

Himalayan Quest

Paul Bauer

Himalayan Quest

*The German Expeditions to
Siniolchum and Nanga Parbat*

Edited by
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DEDICATION

To the German climbers who lost their lives on Nanga Parbat in 1937 :

Karl Wien	Hans Hartmann
Pert Fankhauser	Günther Hepp
Adolf Göttner	Peter Müllritter
Martin Pfeffer	

and the faithful porters who died with them

Foreword by Sir Francis Younghusband, K.C.B.

THE chief interest in this book lies not in the detailed description of the climbs but in the spirit in which they were made. The main motive of the German climbers was not to establish a record but to prove that Germans were men. They were not even moved by love of mountaineering. They did love mountains. But they loved their country more. And it was to show the world that Germany still produced men that they set forth to pit themselves against some of the monarchs of the Himalayas.

They did not succeed in climbing the greatest peaks—neither Kangchenjunga nor Nanga Parbat. But they did succeed in achieving their main object. They did show us that Germany still possessed men. We had never doubted it. But Germans evidently thought we did and wished to prove how wrong we were. And they have proved this and much more. They have shown that Germany possesses not only very manly but very lovable men. For one cannot read this epic story of their struggle with these tremendous mountains without being filled with admiration of their good comradeship and devotion to their leader.

Still, love of the mountains had much to do with their going to the Himalayas. They were mountain people. In those sad post-war years when their country was suffering such fearful depression they had gone to their own mountains. And there they had discovered what many besides these Bavarians had found, that mountains had power to restore that which towns had threatened to steal—faith in the ultimate triumph of the forces working for good in the world. They were strong men

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and brave men and good men. They were convinced that manly virtues must tell in the long run. And through their beloved mountains they would in their own persons give proof that this is so.

Many great expeditions have gone out to the Himalayas but none—not even the Everest expedition—has set forth with a nobler spirit than these Germans displayed. They had learnt that the scale of things in the Himalayas far exceeds the Alpine scale. Himalayan peaks are just twice as high as the summits of the Alps. The ascent of a Himalayan peak of the first magnitude takes not a day but a month, and expeditions require not two or three porters but a hundred. This immensely greater difference in the scale of things had by now become apparent, and the German expeditions were organised on a scale commensurate with the scale of the Himalayas—as well as with characteristic method, thoroughness and attention to detail.

The Germans also undertook the enterprise with great seriousness. They took joy in the struggle, but seriousness was the more obvious feature. And therein they differ from the English, who keep their serious side hidden. Take Howard Somervell as an example. He was resolute enough at heart, but outwardly he was gay : he had the gay courage of the Englishman. He meant to get the better of the mountain, but he was perpetually light-hearted. This is the authentic English type, though some English climbers are apt to put on a pose of regarding the mere reaching the top as pure sensationalism beneath the notice of a true mountain climber. Even Mallory, though when he was actually on Everest he went at it like a tiger, adopted the air of indifference and wrote of “ rejoicing in the yet undimmed splendour, the undiminished glory, the unconquered supremacy of Everest.” And his words are approvingly quoted by others. The Germans would never use such words. They are much more downright. They would see to it that man *is* supreme over the mountain.

It was in this straightforward and determined spirit that Paul Bauer, inspired by the success of his efforts on Kangchenjunga, promoted the organisation of the second expedition to Nanga Parbat, 26,600 feet in altitude, which had already been the scene of one disaster to a German

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expedition, and was to be the scene of another—the greatest in the whole history of mountaineering—which this book describes. And what we cannot fail to admire is the undaunted spirit which the Germans showed in face of these catastrophes. In the first assault they lost, through a terrible snowstorm, Merkl (the leader) and two companions, besides Sherpa porters. In the second the whole expedition except one climber and some porters at the base were buried by an avalanche. Seven Germans and nine porters lost their lives. And yet again in this present year they renewed their assault on the mountain.

This undaunted spirit is what most strikes us. Hardly less striking is the strong sense of comradeship among the climbers. And one likes to read that this camaraderie extended to British officers associated with the expedition and also to the Himalayan porters. “Smart had become an integral part of the German team and stood by it with loyalty and comradeship.” And in the first expedition a Sherpa porter had remained with Merkl to the death though it was within his capacity to save himself.

Of the intensity of this sense of comradeship the action taken by Bauer on hearing of the last disaster is the best illustration. He had inspired but not led this second Nanga Parbat expedition, and he was in Germany when news of the disaster arrived. He at once determined to fly out to India, if possible to rescue the climbers, or at any rate to recover their bodies. Telegraph and telephone were set in motion. The Government of India sent an aeroplane to the first Indian airport to meet him, and he and his companions were actually flown up the terrific gorge of the Indus valley over territory occupied by independent hostile tribes to Gilgit, the frontier post. And so narrow was the valley that it seemed, Bauer said, as if he could stretch out his hand and touch the mountains on either side; while 23,000 feet above the river rose Nanga Parbat itself.

It is forty-nine years since I first saw Nanga Parbat from the valley of the Indus. In those days no one had dreamed of climbing a Himalayan giant and aeroplanes had not been invented. There was no telegraph line to the frontier and the road there had not been built. No wonder

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that in looking backward I come to look ahead. When these things have been, what may they not be ! How infinitely more intimate with the glories of the Himalayas may we be fifty years hence !

Only eighteen days after news of the disaster had reached Germany Bauer and his two companions were at the Base Camp preparing to ascend the mountains. Some days later he was 20,000 feet up on the mountain at the actual scene of the disaster. There seemed little chance of finding anything, for the avalanche was of gigantic blocks of ice the size of a house and covered an area of about fifteen acres. It lay on top of the camp in a firm, solidly frozen mass ten to thirteen feet in thickness, and it was only after endeavours which made terrific demands on heart and lungs that at last the remains were found about eleven feet below the surface. The bodies of five out of seven German climbers were recovered and all their diaries and equipment. And less than four weeks after leaving Germany Bauer and his companions returned to the Base Camp with their difficult task accomplished.

Most determined attempts have thus been made by Germans and English on Nanga Parbat, Kangchenjunga and Everest. Not one has succeeded in reaching the summit, but many of the finest lives have been lost. And this looks like failure. So, indeed, it would be unless we deliberately set ourselves to make good come out of it. Unsuccessful though these attempts have been, they have taught the world greater respect for these mountain giants. They have increased our knowledge of the technique of mountaineering. They have fired others—other Europeans and Americans as well as Germans—to pit their skill, their courage and their endurance against the cold, the storms, the ice and snow of the mountains. Lastly, they have consolidated a comradeship of the mountains between Germans and British and between Europeans and Himalayans.

May they also have achieved one further result ! Though not often in this book is specific reference made to it, yet in short sentences here and there we can quite well see how deeply impressed the Germans were by the grandeur of these Himalayan giants. May we hope that the efforts and sacrifices of these heroic climbers will have drawn the attention

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of other mountain-lovers who, though they may not have the physique or the technical training of these super-mountaineers, may yet be fit and anxious to climb to lesser heights from which views of the greater heights may be obtained. Paul Bauer speaks of the Himalayas being "the greatest and most overwhelming of the countless wonders of the earth." The immensity of the mountain giants and the evidence they gave of tremendous forces at work within them conveyed to his mind more forcibly than anything else the grandeur of creation. And his experience in measuring himself against them only deepened his reverence for Nature and the works of God, he said. Not all can become super-climbers, but many a humble pedestrian, inspired by the example of these Germans and British mountaineers, may make his way to view-points in the Himalayas from which the supreme peaks may be viewed to the best advantage, because at a proper focal distance. And these more modest mountaineers should be able to arrive at their lesser altitudes with their bodily health unimpaired. They would therefore be the better able to take in and enjoy to its full the mountain grandeur round them. While climbers on the great peaks are so exhausted through having to climb in the thin air, to forge their way through deep snow and to battle against piercing wind, the amateurs would be able to reach their lesser destinations still in perfect physical condition and with all their faculties on keenest edge.

The Himalayas afford a magnificent field for the artist. And long have I dreamed of the time when there will be a regular invasion of the Himalayas by artist after artist, first to explore the whole length and breadth of the Himalayas for the finest view-points and then deliberately and methodically, with pen or with brush, to convey in words or in picture to the world at large the mighty impressions they have received. As the German climbers fitted and prepared themselves for the great endeavour and looked upon it almost as a sacred mission in life, so may artists be likewise fired to regard the conveyance of the glories of the Himalayas as a still more sacred mission.

Then, as the climbers have made straight the way for artists, so, in their turn, may artists prepare the way for pilgrims. Indians for thousands of

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years have endured incredible hardships on pilgrimages to the Himalayas and have found deep inspiration from the mountains. But I doubt if even they have drawn from the Himalayas all that it has to give. And as the climbers will have helped the artists to see more of the beauty of the Himalayas, so may climbers and artists combined help the pilgrims to see more of its power to inspire.

The Alps had convinced Paul Bauer that "the forces of good must ultimately assert themselves." And the whole record of these German Himalaya expeditions shows that this faith had been confirmed by their contest and contact with the Himalayas. It had brought out all their uprightness and manliness, all their strength of character. And even the death of their heroic comrades, though it had caused them grief, had also brought "pride and joy and confidence." More than this, through their heroism "new life, new strength had come to the German people."

Perhaps pilgrims wrestling with the Himalayas on the spiritual plane, as these heroic climbers had contended with the mountains on the physical plane, may find an even firmer confidence and an even finer joy. Climbers have found joy in battling with the mountain giants, and the sterner the battle the greater has been their joy. Similarly, artists may find a yet intenser joy in straining to catch a glimpse of the last acme of a mountain's beauty. And pilgrims may experience the intensest joy of all in straining to excel even the mountain itself in sublimity of aspiration and perfection of attainment.

As I was born in the Himalayas and my mother was no mean artist and deeply religious, may I be excused for expressing one further hope? May climbers, artists and pilgrims combine to make the Himalayas for the whole world what Mecca is for Muslims. May men exert themselves, at least once in their lives, to make a pilgrimage to the holy Himalayas, so that there in meditation before the radiant summits they may find themselves transported to a purer, loftier and altogether lovelier realm and be refined in soul for the rest of their days.

FRANCIS YOUNGHUSBAND.

Foreword by the Translator

SOMEWHERE in the following pages Dr. Bauer confesses that whenever he has been in contact with Englishmen he has felt strongly that the English and the Germans are "blood relations." Nevertheless, at least as far as mountaineering is concerned, the German's mental attitude is fundamentally different from that of the Englishman and may, to some, be difficult of comprehension. It has therefore been suggested that some attempt to explain this difference may form a useful bridge between the German and English editions of Dr. Bauer's book, and this I have essayed in the following notes.

J. L. Longland, a distinguished member of the 1933 English Mount Everest expedition, has said : " It seems a pity that mountaineering has ever been acclaimed as more, or deeper than, perhaps the most satisfying of all forms of sport," a statement that was warmly received by many eminent English mountaineers, some of whom dismiss any loftier conception as sheer hypocrisy. German climbers too have subscribed to this idea, but with a certain reserve. Dr. W. Rickmer-Rickmers, a veteran among German climbers and famous for his Asiatic explorations, has said *à propos* of mountaineering : " I am a German and therefore a philosopher. May I be forgiven." One might add on behalf of one's countrymen : " I am an Englishman and therefore a sportsman. I need no forgiveness," and thus may the fundamental difference between the Englishman's and the German's approach to the formidable giants of the Himalayas be summed up, a difference which cannot fail to strike the reader of Dr. Bauer's book.

Herr von Tschammer, Germany's " Führer " in matters relating to sport, contributed the following prefatory note to the German edition of the present book :

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“ The German climbers who attempted Nanga Parbat faced a task which demanded of them every ounce of will-power, courage and self-sacrifice. The powers of Nature brought their bold undertaking to naught, but confronted by these superior forces they did not give in—they died fighting. Our grief at the loss of such comrades is brilliantly outshone by our pride of their heroism. Such blows of Fate may be a setback to the German sportsman, but his spirit will not be broken by them for ever.”

To which Dr. Bauer added the following :

“ Tragedy overshadows Man’s attempts on Nanga Parbat, Mount Everest and Kangchenjunga. Many have gone forth . . . many have not returned . . . none has reached the goal. Will that goal ever be reached by man ? Or must he admit that the earth’s highest is to be denied him ? If we ourselves cannot answer this question there are those who could : those who have lived before us, who for countless ages have left their homes to attempt and overcome the seemingly impossible. Their spirit, prevailing in the men of our race, will always give the same answer.

“ That this spirit was abundantly alive in the men who approached Nanga Parbat in 1937 is clear from their diaries, which they filled with their thoughts during the assault on the mountain to the last day of their lives. They form the basis of this book, so that those who are no longer with us may yet speak to us once more.”

These sentiments find little or no place in the Englishman’s conception of pure sport and it is clear from the diary extracts quoted in the ensuing pages that these German mountaineers felt that their exploits held a deeper meaning. As Dr. Bauer says in his introduction, the motive underlying the German Himalaya expeditions is to be sought in the events of 1914–1918 and Germany’s reawakened sense of nationalism which was their result ; the members of the fateful Nanga Parbat expedition did not regard themselves as mere sportsmen, but men with a noble mission in life, offering a contribution to Germany’s reassertion as a nation to be reckoned with, proving to the world that Germans also are

By the Translator

capable of great feats of endurance. It is essential to grasp this fact in order to understand much in the present book which seems alien to the English mind.

National peculiarities aside, however, it is still not unnatural, it seems in fact inevitable, that Dr. Bauer's mood should not be the light-hearted one of a sportsman summing up a crafty opponent. Any sport worth pursuing is never without some element of danger, but there is also tragedy in the Germans' experiences on Nanga Parbat. The four victims of the 1934 Nanga Parbat expedition had truly tragic ends : Drexel had fallen ill and died during the ascent and the assault was continued under the shadow of grief ; Wieland lay down and died in the snow from sheer exhaustion ; Welzenbach, worn out from his battle with the blizzard, went to sleep in his tent never to wake again, and Merkl, the leader of the expedition, said to have exceptional powers of resistance, died a slow death while within shouting distance of the camp ; his friends, struggling ineffectually in the deep snow to reach him, must have suffered the tortures of the damned. Is it surprising that some are slow in accepting the word " sport " as the expression of all that mountaineering means ?

The avalanche which overtook the 1937 Nanga Parbat expedition, the subject of the present book, has been referred to as " the greatest disaster in the history of mountaineering," and when the news reached India that Dr. Bauer and two other members of the German Himalaya Foundation were flying out to the scene of the disaster, the *Calcutta Statesman* said : " They can hardly expect to do more than look at the scene of the disaster and pay reverence in their thoughts to the gallant men who lie there," an opinion which was widely held until the three Germans with very little assistance had extricated the shattered camp. The immensity of this undertaking can hardly be overrated. At a height which normally demands slow acclimatisation and where the most trifling action requires deliberate effort, these men, coming straight from town life and working under considerable emotional stress, hacked with roughly fashioned pick-axes through eleven feet of tough Himalayan ice. To minds accustomed to Alpine proportions it is difficult to imagine the immensity of a Himalayan avalanche ; the avalanche field which Dr. Bauer and his

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companions had to search before finding the first trace of their buried friends covered some fifteen acres, and they were working not on the brittle texture of Alpine ice but had to contend with an awkward, pliable substance having the quality of solidified glue—a condition peculiar to Himalayan ice. At the time of writing Dr. Bauer is leading the fourth German Nanga Parbat expedition ; he is proving that he and his men are still undeterred, but it seems that the tragedies of 1934 and 1937 will have to be vindicated before Nanga Parbat and the German climber meet in the spirit of sportsmanship.

A few, very few, footnotes have been added to the text where certain allusions seemed to demand explanation to the general reader.

Finally, I should like to thank Mr. J. E. B. Wright for kindly supervising the translation and Dr. W. Rickmer-Rickmers for his valuable assistance.

E. G. H.

July 1938

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The photographs used in this book are from the records of the German Himalaya Foundation, Munich.



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PFEFFER

FANKHAUSER

HEPP

A SAILOR

TROLL

LUFT

WIEN

HARTMANN

GÖTTNER

Siniolchum 1936

Introduction

THERE is little in our time which does not bear the indelible mark of the War years ; even to understand the idea which led the German climbers into the Himalayas one must carry the mind back to 1914, for the turmoil into which our country had been thrown, and a striving for the sublime which battle had rendered only the more urgent, were even in this instance the motive forces.

When Germany emerged from the War I saw all that had meant my world—and that of hundreds of thousands of my comrades—lying in ruins. In November, 1919, in a station building on the Rhine guarded by coloured French soldiers, I was summarily commanded to remove the uniform which I had worn for five years, and in incredibly shabby “civies” issued by the Government, a skull-cap on my head and carrying my entire possessions in a sack on my back, I made my way home—an experience the bitterness of which is only now slowly evaporating.

We fought in the volunteer corps and were prepared to march at any time for a national revolution, but we were strangers, outcasts in our own country. Public life went its way, but in the spiritual life other influences were at work.

It was during this time of desolation that I began to go into the mountains and found that they had the power to restore that which town environment threatened to steal. They helped to convince us that the forces of good must ultimately assert themselves and triumph. They proved to us that courage, perseverance and endurance bring their eternal rewards. In those joyless days we needed some means of proving that he who was dauntless and undeterred, he who was prepared to make the

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greatest sacrifices, and he alone, could aspire to the highest attainments. Defiantly resisting the spirit of that time, we had to show again and again what these virtues could achieve in spite of the heaviest odds.

Out of this was born the German Himalaya idea, and it was in this spirit that the first German Himalaya team set out in 1929. It was entirely independent and had no other support than that offered by a few individuals and one or two climbing clubs. But the team was determined that, as successful pioneers, or, if it had to be, as a lost company, they would strike a blow for their life's ideal and with it for the true Germany.

It was typical of the spirit of this enterprise that the men, after some short trials which proved how ready they were, how well they were equipped for great feats of endurance, should at once focus their attention on the greatest of the Eastern Himalayan giants—Kangchenjunga. They did not reach the summit, but their attempt has ever since stood forth in the eyes of the world as a feat without parallel in the annals of mountaineering, and it is generally agreed that this first German Himalaya team through its heroic struggle and its magnificent achievement won such regard for German climbers that all subsequent German Himalaya expeditions have benefited from it.

Nevertheless, it was not easy for them to set out a second time to continue the work they had begun, for the necessary co-operation was lacking in Germany. It was, of course, understood that the Himalayas now offered new possibilities for climbers, but people did not grasp the underlying motive of the German expeditions, nor did they appreciate the spirit which these expeditions demanded as a *sine qua non*. It was not until two years later, in 1931, that the German team was able to tackle Kangchenjunga a second time. In spite of most unfavourable conditions and although Hermann Schaller, one of the best and most stalwart of their number, was dragged over a precipice by a falling porter, the team, reduced through illness by more than half, struggled on for months to a height of 25,700 feet. Then, however, it had to turn back owing to danger from avalanches.

The next German Himalaya expedition, too, had great difficulties to contend with and could finally be carried out only with help from America.

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This team had another objective, Nanga Parbat, which was supposed to be essentially easier than Kangchenjunga. But here again they failed to reach the summit. The last advance party had to turn back on account of the deep snow when it had reached a height of about 23,000 feet.

Two years later, in 1934, German climbers once more attacked Nanga Parbat. This expedition became a matter of national interest in the New Germany, and the climbers had the support of their country in every possible way. But Fate had decreed otherwise. Four men, the greater part of the advance group, lost their lives. Drexel, Merkl, Welzenbach and Wieland returned no more, and six porters lie with them in the ice of Nanga Parbat.

The German Himalaya climbers needed some little time to rally from the devastating shock of this disaster, but they drew more closely together and, under the ægis of the Sports-Führer, the German Himalaya Foundation came into being. We set aside our highest aim, Kangchenjunga, and applied our energies to Nanga Parbat, which had taken to itself so many victims. In 1936 we were ready to take up the task where it had slipped from the hands of our dead comrades.

The particular conditions existing in the west of the Himalayas, however, made it impossible for us to approach Nanga Parbat in 1936. The British Government permitted the Maharajah of Kashmir to admit only one expedition per year into his province, as the local transport in the poor valleys might otherwise be adversely affected. A large French expedition had already been sanctioned and we were therefore unable to get the necessary permission.

We used the intervening time the better to prepare for the next expedition to Nanga Parbat. We equipped a small party and sent it into the Eastern Himalayas, in the neighbourhood of Kangchenjunga, which since the first German expedition there in 1929 has been so dear to the hearts of German climbers. We wanted to see what quite a small team could do, so that on the basis of this experiment we could organise the large expeditions more accurately and reduce the weight to be carried to the very minimum. We also wished to form the nucleus of a team for the next expedition to Nanga Parbat and to carry out the preparations for

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this in India. Above all, we wished to sustain and strengthen our bond with the English climbers in India and with our own countrymen living there.

As mountaineers, enticing prospects lay before us, while there was also great scope for scientific research. In the fields of meteorology, geography and photogrammetry Wien had rich soil to work, and Hepp had evolved a plan of work to follow up the study of physiology at high altitudes which Hartmann had begun in 1931. I took on the leadership myself with the express intention of passing on to my young comrades Wien, Hepp and Göttner all the knowledge and experience I had gained in 1929 and 1931, so that they in future could lead the German Himalaya expeditions.

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FROM GÜNTHER HEPP'S DIARY

10th July, 1936.

GENOA! TO-DAY WE FOUR, THE CAPTAIN (Bauer), Karlo, Göttner and I, lazed upon a hill above the town. The grass was very poor and scant. We watched the sea and the cliff-girt harbour, and looked down upon the confused jumble of houses, so absolutely typical of the south. We felt lazy from eating so much and drinking chianti. We were watching a ship far out at sea, and as it came nearer we recognised the sign of the Hansa Line, the German colours and the Iron Cross on the funnel. We decided it must be the *Ehrenfels*, and hurried off to the station, where we had left our luggage. Then we hired a tottering old horse-cab, loaded it with our trunks and bags and perched ourselves on top of them. I played my accordion and we jogged along under the partly astonished, partly amused gaze of the dark little Genoese to San Giorgio quay, where the *Ehrenfels* was already lying to.

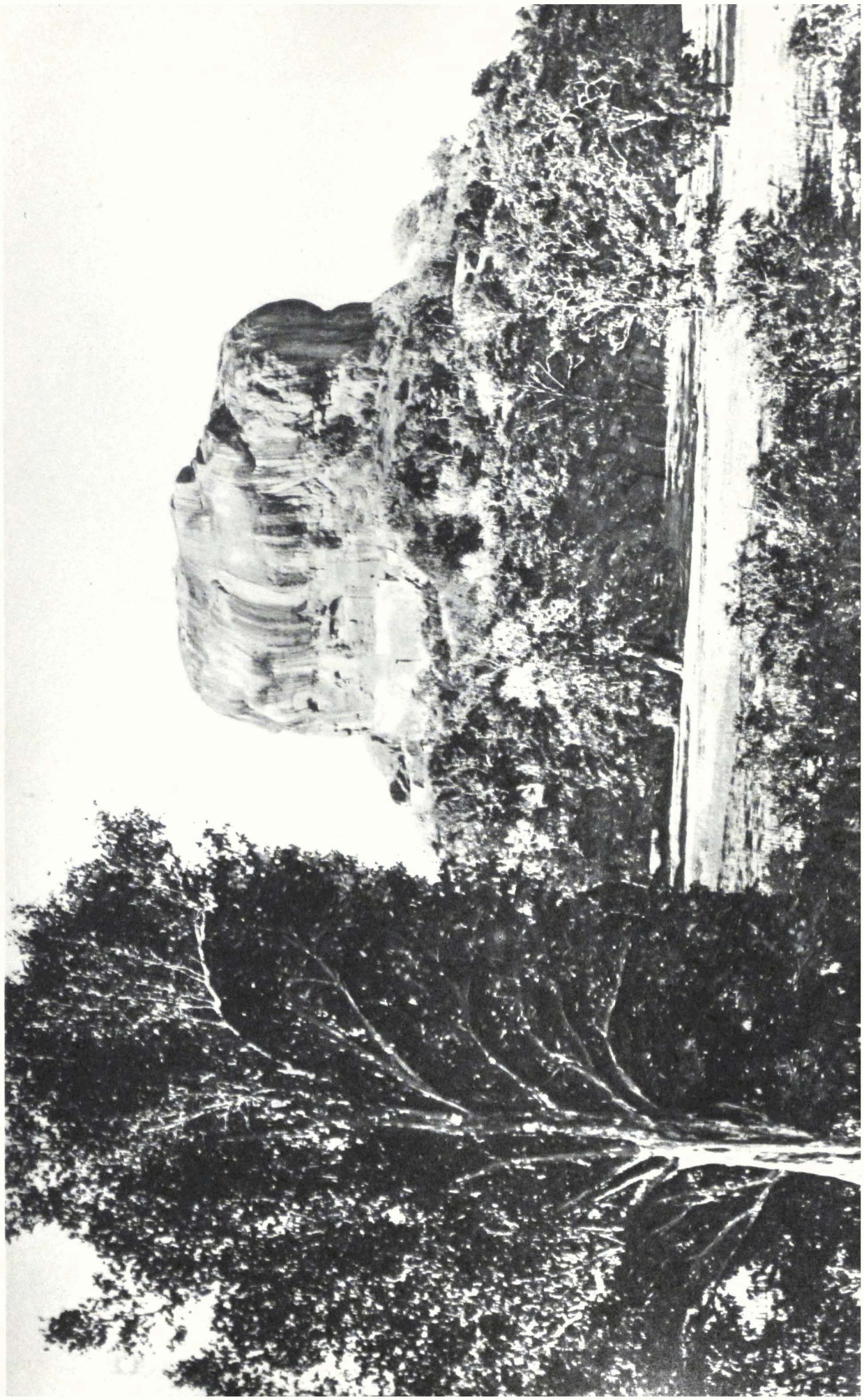
A huge bank of clouds shifted from the west towards the sea, the sun touching its edges with gold. Darkness fell and one by one the lights began to twinkle in the dusk. Memories of the last few days flooded my mind: Holland with its clean towns and its clean people, Munich in sunshine with its dear friends, and, far, far away, the clinic and all its worries. A few days ago, in the little museums of the Hague and Haarlem, I had been able to contemplate the strength and clarity of the





PLATE 6. *By the Indian Ocean at Colombo*

PLATE 7. *Sygyria*, Ceylon



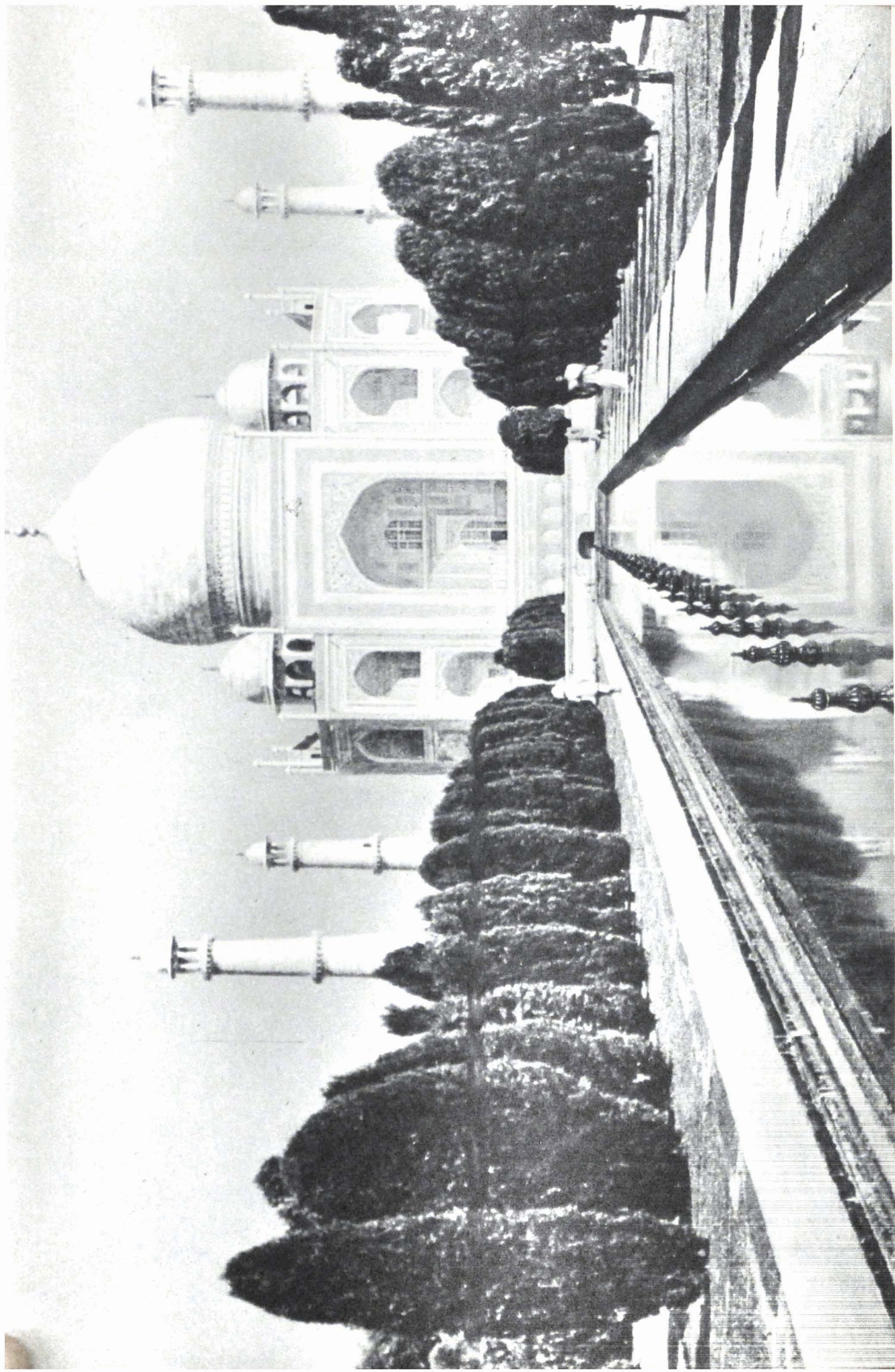


PLATE 8. *The Taj Mahal*

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art of Rembrandt and Holbein. What a contrast was to-day ; colourful activity, the narrow streets with their tall houses, the heat, the loud, gesticulating people—a scene amusing and gay rather than profoundly impressive.

