see. Visibility improved, and the porters went into the lead when we caught a momentary glimpse of Camp 5. Sheeted from head to foot in ice, we all eventually arrived at Camp 5, where Graham Brown and Roberts attended to the sick men and made us all hot drinks.

It was plain that the retreat must continue with the whole strength of the party. Next morning was only slightly finer. We abandoned everything that was not essential for the descent, and ploughed slowly downwards. Even the injured men had to take spells at breaking the trace through thigh- or waist-deep snow. Visibility and general conditions were still such that it was advisable to have a climber in the rear of the party to see that nobody straggled. As we approached Camp 4 the weather suddenly cleared.

I think that the memory of our descent to Base Camp is blurred for most of us. The weather was, mercifully, perfect. Roberts did a fine day's work when, with Passang Sherpa, he made a trace for practically the whole descent to
Camp 1A and, in addition, continued on down to Base Camp to send for the Teasdales. He arrived there at about nine-thirty at night. The rest of us went slowly down behind him. Harrison’s and Hodgkin’s hands were useless, and their feet had no sensation save pain. Graham Brown’s feet were frost-bitten, as were Passang Phutar’s hands. The four-foot high tent, which we had left standing at Camp 3, was buried in new snow and only a foot of one end of it showed. Harrison and two Sherpas had a narrow escape when they fell between Camps 3 and 2. It took a considerable effort of will not to decide to spend the night at Camp 2, which we reached late in the afternoon. From Camp 1A, where we spent the night, we reached Base Camp in the day. Passang Sherpa and a Gurkha had cut good steps for us down Scaly Alley, and had made a new route round the crevasse at its bottom, where the ladder now hung free in the crevasse’s depths.

Harrison and Hodgkin climbed the whole way down the mountain; to carry them was out of the question.

I would rather leave the remainder of the story of the Masherbrum Expedition to the imagination of the reader, with just a few facts to go on; and a few tributes where they are deserved. The descent of the mountain from over 24,000 feet to 13,800 feet, with very seriously frost-bitten hands and feet, was a great ordeal
for the men who suffered. Worse followed. They were carried on stretchers made from skis and Alpine rope down from Base Camp to Hushe; on the way down Dr Teasdale, who had come up on foot night and day since receiving Roberts' summons, met us; and at Hushe, Dr Elizabeth Teasdale, my mother, had hastily got a light camp ready. We waited some days at Hushe, while the injured men's wounds were dressed and their sepsis checked. They were days when the Teasdales worked continuously for seven hours a day, and in which they succeeded in checking the sepsis of Hodgkin's hands and feet, and of Passang Phutar's hands, without their suffering any losses; but during which Harrison lost parts of all his fingers save one thumb,—without morphia (lost on the mountain), and with rubber tobacco-pouches and the like pressed into service for dressings. His general condition was highly toxic. The day we left Hushe on the homeward march he lost all the toes of one foot, and those of the other followed a day or two later.

There were lovely wild rose bushes, heavily clustered with pink flowers, growing beside our Hushe Camp; while for the rest of the days we were there, Masherbrum looked down upon us, free of cloud, its snow slopes sun-kissed and brilliant.

The whole way home Hodgkin rode a pony, without the use of hands or feet, and with two
men to hold him in the saddle. Harrison was carried on a stretcher. Down the length of the Hushe Valley, just the days when he was losing his toes, he had constantly to be lifted from his stretcher and carried on a coolie's back over swaying bridges, or steep crumbling hillsides above the river. My mother and Hodgkin rode their ponies over these places—places where my mother had hesitated to walk on the outward journey. Roberts went ahead from Hushe as his leave was finished, and we missed his unfailing cheerfulness and quiet efficiency. Graham Brown's feet were frost-bitten, and he rode a pony. Passang Phutar also rode. Dr Teasdale and I rode when we could collect sufficient mounts.

Harrison's dressings necessitated a great deal of material. Mr Read of Khapulu won the party's undying gratitude by giving us almost his entire stock of medical stores, and Mr Mazzoni of Kargil sent further stores to meet us in the Indus Valley. Even so the Teasdales had anxious times wondering whether the medical stock would hold out; and many yards of cotton material to make bandages were purchased in the villages along the way.

The journey homewards in July was very hot. In the Shyok Valley my dog's feet were blistered by the burning sand, so that he had to be carried in a basket, and I had to dress his feet at night.

We had two rest days during the whole two-
Plate 61.—Harrison was carried on a stretcher.
hundred-and-fifty-mile journey to Srinagar, which were forced upon us by the general tiredness of the injured and uninjured members: one was at Doghani, after the two-day journey down the mountain tracks of the Hushe Valley; the other at Tolti in the Indus Valley.