11th July, 1936. This ship is 500 feet long ; it is an oil-burning vessel and the most modern cargo ship of the German merchant fleet. It does sixteen knots. Our cabins are roomy and scrupulously clean ; Karlo says he's never travelled so elegantly. The ship's captain is a short, lively, understanding person, so is the first officer, who sits with us at table. Among the twelve passengers are Germans, English and one Swiss. The weather is glorious, the sea, which I never imagined could be such a wonderful blue, is just slightly stirred.

16th July, 1936. We are in the Suez Canal. The memorial to the men who lost their lives defending it lies behind us ; all over the world are evidences of the bravery of those who fell in the Great War. A heavy, brooding heat lies over the green water and the yellow sands on either side ; now and again one sees camels, fellahs and green trees, and right in the distance, swimming in the haze, the mountains. It is impossible to tell whether they are real or a trick of the sand and the hot air.

This morning we were still lying off Port Said and the swiftly rising sun suddenly revealed the town. We saw several ships, many full of Italians returning from Abyssinia. They were seen off by a large crowd of nuns dressed in black, apparently Italians too, who waved to them from the quay. We bought topees from a native dealer and are glad to-day that we have a sensible covering for our heads in this pitilessly scorching sun.

For the last few days we have had a jolly time on board. Our favourite spot is around the fore-mast, where one can sprawl comfortably. Our Captain is in great form ; he takes exercise round about the ship and is ready to join in any sort of horse-play. We spend our time splashing about in the small improvised swimming bath, doing physical jerks, shooting with an air-gun at all possible targets, learning English and Nepali and studying books on Thibet, the Himalayas, India and Arabia.

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It was only a few days ago that we passed the islands of Corsica, Elba, Monte Cristo, Sicily and Crete, and yet it seems quite a long time to me. Our objective—the Himalayas—is ever forcing itself into my conscience and will give place to no other thoughts.

17th July, 1936. We put in at Suez yesterday evening in semi-darkness. A crowd of almost coal-black natives were soon at work loading the ship ; they used a large primitive sort of boat which had an enormous mast with the old Roman type of sail and a small rudder at the back tied up with string. Their labour was accompanied by a great deal of shouting.

19th July, 1936. To-day we leave Safaga, a small Anglo-Egyptian settlement on the African coast at the mouth of the Gulf of Suez, where we have been for two and a half days. We took some cargo aboard and had to unload some apparatus which had been brought from Germany for the mining operations here.

In the mountains, about nineteen miles inland from the coastal settlement, there is a rich phosphorus mine owned by an Englishman. Some hundred natives are employed there under the direction of a handful of Europeans, who, unaided and with remarkable application, work year in year out, only allowing themselves two or three months' holiday in England every other year.

We were up at five o'clock on the first day. The brownish-purple mountains seemed to form a protecting wall round the little town of Safaga, and we set out to visit one of them. The reddish earth of the plains was soon behind us and we were at the foot of the hills in just about an hour. Suddenly the sun came out, throwing long black shadows, but before it could reach us we were in the shade of a little valley which wound its way into the mountains.

The countryside was bare, and yet the vivid colour-contrasts gave it a peculiar charm. The stone of the mountains was red, the valley dark brown, almost black, and farther away in the distance the summits showed purple between the sloping contours of the intervening rocks. Bright-green cacti stood out here and there, the only living things in a sea of stones, and, together with the attenuated shadows of the early sun,

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gave life to the picture. We traversed a mass of crumbling stone and reached one of the peaks ; the Red Sea stretched away below us, its surface like glass ; the *Ebrenfels* lay jauntily in the harbour ; the phosphorus works spewed forth a thick yellow smoke which rolled away to the south, losing itself in the distant haze.

In the afternoon we visited the mine.

The English people had an observation car attached to the train for our benefit. It was a simple affair but very comfortable, and it enabled us to get magnificent views of the sea and the mountains. In this country rain falls only once every few years, but when it does come it is extraordinarily heavy. The last downpour, which occurred some few years ago, destroyed the whole railway, and remains of the shattered bridge and rails, bent and mud-covered, are still to be seen on every hand.

Our train carried us inland across barren country towards the mountains, and in two hours we arrived at the mine. We were received most cordially by two Englishmen, one of whom conducted us round, showed us the mining apparatus, told us how the water supply was managed and explained the different types of stones and the commercial uses to which they can be put. We crawled into the gallery and watched the natives working with pneumatic drills in the stifling heat. They were covered with a thick layer of dirt, their eyes like dark caverns, and looked more dead than alive. Still, they are supposed to be conscientious and contented workers. Afterwards, in the clubhouse, we were regaled with cool beer ; we left at three o'clock and at five were in Safaga once more.

We went into our mountains again on the following morning before sunrise and were back on board before breakfast. Then we bathed and rested for a while, and at about eleven o'clock the engines began their rhythmic throbbing and the siren sounded its three farewell blasts to Safaga. Mr. Black stood a long while on the quay and waved to us with his white topee. With the light behind him, the captain guided the ship carefully through the reefs—without a pilot here—out into the open waters of the Red Sea.

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20th July, 1936. In the Red Sea. Karlo's thermometer registers 34° C. in the cabin, but in spite of the heat we are all feeling very fit and taking early morning exercise, running, physical jerks, etc.

I have been talking a good deal with a young Swiss ; he's tired of Europe and wants to go and sit at the feet of the " Masters of the Far East," who are supposed to have their home somewhere in Southern Thibet. He has given me some of his books ; most of them are obscure stuff and seem fanatical to me. Every three pages Christ or Buddha makes a personal appearance ; both seem to have great opinions of themselves and they talk to their followers in English. The Swiss is deeply influenced by these books and desires to penetrate the " mysteries " of the East. With half-closed eyes he said to me in his harsh Swiss-German : " Ich will mai Ziel erraiche und wenn i dabi draufgeh, das ischt mir glich, ja ! " (" I will reach my goal, and I don't mind if I die in the attempt.")

22nd July, 1936. The *Ehrenfels* needed oil and had to put in at Perim. This little horseshoe-shaped island seems to be a very bare and bleak place in spite of a large European clubhouse with palms growing in its garden. Our English passengers went ashore, but we hadn't any particular desire to land, so we stayed on board and watched the natives, whose bold features and easy carriage betrayed their Arab origin. They were selling some strange fish, red and black and nearly five feet long, which—as we discovered later—tasted very good. The refuelling took about three hours ; then we were off again.

In the evening, when the sun had gone down like a ball of fire, casting golden lights upon the gently undulating surface of the water, we stood on the bridge, watching night's rapid approach. Darkness fell on the silvery-blue wavelets which followed the ship like ribbons of ever-changing fluorescent colour. Thoughts wandered over seas and mountains, dwelt for a moment on the empty excitements of the last few days, but finally came to rest in our homeland, our never-failing friend and comrade.

I recalled the gigantic conflict in which we have so recently been engaged, in which one thing alone was sacred to us—the ideal for which

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we fought with all our might, sparing neither ourselves nor our enemies, hated and shunned by a so-called respectable society which purported to be the mainstay of that Germany for which, during the past ten years, her best sons have given their blood. True, we lost much that to some people would seem to make life worth while, personal ties had to be severed, involving sacrifices which even to the strongest imparted a sense of irreparable loss ; selfish considerations had to be ignored ; we had to stake all. Our conscience is clear ; we carry the proud conviction that we acted rightly.

27th July, 1936. The sky is overcast and the rain so heavy that now and again the noise of its patter drowns even the monotonous drone of the engines. We worked in the hold this morning and, under the orders of our Captain, changed about the contents of the bags, weighed everything again, put the tents together and rearranged the porters' loads. He was perfectly right, and after our exertions everything was packed in a much more compact and practical way. As for the Captain himself, he's absolutely indefatigable and his tremendous enthusiasm carries all before it. If he comes into the cabin and finds us idling, we feel compelled to get up and get busy—without his saying a word !

Wrapped in a grey mantle of falling rain, we are now sailing past Minikoi ; preparations are afoot for our arrival in Colombo. We shall have to make several purchases there, send off our mail and wait for letters, and we may make an excursion inland into Ceylon.

28th July, 1936. Our first sight of Colombo was the flat coastline. Adam's Peak, which can be seen from the sea on clear days, was obscured by clouds. The breakers were hurling great masses of white foam over the harbour wall and, full of eager expectation, we watched the land draw nearer as the *Ehrenfels* manœuvred her way into harbour. It was not long before we were lying at anchor, and we had hardly finished breakfast when the post arrived. There was a letter from my wife which cheered me considerably.

We landed, that is to say, a motor-boat took us to the quay-side. As we are to have only two days here the Captain has given up the idea of climbing Adam's Peak, and instead we are to see Dambulla, Sigeriya,

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Kandy and Peradeniya. This evening we drove out to Mount Lavinia, a restaurant most beautifully situated on the sea-front with a lovely view over the beach.

Whilst standing on the beach near the Galle Face Hotel we saw a most exquisite sunset. An aura of colour, now green, now purple, flooded the gay confusion of houses and palms, the crests of the waves rose silver from the shimmering blue and red of the water, and where the sand had been washed by the outgoing tide and burnished by the sun there was a sheet of glistening gold. Dusk and darkness followed only too quickly when once the glowing orb had disappeared into the sea. In the glare of artificial light, among a jostling mass of mankind, the senses were slow in freeing themselves from the spell of this magnificent spectacle.

29th July, 1936. We drove away from the harbour in an American car, our chauffeur a betel-chewing native. Whenever he had to slow down to take a bend he also took the opportunity to spit out the red juice, his hand held decorously before his mouth. Colombo is like many other Oriental towns ; the business quarter is similar to any European town, while the native dwellings are mean and dirty. The natives live their lives in the streets. The bungalows of the Europeans, standing among palms and well-kept lawns on the outskirts of the town, are really beautiful.

Soon we were on the busy main road ; black natives trotted along with their rickshaws, there were tall carts laden with fruit and drawn by little long-necked oxen—cars, bustle and noise, natives moving slowly with baskets on their heads, sitting about in all possible positions, lying in the streets, sleeping, smoking, gossiping or just idling. Driving at a good speed we dashed past paddy-fields, woods of palm trees, coconut palms, tea plantations, tobacco fields, through native villages and small towns, we saw elephants working in the fields, water buffaloes being washed in small pools by naked natives—the drive was full of interest. This country is tremendously fruitful ; no wonder it has been called a Jewel in the Crown of the British Empire.

At three o'clock we reached Sigeriya and saw a five hundred feet high gneissic dome standing out from the wild, jungle-covered plains. Fifteen

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hundred years ago a Sinhalese king who had murdered his father and lived in fear of vengeance built himself an unassailable fortress here. There are still signs of his one-time greatness scattered around the rock, the throne, baths, stairs, a sacred grotto, all hewn out of the hard rock, testimony of an astounding knowledge of the stone-mason's art.

We then climbed up to the top of the rock by a most cleverly devised route ; it was really remarkable, for the rock would even to-day present a difficult problem to the best of climbers. In a cave in the middle of the overhanging rock wall are some magnificent frescoes picturing the five queens, their features small and regular. They exhibit fine craftsmanship and, in spite of their great age, have retained their luminous colours.

On the top of the rock, which has a large flat surface, are to be found some more remains of the one-time royal palace ; a little lower down are the queens' apartments with a large swimming bath, which is still in an almost perfect state of preservation. A magnificent view of the surrounding country rewards the warm and weary climber ; to the north are the primeval forests of Ceylon, and little lakes lie scattered everywhere ; to the south-east are the hills of Kandy, and as far as the eye can see there are green forests, glowing with colour, and the glorious sweeping curves of mountain ranges and isolated steeply rearing rocks.

After a short rest we drove back to Dambulla and climbed to the rock temple, a Buddhist place of worship more than two thousand years old. The temple is hewn out of the rock, and in it are many beautiful figures of Buddha portrayed in different postures, some of them coloured ; the ceiling is completely covered with exquisite painting and ornamentation. In the flickering candlelight it all seemed magic, mysterious ; sacrificial bowls lay here and there bearing the gifts of pious Buddhists. The place had a strange, uncanny atmosphere.

We did not stay there long, as we wanted to be in Kandy in the evening to see the Buddhist Perahera procession. Kandy lies at a height of about 1600 feet and is one of the beauty spots of Ceylon. We arrived there at eight o'clock and watched the procession from the Queens Hotel. Elephants with garish trappings, groups of dancers and solo

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dancers with fantastic headdresses, drummers, torch-bearers and throngs of gaily dressed people passed by in gaudy sequence. Two amazingly fat high-priests, the very embodiment of tranquillity, garbed in long white robes and wearing shiny black shoes decorated with silver, moved in pompous and lordly fashion among the colourful assembly.

The next morning was taken up by a visit to the botanical gardens in Peradeniya, in which there are supposed to be specimens of almost every plant and tree in the world ; there were wonderful orchids, palms and bamboos, trees with spreading roots and aerial roots, camphor, cinnamon, laurel and citronella trees—in fact, every tree imaginable.

On the way back to Colombo we stopped to look over a warehouse where we were able to buy tea for under 25 cents a pound. But even so it was dearer in the end, as we had to pay almost double the amount in export duty. We were on board at one o'clock and not long after that Colombo disappeared on the horizon.

1st August, 1936. When we woke up we were lying before Madras, under a wan grey sky. A motor-boat took us ashore. At the landing-place we were as usual besieged by a crowd of natives who clung to us with quite incredible tenacity. The Captain had some matters to attend to, and Karlo, Adi and I took a bus, packed full with noisome natives, to the aquarium, which lies by the seashore two miles south of the centre of the town. We just managed to reach the aquarium in time to shelter from a heavy downpour. It isn't a large place, but it has some rare fish with wonderful coloured markings, poisonous little sea-snakes and so on. The inevitable native who followed us about explaining everything was a bit of a wit ; he described a Javanese fish as a Brahmin fish because it eats no meat ; the Bad fish, a flat, ugly black thing with a quite sinister appearance, was compared to a German dirigible.

2nd August, 1936. We arranged to go to the mole this morning and catch crabs, as Adi wanted some specimens to take back with him for the Zoological Institute in Munich. With the help of a nail driven into a small bamboo cane we managed to spear one of the ugly but nimble brutes, a performance which greatly delighted the two natives who rowed us out. At eleven o'clock the car of the German Consul, Herr Harden,

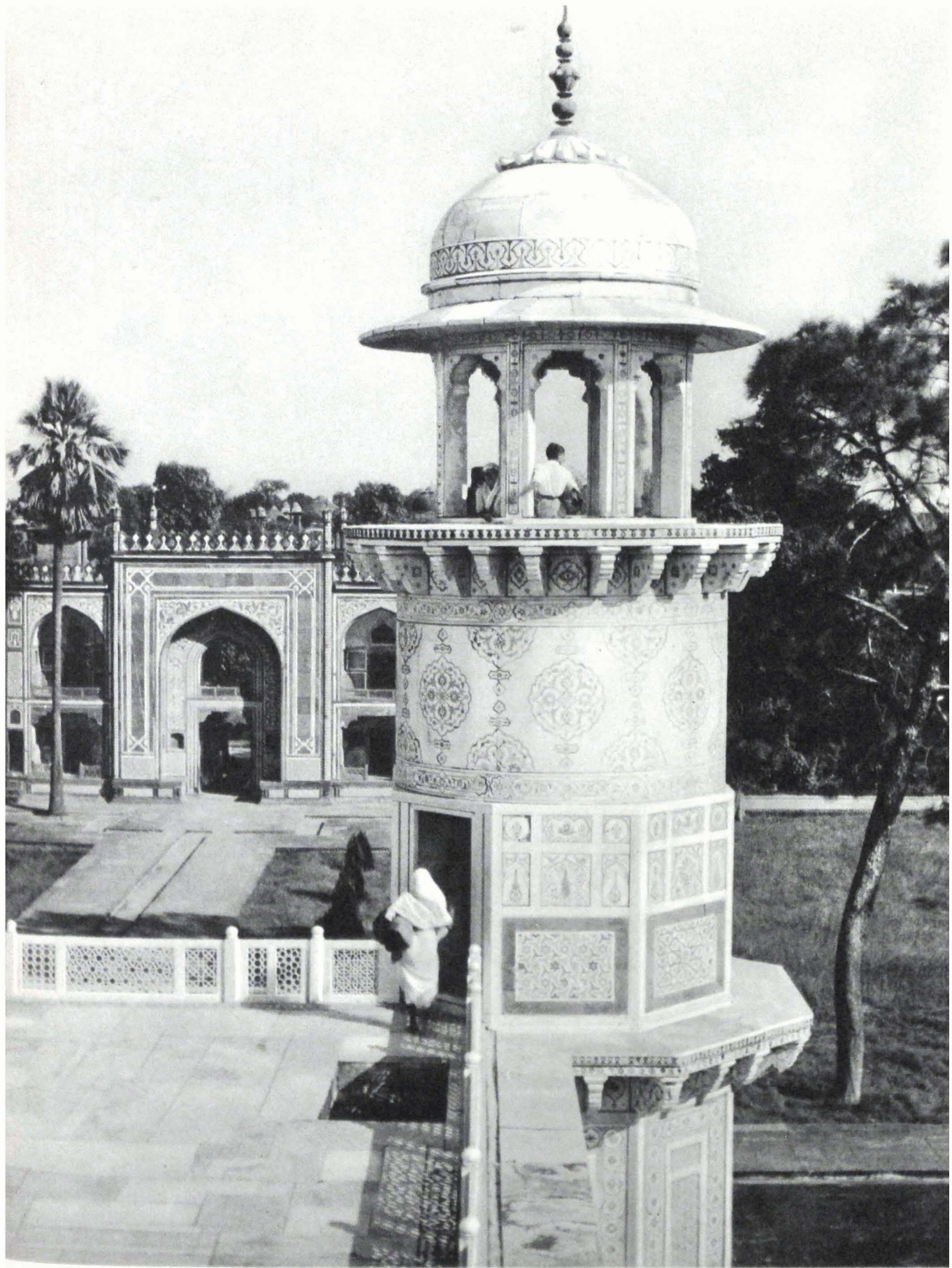


PLATE 9. One of the four corner towers of the Itimad-ud-Daula monument, .



PLATE 10. Siniolchum (22,620 feet) as seen by telescope from Darjeeling

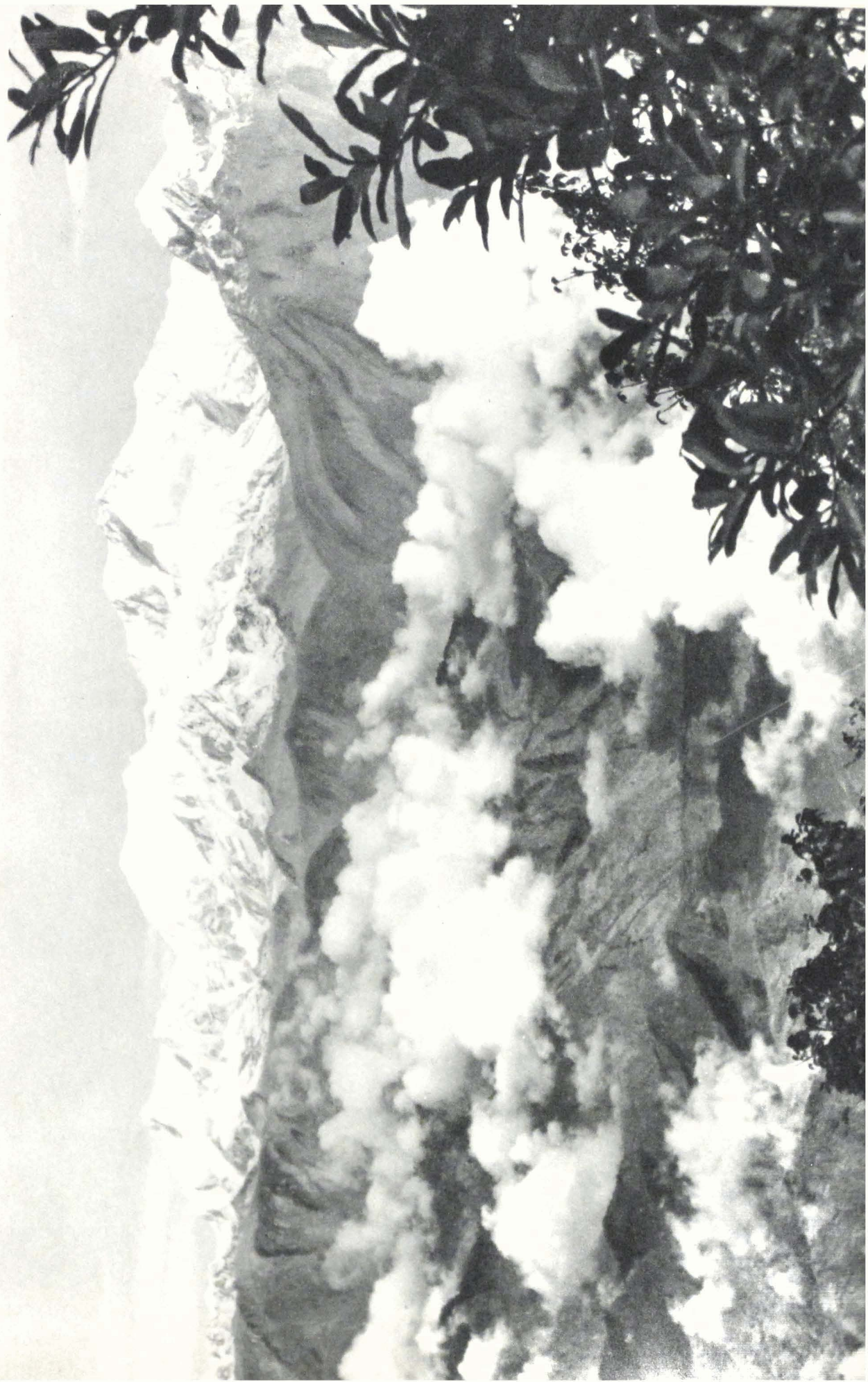
PLATE II. *Kangchenjunga* (28,146 feet) with *Jannu*, *Kabru* and *Pandim*, as seen from the Darjeeling hills

JANNU

KABRU

KANGCHENJUNGA

PANDIM



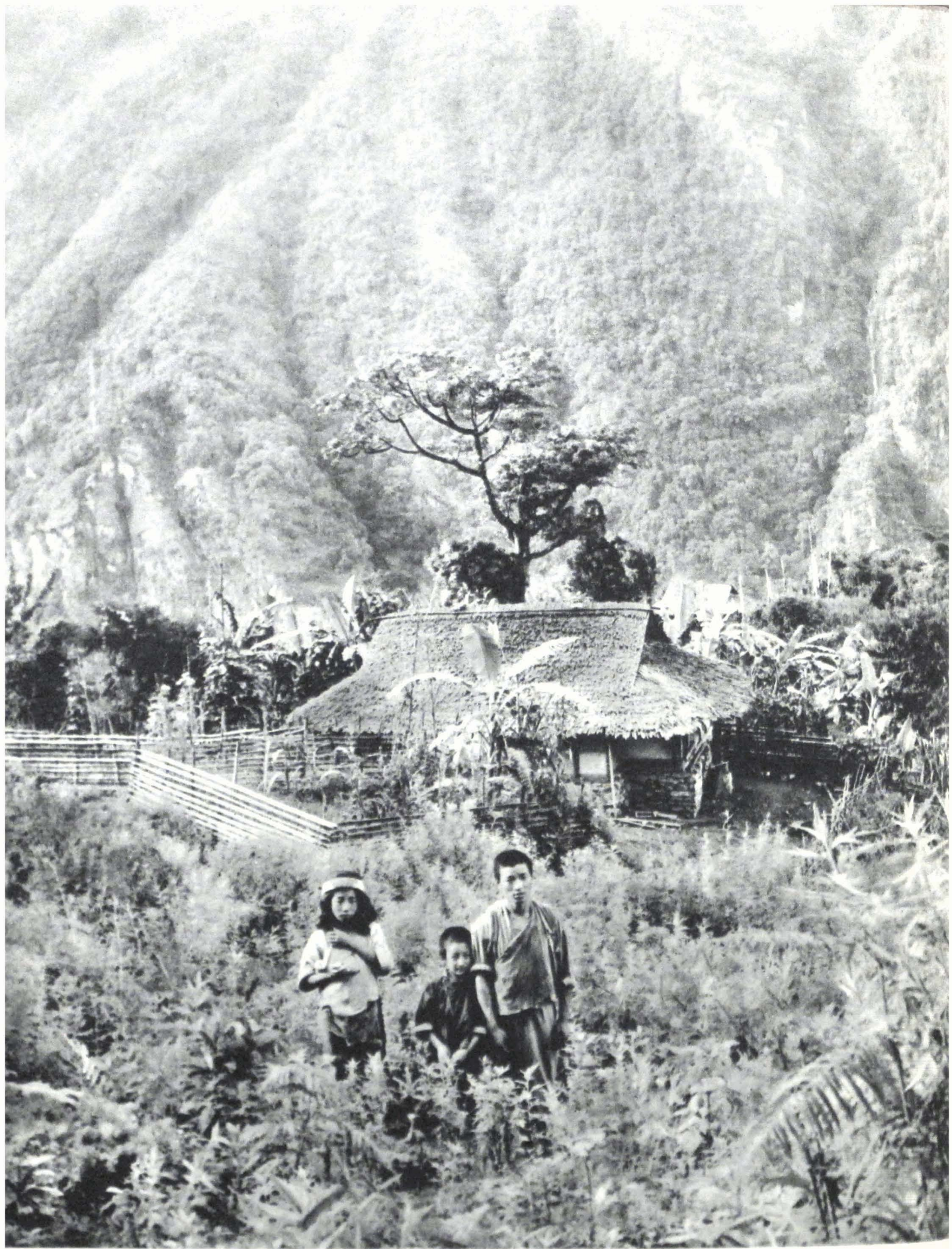


PLATE 12. *Native farmsteads in Sikkim*

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called for us and we drove away from the town to a country district where there are only a few isolated bungalows. Herr Harden has a fine place there, lavishly set out with all sorts of rare luxuries. He was eight years in Afghanistan with Amanullah. We had a pleasant time there, drinking a most refreshing mixture of ginger and German beer and talking about politics, India and England. The German colony is not large—only about sixteen people—but they keep together very well. I soon made friends with little six-year-old Erika, a friendship which in that heat was most exhausting ; what with pick-a-backs, ring-o'-roses, story books, dolls and Teddy Bears, I was soon streaming with perspiration. This genuine hospitality, which was neither dependent upon personal contacts nor built up on humbug, but sprang spontaneously from the knowledge that we were all German, gave me really deep pleasure and satisfaction.