On 16th July we reached Srinagar, being met by Major Lander, with cars and beer, about five miles above Woyil Bridge in the Sind Valley.

Before closing the account of the Masherbrum Expedition I must pay a sincere tribute to the conduct of its members during the return journey: to the Doctors Teasdale, whose devoted care saved the lives of the two injured British climbers, and who on occasions had to carry out dressings by candle-light up till after eleven o’clock at night, after marching fifteen miles that day; who took charge of the party and its members, injured and uninjured, when even the latter were unfit to continue in command of it themselves; and who were unfailingly optimistic and eager to shoulder troubles: to the injured men, who went through a terrible ordeal for almost a month before reaching civilisation; who were always cheerful and eager to help; who never once complained, and who seemed to consider only the comfort and worries of those who were looking after them, and never their own: to the porters, Dawa Tandup, Passang Sherpa, Nima Tsering, Dawa Tsering, and Hussein and Raheem, without whose magnificent work on the mountain the
retreat from it could never have been accomplished, and whose skill and keenness in every sort of job from nursing to chopping wood on the return journey was an example: to Noor Mohammed and Karima, our Kashmiri cooks: to our Kashmiri camp servants and to the Balti coolies and people, for their unfailing efforts in making the party comfortable and in assisting us in every possible way,—to all of these a tribute is due.
Plate 62.—My mother and Hodgkin rode their ponies over these places.
I have no wish to close this book on the gloomy note of injury. Nor should it so close; for that would give an untrue impression of the spirit of the men who climbed on Masherbrum. Hodgkin has written that, in spite of his losses, he is glad that he went to Masherbrum. I myself would have no cause to be sickened with mountaineering; and I am not. My passion for the higher places of the earth is intensified, and I think that I am beginning to understand something of the reason.

Mountaineering can be divided into different compartments, each of which is a part of the sport of mountaineering, and all of which overlap. These compartments may best be described as, first, rock-climbing of the type found in the British Isles, where the joy of climbing is concentrated into the joy of instant danger; where skill and balance, and acrobatic activity are the end-all and be-all. This compartment of mountaineering most nearly approaches the other
great sports like hunting, pig-sticking, race-riding, and polo, where the moments of tense excitement make the chief attraction, but where the strain and the excitement are at most of a few hours' duration; more often of a few minutes. The second compartment may be termed Alpine climbing, where the scale of the undertaking has increased, but normally the technical difficulty has decreased. This relies for its interest on a wider series of factors; the knowledge of snow and ice conditions, weather, and a longer drawn-out ordeal, in which the high-lights of excitement are likely to be less strong. Into this type of climbing also enters the pleasure of contemplation, and the contrast between moments of exertion, and of placid enjoyment, when the climber sits on some high throne and the kingdom of the world is spread before him; and, as is taught in the Bible, the reaction to it is not to make the man wish to own the world, but to make him realise how great a place it is, and what a small thing is any individual.

The third compartment of climbing might be called the Himalayan, where it is the struggle which supplies the joy, where the technical and acrobatic achievements are probably small, and the time given to the contemplation of the wonders of nature almost negligible; but where a man is on trial, together with his companions, and where he knows that if he fails, not only his own life, but, even more important, that of
his friends may be forfeit. The climber gets few moments of tense excitement; high up he is probably incapable of strong feelings of any sort; his whole being is dulled, but for a period of maybe a month he is fighting a slow siege against a stronghold of nature, where he must make no mistake, and where any showy performances of gallantry, which would probably succeed lower down, and might even receive acclamation from the world, must be firmly suppressed.

I started my climbing in the middle. I have never yet climbed English rock, but it is an omission I intend to repair in the very near future. I do not think that this omission has caused me to lose any of the pleasure to be found in the other sorts of climbing, but I do suffer the disadvantage of never having had experience of really difficult rock work, and so not knowing what standard is possible. It seems to me that a man's climbing education is best started on the home rocks, from which he may, if he wishes, graduate to the other forms of climbing; but I do not think that this is essential, and, because a man has not climbed in England or even in Switzerland, I would not say to him that he cannot climb in the Himalayas. He can, and he will enjoy it; but his progress will be slower than if he had started on the other climbing stages, because he will not appreciate what is easy in climbing: he will find himself confronted
by all the problems of mountaineering without having had a proper technical grounding; he will be making difficulties for himself.