The crew of the *Ehrenfels* asked me to play football with them against a team of English sailors, but as the English side hadn't enough men to make a team I played for them, and in spite of the excessive heat it was a really good game. An English officer from the Africa boat refereed, and the *Ehrenfels* team won, 3—1. The teams were in earnest and it was a fast game, well and fairly played. Most of these seamen are splendid fellows, a sturdy, fair-haired type ; they're decent chaps and they know how to stand by their word ; they're proud to be Germans, too, and to sail under the Swastika.

In the evening we saw the Captain off at the station. He has to go on ahead to Calcutta to make preparations for our arrival and, in fulfilment of a long-standing promise, deliver a lecture on the German Himalaya expeditions to the Himalaya Club. The station is large, modern and clean ; the restrained behaviour of the Europeans, many of whom were on the platform in evening dress, contrasted strangely with that of the natives ; some of the Indians were passing away the time until their train departure simply by lying on the ground and going to sleep.

5th August, 1936. It was very late—about five in the morning—before we left Kokanada, where we lay at anchor far out at sea. The

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natives came out in fine large sailing boats to take off cargo, a difficult business, as the sea was rather choppy. It was pouring with rain and the work had to be continually interrupted, so that it was late before we were under way again.

6th August, 1936. As we neared the Hoogli, the river—an extended arm of the Ganges—that carried us up to Budge-Budge, the water gradually turned a dirty yellow, and we could glimpse the green edges of the river-bank on either side. For a while the pilot allowed the ship to run at full speed, and at four o'clock we were at Budge-Budge. And hurrah! Our mail was waiting for us! It was not until six o'clock, however, that we finally got ashore, as the mooring of the ship and the unloading took some considerable time. We had moved up the Hoogli with the tide, which turned while we were being moored.

The flood-tide at the mouth of the Hoogli reaches a height of 52 feet and even here reaches 26 feet; at its ebb, therefore, vast quantities of water are carried down to the sea. We lay in the middle of this swiftly moving stream and the cargo had to be taken ashore in boats.

Budge-Budge is about twenty miles from Calcutta; the *Ehrenfels* has an inflammable cargo which may not be discharged in Calcutta harbour. Herr Weyel, a German, Krupp's Calcutta representative, came to meet us and, after we had arranged for the heavy baggage to go to Sealdah station, drove us through the swiftly falling darkness to Calcutta. The Captain had to leave this evening for Darjeeling to see about the porters. We had a heavenly meal in Herr Weyel's bungalow; Herr von Selzam, the German Consul, was there, and a number of other Germans, who received us warmly. Our host and hostess, Herr and Frau Weyel, are charming, cultured people. We listened to the latest Olympic Games news straight from Germany and were all highly elated about the gold medals. It was late before we got to bed, and I slept like a top.

At seven o'clock an Indian servant brought me tea and bananas and prepared a warm bath for me. The native boys do everything here and one only has to let oneself be waited on. Herr Weyel placed his car at our disposal; I collected Adi and Karlo, and we went to the bank to arrange our money matters—which took up an enormous amount of

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time—then to the Map Office and the Geological Office to attend to this and that, and at 1.30 we rejoined our hosts. Calcutta is a very populous city, the second largest in the British Empire. We saw the palace of the Governor of Bengal, at the gates of which stood mounted Bengal lancers, picturesque in their red turbans and with their beflagged lances, and we encountered dozens of beggars and coolies.

In the afternoon we drove with Frau Weyel and Frau Panzerbieter to shop in the native bazaar. The natives coaxed us to buy with all sorts of wheedling gestures, while some of them were reading, some writing; altogether it was a mad confusion. We purchased a few trifles and then went on to the Calcutta Swimming Club, a magnificent bath in the centre of the town surrounded by green lawns. Behind it stands the High Court, a large red building which, though architecturally devoid of charm, makes an interesting colour-contrast to the green of the swimming-pool. We met Mrs. Townend, the honorary secretary of the Calcutta Himalaya Club; she is an excellent person and does everything possible to assist anyone travelling to the Himalayas. She spoke very highly of the Captain's lecture, and talked to us about an English climber who was "in a perpetual state of impecuniosity." If I had been in Karlo's place, to whom she was speaking at that moment, I should have said: "So am I."

We swam, jumped from the high diving-board and generally enjoyed ourselves, so that the time passed very quickly. Finally, we had to rush back and hurriedly eat and pack. The Darjeeling express left at 8.40. Mrs. Townend arrived at the station in evening dress; Mr. Percy Brown (Karlo's host), my host and hostess, Herr and Frau Weyel, and Göttner's, Herr and Frau Panzerbieter, also came to see us off. After hearty good-byes we slowly steamed out of the station, waving as long as our friends remained in sight.

8th August, 1936. We settled ourselves comfortably in our compartment, spread out the sleeping-sacks and after we had drunk two more bottles of German beer at some unknown station we fell asleep and did not wake until the train stopped at Siliguri, so that the Captain, who was waiting for us at the station, began to wonder if we were on the train at

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all. However, we soon had our forty-eight loads piled on to the car and, in pouring rain, drove towards Gangtok.

In spite of rain and mist, and although in some places the road was flooded and in very bad condition, it was a grand drive. Far below us flowed the Teesta, its thickly wooded banks rising steeply on either side. The porters whom Bauer had engaged in Darjeeling awaited us on the Teesta bridge ; one, bare-footed and with long plaits, was clad in brightly coloured tunic and pants ; another had breeches and a broad-brimmed hat, his plait wound high up on his head, while the third wore a Thibetan cap and a wind-jacket. One of them smiled genially, and they all said : "Salaam, Sahb," their hands clapped to their brows. Adi looked at them rather uncertainly and said he thought he'd go and take some photographs, but Bara-Sahb (Bauer) and Wien Sahb went up and spoke to them and in a short time even Adi Sahb had made friends. Whenever they have anything wrong with them they come to me and say : " Doctor Sahb, All moi and no good."

In spite of various minor mishaps men and baggage arrived safely in Gangtok, and in the evening at the dak-bungalow the cook prepared his first meal—curried chicken and rice and a quite elaborate sweet made out of eggs and peaches. My orderly is a Thibetan called Mingma Bhutia, dark, with protruding cheek-bones, and he was immediately all concern for me. The chief porter wears a gay Thibetan cap and has a long pig-tail into the end of which is plaited a red tassel. He is always chewing betel and smiling expansively, showing his red-stained stumpy teeth. We still had some packing and writing to do and there was much to be discussed and arranged before we slipped into our sleeping-sacks at eleven o'clock.

9th August, 1936. Water positively gushed from the sky all day ; rain was not the word for it. We wanted to go on to Singhik, but as the pack mules arrived so late we decided to go only as far as Dickchu, which has the unfortunate reputation of being fever-ridden, as it is rather low-lying. Karlo and Adi went on ahead and the Captain and I stayed in the bungalow until we had made sure that all the transport arrangements were complete. While the Captain was calling on the Maharajah of

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Sikkim I fell asleep and dreamed of home ; it took me quite some time to find my bearings again when I woke up. I could just picture my wife going for a walk or doing some needlework for the baby we are expecting at the end of September. The knowledge of this and the feeling of being more firmly rooted in the Fatherland than ever before give me strength to dismiss foolish thoughts with a laugh. The idea is ever in the forefront of my mind that we are no globe-trotters out to see as much as we can, but that we are Germans, soldiers, with a mission in life great enough to fill the heart of any man.

At three o'clock we mounted our little Mongolian horses and in torrential rain rode up to Penlong La, accompanied by the little horse-boy. The Captain rode ahead and the horses kept up a good pace. Sikkim is extraordinarily verdant, almost eerily green ; a district of primeval forests with damp, glistening trees, rushing streams and grey clouds. From the pass the often sodden track led us over rocks and through waterfalls and dropped steeply down into the Teesta valley.

In many places we had to lead our horses and wade slowly through water which was often knee-deep, and it was on such an occasion that I saw the first leech. Bauer had mounted again, but I was still on my feet. Suddenly I saw not just one leech—water, stones and grass swarmed with them and they clung to my shoes and my breeches. In one leap I was on my horse again and at the next stream I stopped to investigate. A number of them had slithered through the eyelet holes of my shoes, had attached themselves to my ankles and had gorged themselves fat and full. I had to pull off these inch-long beasts one by one, and in each case they left behind them a wound which continued to bleed for some time.

As soon as possible we mounted our ponies again and continued at break-neck speed down over rocks and through waterfalls—a thrilling ride. In the late afternoon a green half-light pervaded the forests, the cicadas sang shrilly, and the streams plunged roaring into the depths. Nature seemed indescribably wild, the air steaming, sultry and oppressive. My pony was lazy and went slowly as long as his colleague, the Captain's mount, remained in sight, but if he disappeared round a bend he would stumble down over the rocks and fallen trees like a devil possessed and

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only subside into his slow trot when the other rider came in sight again. It was not particularly pleasant for me, especially when the track was narrow and dropped vertically to the right for 150–200 feet and the Captain happened to be round the corner. However, we finally arrived at the tottering bridge over the Teesta at Dickchu and reached the dak-bungalow, where the others awaited us with hot tea. Late at night some of the mules arrived with the supplies of porters' food, but the greater number of them had still not come ; presumably they had not all been ready to start at the same time.

10th August, 1936. There was one good aspect of the heavy rain ; it had at least kept off the mosquitoes and the other pestiferous insects which might have troubled us. We slept well ; the cook, an intelligent Nepalese, prepared a splendid breakfast, Mingma got everything ready for me, and at eight o'clock Adi and I set off along the Teesta towards Singhik. We wore our waterproof capes and breeches and moved fairly rapidly. The Teesta hurled its yellowish waters, crested with white foam, along the valley. The damp and sultry atmosphere was so oppressive that we were soon limp and sweating. Black crabs crawled over our path, which sometimes lay in a stream ; the banks rose sheer ; on every side lay the dense green tropical forest.

In Mangen, high above the Teesta valley, we drank hot tea, ate apples and rested outside a native hut. We had taken three and a half hours over these ten miles—not exactly rapid going. We soon caught sight of the Captain and Karlo approaching on their ponies, dry and in good spirits, and after a short rest we continued on our way. Adi rode Karlo's pony and took my rucksack with him and I photographed the Captain on his imposing mount ; he said I looked like Buffalo Bill. We still had two and a half miles to cover to the dak-bungalow in Singhik and eventually arrived there in another hour.

The view into the Talung valley was wonderful ; wild wisps of mist and grey clouds enveloped Kangchenjunga, the woods, reaching to a height of some 13,000 feet, were blue-green, and as evening approached the clouds parted and the summit of Kangchenjunga rose majestically above them, 23,000 feet above Singhik, a picture of indescribable beauty and power.

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Meanwhile the pack mules had arrived, and as soon as they were relieved of their heavy loads they hurled themselves on to their backs and, in some cases, rubbed themselves sore. It was here, too, that Wastl, our dog, joined us ; he suddenly appeared as if out of thin air, and became our faithful follower. We slept marvellously, but had bad weather the next day.

11th August, 1936. Singhik to Chungtang, a distance of about fourteen miles. Adi and I rode and roared with laughter at my horse's frequent attempts to throw me. He would stop, cock his ears and then throw his hind legs into the air, and for this performance he would choose such highly unsuitable places as waterfalls, the edges of murderous precipices and steep rock faces ; however, when our path began to climb, the ponies' high spirits began to evaporate and we arrived safely in the little village of Chungtang. Here the track forks, leading northward to Thibet and north-west towards Lachen, which we were to reach on the following day. The bungalow at Chungtang was very pleasant, but we were disappointed to find that no post had arrived there for us. The valley here is broad, covered with green meadowland, and the people, most of them Thibetans, grow rice and breed cattle. We drank excellent millet-beer through straws from large vessels holding nearly a quart, a drink which is prepared simply by pouring boiling water on to the fermenting millet. In the evening we worked hard on our Nanga Parbat plans, wrote letters and made lists. The Captain's energy is quite remarkable. He always seems to be making unnecessary work and there are times when we feel rather sore with him, but he invariably turns out to be right in the end.

12th August, 1936. Chungtang to Lachen—a glorious stretch of country. The Captain rode on ahead with Adi, still following the valley of the Teesta. The scenery gradually changed as we approached the heights ; the air freshened and the surrounding woods with their tall pine trees reminded us of the Black Forest. We passed over a rickety bridge which swayed in a most alarming manner and the Captain was furious with us for rocking about on it. However, when we took a good look at the shaky contraption and the raging torrent below, we were

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inclined to agree with him. Karlo and I brought up the rear and discussed all sorts of things, but always gravitating to the subjects of the expedition and the University. We were pleased to find that we shared the opinion that mere knowledge means the end of an academic life, and that without the firm resolve to bring living values into a dead subject, without the conviction that we at the University should educate as well as teach, and that it is our duty to create a spirit which draws its inspiration from a love of the fine characteristics of our race and all that is upright and manly, without these things there can be no true progress. We discussed our work and our activities in the A.A.V.M.* and, deep in conversation, were hardly aware of our arrival in Lachen. Here again we had glorious barley and millet beer and Adi read a book called *The Heritage of the Earthborn* which the 1931 Kangchenjunga people had left behind. All the baggage followed on safely and we sat round the table in the candlelight and read, worked and wrote. A stillness descended, a certain mood was upon us and we knew that comradeship was there. Calmly thoughts freed themselves from the fearful imaginings of the past months, and contentedly, with no trace of nostalgia, fled home to wife and friend. Outside, the Lachen people were singing their Thibetan songs, melancholy yet virile. The Captain worked away at letters and telegrams, and at eleven o'clock as the oil lamps gave their last flicker we turned in.

13th August, 1936. We worked frantically at our stock-taking, preparing the food supplies, handing out the porters' equipment, weighing the baggage and distributing it equally. The Captain had to handle the Lachen porters, who at first appeared to demand too much pay; he just stood among them placidly, laughing and shaking his head, and in the end they agreed to five rupees. A Thibetan came to me, and our Sirdar, who speaks English, said the man had a temperature and wanted medicine. As far as I could see, it was malaria; I gave him some quinine and he went off. The little toe of the muleteer's left foot was septic and he had an inflammatory swelling on his instep. He would not let me lance it, so I applied an alcohol dressing. Another came to me with toothache; one of his back teeth was completely decayed, but he

* The Munich Academic Alpine Club.

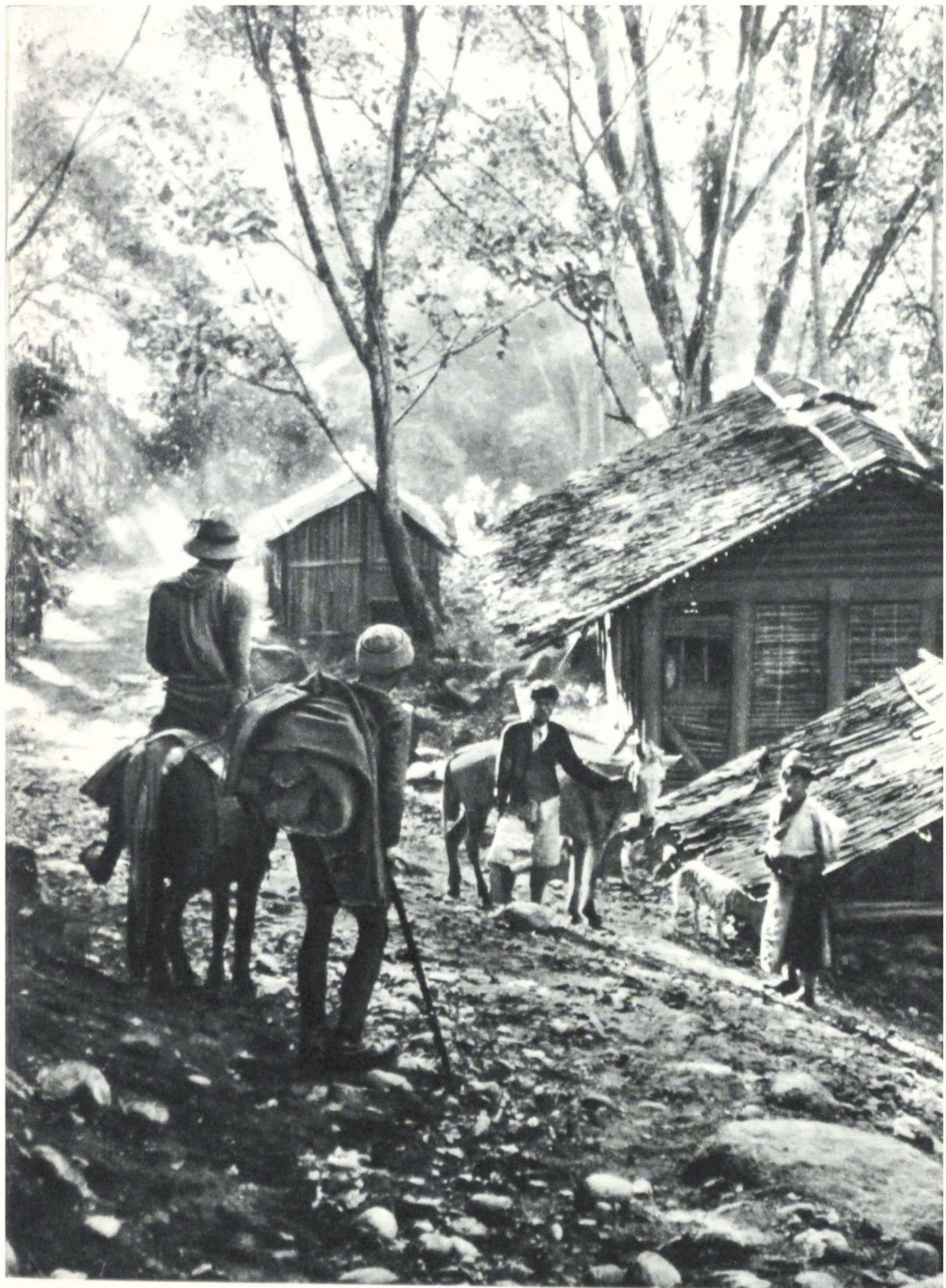


PLATE 13. Bamboo huts in the Teesta 1

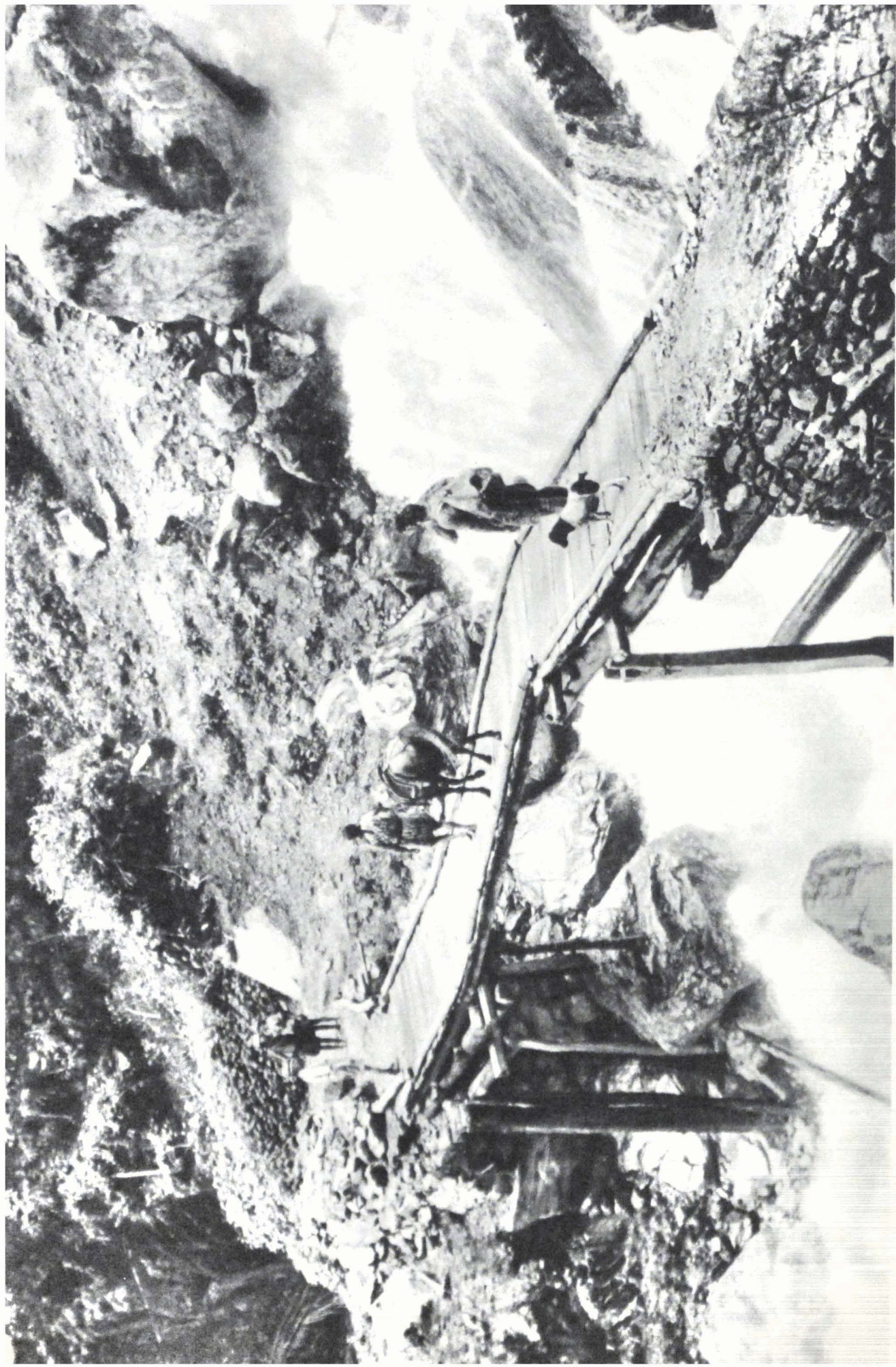


PLATE 14. A mountain torrent in Sikkim

PLATE 15. *Dinner-time in the Base Camp (c. 14,800 feet). Left to right: Bauer, Göttner, Wien*
KEILBERG PEAK





PLATE 16. Outside the Lachen Rest-house (9,000 feet)

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would not have it out, so I gave him a tablet to ease the pain. So the day passed. We turned in early and I browsed in *The Heritage of the Earthborn* until I fell asleep.

14th August, 1936. Into the Zemu valley. Our path, which narrowed considerably after entering the valley, climbed slowly. To our left roared the Zemu as we passed through magnificent forest ; rhododendrons, marshmallows and ferns grew in profusion ; huge weird trees, the like of which I have never seen before, surrounded us or lay fallen across the track, and queer gaudy flowers bordered our path. We waded through swamps and stopped now and again to take photographs. The crowd of porters, forty-eight Lachen people, men and women, went on ahead and we followed slowly. The weight of our rucksacks made us conscious of the increasing height and, not yet acclimatised, we had to take several rests.

Camp I lay by the bridge of Yaktang, where the path from the Zemu valley passes over the Yumtso La, in a meadow full of gorgeous flowers, between the Zemu stream and the upland forest. The Lachen people collected tree-bark and dry stalks and made themselves a shelter, and soon fires were burning everywhere. The natives drank their Thibetan tea, which is boiled with soda and to which butter is added and, according to Karlo, tastes like stew. With this they eat roast barley meal, tsamba and something which looks like bread prepared from the pounded fermented roots of, I think, Aaron's rod. The mist had settled on the forest and only the highest tree-tops emerged from the grey-blue shimmering haze. For a while I watched the Thibetans as they washed various kinds of roots in a basket in the Zemu, then we had our meal and retired to our tents.

15th August, 1936. We awoke early to find that the porters had already packed their loads, and as the sun was rising above the blue mountains to the east the first of them started off. After a quick breakfast we too were on our way, Karlo and Adi in front, the Captain and I bringing up the rear. It was a fine path ; we climbed slowly through rhododendron bushes and meadows brilliant with flowers and now and again the curtain of mist was drawn aside revealing part of Kangch. We had to make a good many halts as the Captain, not yet accustomed to the

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height, was obliged to go slowly. Actually there was no need to hurry, as Camp II was not a great distance away. It lay on the orographically left bank of the Zemu, and when we arrived the Lachen people had already lit fires, our tents stood ready for us and the cook had prepared a good meal. At about four o'clock, with a great deal of exertion, the Captain, Adi and I climbed up through the tangled undergrowth as we wanted to fell some trees to try out the new axe. In quite a short time two fine firs lay at our feet and tired but happy we dragged them through the dense bush down to the camp. After drinking more tea we turned in.

16th August, 1936. Up to the "Rest Camp," as the porters called the old base of the '29 and '31 expeditions, lying on the left bank of the glacier between the stream and the moraine. It is a fine expanse of meadow scattered with great boulders and the remains of the "habitations" of the Kangch expeditions. Purba, the wild Bhutia, was waiting with the cash box and as soon as the Captain arrived he began to pay off the forty-eight Lachen porters, who received five rupees each. It was amusing to watch their excitement as they took the money; as soon as they got it they sat down and sounded the coins against the stones to see if they were good.

Their number included about ten women, who had managed their loads incredibly well. They were clad in brightly coloured woollen dresses and wore Thibetan shoes, and there was one lovely one among them whom we called the Village Beauty. Two of the men, one of them in a red cap, were particularly dashing, and practically every one of them carried a Lepcha sword at his side. We ordered some more eggs and a sheep from the chief of the Lachen porters and then they left us.

We settled ourselves in comfortably and helped the Captain to build a "house." A Caucasus tent formed the roof, the walls were of earth and stone, and packing cases served as tables and chairs. When the table had been adorned with a posy of fresh flowers and the cook appeared with a steaming dish of food we could almost imagine we were at home. All the loads had now arrived. The Captain and Karlo were to sleep in the Schuster tent, Adi and I in the second Caucasus tent.

. . . Here we are at last, and to-morrow our climb begins in earnest.

Approaching Siniolchum

THE MIGHTY MASS OF KANGCHENJUNGA— which was long believed to be the highest mountain in the world—seems to dwarf Jannu, Kabru, Pandim and all the lesser peaks which stand in its train, but whoever is deeply affected by the incomparable spectacle which this chain presents from Darjeeling will be equally enthralled with the ice-pyramid of Siniolchum which, far to the east of the Kangchenjunga massif, towers above the black jagged peaks of the intervening mountains. At the first glance, even from this great distance of nearly forty-six miles as the crow flies, the observer is held fascinated ; he knows that here is a mountain without equal in the whole world.

Joseph Dalton Hooker, the scientist who revealed the flora of Sikkim, was the first to see the mountain at close range when in 1848 he viewed it from the north-east. He called it Liklo, a name which he had probably heard from the Lepchas who accompanied him. Actually it is open to doubt whether the Lepchas really used the name Liklo for Siniolchum, as Siniolchum is also a Lepcha word which had long been commonly used for the mountain. The first German to see it may well have been the photographer T. Hoffman, who in 1891 in company with J. C. White, the Political Agent well known in the history of Sikkim, penetrated as far as the Zemu glacier.

The mountain then became widely known through Freshfield's expedition and by means of the magnificent photographs which Vittorio

Approaching Siniolchum

Sella brought back with him. Since that time countless people have admired its glorious form and it is now openly acknowledged to be a king among mountains. It is probable that Freshfield intended to climb Siniolchum from the Simvu Saddle, but the sight of the mountain seems to have overawed him.

In 1929 when I with my eight comrades of the first German Himalaya team approached the Zemu glacier for the first time, the sight of Siniolchum held us in amazement and wonder from which there was no escape. None of us nine climbers imagined for a moment that one could climb this peak which reached to heaven keen and sharp as a Gothic spire. It found a very special place in our hearts, but our mountaineering ambitions, which wavered before no other mountain, receded from this one. We felt as the far-travelled Freshfield must have felt when he wrote :

“ Power dwells apart in its tranquillity,
Remote, serene, and inaccessible.”

When we Germans attempted Kangchenjunga for a second time in 1931, Siniolchum remained in our minds as the embodiment of inaccessibility, but gently, gradually another idea took shape ; one or the other of us would in secret examine Siniolchum more closely, seeking in its walls and ridges places where the human foot could find hold. This idea remained unexpressed, for we all stood far too much in awe of this mountain, but individually we were already trying to find a way.

From the height of the north-east spur of Kangchenjunga, when Siniolchum already lay beneath us, we saw that the middle part of the west ridge could probably be negotiated and we were inspired by the thought that one day we might stand upon this ridge.

It was in the course of preparation for the journey to Sikkim in 1936 that these thoughts first found utterance between Wien, who had also been with us on Kangchenjunga in 1931, and myself. We exchanged the results of our observations and became filled with the idea of conquering this most beautiful and most challenging of all mountains, the very embodiment of inaccessibility. We worked at this plan in full detail,

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but we did not disclose it, for we felt it was almost too intrepid and we were well aware that practically everyone who had seen the mountain—even our own comrades—would regard our plan as utterly impracticable. Nevertheless, when we started on our journey Wien, Göttner, Hepp and I were fired by the idea and Siniolchum became our secret ambition. However, we were by no means certain whether we should be able to progress beyond the very first stages of an attempt.

For our journey in 1936, therefore, we had prepared in full detail a number of smaller undertakings in the vicinity of Kangchenjunga : Simvu, The Twins, Pyramid Peak, the "Roof Ridge" on the other side of the Zemu Gap, and Siniolchum Needle. We had also previously assembled the necessary equipment and provisions for exploratory journeys into the Passanram valley, the unknown Zumtu district and the Talung valley, and had even worked out the daily distances and the arrangements for the replenishing of supplies. We had gone to great pains over these plans, had prepared everything in infinite detail, worked out the weight of the equipment and the provisions to the smallest approximation—they were, in fact, calculated to an exactitude of two ounces—and had made a close study of the mountains from the photographs taken in previous years, so that we were quite conversant with the paths we had to tread and the dangers which beset them. All these other plans had gradually grown dear to our hearts.

Nevertheless, when once we had stood at the foot of Siniolchum we laid them all aside. We decided there and then that as long as our energy held out we would make the first attempt on Siniolchum.

THE FIRST ATTEMPT ON SINIOLCHUM

The rain was beating against the tent when we awoke on the 17th August. At eight o'clock we went across to the "mess tent" for breakfast. We arranged our supplies and equipment and prepared the supply-sacks which were to be stored at Green Lake for later expeditions. Günther, Karlo and Adi set off at eleven o'clock with all five porters to carry up the sacks which were ready. They rested a long time up on

Approaching Siniolchum

Green Lake Plain in the fields of edelweiss where, miraculously, the sun was shining while the mountains were obscured by mist and it was still raining in the Base Camp. It was a long time before the porters returned. Mingma came first, but he had to go back at once to take Tawang's load. Poor Tawang was ill, and when they had returned Hepp declared that he had dysentery. It was obvious that he had had it for some time in spite of the fact that he carried a very dubious certificate from a doctor in Darjeeling saying that—after two days' treatment—he had been discharged fit and well. We were lucky not to have been infected, for he was my personal servant and, of the porters whom we now had with us, certainly the most useful. He had been Ruttledge's servant on the English Mount Everest expedition in the spring of this same year. We had to send the poor fellow back so that he could get really better. Unfortunately we lost in him on the first day one of the five porters we had selected with such care.

On the morning of the 18th August everything was still covered in mist, but later it brightened. Immediately Göttner and Hepp were sent off to explore the approach to Siniolchum. Wien undertook a glaciometrical survey; that is to say, he tried to. When, carrying the photogrammeter, he arrived at the place, some 325 feet in a northerly direction above the camp, where he had made the survey in 1931, the short period of clear visibility was already over; it got worse and worse, and the wind from the valley swiftly carried the dense mist over the glacier and up towards the little valley in which the camp was situated. In the afternoon he came back to the camp again, as it had become quite hopeless. At five o'clock Göttner and Hepp arrived. They had found a quite practicable path and had marked it well with cairns so that we could find it even in mist. They believed that at a height of about 17,000 feet one could easily get across from the moraine on to the glacier and circumvent the first great ice-fall.

19th August, 1936. It was raining when I woke up and was still dark. Wien was asleep, breathing heavily in the Cheyne-Stokes manner.* I dropped off again, and at five o'clock it had stopped raining. We called

* Irregular, spasmodic breathing.

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the sleepers, got the axes and the food ready, and the tents were dismantled and packed. Our Sirdar Yischey took poor Tewang, who was really miserable and unhappy at having to leave us, to Gangtok hospital, for we could not let him go alone. Yischey also took the post which had been got ready overnight with great haste and was also to bring back with him the proper climbing boots for the porters which we had left in Gangtok. The porters had definitely assured us that they possessed suitable footwear, but we discovered later that they had only ordinary English army boots which were quite unsuitable for climbing. We explained the route to Yischey and he was to be with us again with the boots on the 30th or at the latest the 31st August.

At seven o'clock we set off with our four porters, Purba, Nima Tsering, Mingma Bhutia and Minga Sherpa ; only Mambahadur, the cook, stayed behind, to look after the camp. In spite of the mist and by following the cairns which Göttner and Hepp had set up on the previous day, we got safely across the glacier. It was amazingly lumpy, its whole surface broken up into veritable mountains and valleys of débris and boulders. In an hour and a half's time we were on its southern edge and following—still enveloped in mist—the moraine on the orographically right side of the Siniolchum glacier. We then had to climb up the wild wastes of rock and stone which lie high above the glacier, until we came quite close to the glacier again. And there, in a flat little spot safe from stone-falls, we had a place levelled out for tents. A Zdarsky sack * stretched between two great boulders gave us kitchen and living-room. It soon began to rain again and any odd parts of one's anatomy which happened to find themselves protruding from the living-room got wet. Two of our porters were sent down for more supplies and they were to join us again two days later. They were also supposed to take Wastl with them, but he ran back to us and sat happily among us, even though he must have felt the cold terribly in the rain which was almost turning into snow. In the evening and during the night we heard the deep growl

* "Zdarsky sack" is a general term used by German climbers for all portable sack-tents, of which there are many types. They are named after Matthias Zdarsky, the great ski-pioneer, who introduced them and demonstrated their life-saving importance to the mountaineer.

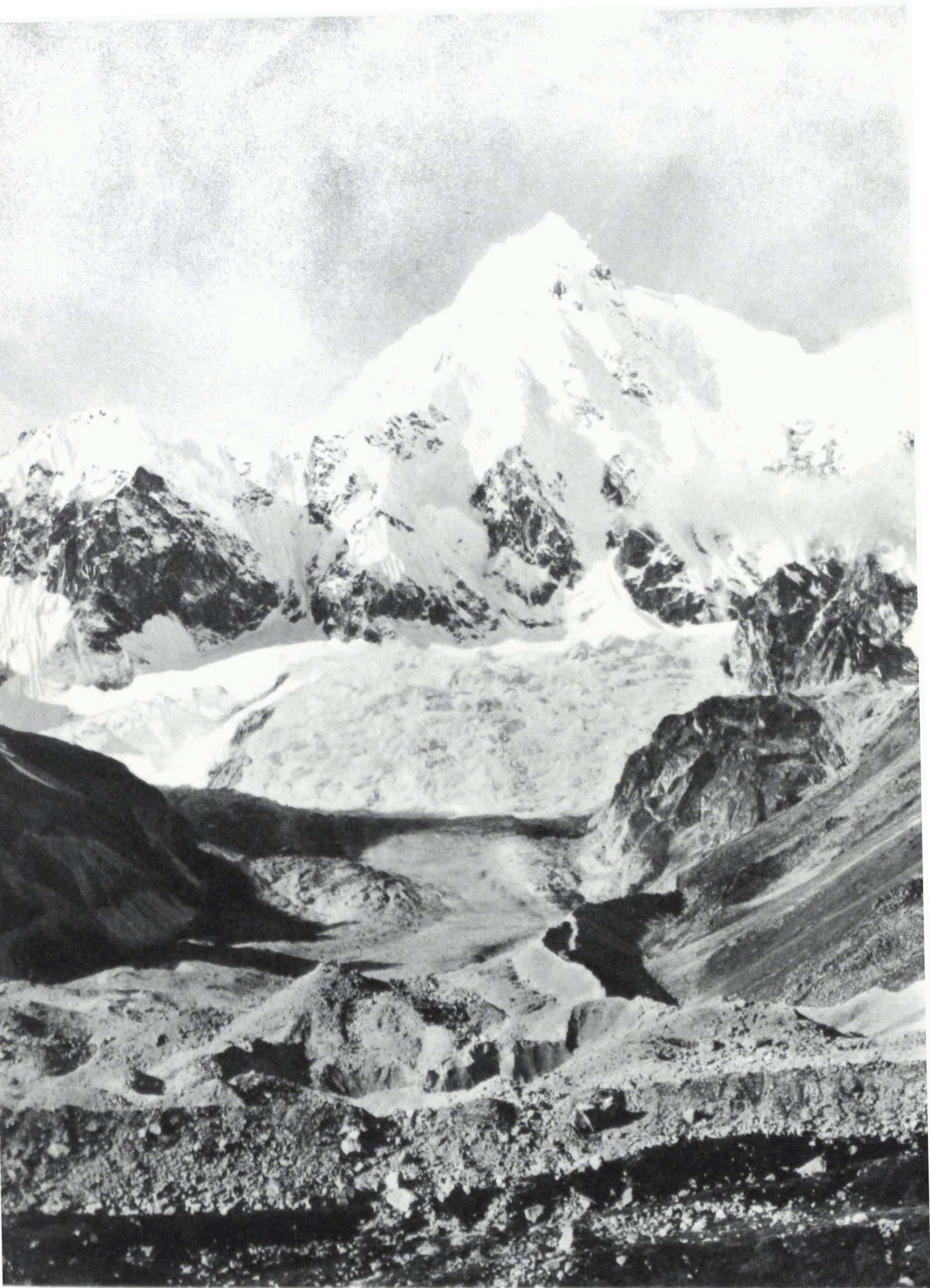


PLATE 17. *Siniolchum* (22,620 feet) as seen from the Base (

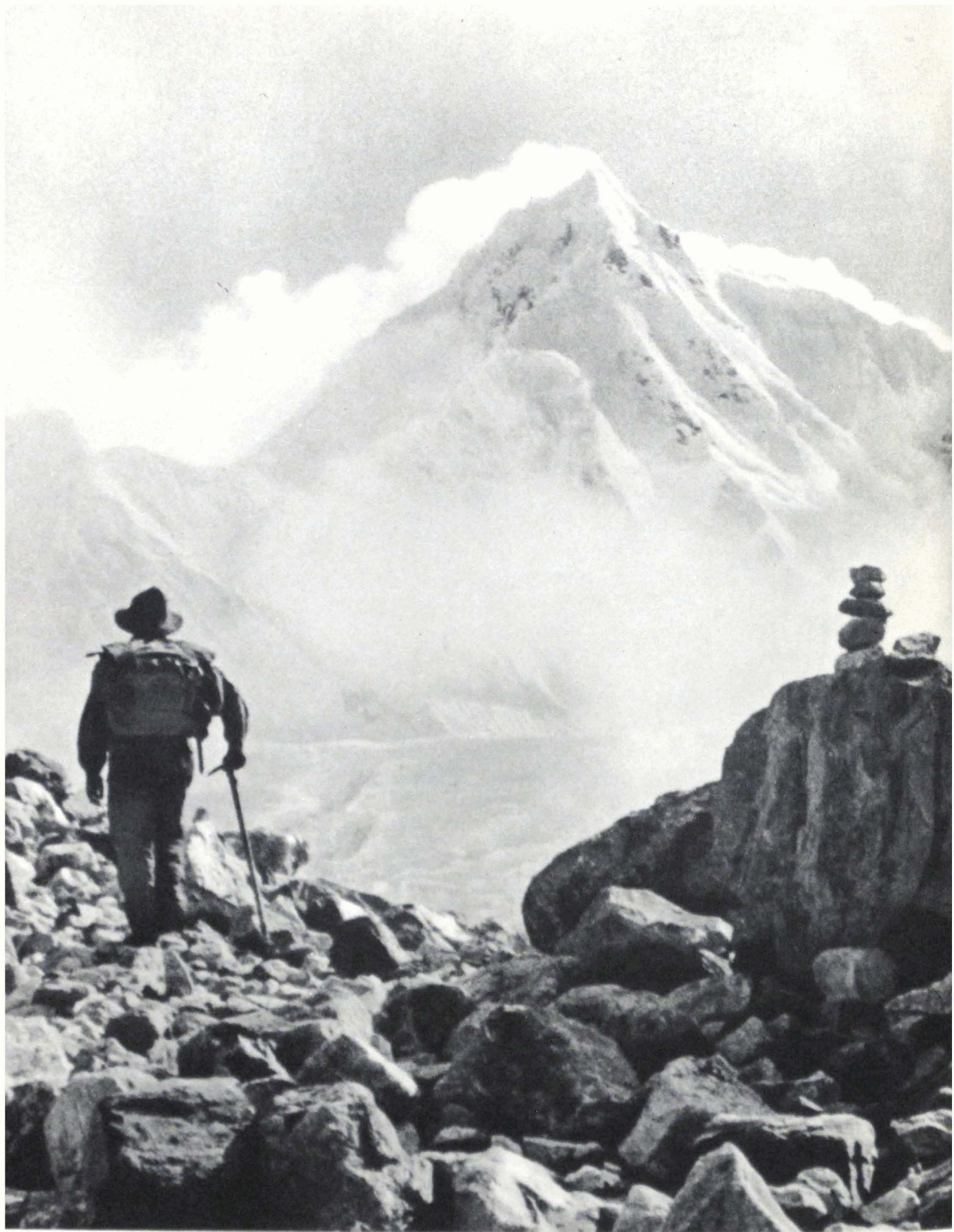


PLATE 18. *En route for Siniolcbum (Bauer)*



PLATE 19. *At the foot of Siniol*



PLATE 20. *Siniolchum Needle* (c. 19,500 feet) as seen for the first time by Allwein and Pircher in 1931

Approaching Siniolchum

of avalanches thundering down from the slopes of Siniolchum and occasional cracks from the glacier, while the rain beat steadily down. We four slept tightly wedged together in the Caucasus tent.

20th August, 1936. In the morning it was clear for only a short time. We studied the ice-fall before us through which it seemed possible to find a way up to the glacier plateau which stretched along below the north face of Siniolchum. Siniolchum's fantastic form towered high above us, its ridges stretching down to the east and north-west. We could not see as far as the gap between Little Siniolchum and the north-west ridges of Siniolchum to which we would probably have to ascend, for in that direction everything was still veiled in mysterious darkness. The lower parts of Siniolchum seemed more denuded than we were accustomed to seeing them, but we had never before been so near to the mountain at this time in midsummer. Up higher there seemed to be rather more snow than in 1931. Wien and Göttner went on in front, Hepp and I followed with the porters, and, roped up and wearing crampons, we all passed through the ice-fall. It was not really difficult, but with the loads the porters had to carry we made only slow progress. Soon the mist was so thick that we could not see more than ten to twenty yards in front of us. Wien and Göttner were a good way ahead ; it always took us a long time to get the porters and the loads safely over the crevasses. Wastl turned out to be a great success on the glacier ; he ran backwards and forwards between us like an orderly officer, making sure that none of his masters was missing. It took only one experience to teach him that crevasses may be dangerous things ; Adi with great presence of mind grabbed him and just managed to save him ; after that he behaved like an experienced mountaineer.

When we had safely arrived on the plateau it was snowing heavily again and we could not see twenty yards in front of us. Göttner and Wien stood there waiting for us, shivering with cold. We decided to pitch camp at once, for we had no idea what our surroundings looked like and in this driving snow we could easily tire ourselves out for hours on end without making as much progress as we could given half an hour's good visibility. We pitched the porters' and the Sahibs' tents with the

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openings facing, and the dog crawled in hastily and buried himself in the sleeping-sacks. Outside it was snowing relentlessly and now and again I would wake up ; one of us was always awake and it was possible to hold quite a conversation at any time of the night. The dog scratched himself noisily, but on the whole it was a restful night.

21st August, 1936. There was a great deal of fresh snow. True, it had stopped snowing, but the clouds and the mist were moving over the glacier and enveloping the mountains. We heard the growl of avalanches somewhere in the flanks of Siniolchum and here and there a beam of sunlight penetrated, conjuring up pictures of indescribable beauty in the dense mist. We watched and waited, but the next ice-fall to be negotiated and the way up to the ridge of Siniolchum remained shrouded.

For a long time we discussed what we should do. It was not possible to approach Siniolchum now, there was too much heavy wet snow on the glaciers. If we had had the same conditions as in the latter part of August, 1929, we could have easily gone on, but conditions now were different. We set out on the return journey, but we left our axes, fuel and all the provisions we had brought with us—two full sacks of food with rations for twelve days—under a huge snowman, carefully noting its position. Then we hurried down to Camp IV. A great deal of snow had fallen in the night and our way was soft and slippery, so that we had to be very watchful of the porters in the steep places. We had reached only the beginning of the moraine when icy rain began to beat cruelly into our faces. Late in the afternoon, thoroughly wet through, we arrived in Camp III from the first attempt on Siniolchum.

22nd August, 1936. In the morning it was quite clear. Günther Hepp wrote in his diary :

“ ‘ You’re sleeping away the most beautiful moment of your lives,’ the Captain shouted, as at five o’clock he threw back the tent flap. A blue sky smiled above us and the summit of Kangch glanced down upon our camp. ‘ Come on, fellows,’ called Adi, and quickly we jumped out of our sleeping-sacks, threw on our clothes and stood on the moraine. A picture of infinite beauty confronted us, Siniolchum, the most beautiful mountain in the world, firmly straddling the glacier basin, swinging

Approaching Siniolchum

upwards into a snow pyramid of perfect symmetry. Far behind us at the head of the Zemu glacier stood Kangchenjunga, mighty, terrific, its peaks, towering above their surroundings, illumined by the morning light. The Twins and Sugarloaf were dwarfed. To the east the sun had transformed mountain, mist and cloud into a shimmering haze. We stood there long, forgetting all else."

We studied the structure of the summit of Kangchenjunga through our Zeiss binoculars (sixteen magnifications). The slope towards Sugarloaf, as far as one could form any opinion from so great a distance, looked considerably better than in 1931. It seemed as if in the particularly heavy monsoon of this year a great deal of snow had fallen high up, for the saddle in front of Sugarloaf reached higher and the angle of the lower slope seemed less acute. However, on the right there was still a yawning crack and a land-slip. In a short time the Twins and Tent Peak were also free from mist and we studied them minutely. Wien was fortunately able to work at his glaciometrical survey until 9.30, but by then the fine weather was over, the mists crept up the valleys, slower than before, but by midday all was grey again, and in the afternoon it began to rain. It was quite definitely impossible to approach Siniolchum now.

Into the Unknown

Zumtu District

AFTER OUR EXPERIENCE ON THE SINIOLCHUM glacier it became clear to us that the snow on the glaciers at heights over 16,000 feet was still so deep and soft that whatever objective we set ourselves our progress was bound to be both dangerous and slow. In 1929 and 1931 we had learned that the snow is farthest receded at the end of August and we found that the glaciers were free up to a good 19,000 feet. This year (1936) the moisture-laden monsoon winds had come very early—a month sooner than usual—and their early arrival had so affected the English climbers on Mount Everest that they could not get even as far as the North Col (about 23,000 feet), which they had already reached in 1921. They had to turn back empty-handed so to speak, for even as early as May the slopes up to the North Col were so seriously threatened by avalanches on account of the heavy snowfall that it would have been foolish to approach them.

We had hoped that the monsoon, having come so early and with such great and consistent force, would end sooner than usual, but we were wrong in this surmise. We also had to learn that the monsoon had brought far more summer snow this year than in either of the previous years when we had been in this district.

We therefore seized upon another of our numerous plans. Even though the Zemu glacier had been visited by several groups of climbers before us and the Talung valley, running parallel in the south, had already

Into the Unknown Zumtu District

been traversed by two or three parties, the whole of the extensive district lying between the two valleys remained unknown. In 1931 Allwein and Pircher on their way back from Kangch had passed over the Simvu Saddle and through the Passanram valley and had brought back the first fragments of information about this district. We learned from them that here the Himalayas drop into deep valleys and that the steep ravine walls are often covered with quite impenetrable undergrowth extending to a great height. Allwein and Pircher had laboured from morning till night for six days (the 4th to the 10th October) to get from the tongue of the Passanram glacier to the first native settlement in the Talung valley, a distance of only four and a half miles as the crow flies, and they brought with them a photograph which made the hearts of thousands of climbers beat fast—Siniolchum Needle, piercing the sky like a Guglia di Brenta of granite, 20,000 feet high, a single pillar of rock, its base clad in the wild profusion of rhododendron and bamboo of the Passanram valley.

We had exactly determined the position of this mountain although it was beyond the scope of Wien's photogrammetric chart, and had studied every photograph on which it appeared. We could even discern it on some of our photographs of the north-east spur of Kangchenjunga and of Singhik, if only as a tiny finger of black rock.

The valleys which lie around this mountain, particularly those to the east, were quite unknown. On the map of the Survey of India the name Zumtu Glacier appears there, but no one had ever explored the district. These mountains, glaciers and ravines held an extraordinary fascination for us ; we felt we must see the country over which Siniolchum towers, where eternally green, densely wooded ravines are chiselled out thousands of feet deep between the heaven-piercing giants of the Himalayas.

We had several facts to consider : this district was lower lying, it was open to the south and the east so that the warm breezes coming from the east would take the snow away sooner ; the mountains were steep and rocky. We believed, therefore, that here the snow would be less of an obstacle to us and we made this district our objective. Siniolchum Needle was the main attraction.

Himalayan Quest

The 23rd August was a brilliant day and we thought the weather might be improving. It was still really warm (a minimum temperature of 2.8° C. during the night). We sent our cook Mambahadur and Minga Sherpa to buy a yak from the shepherds who at this time of the year are up in Lhonak on the Thibetan frontier, and Adi, Günther and Karlo left to approach Siniolchum Needle. They descended the Zemu glacier for about an hour, then crossed it, taking another hour, and came into a beautiful little valley on the southern side of the glacier, full of flowers and watered by a glistening, full-flowing stream; a scene of idyllic loveliness. On the orographically left side of the moraine of the glacier, which debouched at this point, they were climbing up steeply but comparatively comfortably when Wastl, wildly barking—it was the first time anyone had heard him bark—suddenly bounded after a large animal like a chamois, which fled in giant leaps. Mingma said it was a casturi, upon which we called the glacier the Casturi glacier. The casturi has become very rare; it is a type of musk-deer which on account of its much-sought-after excretion has become almost extinct. In the region into which we were now penetrating it had nothing to fear, for it seemed evident that no native huntsmen or shepherds had ever been here. The casturi sat down quietly as the first of the men approached it and calmly surveyed this strange two-legged creature until Wastl came and put an end to the pleasant encounter.

On the next day the weather was doubtful again. The camp lay at about 16,000 feet up on the moraine. A practicable way of getting across into the southern valleys was found east of point 5390 m. on the map which Wien had made in 1931. Peak 5390 m. was climbed and Karlo Wien measured out his base-line there in order to make a photogrammetrical survey of the district to the south. But soon all was covered in mist and they returned to their bivouac.

25th August, 1936. Hopes for a fine morning had been dashed by the regular beating of the rain throughout the night, but when towards seven o'clock it eased a little they prepared to start off. It seemed as if after the three days of good weather a bad spell of rain was about to set in. Lightly burdened they crossed the glacier and soon the rain turned to

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snow, and after crossing the snow-line the going became very laborious in the soft mush underfoot. It was a strange column of roped figures swathed in waterproof capes that finally arrived at the pass where the photogrammeter had been deposited with all its attachments on the previous day, and now the two porters had to take heavy loads. The glacier dropped steeply on the other side and they had to move carefully on account of the great boulders lying loosely on the ice and on the rocks bordering the glacier. When the mist parted now and again that 19,000 feet high mountain which was already known to us from photographs and which we wanted to call Liklo became visible to the left, that is, the east. They descended shortly before midday and pitched camp on a moraine at a height of about 16,000 feet. Günther Hepp went back with the porters over the pass and when he had disappeared into the mist with his two men Göttner and Wien erected the small tent and built on to it a projecting roof of Zdarsky sacks, supported by piles of stones. Investigations into the surrounding glaciers brought no good results as visibility was so poor.

The 26th August was a dull, rainy day. I prepared to leave Camp III and join the others in the Zumtu valley as I had promised to go to-day and could not wait any longer for the cook and Mingma. But just as I had left the camp I saw them approaching from below. There was no yak with them as the shepherds had refused to drive a large animal over the steep slopes from Lhonak, but they brought three sheep instead, and the shepherds, two Gurungs from Nepal, had come up with them. They brought a fine clean bamboo container full of splendid fresh butter made from sheep's milk, a present to their guests. They also had a number of aches and pains, which I dealt with as well as I could with bandages and ointments.

One sheep was killed, a process for which the shepherds had their own technique ; they shaved away the wool from the nape of the neck, then two men held the sheep, one by the head, the other by the hind-quarters ; they well stretched the neck and the animal's head was severed with one blow of the shepherd's kukri.

In the afternoon we trekked across with the meat and the butter and

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came upon Hepp who, alone with his two porters, was bivouacking in the rain and mist on the northern side of the Casturi glacier. On the other side of the pass Wien and Göttner were exploring a chain of mountains which lay to the south-west. They came to a sharp, exposed summit which was about 17,000 feet up, but mist and rain prevented any further projects.

27th August, 1936. Wien and Göttner had expected us on the 26th, but it had got too late for us to go on and join them. When we two reached the pass with our porters we had a wonderful view. The valleys and glaciers in the south were veiled in mist but we were above the clouds. Around us strange, curiously formed mountains of rock and ice projected above the clouds, a magic sight, deeply impressive, although we had no idea from which valleys and glaciers these mountains rose. Soon, however, mist surrounded us again. We reached the others—they were already prepared to press onwards—and now the whole company made its way in the rain down towards the Zumtu valley.

Hepp and I were groping completely in the dark, but during the morning Wien and Göttner had managed to snatch a glance at this moraine from a summit of the south-west chain and believed that it led right down into the main valley. For days now we had seen no change in our surroundings and a rather gloomy spirit prevailed; we could see dim shapes leaping over the rocks in front of us, the rain splashed softly on hat and coat and a few feet away all was swallowed in dense mist.

And so we trudged on slowly and uncertainly through this unexplored country. Suddenly the angle of the slope increased, we felt that we were on the edge of a ravine and wondered whether we should continue to drop down with night already approaching. We halted at the next comparatively level spot and Wien, eager as usual to help, offered to descend farther to see how the länd lay below. We squatted in the rain and waited. Fragrant juniper glistening with moisture and yellow-green moss grew around us, a stream plunged into the depths and disappeared into the grey, uncertain darkness.