But if a man finds himself in India or close to any of the great ranges of the world, and he has the desire to explore them or climb them, he should not be deterred by the fact that he has never climbed in Europe. A man may get a good grounding in the Alpine type of climbing in any of the outlying ranges of the Himalayas. The climbing is generally more easy than that in the Alps, height for height; but if a novice is starting alone, or in the company of inexperienced companions, this is all to the good. He will gain confidence more quickly. I see no reason why a party of complete novices should not undertake Alpine type climbs in the Himalayas, but I would suggest that they will progress much more rapidly if they work under the tutelage of at least a moderate amateur; because they will learn more quickly what is possible and easy, and will gain confidence sooner. Even if novices feel that actual climbing is beyond them without an experienced leader, I am convinced that a party of three, armed with a hundred feet of rope, and an ice-axe apiece, may well take on extensive Himalayan glacier exploration. By doing so they will soon gain experience of snow and ice; and they will be taken into regions of marvellous scenery and splendid people, and, in many parts, to places which have never before
Plate 63.—An old man weaving in the open air.

(Seen anywhere in Baltistan.)
been trodden by man: not even excluding the ‘Abominable Snow Man’!

There has been too long an impression that the man who climbs in the Himalayas is a special sort of superman. There is another idea that only a vast army of men, supported by an army of porters and coolies, and with great resources of money behind them, can hope to succeed in the Himalayas. It is an idea which has been encouraged by the inevitable advertisement of the greater expeditions; inevitable because somebody has to pay the bill which runs into thousands of pounds, and like everything else done on this scale, it is in the end the Public who pays. To persuade the Public to pay, a Press campaign is launched, and books are written; and to seize the public imagination the size of the army attacking the mountain tends to increase, so that a vicious circle results. And what have been the successes of these great financed expeditions, which are a phenomenon which have only grown up since the last war? Five expeditions to Everest have succeeded on two occasions in reaching 28,000 feet; a very fine performance, but no higher than was achieved by the 1924 Expedition; and there have been three full-sized expeditions since: Nanga Parbat has not yet been conquered, and the loss of life has been appalling; the French Karakoram Expedition in 1936 achieved little, as did the International Expedition to the Karakoram. Against these
compare the achievements of privately financed, small parties, gatherings of friends who climbed without an eye to the Public: Smythe’s party climbed Kamet, 25,447 feet high, in 1931; the Anglo-American Expedition climbed Nanda Devi, 25,645 feet, in 1937; Shipton and Tilman carried out the splendid exploration of Nanda Devi the previous year; C. R. Cooke climbed Kabru, 24,000 feet; Spencer Chapman climbed Chomalhari in 1937; while of the unsuccessful yet very fine climbs by this type of party, Bauer’s two attacks on Kangchenjunga stand alone at the top of the scale; and the American Expedition to K2 achieved a height of 26,000 feet in 1938.

I argue for the small expedition; but I want to see the application go further. Let the young men, soldiers, airmen, and civilians, who spend much of their lives in India, get up their own parties to challenge the financed expeditions from abroad. They have all the advantages save that of climbing experience; they know the country and its ways; they learn how to treat Indians; they speak the language; the Himalayas are at their doorstep, so that they can gain their experience on the spot, and at less expense than from overseas. They are brought up in the tradition of team-work, and they have discipline.

Experience of India never teaches one to understand India, but it gives some insight into the way that various types should be treated.
Plate 64.—"Baksheesh, sahib!"
(A study anywhere in Baltistan.)
The Kashmiri merchant is not a man to be taken at his word, especially in the prices he asks; but, at the other end of the scale, a Sherpa is a man who appreciates being treated like a soldier; a man one can trust with one's life; a man who will follow his leader anywhere, but who cannot be driven; a man who appreciates a just discipline, and has respect for a brave man; and, above all, he is a man who has brains of his own, who goes climbing chiefly because he likes it, and who will never presume upon the friendship of a European, but will respect him for giving him that friendship. To give a man one's friendship one must give him one's confidence; and forget that one man is paying and the other paid.

After seven years I am leaving India for a time. I have been learning the rudiments of the art of mountaineering, and although I have always hoped that every expedition would reach the summit, my main personal wish has been to gain experience. I have believed that that was best attained by attempting new climbs each year, and not by returning repeatedly to one great peak until it was conquered. It has not been a policy to give me a name as a mountaineer, but I still believe that it has been a good policy. I feel now that I have gained enough experience to be able to attempt something more ambitious; and this time I hope to go for success, and if I fail the first time or the second to return again
to the same peak. This new policy involves a change in my own outlook: I am not sure that it is for the good, as over-emphasis on the importance of actually reaching the summit of a great Himalayan mountain may be harmful. It emphasises the pleasure that one gets by doing something better than anyone else, the ‘record-bagging’ outlook, whereas the real joy of climbing should surely lie in the mutual experiences of a climb, things which are not spoken of afterwards, but which live in the memory; and not in being able to say to an admiring world: “I am I; I climbed a mountain higher than anyone else in the world. Look at me!”