It seemed a very long time before Wien reappeared. The glacier lay

PLATE 21. Siniolchum, with the long south ridge, as seen from the northern Casturi glacier.
(East)

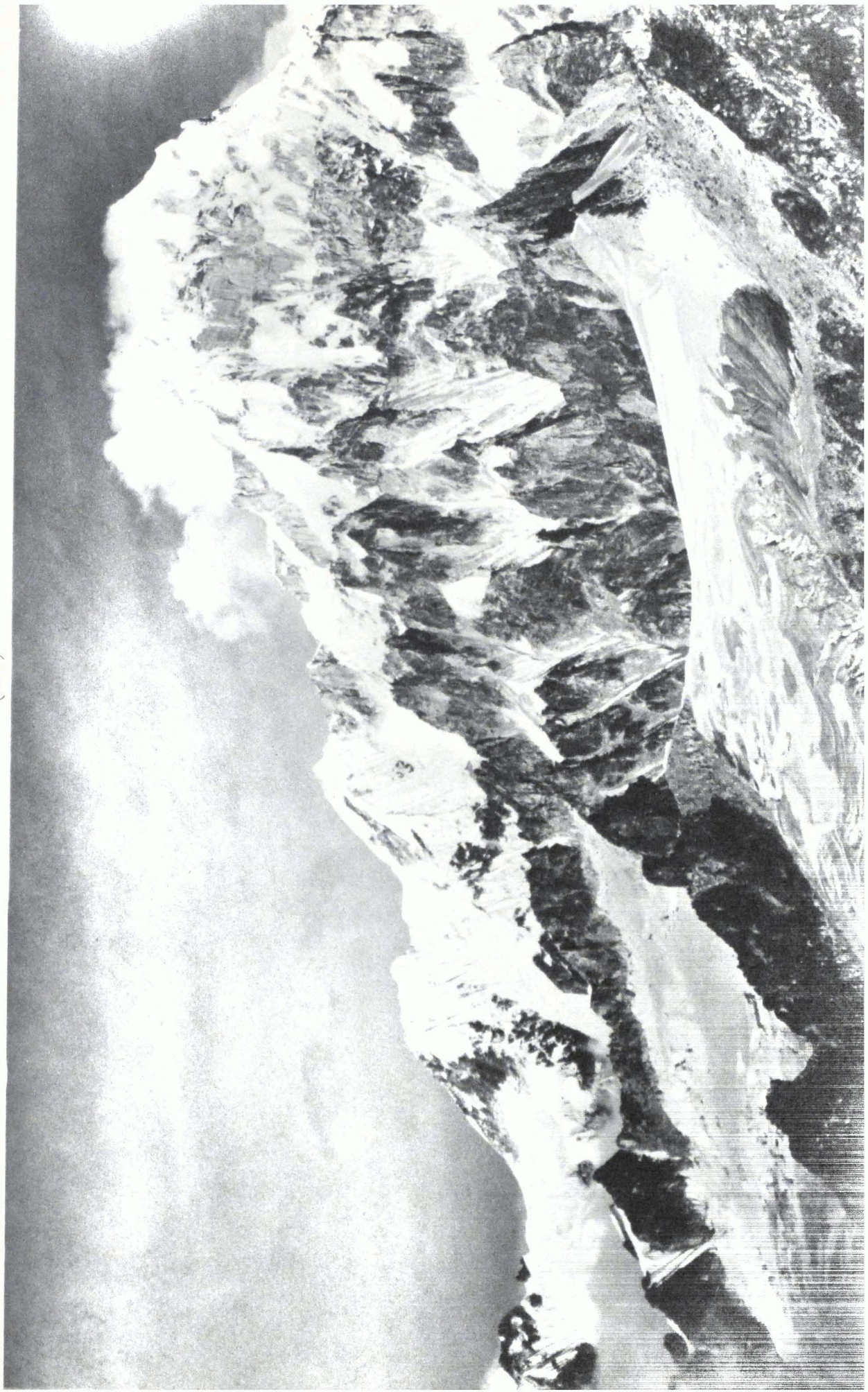




PLATE 22. Monsoon clouds in the hitherto unexplored southern valleys (the Zumtu district). In the foreground the Payan glacier

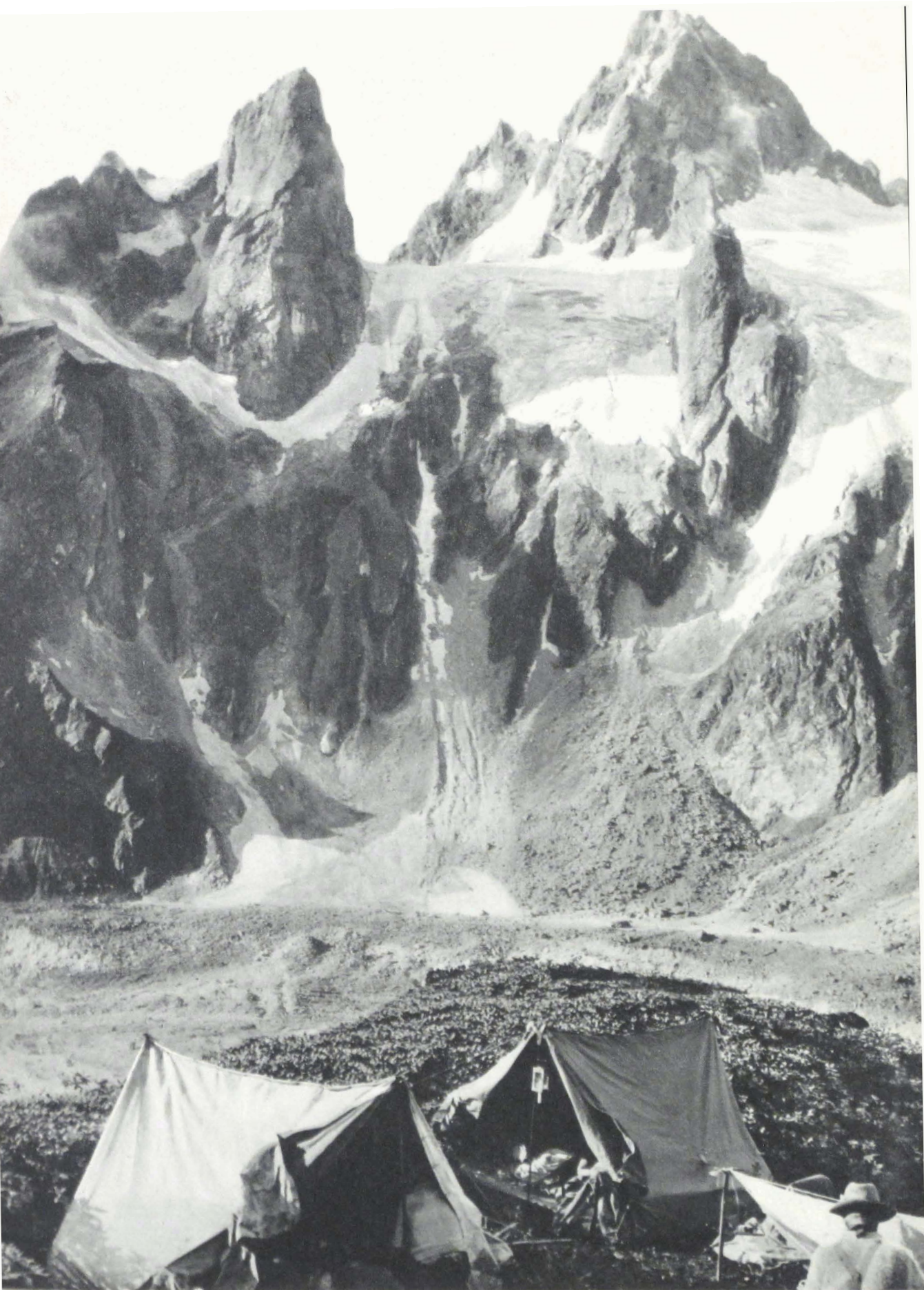


PLATE 23. *The camp above the Zumtu glacier ; in the background a new unknown mountain*

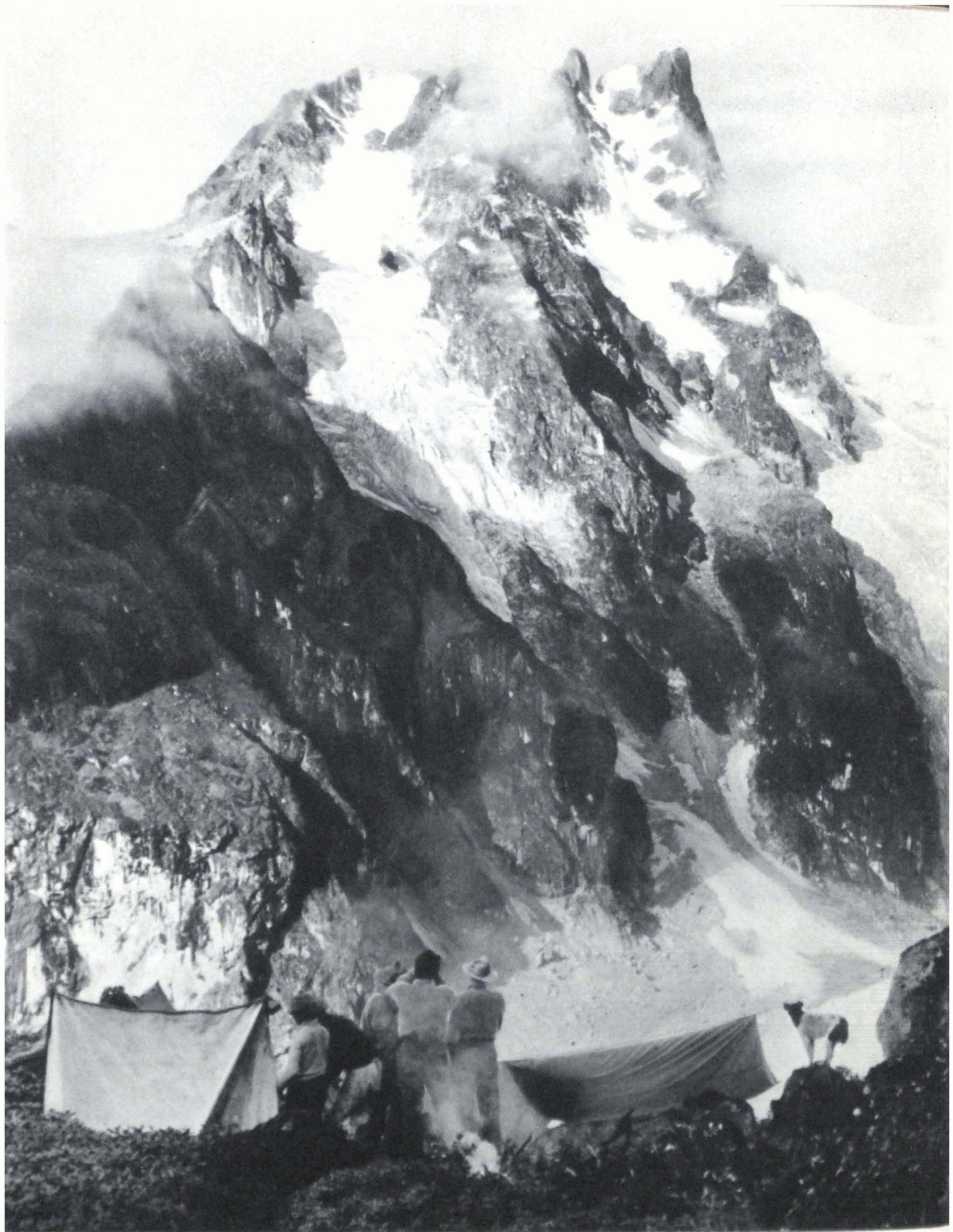


PLATE 24. *The northern precipices of Siniolchum Needle, as seen from the camp above the Zumtu valley*

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500 feet below ; there was not another good camping site down there so we stayed where we were, cleared a pitch out of the dripping rhododendron bushes and, with difficulty, lit a fire. Suddenly, however, the mist began to move, the clouds parted and a scene of unforgettable grandeur opened up before us.

It was the most beautiful evening of our whole journey. Below us lay the Zumtu glacier, mountains of jagged rock rose before us and to our right the mighty massif of Siniolchum Needle was slowly unveiled, the last shreds of mist clinging like smoke to its walls. Slowly the light of day gave place to the moon, which shone down on to the glacier. Fatigue and depression vanished. The sight of this glorious panorama revealed to us for the first time was an experience to be treasured. The discovery of this wild region of glacier and rock south of the Zemu glacier filled us with awe and enthusiasm and we lay long awake.

SINIOLCHUM NEEDLE

28th August, 1936. The morning was fine and Siniolchum Needle rose clear before us. We discussed the possibility of climbing it and finally decided that we should have to approach it from the south-east side, for on the north side where we were it fell to the Zumtu glacier, a good 5500 feet, in one single smooth drop.

We descended to the glacier, our last stretch lying over a high old moraine ; this glacier, like the Zemu, was completely covered with débris. On the other side a glacier emerged in a deep valley south-east of the Siniolchum Needle, coming to an end about 1000 feet above us. To climb straight up to its tongue seemed too dangerous as the rocks on both sides were worn absolutely smooth, so we used a steep scree-filled gully from which we intended to climb on to the glacier higher up, over a grass-grown ridge.

In the meantime it had begun to rain again and, panting, we climbed hastily through the steep gully. There was an uncanny mingling of sounds—the rushing water, the spattering rain, the rolling stones. The

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porters had to be secured over the steep places ; Purba, the Bhutia, fell with his heavy load—his boots had become quite sodden from the incessant rain—but Hepp managed to hold the rope and stayed his fall. The first attempt to cross over to the ridge misfired, but Göttner and I succeeded in finding a traverse higher up and we stretched the rope across. Wastl was helped up over the difficult places ; on the whole he climbed extraordinarily well.

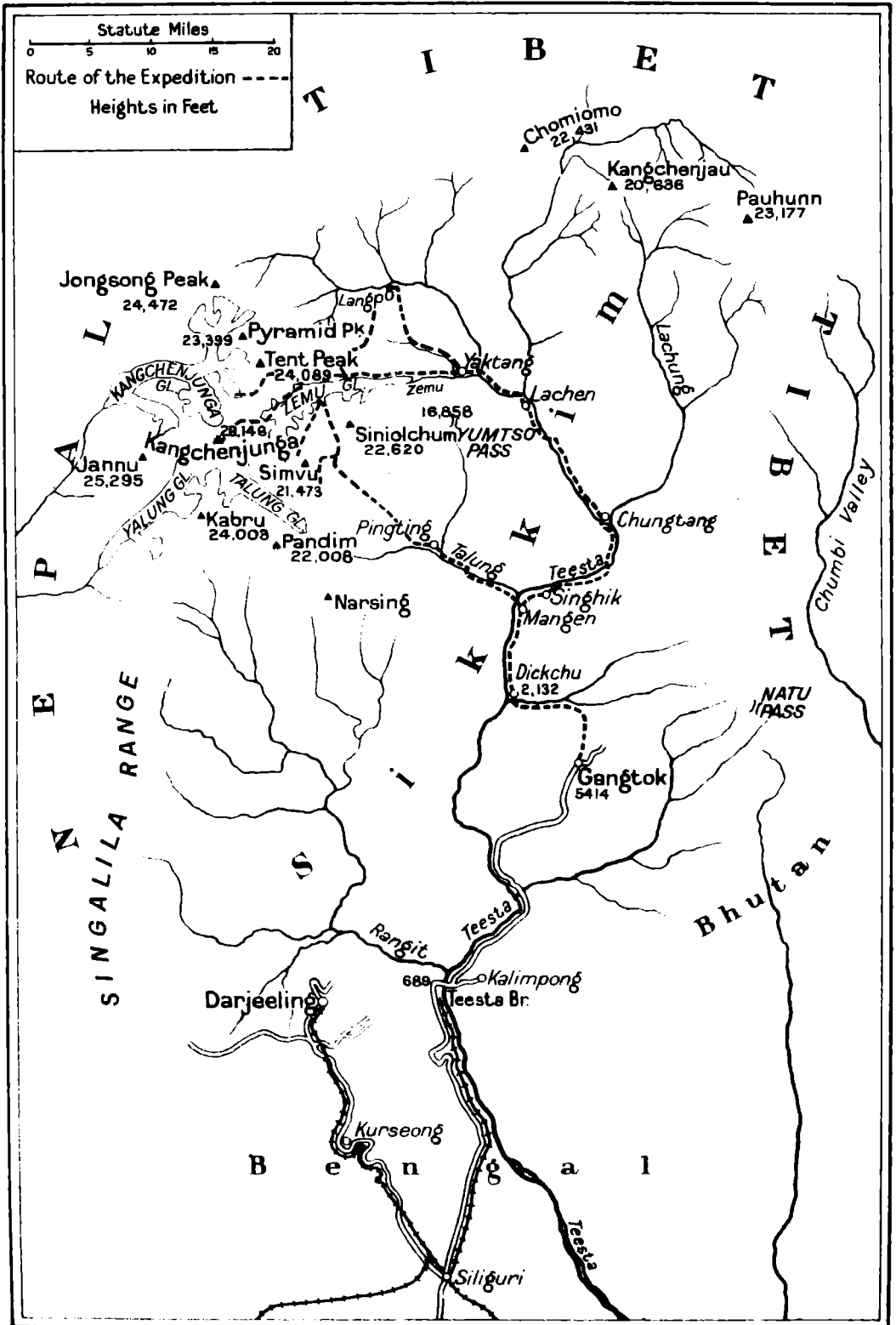
At the last traverse it looked as if our good Mingma was going to fall ; for a moment he closed his eyes and went pale, but we called to him and he soon had himself in hand and worked his way across with his load, which the rain had made very much heavier. Our anoraks * were damp and dirty, our hands cold and grazed ; the rain streamed from hats and clothes, from rocks and sky.

On the next level spot among the débris we erected our tent and let the porters return unloaded ; they could safely manage the difficult places with the firmly fixed rope. Then we sat shivering in the tent. In the meantime the rain had increased in force and was now extraordinarily heavy. Suddenly things became lively for us, for water began to flow through the tent. We bore this with grim humour and found some amusement in having the water laid on for cooking and drinking purposes, but when the tide rose too high there was only one thing for it—to go out into the rain and labour away until we had dug another channel into which the stream could be deflected.

Then we sat down again on our synthetic rubber ground-sheets, Adi played the Sikkim National Anthem on his mouth-organ—“ Rain-drops, rain-drops, hammering on the tent-tops ”—and we soon cheered up. The warmth of our bodies was sufficient partially to dry our clothes and sleeping-sacks during the course of the night.

29th August, 1936. In the morning surprisingly it was quite clear for a short time. The rain had not turned to snow, so we hoped to be able to do something on Siniolchum Needle and took pitons and ropes, kletterschuhe and crampons with us to the glacier, but we saw as soon as

* Eskimo blouse with closely fitting hood.



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we reached it that this glacier did not, as we had imagined, lead up to a flat, snow-covered pass south of Siniolchum Needle, but that it was completely surrounded by steep rock walls, for the most part ice-glazed.

We still wondered whether we should not all the same begin to climb Siniolchum Needle, but the mountain was from this position very difficult to survey and it was essential that one should be able to get at least one clear view of the needle before commencing to climb. So we followed our glacier and climbed from the farthest glacier basin over a steep ice-wall up about 800 feet to a gap which lay at a height of probably 16,000 feet. Down on the other side must lie the Passanram valley, but all was enveloped in dense grey mist; rain fell in torrents and all one could see was the black ribs of rock in the immediate foreground, incredibly steep, rising from the mist and disappearing into the mist again. A great boulder, which we released into the unknown depths, flew for a second through space and then thundered below us for a long time before it finally came to rest—evidence that the drop from this gap was both steep and long. We left ropes, pitons and axes upon the glacier and spent a second night in our rain-soaked camp.

30th August, 1936. In the evening the weather had improved a little, raising our hopes for the following day, and we had prepared everything for an early departure. But heavy rain had fallen again during the night and it was certain that there would be fresh snow higher up. After a short discussion we decided to return at once to Camp III. We left behind the food-sacks, the tsamba for the porters, the petrol, ropes, axes, etc., carefully protected between stones, so that everything would be ready for a later attack on Siniolchum Needle.

Then we descended, this time following the tongue of the glacier, along which we had discovered a gully. We carried our entire equipment ourselves down as far as the glacier, where the porters came to meet us. Two of them had waited for us in the camp on the other side, while two others had returned to Camp III, but they had come straight back again bringing heavenly roulades of mutton which the cook in Camp III had prepared for us. With a little cumin, a sort of carraway seed which

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occurs frequently in Thibet and by the Zemu glacier, they were delicious. But, most important, the porters brought post and we sat in the rain and read our letters from home. We all got something and were particularly elated at the news that the British Government was prepared to allow us to approach Nanga Parbat next year.

We soon started off again to climb up to the higher camp immediately below the pass ; as it was obvious that nothing could be done here in this weather, we wanted to get back quickly to Camp III to get started on some new scheme.

31st August, 1936. During the night there was heavy rain and a north wind, but the morning, contrary to all expectations, was clear. We spread out our things—which had not been dry for days—and sunned ourselves. Soon our enthusiasm returned and we decided to make good use of the fine weather. Göttner and Hepp, with light packs, made towards the mountain which rose directly above our camp, the 19,000 feet high Liklo, and I climbed up to the pass with Wien and the heavily laden porters to measure out base-lines there for a photogrammetrical survey of the surrounding mountains.

The weather gradually improved and the light was excellent. In the afternoon Wien took his apparatus over to the mountain to the south-east of the pass, but storm clouds had already gathered and he was unable to get anything, for some essential part was always obscured.

In the afternoon a loud yodel reached us from Liklo. Göttner and Hepp had reached the northern peak ; to attain the summit was perhaps altogether impossible, but anyhow impossible now, so late in the day. They descended rapidly and by dusk they reached the glacier, waited for the moon and climbed by night over the southern Casturi glacier up to our camp in the gap.

It was a strange night. When the mist lifted for a moment the glacier shone forth as bright as day and the surrounding pinnacles of rock pointed to heaven like black fingers.

1st September, 1936. The weather, as was expected, was glorious in the morning and the snow had frozen board-hard. At 4.30 Wien left the camp with his assistant Mingma and by sunrise at 5.15 they had

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reached the summit of the mountain which lay to the south-east. In the north it was clear and fine, in the south lay a bank of clouds just revealing Siniolchum Needle. There was no wind and the mist was rising swiftly again. There was nothing we could do and towards ten o'clock Wien descended, frustrated, and we immediately set about returning to the Base Camp.

Between Twins and Tent Peak

THE PROJECTS WE HAD SO FAR UNDERTAKEN had been in the nature of experiments, to see what could be accomplished in the conditions then prevailing, if the weather would open up any possibilities for us, and how we should fare with a small mobile team and few porters. It was an interesting experiment and, given good weather, we could have achieved much. But the weather was absolutely against us. We knew now that the rain in the southern valleys was even worse than at Camp III and realised that this year the weather was much less favourable than it had been in 1929 and 1931.

Our hopes of undertaking something on Siniolchum, in the Zumtu valley, the Passanram valley or the Talung valley now had absolutely evaporated. However, we knew that the moisture-laden monsoon winds always weaken towards the north and west, and it was by no means beyond the bounds of possibility that the sun was shining at a height of 20,000 feet north of the Kangchenjunga massif while incessant rain was falling at Camp III and particularly in the Zumtu valley.

We therefore decided to devote ourselves to this district for the next ten days. Wien and Hepp were not very happy about it ; they would have preferred to wait for a fine spell and stake all on Siniolchum, " but," says Wien in his diary, " at the moment the weather is too bad to think of an attempt and none of us likes to take the responsibility of deciding for an indefinite period of inactivity."

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Two rest days in Camp III were necessary to get things dried, mended and darned, to fit the porters with the climbing boots which had now arrived and particularly to get off some letters in preparation for the 1937 Nanga Parbat expedition, which had now become a reality.

On the 4th September our day began very early. We had been working on our post far into the night, but there was still much to be done before our Sirdar started off with the bundle of letters safely in his hands. He cut a comic figure in his long white pants—his only leg-covering—an old brown climbing jacket from some earlier expedition, with his long plait with the red tassel, and his alert, open face. We could depend on him ; he may not have been exactly a hero, but he was reliable and willing.

At eight o'clock we started off with all four porters ; Mambahadur again stayed behind alone to look after the camp. At Green Lake Plain, where we collected the food sacks which we had left there a fortnight before, the rain was so heavy that we branched off from the moraine of the Zemu glacier on to the moraine of the Nepal Gap glacier, climbed a little farther and then pitched our camp. "It was a restless night," wrote Günther Hepp in his diary ; "Karlo got an attack of claustrophobia, the rain leaked in on my head, Adi snored and the Captain grumbled."

However, on the following morning, the 5th September, there was a bright blue sky ; we could gaze on Simvu in all its splendour and Tent Peak rose majestically before us. We set off at seven o'clock. After some hours, when we were at the bend of the Nepal Gap glacier where it takes an east-to-west direction, the mist was upon us again and it began to snow lightly.

In the steep, broken part of the glacier we took the porters on the rope ; it was now snowing fast and we had to cross perilously narrow bridges over snow-covered crevasses. Once more the day ended miserably, with driving snow in which we could see hardly thirty yards in front of us. We pitched our tents as evening approached and were not quite sure, in spite of all our care, whether we were not perched above a crevasse.

6th September, 1936. The morning was fine and the cloud formation indicated that the more settled autumn weather might be expected. We



PLATE 25. *Siniolchum Needle showing above the Simivu Saddle. Seen from the east ridge of Twins. (North-west)*



PLATE 26. Morning in camp on the Liklo glacier



PLATE 27. *Liklo* (c. 19,000 feet) as seen from the Stone Gap in the north c



PLATE 28. Simvu (22,360 feet) as seen from the lower Nepal Gap glacier

Between Twins and Tent Peak

made cocoa and breakfasted on the glacier in the sunshine, then we formed ourselves into a long crocodile and started off up the glacier. We had negotiated the ice-fall on the previous day and were already in the uppermost basin of the Nepal Gap glacier. The snow was deep and as we tentatively explored with our ice-axes we left clear blue-glowing holes. Laboriously we trudged along in the soft snow ; the sun's rays were very strong and the protection afforded by our felt hats was quite inadequate. The porters, carrying heavy, wet loads, asked for several rests and our progress was often interrupted.

After about four hours, however, we neared Nepal Gap and Sugarloaf Gap, up to which we wanted to climb in order to attempt the eastern ridge of Twins which stood on our left. We were 20,000 feet up and could feel the height—the pulse had quickened and breathing was laboured. Mingma Sherpa was pale. " Sick, Sab," he said, pointing to his bushy head and his shoulders. Hepp examined him : his lungs were in order, but his pulse was very rapid ; he seemed to be suffering from a slight chill and over-exertion and was given cardiazol and aspirin. He then lay down quietly and resignedly in the tent.

On the same day heavy sleet fell, but it cleared up again in the afternoon and at sunset it quickly grew cold. We busied ourselves with preparations for the ascent of Twins by the east ridge.

TWINS

7th September, 1936. At four o'clock we began to cook breakfast. I was suffering from a bad sore throat and was afraid I should only aggravate my condition by the laboured breathing, so I arranged to stay behind and let the others go on alone. Judging by the snow down here and by the appearance of the ridge, we thought it would be possible to reach the first summit in five to six hours. At six o'clock the others crossed the beautifully firm snow to the slope leading to the Gap ; rather sadly I watched them as they climbed the slope, not very rapidly ; their progress became slower and slower and I soon began to suspect that conditions were bad and that they probably would not be able to reach

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the summit of Twins. Unfortunately I proved to be right. Wien writes of this attempt in his diary :

“ We began to climb up the steep couloir to the ridge and there we received our first shock. The slope was much longer and grew steeper than we had imagined, but in a gully free from loose snow we safely ascended with the help of crampons. It was an angle of about 60° and we took an hour over these 150 yards. The sun greeted us as we attained the ridge which fell on the other side, just about as far as on our side, down to the glacier situated in the Sugarloaf massif. The view to the south was absolutely magnificent, particularly across to Kangch. We now made our way along some snow-covered rock towers in order to reach the beginning of the snow ridge. Our progress was much more slow and difficult than we had expected. We tried to avoid the sun-softened snow by going into the rocks, but that did not get us on very quickly as there were three of us on the rope. At last, at ten o'clock, we rested at point 6235 m., at the end of the rock ridge.

“ We then descended over a seventeen feet high vertical rock face to the beginning of the steep knife-like snow ridge. For a while things went fairly well, but soon Göttner, who was going on in front, informed us that the snow on the ridge was soft and let one down badly. A rather steeper section gave us a great deal of difficulty and we had to clear away the soft yielding stuff until we came to hard ground capable of supporting us, just as we had had to do on Kangch. That delayed us for a long time and we spent two hours negotiating the first section of the ridge, which brought us about 350 feet higher. The ridge sloping to the east had softened, or rather was not yet firmly enough frozen—again the difficulty which had given us so many anxious hours on Kangch, only this year it seemed that the cold came even later than in 1931, when from the 1st September onwards it was on the whole cold enough.

“ We were bearing in mind how suddenly it had grown cold the previous afternoon and thought we would wait until the direct effect of the sun had diminished and the snow froze firmly. So we sat in the snow from midday until two o'clock, in heavy sleet, and waited for the cold to come. At two o'clock we set to again. A steep slope led us to a terrace,

Between Twins and Tent Peak

at first pleasantly hard, but as the angle increased we sank in deeper and deeper and were soon floundering. We then crossed a great crevasse and had to approach a very steep snowfield leading obliquely upwards and which directly below us merged into the steep slopes swinging down to the Nepal Gap glacier. In contrast to the sharp east ridge which in its upper parts was quite soft, we encountered here, more towards the north, a layer of snow in a sort of granulous condition, in parts whirled up into heaps by the wind. We sank into it well over the knee and could move upwards only slowly, while the arm holding the ice-axe would plunge deep down into the snow. I went on in front—there were three of us on a 100-foot rope—but nowhere could I find a firm foothold nor any means of belaying, and the slope continued to ascend at the same perilous angle. Günther and Adi followed. It was quite impossible to belay as the ice-axe just sank right into the yielding snow.

“ The mist parted for a brief spell, showing us that we still had a long way to go on the ridge slope, and it became obvious to me that with the entire absence of any means of belaying it was too dangerous. Günther had already warned us, but I did not want to turn back until I was absolutely certain that the project was impossible. However, we now carefully retraced our steps until we could stand on firm ground again.

“ We had a short discussion as to whether we should bivouac here and continue on the morrow should there be a favourable fall in temperature, but we were all agreed that this snow, lying loosely on the north side, would not be influenced by the daily freezing, and we therefore decided to return immediately. The descent over the upper section of the ridge was most laborious ; we fell even deeper into the trail we had made and in places could progress only by sliding astride. We had been hearing thunder for some time and now the storm reached us with the cold north wind, and driving snow lashed our faces. In the shelter of the first rock tower we waited for the worst of it to pass over and then continued our descent over the towers.

“ It was soon clear that we should not reach the camp that day, as we could not descend the steep ice wall by night. Near the gap we found a fine place to bivouac on a ledge of rock on the south side, where we could

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creep into the Zdarsky sack. I had beforehand reached some understanding with Bauer in the camp below. The night was cloudy and therefore not cold ; we huddled together quite happily and after midnight managed to get some fairly good snatches of sleep. The morning was glorious, absolutely clear, and from four o'clock we sat watching as night turned into day and the sun broke through behind Sugarloaf, touching first the summit of Kangch and then quickly flooding its glistening white walls.

“ Soon the sun reached us too, and bathed in its warmth we could gaze upon this glorious scene to our hearts' content. The high mountains in the distant east could be clearly seen, the nearer ranges dominated by Siniolchum ; next to it we saw Siniolchum Needle, sharp and black, with its much lower satellites, the Simvu range and the ' Roof Ridge,' and then Kangch itself, towards which the north-east spur, bathed in a different light, shot up like a coulisse. We stood long and gazed with wonder—I particularly—over to the north-east spur, which seemed to me decidedly changed. However, I had not seen it from this side in 1931. A bivouac night and a morning facing Kangch—an unforgettable experience.

“ We had to reach the steep couloir while it was still in shadow and so made an early start. Just as we were standing in the gap we saw Bauer and a porter followed by Wastl walking over the level glacier towards Nepal Gap. An avalanche was released from the slopes of Twins, thundered down to half-way down the glacier, its clouds of snow almost reaching the men down there. Our descent was completed slowly and with extreme care.”

Meanwhile I had walked to Nepal Gap. The last steep face up to the saddle, before which Kellas had turned back in 1911, was not exactly simple. From the edge of the saddle the north ridge of the first summit of Twins rises sharply and steeply with a wildness seen only in the Himalayas. It was obviously impossible to climb over this ridge. In the early morning hours I had a clear free view as I stood on the dividing line between two weather-zones ; to the east, in the Zemu district, the mountains were white and the glaciers descended far ; to the west, in

Between Twins and Tent Peak

Nepal, the mountains were free of snow to a great height and the glacier, the source of which lies beneath Nepal Gap, came to an end in but a few miles.

On returning to the tents we discussed our experiences. I felt that we should still attempt Nepal Peak and Tent Peak ; the weather was fine up here, below rain and mist certainly awaited us, and I hoped too that the ridge from Nepal Gap up to Nepal Peak and Tent Peak, facing south, would have softened to a considerable height in the heat of the sun in the past few days and frozen again during the night, so that early in the morning progress should be comparatively easy. We were longing for another opportunity of climbing on firm snow and ice.

9th September, 1936. I called my comrades at three o'clock in the morning. We each had a cup of cold cocoa and at 3.15 we left camp while the moon threw its pale light on to the glacier. We were still tired and a little down-hearted, but our conjectures were correct ; the snow was hard and we reached the ridge very rapidly. It was steep and cornice-crowned and the cold west wind had formed fine pinnacles of ice. Although it was a joy to climb over the sharp ridge towers, they nevertheless delayed us and we could allow ourselves only a short rest for breakfast. Light cumulus clouds rose from the valleys, Chomolhari lay to the east, a magnificent sight, and as we gained height the view from the ridge to the north-west to Mount Everest opened up. As the day advanced it grew warmer, the sun increased in strength, the snow began to soften and my cough worried me more and more. At about one o'clock we rested on a little plateau 22,000 feet up.

On the advice of Günther Hepp, however, I then decided to turn back, for with the chill and cough I was finding it too tiring. Wien and Hepp would not let me return alone and wanted to toss up as to who should go with me, but Günther Hepp said he was a doctor and that it was therefore his duty. Our descent led us into more difficulties ; we chose an arm of the ridge leading down in the direction of our camp and which, when we had viewed it in the morning from the side, looked quite possible. At first the snow was manageable, but soon we sank in to our thighs. We had to retrace our steps for thirty yards, circumvented an ice tower on the south-eastern side and then had to put on crampons.

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We worked ourselves down the steep soft slopes with extreme care and over ice towers similar to those we had encountered on Kangch ; difficulties by no means decreased and by the time we had got the worst over it was already dark. We felt our way down carefully, but I broke through the snow, softened by the sun, and fell into a crevasse ; Hepp helped me out again, but it now began to snow ; we could see nothing more and had to bivouac.

I built up a mound of snow under which I laid the ice-axes, rope and crampon felts. We put on the few warm things we had with us, ate some biscuits and Dextro Energen and then covered ourselves with the Zdarsky sack. On Günther's side it fortunately had a hole, so that he got some fresh air, but I thought I should suffocate and had to cut myself an air-hole. It was soon damp inside from our breath, the snow drizzled on our heads ; we would sleep for ten minutes and lie awake for two hours, then doze off again for another few minutes and again be hours awake. We rubbed ourselves together to get warm, but only very carefully, for we did not know for sure that we were not very near a crevasse. At twelve o'clock the moon appeared above the white mist ; at five o'clock we shed our coverings ; it was beginning to get light and we tried to find a way down. Now and again we sank in to our hips and it took us two and a half hours to reach the glacier. It was now beautifully warm in the sun, a light mist hovered on the mountains ; we plodded on, sinking in here and there, but we felt the worst was over, though the heat in the glacier basin was becoming quite unbearable. Up on Nepal Peak we could see two black dots and we wondered if they could be Wien and Göttnner. After an hour they had moved only a very small distance and we realised that up there too things had not gone quite as one would have wished.

WIEN AND GÖTTNER ON NEPAL PEAK

In the afternoon of the previous day they had gone astray in the mist and had not gained much in height. At about 23,000 feet they found an ice grotto and there " in the hall of the mountain king " they settled in

Between Twins and Tent Peak

comfortably and made themselves seats out of great lumps of hard snow. It was a cold night (10°C . below zero in the grotto), but they had a good night. "Towards morning we fell asleep from sheer exhaustion," Wien wrote in his diary, "but we had to start off at four o'clock so as to have the summit slope behind us before sunrise, for we had to be on the steep rise of Tent Peak early enough to enable us to tackle the difficult parts in good light. We had dreaded the idea of a second bivouac on the way down, but this was more bearable now that we had our ice grotto.

"We took only one rucksack, some food and a rope, then we put on our crampons and off we went. All the fresh snow slipping from the summit rocks settles on this slope and the morning hours of sunshine are too short here to melt down the snow sufficiently for the cold of night-time to freeze it hard, and we found it still very loose and powdery. So, five paces from our cave, sinking in far above our knees, we had to set to work stamping out a track. Although we changed over every ten yards, the work was too tiring for us to make any rapid progress.

"After sunrise we halted for breakfast and to bring back to life Adi's right foot, which was cold and numb, and it was nine o'clock before we reached the gap east of the central peak. These two hundred yards had taken us four hours. Even if conditions on the ridge had been better, it would still have been too late now for Tent Peak, but in any case we saw in the next few minutes that the gap, the peak and the ridge were covered with deep powdery snow still undisturbed by wind.

"As we stood on the peak, a sheet of mist lay below us to the south-east, about 22,000 feet high, from which Siniolchum just emerged. Kangchenjunga reigned supreme; we could plainly see the summit ridge extending from Sugarloaf. Twins lay in front of it, the higher parts of the steep and sharp north ridge reaching down to Nepal Gap surmounted by huge snow-bosses.

"To the west lay Nepal, which has a much smaller rainfall and fewer glaciers, and in the far distance stood Mount Everest. The ridge on which we were standing reached towards the west over a snow-peak and ended in an extraordinarily sharp and steep dome of névé. At ten o'clock, after a long rest, we set off again to climb higher to the north-east summit

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of Nepal Peak so that we could at least have another glance at Tent Peak and study the course and structure of the ridge.

“ About fifty feet below the summit, just as I was stamping out a way in the deep snow on the knife-like ridge, fourteen to fifteen feet of the north-west side of the ridge suddenly broke off, the eighteen-inch-thick layer of snow shot down, tore away with it a small slab of snow from the upper slope, a larger one from below, and carried them down like a great avalanche. We watched it hurtle right down into the valley. The lower layer of snow which remained was also not yet hard and Adi, who was belaying, received another shock when with a second crack a further lump of the slope broke away and part of the snow which was supporting him glided into the depths.

“ To make our progress safe we should have to dig to a depth of more than three feet to reach firm ground, a task for which we now had neither the time nor the energy. So we had to content ourselves with the first Nepal Peak. It was Göttner's first 'twenty-three-thousander' and my highest.”

• As darkness was falling Wien and Göttner, dead tired, dragged themselves across the glacier to the tents.

FORTY-TWO HOURS' SNOW

On the same evening signs of storm, familiar to me from previous years, had appeared in the western sky above Nepal Gap ; I could tell from the peculiar colouring of the sky and the wisps of cloud that we were in for a heavy fall of snow and we got everything ready overnight for an immediate return to Camp III on the following morning.

10th September, 1936. Snow began to fall during the night and continued all the day ; we had to get back at once if we were not to find ourselves cut off, but the porters whom we had sent down to Camp III had not yet returned, although they should have been back on the previous day. So that no time should be lost, Wien and Hepp started off at once, carrying heavy loads, to blaze a trail before the snow was too deep. Göttner and I stayed behind to follow with the porters.

NEPAL PEAK

TENT PEAK

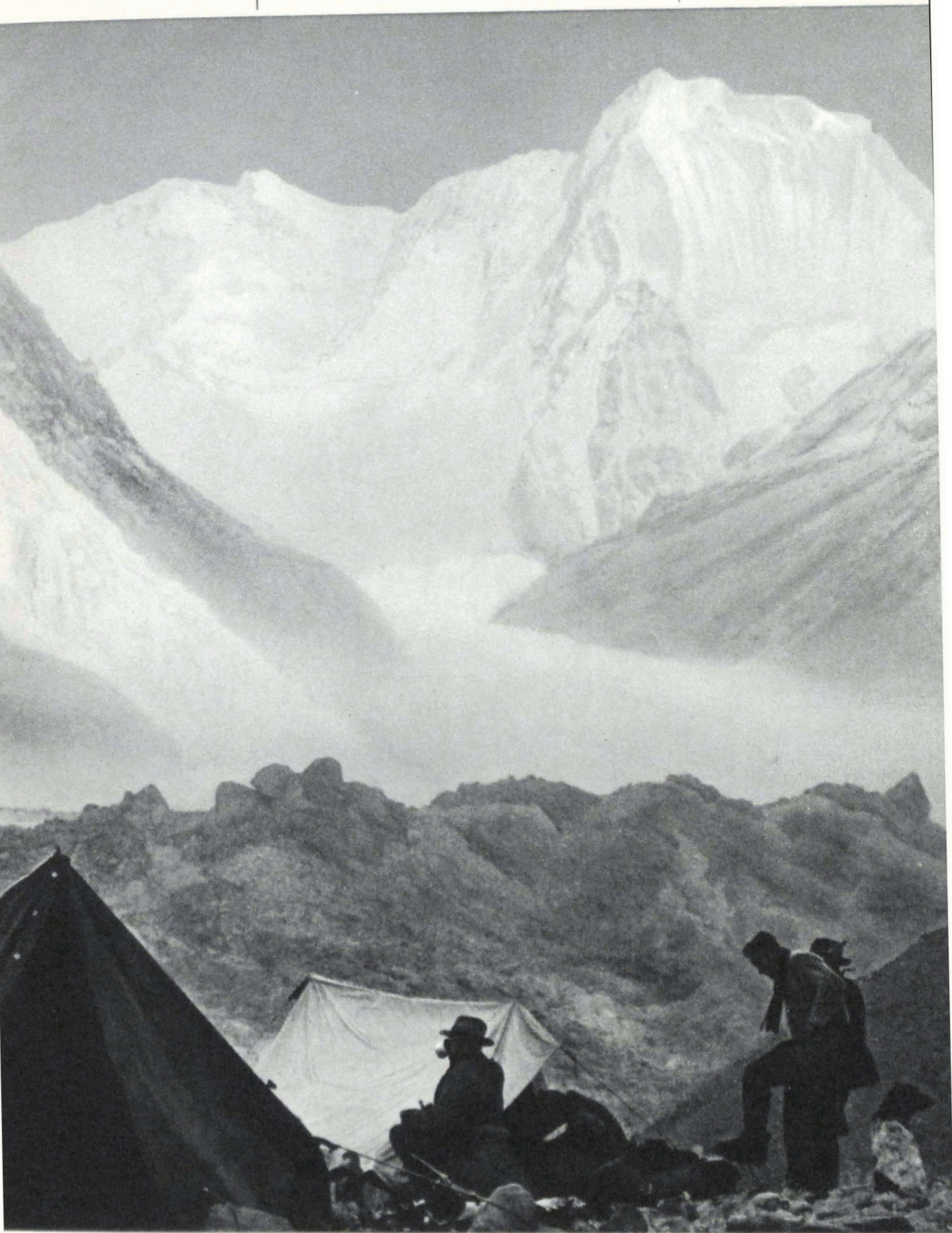


PLATE 29. *Tent Peak (24,089 feet) as seen from the lower Nepal Gap gla*



PLATE 30. Sugarloaf (c. 21,150 feet) as seen from the upper Nepal Gap glacier

NORTH-EAST SPUR

PEAK 2

MAIN SUMMIT

PLATE 33. On Nepal Peak (23,500 feet) with Kangbenjunga in the background

PEAK 4

THE TWINS



PEAK 4 OF KANGCHENJUNGA

PEAK 5 OF KANGCHENJUNGA

WHITE WAVE

CHAMLANG,
24,012 FEET

MAKALU, LHOTSE, MOUNT EVEREST
27,790 F 27,890 F 29,002 F

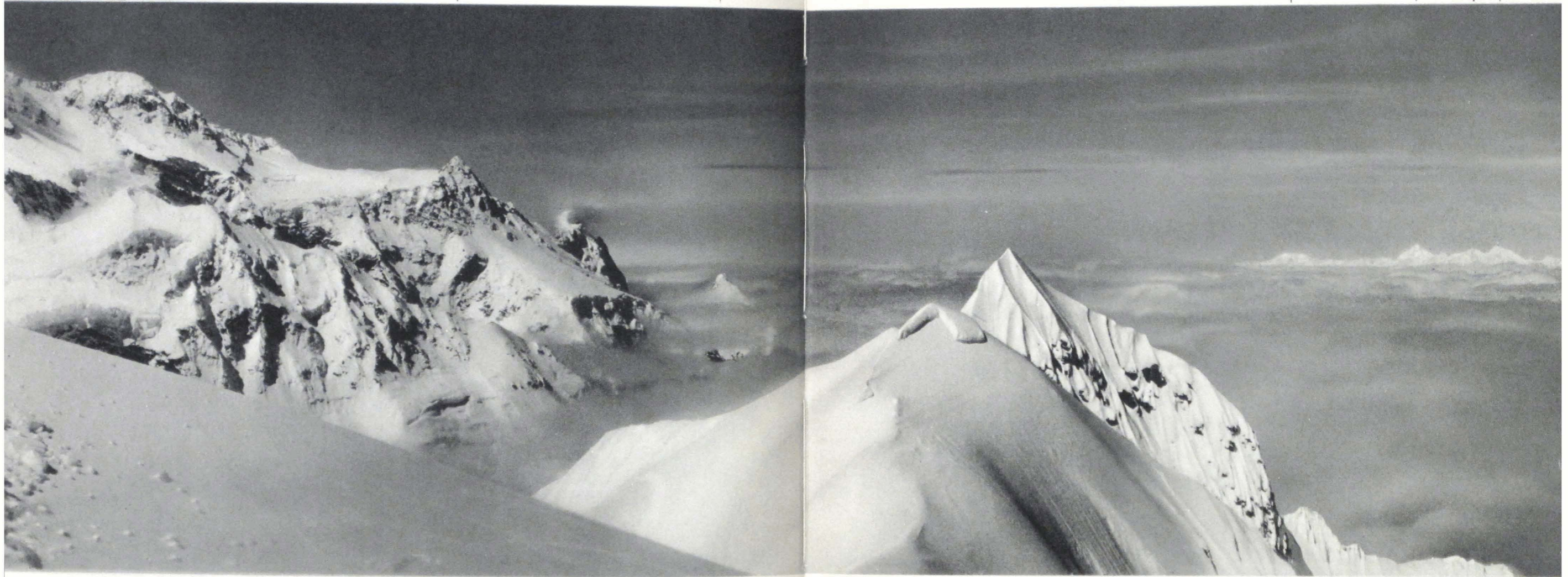


PLATE 34, PLATE 35. *View from Nyal Peak, showing Kangchenjunga and Everest*



PLATE 36. *View towards Nepal from Nepal Gap*

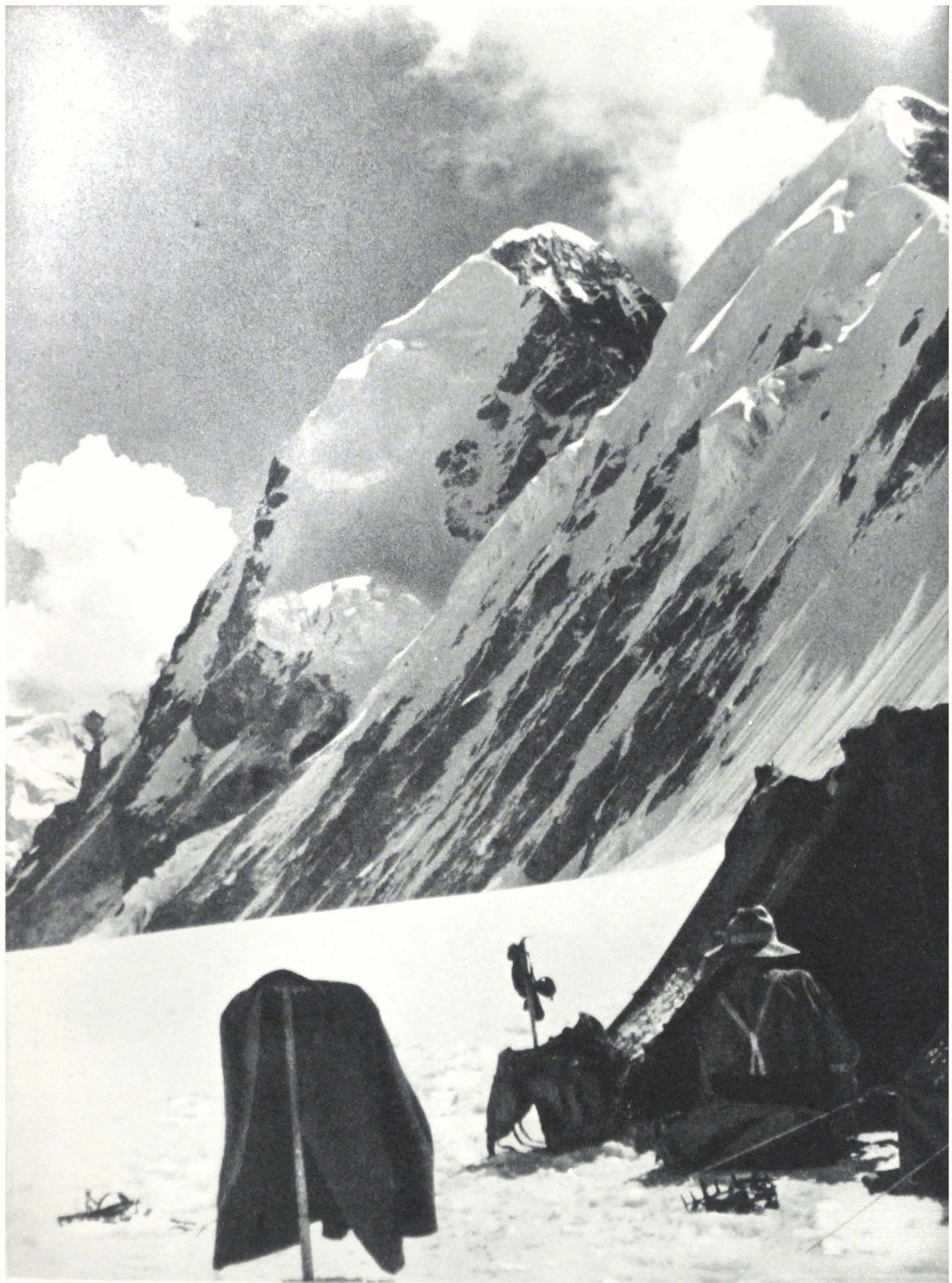


PLATE 31. *The camp below Nepal Gap, with Sugarloaf in the background.*



PLATE 32. *The north ridge of the first summit of The Twins (c. 23,000 feet) as seen from Nepal Gap (20,013 feet)*

Between Twins and Tent Peak

After some hours the porters arrived ; they had lost their way and had had to bivouac on the other side of the glacier. They were naturally tired, but it was essential that we should get down as soon as possible and they understood. Tents were packed up and then we set off after the others. But we did not reach Camp III that day, for we had to halt above Green Lake. The snow was incessant ; it pressed upon the tents during the night and on the following morning it lay a good two feet deep—and was still falling.

We were now experiencing one of those heavy snowstorms which occur regularly in this district in September and October. It snowed for a good forty-two hours without a single break and then, after clearing up for only a few hours, rain set in, which again lasted for three days. We were in desperate straits, for more than half the time at our disposal had already passed. Everywhere this year we had been frustrated by bad weather. But with grim determination we remained faithful to our ideal and tried to make the best of things.

CAMP LIFE

A few extracts from Günther Hepp's diary show how we passed the time :

12th September, 1936. Wastl is lying curled up at our feet, keeping us warm ; he is blinking a lot, for his eyes have been inflamed by the glare from the glaciers. Outside it is snowing and water is dripping through the tent. The last sheep is running about in the snow, no doubt feeling the cold. Water is gushing through the tent and we have set about digging a channel for it. I keep thinking of home.

Mambahadur came to us this morning and told us that the porters' tent had collapsed during the night under the weight of the snow ; we dug it out again and then had our breakfast of roast mutton, eggs and coffee.

* * * *

I have just been outside ; it is still snowing, and there is a west wind. The mountain which towers immediately above us here is snow-covered

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right down to the level of the camp. There is still nothing to be seen of our comrades. Karlo, who is squatting opposite me, is writing furiously in his diary and making notes of the weather. We are feeling the cold a little and now and again we hum the familiar Sikkim National Anthem, which has been enriched by a few more lines, all variations on the original theme. Karlo says he's going home if the weather doesn't improve.

* * * *

At about two o'clock Nima Tsering appeared, wet through but smiling. "Sab coming," he said. Then came Mingma, our youngest porter, also in good spirits. The Sherpas are always first, and I have never known them to be anything but cheerful and willing. They are always at hand when they are wanted, whether it be to light a fire with damp wood or to perform some similarly unpleasant task. Their race, which is difficult to define, has a predominant Mongolian strain, but one also sees faces which look very European. Whatever they are, they are the most tireless workers, the best porters and the loyalest comrades among all the Himalayan people.

Ten minutes later Adi appeared with a dripping beard, laughing, cursing and telling us that they had been nearly up to their waists in soft snow all the way from the camp above Green Lake. Still laughing, he pointed in the direction of Green Lake and we saw the Captain coming through the pouring rain. He presented the queerest sight. His hair—he had no hat on—was hanging round his face like a little boy's, his big boots were in his rucksack as they had got so heavy from all the floundering in the snow, and he was walking in his socks. He laughingly told us that he only felt discomfort when he had to wade through a cold stream.

Soon we were sitting together drying our things and chatting. Then we had a meal and worked at our letters.

13th September, 1936. Still snowing. I got out my outfit for blood examinations and prepared to take tests, a procedure which was regarded differently according to temperament. One would shriek out about the "huge hole" I had made in the top of his little finger, while another would nonchalantly hold out his finger and go on writing. We worked

Between Twins and Tent Peak

desperately to improve our shelter, the Captain built a primitive hearth, a fourth wall was added to our house, a door was erected and a lamp rigged up. But our position remained critical, for the two Bhutias said they were ill and wanted to go to Darjeeling ; so far as I could tell from a superficial examination Mingma had a slight chill and Purba was suffering from sore feet. No doubt they had had enough of snow and bivouacking on glaciers and it was a case of flight into illness. The cook and the Sirdar came to blows, as they both wanted to go to Darjeeling, and it looked for a while as if we should be without porters by the morning. However, the Captain talked them over and they agreed to stay at least for the present.

We shall see how things stand to-morrow.

14th September, 1936. Still snowing. The whole camp is white with snow. We busied ourselves making plans, writing letters and counting our exchequer. We let the two Bhutias go ; they didn't get on very well with the Sherpas and they were obviously not morally equal to such hardships as our projects involve. But the cook and the Sirdar have calmed down and our two Sherpas are sticking to their guns. Our plans now have to be made on a basis of only two porters.

In the evening our stove burned merrily and we forgot for a while all the unhappy circumstances which were thwarting our plans. The Captain and I conversed in southern dialect, which greatly amused the others ! " Der Ove racht e bissche, awer's Feia brennt " (" The stove is smoking a bit, but the fire's burning ") and " Pass uff, dass de de Haafe nit umschmeisst " (" Look out you don't have the whole lot over "). We thought of home and discussed the glories of country life, and the Captain and I waxed enthusiastic over a plan to devote the rest of our lives to the compilation of an exhaustive encyclopædia of wines. When the smoke from the stove became too unbearable we retired to the tent with slight headaches, obviously due to the carbon dioxide.

15th September, 1936. The snow has turned to rain and the covering of snow around the camp has partially vanished. Adi and I on the Captain's instructions went with Mingma and Nima to the first Twins

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camp to fetch the loads which Karlo and I had left there. Half-way up the rain turned to snow again and we were soon deep in it ; I led and found myself thinking of home, of Nanga Parbat and of the University. When there are no distractions and I can hear nothing but my own heart-beats, my thoughts always turn to the world which we build within ourselves. In the white monotony of the gently sloping Green Lake Plain, a mist-enveloped scene unchanged for countless ages, my thoughts seemed to take concrete form and strengthened my will to love and to despise, to work and to struggle. However, the exigencies of the present and my gradually increasing fatigue claimed my wandering thoughts and forced them to concentrate on the bed of the stream through which we had to wade. We rested a while at Green Lake, shared our food with the porters and watched a little bird pursue and devour a butterfly. In these white wastes everything took on an air of unreality. I tried to go on but sank in the snow up to my knees. From the crest of the moraine I viewed the snow-covered Zemu glacier. It had stopped snowing for the moment, and we soon felt the warmth of the sun as it shone through the clouds. The Zemu glacier lay like a sea of frozen foam, manacled yet suggestive of vast hidden powers. The outlook was bad ; the porters had sore eyes ; Mingma said, "No good, Sab," and pointed to the dark, threatening sky. We turned back, floundered through snow and water and trudged across the moraine ; soon it was raining in torrents and the porters were wet through. It was five o'clock before we were again in camp crowding round our little stove, and in spite of the weather's cheerless prospect we again spent an evening such as can be experienced only by men who are thrown together somewhere far from home but who have home ever in their thoughts.

16th September, 1936. Four inches of fresh snow have fallen here in the camp and it is dripping through the tents. We have done much eating, mending and planning. Every day we have to revise our plans, for the time at our disposal is gradually getting shorter and we have to make new arrangements to get the most out of the few days left to us.

At four o'clock in the afternoon the snow once more turned to rain

Between Twins and Tent Peak

and it poured in torrents. I examined Adi, who has a frightful cold, but found nothing but naso-pharyngeal catarrh. In spite of an occasional fit of depression inflicted on us by the bad weather, we are in good spirits and have not given up hope. We raised the temperature of our "salon" to 16° C. this evening and on the whole we are feeling fit. At nine o'clock when we turned in the rain had stopped and we dared to hope for sunshine.

The Ascent of Siniolchum

WHEN THE SUN SHINES AND SUCCESS lends wings to one's step, it is not difficult to be a good companion, but the sun had smiled upon us for a few hours a day at the most, and there had been whole weeks when she had favoured us not at all.

For days on end we had struggled on together in rain and snow, or one of us would go on ahead and blaze a trail for the others to follow. It had now become impossible to carry out many of the plans we had prepared and none of the projects which we had already undertaken in the vicinity of the Zemu glacier had been altogether successful.

Not many teams could have stood up to all this bad weather and the frustration of such carefully prepared plans, but Göttner, Hepp and Wien were such splendid fellows that this run of bad luck only served to bind us more closely together. During our time on the Zemu glacier there had been many occasions when one would show the other that he could understand, make allowances, unquestioningly help and silently overlook certain things, and a bond of fellowship had grown between us such as can occur only rarely in a lifetime.

The spirit that lived among us had been refined by misfortune and had developed into something very splendid. We were determined to wait indefinitely if necessary or to take a chance should any possibility arise. It was bound to clear up some time and everything depended upon our being prepared when that time came.

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back and one sinks down to the knees or even farther in the crunching snow with every step. As the morning advanced conditions did not improve, the heat and the glare added to our discomfort and at midday we had to stop. We pitched our camp hoping that the snow would be more manageable on the morrow. Now and again an avalanche would growl down the mountainside, but those immediately resulting from the last great snowfall had, for the most part, already settled. The first and the second ice-falls had to be negotiated on the following day and, warned by our recent experience, we stamped out a track in the soft snow of the first in the afternoon, in the hope of being able to climb in it without effort early on the following morning. Wien and Göttner were in the best form and they undertook this task.

21st September, 1936. We struck camp while it was still dark and at 4.45, at the first glimmer of dawn, we started off. In the trail which had been prepared on the previous day we quickly and almost effortlessly negotiated the first ice-fall. To our left the summit of Siniolchum pointed heavenward, a fantastic sight in the grey light of early morning. However, we had no time for contemplation for, if we were going to reach Siniolchum with our small supplies of provisions and fuel, the second ice-fall still had to be negotiated. The supplies we had deposited on the plateau at the foot of Siniolchum could not be recovered; we found the right spot and made every effort to reach our things but could not penetrate the snow, the depth of which had increased by a good six feet since we had been here on our last attempt, exactly a month ago, an indication of the immensity of the masses deposited upon the glaciers in Sikkim during the summer monsoon.

We trudged over the level part of the glacier, envying Wastl's ability to move without breaking through. The ice-fall which confronted us was steep and we were still not sure how we were going to negotiate it. Wien and Göttner went on ahead to seek a way through while Hepp and I followed with the porters. Twice we had to rope up the porters and the loads, a difficult job with the weights we were carrying. At last, all thoroughly exhausted, we reached the little glacier plateau, directly below the vertical east face of Little Siniolchum, and now for the first time we

PLATE 37. On the Siniolobum glacier, with a view towards the north





PLATE 38. The great snow arête on the far side of the gap

PLATE 39. *The two brave Sherpas, Nima and Mingma, with Günther Hepp*



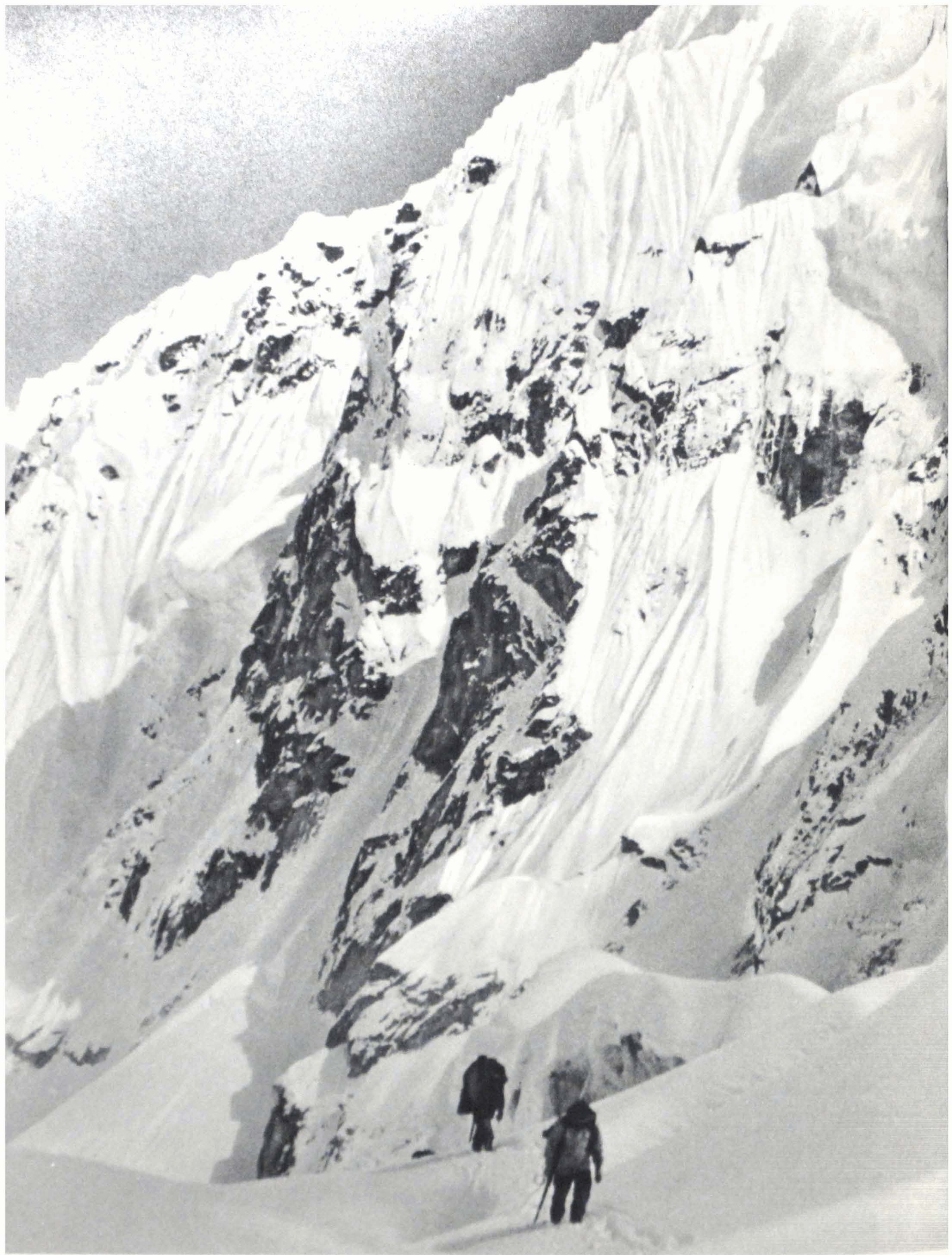


PLATE 40. *On the upper terrace of the Siniolchum glacier*



PLATE 41. *The steep ice-fall between the upper terrace of the Siniolchum glacier and the*

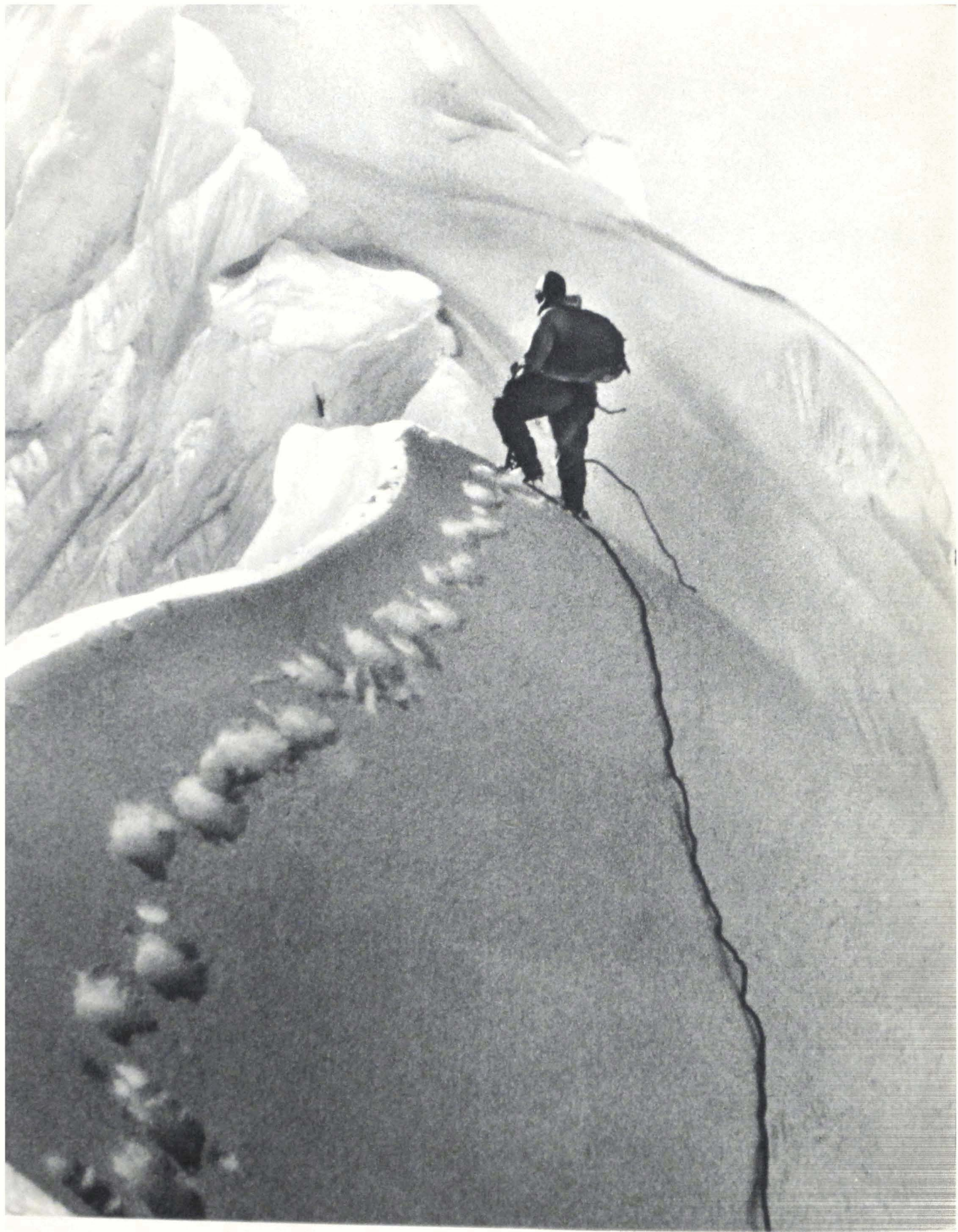
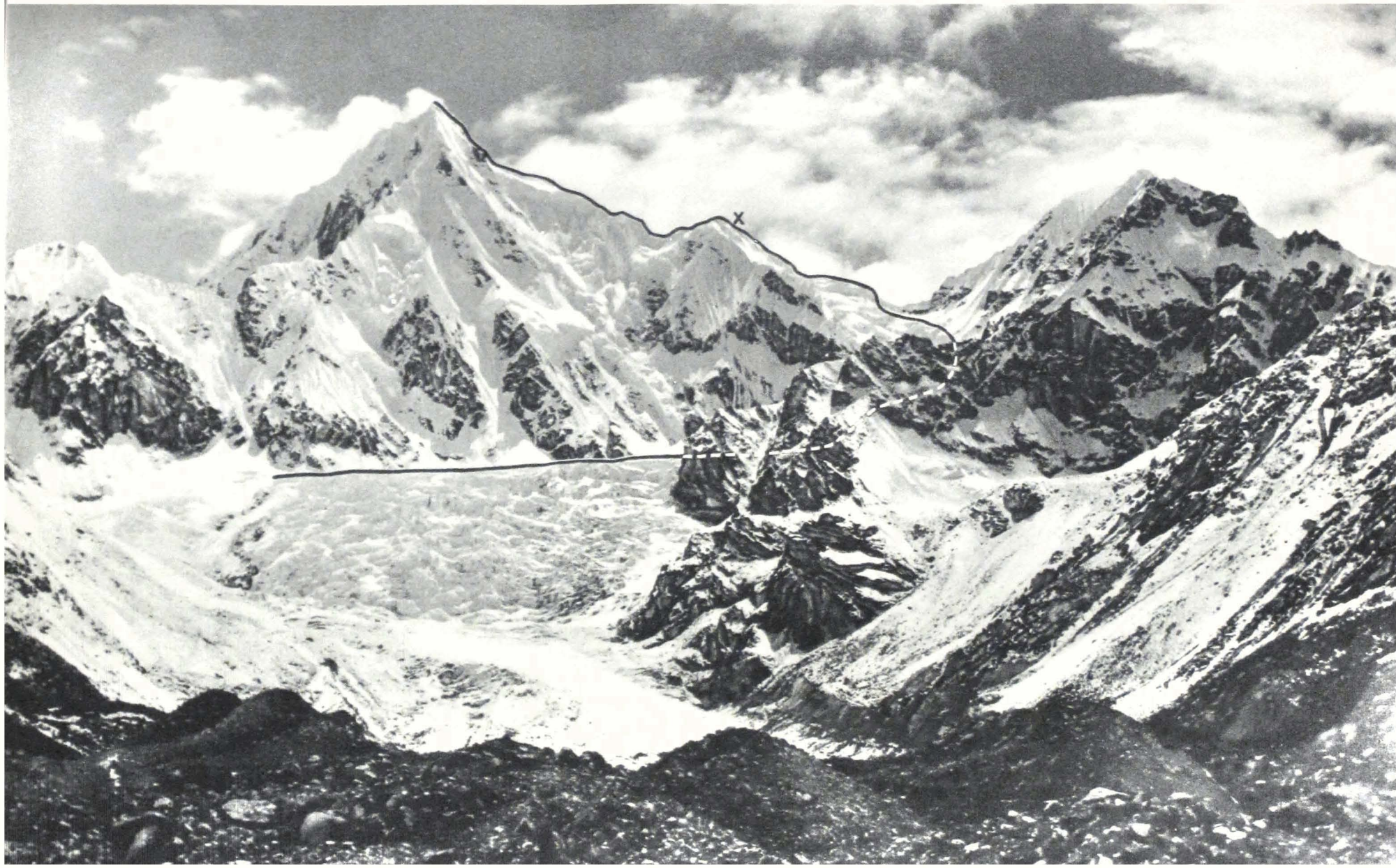


PLATE 42. *On the north-west ridge of Siniolchum*



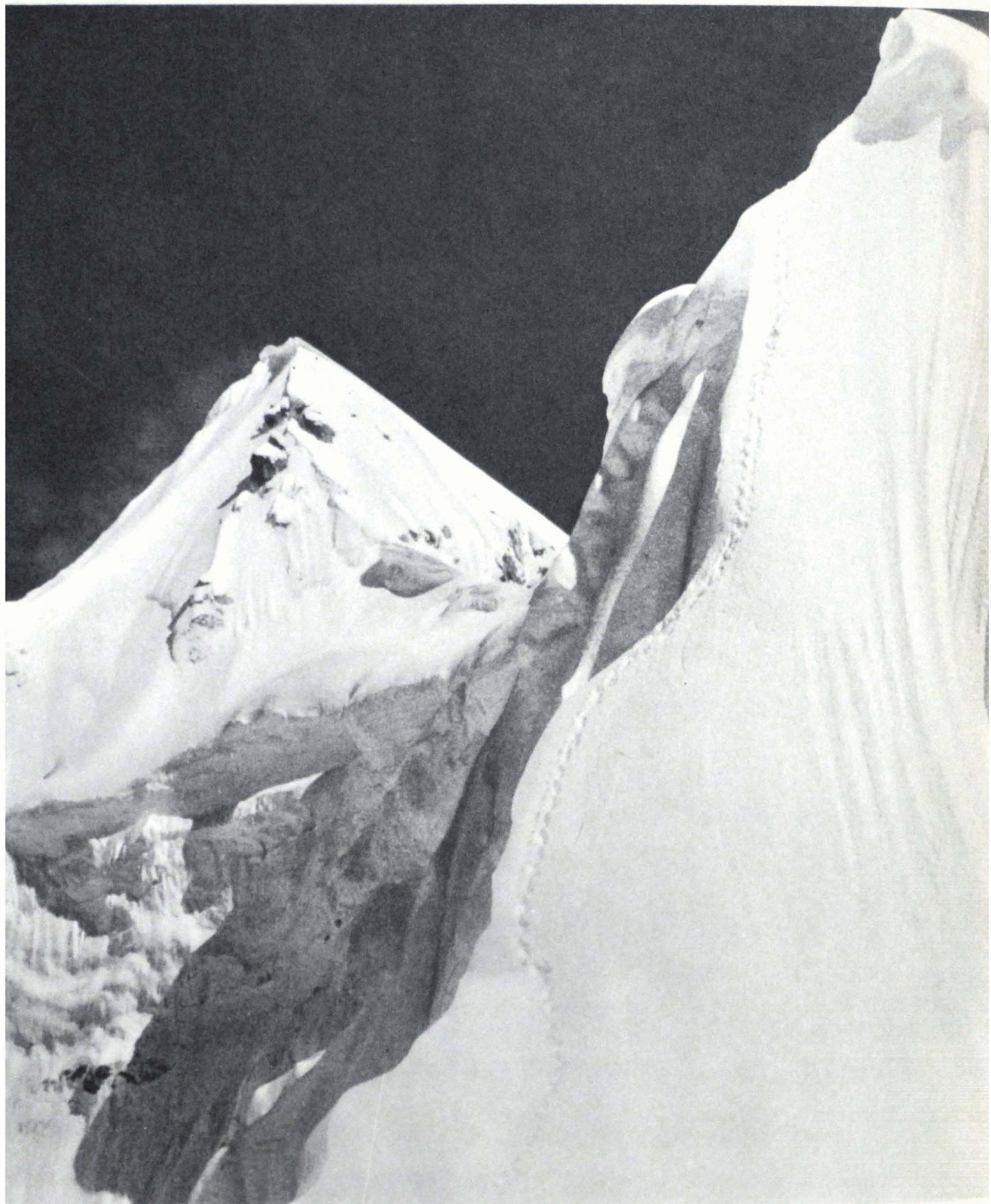


PLATE 44. *Göttner and Wien (the two black specks) approaching the summit. Taken from the gap on the far side of the fore-peak*

The Ascent of Siniolchum

could see into the ice corridor through which we should have to climb up to Siniolchum. It was eleven to twelve hundred feet high, incredibly steep, comparable with the north face of the Dent d'Herens. Here we should have to leave the porters on the following morning and go on alone with only light loads, the Zdarsky sack and a small Meta stove.

22nd September, 1936. The morning was clear, a fine day for our attack on Siniolchum and the snow held well. By 5.45 we were ready—having eaten the last warm meal we should have for some few days—and started our trudge upwards. As we penetrated into the north corner, the snow became deep and powdery, but we were not in danger of an avalanche. Göttner went intrepidly ahead up the steep slope where the ice was covered with only a thin layer of soft snow, without cutting steps, often the best way of overcoming a stretch of this kind, but we were more cautious and cut steps, and, of course, by the time we had moved upwards more snow had slipped away. Then began a precarious traverse round an ice tower and then some ploughing through deep, loose snow. Every twenty yards we had to stop for breath, but finally we had these steep drops behind us.

We were now not far below the gap, but did not consider it advisable to approach it directly as we were confronted by a very steep wall of fluted névé. We wound up narrow terraces now to the left, now a little to the right, and gained height in this way. Wien was carried down with a small avalanche, but we all realised at once that he was in no danger. At last we were able to force our way through the cornice on to the ridge. We stopped to rest and were soon joined by Wastl; how he had got up these steep walls of ice was quite beyond our understanding. We had chased him back at the beginning of the ice corridor, but it seemed that he had been following us at a respectful distance, unobserved. Now we had to take him with us for better or worse. We were a little anxious about him, for the ridge was dangerous—very steep and heavily cornice-crowned. We hoped he would stop at the steepest part—which rose at an angle of at least 70° —and follow our tracks back to the tents, but Wastl showed great ability in getting a firm grip in the steps with his fore-paws and he continued to follow us unconcernedly.

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Our necessarily careful progress on the sharp cornice-crowned ridge took time and as we stood beneath the overhanging snow-bosses of the fore-peak night began to fall. In a yawning cleft stretching horizontally beneath the cornice we levelled out a resting place and covered ourselves with our two Zdarsky sacks, Wien and Göttner in one, Hepp and I in the other. The little Meta stove was set going and we prepared a warm drink, carefully sheltering the small flame from the wind. A drop of thousands of feet fell on either side of us, the precipices down to the Passanram valley to the south being even longer and steeper than those to the north down to the Siniolchum glacier. The night had an inexpressible grandeur, Kangchenjunga dominating the scene with its magnificence. We gazed upon its north-east spur over which we had struggled for weeks, nay, months on end, in 1929 and 1931. The mountain towered supreme above all others ; even in the depth of night when all light had faded from the sky our gaze was irresistibly drawn to its mighty form.

The night was chilly ; I was on the outside and caught the full force of the cold north-east wind. Between waking, sleeping and shivering, strange, detached thoughts came and went.

At five o'clock dawn began to break, Kangch receiving the first light of day. We shook the heaviness of night from our limbs and prepared to start off again. We quickly reached the fore-peak, for Wien and Göttner had already hacked away the snow-bosses on the previous evening while Hepp and I were preparing the bivouac. The bosses on the fore-peak extended in some places to a width of twenty feet and our progress was threatened by the sheer precipices into the Passanram valley on the one hand and the danger of snow breaking and falling from the bosses on the other, and it was not until we had laboured for several hours that we reached the gap on the far side of the fore-peak.

It was now eight o'clock, and a very steep and difficult ridge—a height of a good 1500 feet and a horizontal distance of at least 1000 yards—still lay between us and the summit of Siniolchum, and it became clear that we were unlikely to reach the summit at all if we pursued our present method of assault ; this meant that from here onwards the two best of us, unhampered by rucksacks, would have to make a quick and

The Ascent of Siniolchum

concentrated attack and the other two would have to renounce all ambitions of reaching the summit but hold themselves ready to follow up with bivouacking material and food should the others be unable to get down again in time.

Hepp and I stayed behind ; Göttner and Wien were in the best condition and they set themselves to tackle the great slope which swings up immediately from the gap. This kept them occupied for a long time ; the last part of it looked terribly exposed and dangerous ; then they disappeared from view and it was not until just before twelve o'clock that we once more caught sight of them. They stood at the end of the ridge at the foot of the summit wall, which they then began to climb—an exciting spectacle. We lived through it with them ; the snow on the steep face was shifting and dangerous . . . a passage of smooth rock forced them into the middle of the wall . . . we breathed again when they had once more reached the small sharp ridge on the left, and then, nearly choking with excitement, we watched them as they again had to traverse from here through the apex of the summit triangle to a rib lying to the south-east. The first man hacked away, cleaving a gap in the cornice through which we below could see the blue of the sky ; then he hoisted himself up, and with that they were within reach of their goal. In a few minutes the second man had joined him ; another few minutes and they stood on the summit.

HOW WIEN AND GÖTTNER REACHED THE SUMMIT

This memorable climb is recorded by Wien in his diary as follows :

Beyond the gap on the other side of the fore-peak (see photographs 43 and 44) a very difficult stretch confronted us—a very steep slope rising for 200 feet—which cost us a good deal of time. Göttner and I set to work. We had decided that I should lead to the spot where there was a small shelf and that Göttner should then lead up to the snow-bosses. My part up to the shelf turned out to be quite innocuous, however, just a question of stamping out a track in good, workable, deep snow. Then

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Adi had to climb for nearly two ropes' length in very difficult steep névé ; however, it was possible to kick out good steps without a great deal of exertion. The most difficult parts were the last ten yards over the ridge and hewing a breach through the snow-bosses. Here we had to make sure of every single step, for to the right and to the left the ridge broke away steeply ; the upper part of the Zemu side was in fact vertical ; however, it was broad enough for us to make good steps.

The cornices demanded a considerable amount of axe work before Adi could hoist himself up to the top of the tower. This cost us fifty minutes. I followed, but after climbing through could find no way of getting past Adi, so incredibly steeply did the ridge continue to fall on either side. This particular spot was more perilous and completely exposed than I have ever seen on any ice ridge in the Alps. The Passanram precipices—on this side one had to hold oneself in to avoid the overhanging cornice—were by far the most rugged and steep I have ever known, and as soon as we reached the summit massif we saw that the Zemu side was no less steep. For two or three ropes we worked our way forward, carefully belaying, and then, having gained confidence from our experience, we were able to move together again.

Now the ridge gave place to larger terraces, rising steeply in steps, and here again lay soft, powdery snow, but although we were in it to above our ankles, we made quite good progress. A broad, gently sloping terrace and a long cornice-crowned section of ridge both led to the summit massif and we had to decide which course we should take. The ridge led right up to the summit slope itself, so we decided on the ridge. It was very sharp and overhung with cornices which partly extended over to the Passanram side, while all the other cornices projected consistently towards the north. There was still a great deal of snow work to do before we reached the ridge, and even when we stood at its foot, sinking into the deep snow, the summit slope was still far away. Lacking any standards by which to judge, it seemed to us very high and, on examination, alarmingly steep, and our spirits drooped. Mechanically we pressed on. We took it in turns to stamp out the track, taking a rope's length each, and at the foot of the ridge we rested and took some refreshment ; then

The Ascent of Siniolchum

we plodded on to the end of the ridge. Now, seen near to, the summit slope looked short and easy. "We've got it, Adi!" "You're right, Karlo. It can't escape us now!"

It was twelve o'clock when we tackled the steep slope of névé, still taking turns with the trail-making. Adi went first. It was possible to kick out steps, but in an attempt to reach a rib to the right he came to snow lying on rock. I now climbed farther in the gully, up past him, and thus he too was able to reach a safe stance again. The third rope took us to below the great rock, the fourth in an arduous traverse on a thin layer of frozen snow upon ice along beneath it, and the fifth once more in very steep névé to a conical mass of hard snow above the rock.

Now we reached a short snow ridge which led to below the snow-bosses which crowned the summit. A rather difficult stretch fell to my lot. Adi remained at the spot from which it seemed that a traverse to the right would lead to a possible position for climbing through the snow-bosses. The traverse was arduous; floury snow lay on ice, and the bosses had to be hacked through from a very poor position. However, Adi was soon able to draw himself up by means of his ice-axe. I followed and, passing him, trod the excessively steep southern slope which ended in the snow-bosses which crowned the summit. Our eighth rope took us over the steep but hard snow. The first prominence, which on our ascent had always looked like the sharp-edged summit, still lay to the left and our way continued over a second prominence; we did not attempt to stand upon the highest point—a far overhanging snow-boss.

Here we were, surrounded by the wildest of the wild Himalayas—the deeply furrowed south ridge, the incredible north precipices, sheer ice on smooth rock and the precipitous and exposed spot upon which we stood. The wild savagery of the scene was profoundly impressive. We exchanged a yodel with our friends in the gap below, the Swastika and the Union Jack were fastened to an ice-axe and brandished in the air, a handshake, and then we began to descend as rapidly as possible. The sun was turning and now shone straight on to our path; we had to get down before the ground was softened.

At round about two o'clock we again climbed through the snow-bosses;

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the two ropes' lengths taking us past the great rock required extreme caution, but we achieved the beginning of the ridge in less than an hour and a half. Here we took a short rest ; the sea of clouds had risen, but the highest peaks still showed above it. Kangch with the sun behind it was once again the most beautiful. When we had the summit slope behind us, we saw Bauer and Hepp leave their place in the gap and climb down over the fore-peak. We continued in our own tracks. The snow on the western side of the ridge was soft and sticky, it clung to one's feet and demanded care. The 200-foot slope was quite manageable on the descent and we were able to kick good steps in the steep part. What joy when we reached the gap and found a flask of water there which Bauer and Hepp had prepared for us with their capes ! *

It was five o'clock and we were finding our way over the fore-peak easy. Our friends had carefully trodden out steps for us while the snow was soft ; now it was hard and, not having to concentrate so single-mindedly on our path, we could pay more attention to our glorious surroundings, particularly to Kangch and to the fantastic rosy clouds in the south. Five years ago, almost to the day, we had begun our retreat from the spur summit of Kangchenjunga. At six o'clock as darkness was falling we arrived at the bivouac place. The night was again clear, but our over-tired limbs did not find much relaxation in the very constricted space offered by the Zdarsky sacks and we waited long for morning to come.

In spite of cold, fatigue and hunger, we were filled with a wonderful happiness and joy. Freshfield, after seeing this mountain on which we now stood, had written : " Inaccessible ! For my own generation I am not afraid to use the word. But others will come, and, standing on our shoulders, will boast, as men did in Homer's day, that they are much better than their fathers. Who can tell ? The story of the Alps and Caucasus seems to show that every virgin peak must sooner or later meet with its conqueror." Our feelings were different during the long watches

* Previous German expeditions had evolved a simple method of producing water from snow without using fuel. They spread out their waterproof capes and sprinkled them with snow, which quickly melted in the sun.

The Ascent of Siniolchum

of the night. We recalled the first time we had seen Siniolchum. It was eight years ago, after our first night in a little hollow down on the moraine of the Zemu glacier ; at daybreak a few of us had gone down to the stream and, rising above the high wall of the moraine, there appeared to us a vision, ethereal, like the topmost battlements of a fairy castle, reaching into unknown heights. We stood spellbound in the virginal stillness of the mountains in early morning ; we felt we were standing in the midst of wide, untravelled reaches of a secret land, and for some minutes it seemed to us as if the supernatural had taken tangible shape. That which we seek and strive for yet only vaguely sense and can never fully realise seemed at that moment embodied in the purest clarity. So on this day the mountain still stood before us ; that we had reached its summit seemed to us a divine favour which filled us with happiness and gratitude, and all that we had seen and experienced during the hours of our struggle upon its slopes only deepened our reverence for Nature and all God's creation.

24th September, 1936. Our descent had to be made quickly, for in the event of bad weather our chances of getting down safely were very small. At 5.30 we descended in the firmly frozen steps from our bivouac down over the ridge, Wien and Göttner in front, Günther and I following. The dog caused us a great deal of anxiety, but we were unable to help him. The descent was too difficult and after two nights of bivouacking we no longer had the strength to carry him down. He had patiently spent the previous day at the bivouac place as he could not get through the snow-bosses.

However, he now evolved his own method. Just as we had got to the first difficult place—I, last man, was just moving down—Wastl appeared above. Obviously he had thought the matter over and had waited until I was standing on the most difficult spot. I for my part had already sensed what was going to happen. I rammed in my ice-axe and then—down came Wastl from above, half sliding, half jumping ; he landed on my shoulders, then turned to the left and jumped down to Günther Hepp. He subsequently disposed of all difficult passages in the same

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manner, using us as his springboard. Although at times he was imperilling our very lives we couldn't feel angry with him ; we could only rejoice in his resourcefulness and feel glad that by this means he was able to get down safely with us.

The descent was accomplished well and quickly and Mingma and Nima greeted us with joy. They had followed every detail of the climb to the summit and were thrilled. And then, in the afternoon, when the worst of the heat was over, we descended the upper ice-fall while Mingma in his high spirits emulated Wastl's tactics. Heedless of danger and with childlike impetuosity, he took his load in his hands and, with a wild cry, let himself slide down the first ice wall. Then we plodded on for some hours in the softened snow, which was terribly tiring, until we reached our pitch. It was warm but snowing.

25th September, 1936. Towards nine o'clock, after a deep and glorious sleep, we started off. The snow had softened right through to the ground, but our way lay downwards and that lightened our task. Quite early it began to snow again in thick wet flakes and it seemed as if once more bad weather had set in.



PLATE 45. *Simolchum* '22,620 feet', as seen from the Stone Gap (c. 18,600 feet).



PLATE 46. *The summit of Siniolchum telescopically photographed from Camp III*



PLATE 47. *Pandim* (22,010 feet), as seen from the fore-peak of *Siniolcbum* (c. 21,250 feet).

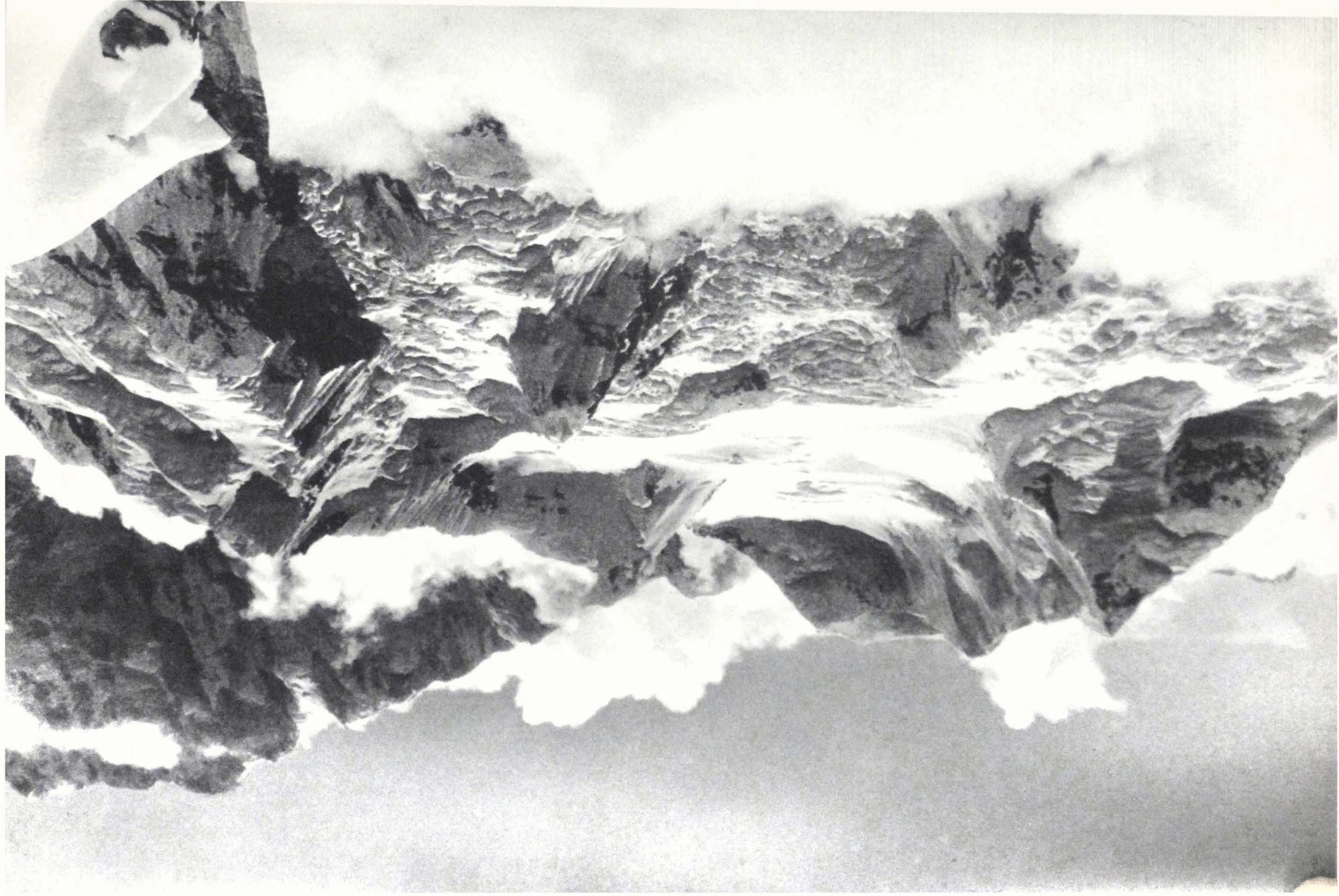


PLATE 48. The Simvu group and Kangchenjunga, as seen from the fore-peak of Sinitolbum
(c. 21,250 feet)



PLATE 49. *Kangchenjunga* (28,146 feet) and the main summit of *The Twins* (c. 24,100 feet) as seen from the fore-peak of *Siniolchum* (c. 21,250 feet). To the left, below *Kangchenjunga*, is the north-east summit of *Simvu*



PLATE 50. *En route with heavy loads*



PLATE 51. *The ascent of Simvu, seen from the Stone Gap (c. 18,600*



PLATE 52. Heavy going on the way to Simvu

The Ascent of Simvu and Farewell to Kangchenjunga

WE HAD BY NO MEANS SAVOURED OUR joy over Siniolchum to the full, but the present was no time for leisured contemplation ; we should have to postpone this luxury. Fortune seemed to be favouring us and for the present we must take full advantage of whatever opportunities offered. Our enthusiasm was redoubled and we concentrated on realising as many of our plans as possible.

As a stroke of good luck we were joined by two porters from Lachen, Dorji—whom we called Adonis on account of his excessive ugliness—and Girti, two sturdy fellows with keen, intelligent faces. It was now possible for us to split up. The one party, Hepp, Göttner and I, intended next to tackle Simvu and carry out other of our mountaineering projects—perhaps another attempt on Tent Peak, or the Twins—while Wien wished to devote himself to his photogrammetrical work. He was to go over the Simvu Saddle into the Passanram valley, work there for six days and then climb up to the gap which leads over into the Zumtu valley. Near the head of the Passanram valley, up by Siniolchum Needle, we had already deposited supplies for six days and, thus fortified, he was then to make a photogrammetrical survey of the Zumtu valley ; Hepp was to join him and together they were then to pass through the Zumtu valley out into the Talung valley.

Such were our plans.

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On the following day we started off and collected the supplies we had dumped at Green Lake. Fresh snow had fallen and to the east all was still enveloped in dense mist. The monsoon was not yet at an end, although in 1931, when it had been particularly heavy, we had had practically no more snow or rain and for the most part a cloudless sky after the 24th September. Heavily laden we crossed the Zemu glacier and Wien climbed to the Simvu Saddle and into the Passanram valley. (He describes his adventures in the following chapter.) We camped down below so that we could make a reconnaissance of Simvu on the following day preparatory to our assault.

We were to have one or two rest days as all four porters had gone with Wien to help him get the loads over the Simvu Saddle ; from there two of them were to turn back and rejoin us. However, on the 30th September, when we climbed to the Saddle to view the surrounding district, we saw to our surprise Nima and Dorji—whom we were not expecting until the following day—already on their way back. To our first question as to how things were going Nima for the first time said “ No good,” and murmured something about rocks and a steep precipice and handed me a note from Karlo Wien. This contained the distressing news that Mingma had fallen and dropped his load—the photogrammeter and the plates—and Nima now produced the twisted remains of the camera and tripod from his rucksack. That was the end of the photogrammetrical work, but nevertheless Wien intended to go on and make his survey.

We were now able to start for Simvu on the following morning.

1st October, 1936. The snow held, the sun shone and our hopes were high. We progressed swiftly, but, as we gained height, the depth of the snow on the glacier increased. We looked anxiously up to the summit hoping there would not be too much snow up there, for otherwise we should have a difficult if not an altogether impossible task. At about midday the mist rose from the Passanram valley, and the Zemu glacier was soon shrouded in its dense white cloak. As we climbed round Simvu Saddle Peak we found ourselves in the teeth of a biting wind ; it was very cold and we were already up to our knees in the shifting snow.

The Ascent of Simvu

Wastl, who in the morning had been his usual cheery self, was obviously feeling the cold and kept licking his paws ; he then began to howl pitifully and, as we could do nothing for him, finally turned and raced down in our tracks until he came to a warmer spot. The thermometer was registering minus 15° C.—too much for a dog in this loose, floury snow. We pitched our tents behind a great snowdrift and sent the porters back as quickly as possible so that they should not have to suffer from the cold.

2nd October, 1936. At four o'clock our primus stove was already burning and we made cocoa, but what with the cold and the confined space in the tent our simple operations took a frightfully long time and it was not until 6.15 that we were ready to start. Hepp, up to his thighs in snow, began stamping out a track from the tent, alternating with Göttner. I was rather off colour, having had stomach pains for the past three days, and when we had reached a height of about 20,000 feet I decided not to go on but to return to the tent. As I descended, the clouds were already rising again from the Passanram valley ; I watched the others as they toiled through the snow, and then everything was lost behind a bank of cloud. At about three o'clock I managed to snatch a glimpse through the clouds and saw that my comrades were actually at work on the summit wall. That it was still possible for them to reach the summit I dismissed as quite out of the question.

I lay in the tent, waiting. It had been dark for some time. Surely, I thought, they would not be able to get down to-night now. I hoped nothing had gone wrong. In the middle of the night I heard voices outside the tent. There they were, covered in ice . . . they had reached the summit !

Not until four o'clock had they gained their objective ; the steep, snow-covered summit wall had given them some dangerous moments, and they had had some heavy snow work to do before they reached even the top of the ridge. A fantastic scene had greeted them up there, conceivable only to those who have had some similar experience. The setting sun gilded the clouds which filled the Zemu valley, breaking like waves against the mountain-sides of the Simvu range. The untrodden and almost inaccessible glacier basin within the horseshoe-shaped

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Simvu group lay at their feet ; the sky above them was clear, cloudless and still. Kangchenjunga, the grandest sight of all, lay nearly two miles to the east, its north-east spur and east ridge rising from the sea of cloud and bearing away beyond it another 6000 feet to the mighty, austere summit.

They both felt some anxiety over the descent, for they had sunk every ounce of their strength into reaching the summit. But fortunately, as evening approached, the cold came very quickly ; the snow held firm and, contrary to expectations, they managed the descent of the summit wall without undue discomfort. They were guided over the crevasses in the Simvu glacier by the light of the moon and reached the tent before midnight.

A VISIT TO KANGCH

We could not have contemplated leaving the district of the Zemu glacier without visiting Kangchenjunga, to us the greatest mountain in the whole world, and the grave of our friend Hermann Schaller, whom we had laid to rest there in 1931. We carried down all our equipment unaided, for the porters had already moved the camp a little higher on the Zemu glacier. Wastl greeted us there with joy and we were favoured with a sunny afternoon in the little hollow in the moraine between the glacier and Simvu. On the following morning we passed over the glacier to climb up to the grave. It was the 5th October, our first cloudless day since we had arrived in Sikkim.

Not until midday did we reach the spot where in 1929 and 1931 we had pitched our second base camp. The glacier had changed and the moraine, and with it the rocks on which our camp had stood and the remains of our " buildings," had moved a little towards the valley. The hours we spent here were given up to memories. . . .

How strange and remote had everything seemed to us when we had stood there for the first time in 1929 ! We had reached the towers of the north-east spur, had hewn a way past them, and our faithful Sherpa porters had followed us. It had taken us weeks to negotiate the excessively sharp ridge before we could press on with all our impedimenta to the

Farewell to Kangchenjunga

more gentle slopes in the neighbourhood of the spur summit. Seven years ago, almost to the day, on the 6th and 7th October, we had stood up there at a height of over 22,000 feet. Then came that catastrophic break in the weather, on the 7th and 8th October, when within only twenty-four hours over six feet of fresh snow had fallen. Allwein and I and the two porters Pasang and Kedar were the only ones left up there and we had to force a retreat through those vast masses of freshly fallen snow ; in a four-day battle against Nature—one of the proudest memories of my life—we overcame the deeply snow-covered ice ridge and reached the Eagle's Eyrie, as we called our camp on the rock ridge.

Five years ago, in 1931, we had been here a second time and Hermann Schaller had lost his life ; a falling porter had dragged him down with him. His tomb now lay before us on an island of rock, and we could see the cairn which we had erected on the spot where he and his porter were laid to rest. We lingered long, our minds busy with memories. Göttner and Hepp, deeply impressed by Kangchenjunga's overwhelming magnificence, were carried away by the austerity of the scene. For my part, pride and pain intermingled as I gazed at Kangchenjunga and the north-east spur.

Clouds were soon rising again above the Zemu Gap, a narrow belt already pressing down from the gap to the Zemu glacier. Not without reason did Kellas call this saddle "Cloud Gap."

For the next few days heavy snow fell ; we waited a while at Green Lake, then returned to the main camp and waited there for some improvement. Time was getting short and it seemed that the safe autumn weather wanted to elude us this year.

ON THE HIDDEN GLACIER AND IN THE LHONAK VALLEY

On the 9th October the weather began to improve and Göttner and I with Nima and Dorji walked up towards the Hidden Glacier. Green Lake Plain appeared in all its autumn splendour, a scene rich with red and gold, and once more, as we ascended to the Stone Gap, we looked

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across to Siniolchum. There was a breath-taking beauty about these mountains as cloud-free they ranged before us, each one laden with special memories. The clouds had retreated far and now lay only below in the Teesta valley. Above, all was clear.

On the following evening, as the sun was going down, we stood on a rock-mountain north of the Hidden Col, Black Peak (about 20,000 feet), and saw lying before us in the rosy glow of evening the broad Lhonak valley from Chomiomo to Pyramid Peak ; but with that we had to be content, for the snow on the glaciers was too deep to allow us to get much farther. On the 11th October we climbed Podon Peak, Green Lake Peak and yet another mountain north of the Hidden Glacier, White Peak. Kangchenjunga, Simvu and Siniolchum were still free from mist, but clouds were already beginning to creep up the Zemu valley again.

Then we descended to Lhonak and saw new valleys and new scenes opening up ; we were now dropping into a dry district of a quite different character from the Zemu valley or the Zumtu valley and the definite division into two weather zones was plainly discernible, the Zemu valley filled with clouds, rolling up to the gaps leading into the Lhonak valley, while Lhonak itself remained clear and cloudless.

Langpo, the home of the shepherds, where we spent the night, was deserted. On the following morning we climbed from the wide spaces of Lhonak, where the broad, flat plains extend for miles and the mountains rise in gentle undulations, up to The La. Like a part of the high plains of Thibet, arid, its meagre vegetation parched, and sweeping away in all directions as far as the eye could see, so Lhonak lay stretched out before us. To the south the steep slopes down from The La merged into luxuriant mountain pastureland reaching to the narrow Tomya valley ; the air was fragrant with the acrid scents of autumn, the countryside glowing with tints of red and gold such as can be seen hardly anywhere else in the world. The snow in the Tomya valley lay low on the northern slopes, while above in Lhonak even mountains as high as Chomiomo were still bare.

High moraines, from which the glaciers had receded by miles, accompanied the valley on either side, and where long ago the tongue of

Farewell to Kangchenjunga

the glacier had been they shut in the valley with a semicircular wall, 130—140 feet high, through the middle of which the stream had worn a sharp incision. Where the higher valley came to an end, merging into the Zemu valley above Yaktang, there began the damp subtropical upland forest, like another world beyond the realms of imagination.

As night fell we were nearing Yaktang ; the circle was complete. Günther Hepp would by now almost certainly have picked up with Wien, we thought, and they would probably be on their way together through the Zemu valley to Mangan. However, things had turned out differently with Wien. . . .

Through the Passanram Valley

FROM KARL WIEN'S DIARY

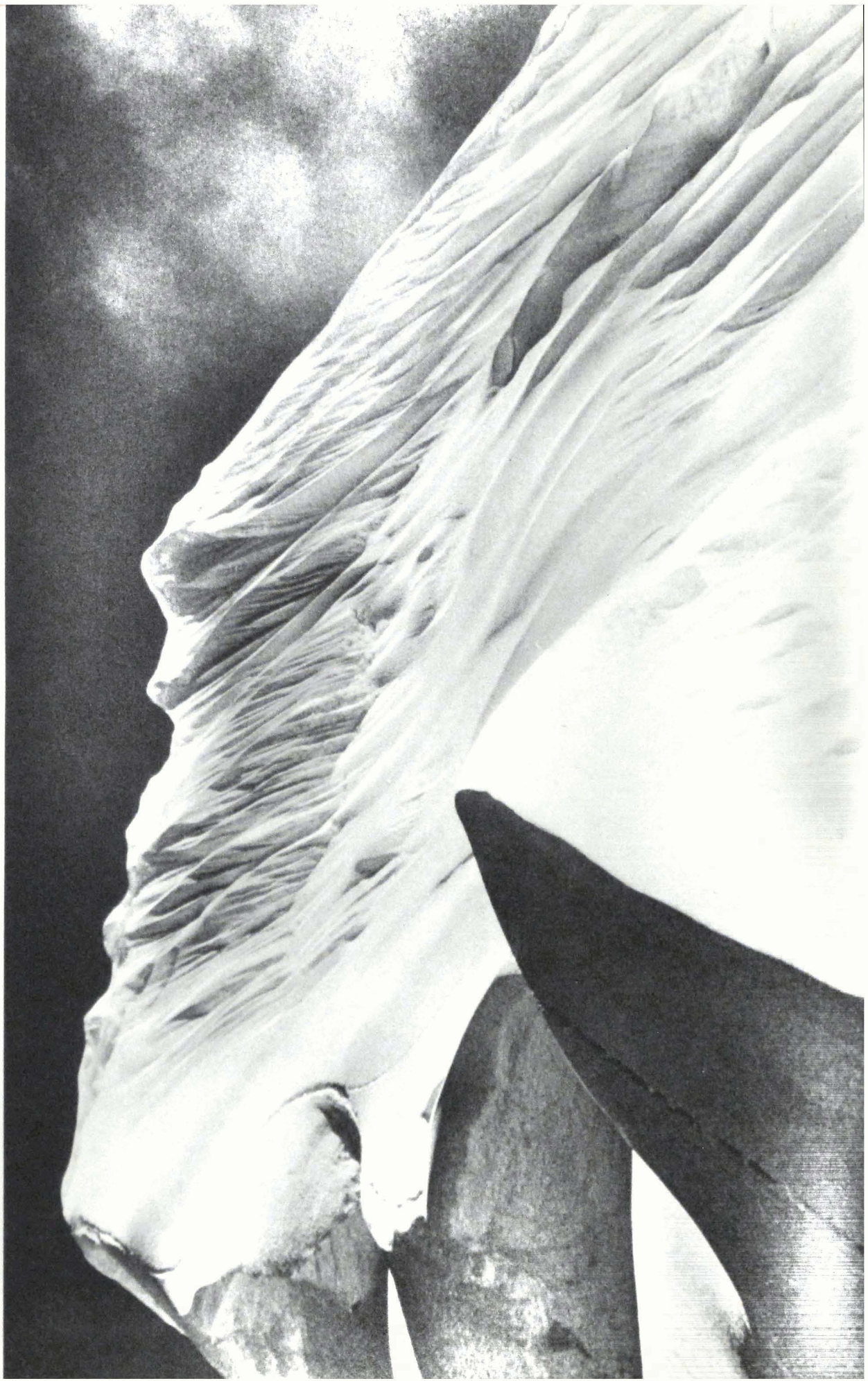
29th September, 1936.

AT THE CAMP ON THE SIMVU GLACIER I experienced my coldest night. Only a thin sack and my waterproof cape lay between my sleeping-bag and the snow, allowing the cold to penetrate and attack me from the ground, and an icy wind blew down from the pass, whisking fine swirls of snow through the gaps in the tent. At 4.30, shivering with cold, we made tea and set about our preparations, and at 6.40 we were at last ready to start. Mist was hovering over the pass, on the Lake and on Simvu.

OVER THE SIMVU SADDLE

In an hour's time I was up on the pass, the Simvu Saddle. Mingma, the fastest of the porters, kept close, the others—Nima, Girti and Dorji—following rather farther behind. The descent on the other side to the Passanram glacier seemed in the mist even steeper than it really was. A photograph which Allwein had taken in 1931 offered me some guidance and I could see from it that our path would lie across and then along by the glacier which descended steeply and dangerously south from the Simvu Saddle to the bottom of the valley. Dr. Allwein, when he was here in 1931, was the first to make this descent and I knew from his report that the steepest part of the ice-fall could be circumvented by following

PLATE 53. The north-west peak of Simvu (c. 21,500 feet) showing the track of the descent



EAST SUMMIT, C. 22,000 FEET

MAIN SUMMIT, 22,360 FEET

WEST SUMMIT, C. 22,260 FEET

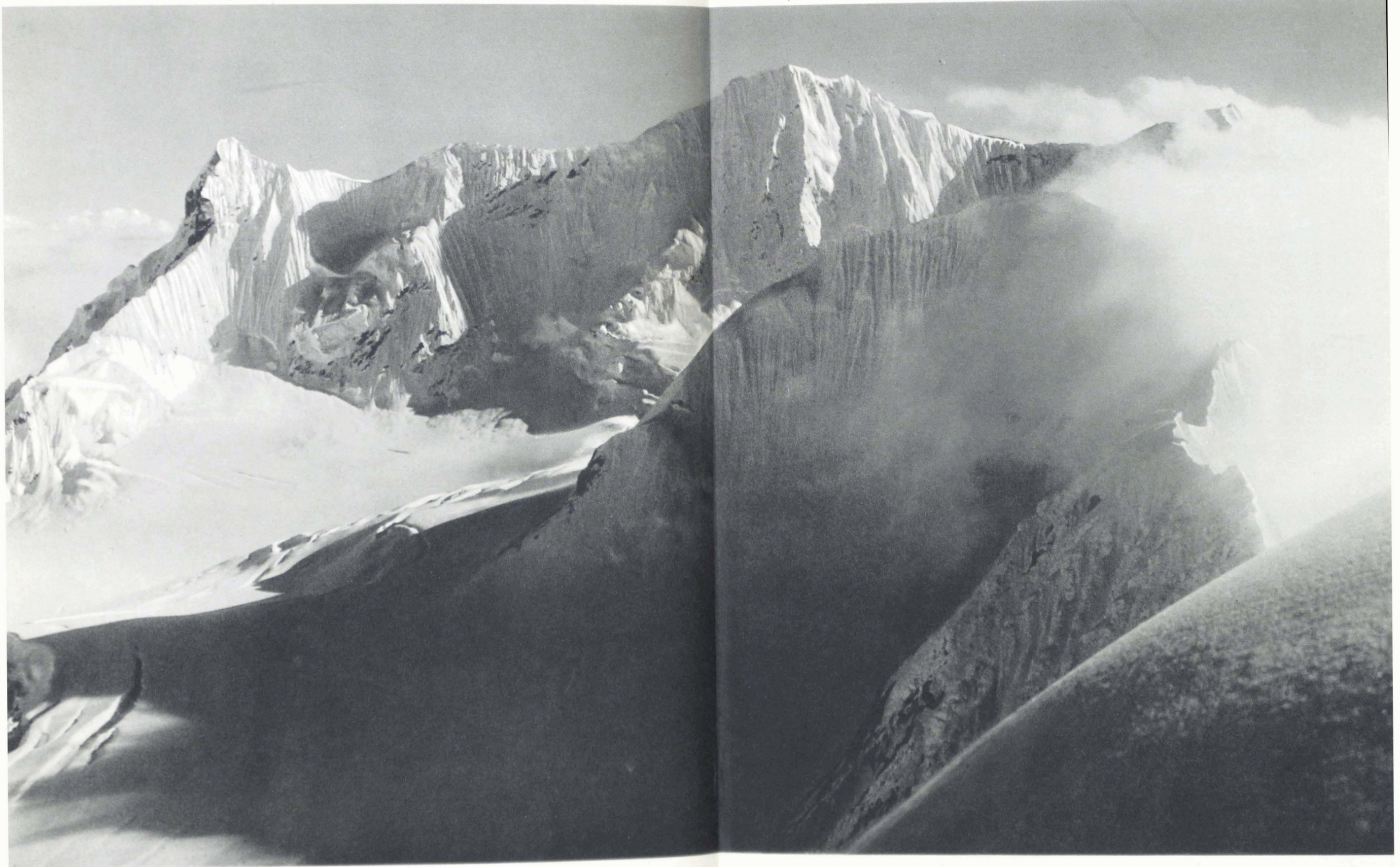


PLATE 54, PLATE 55. *The Simvu Group, seen from the north-west peak*

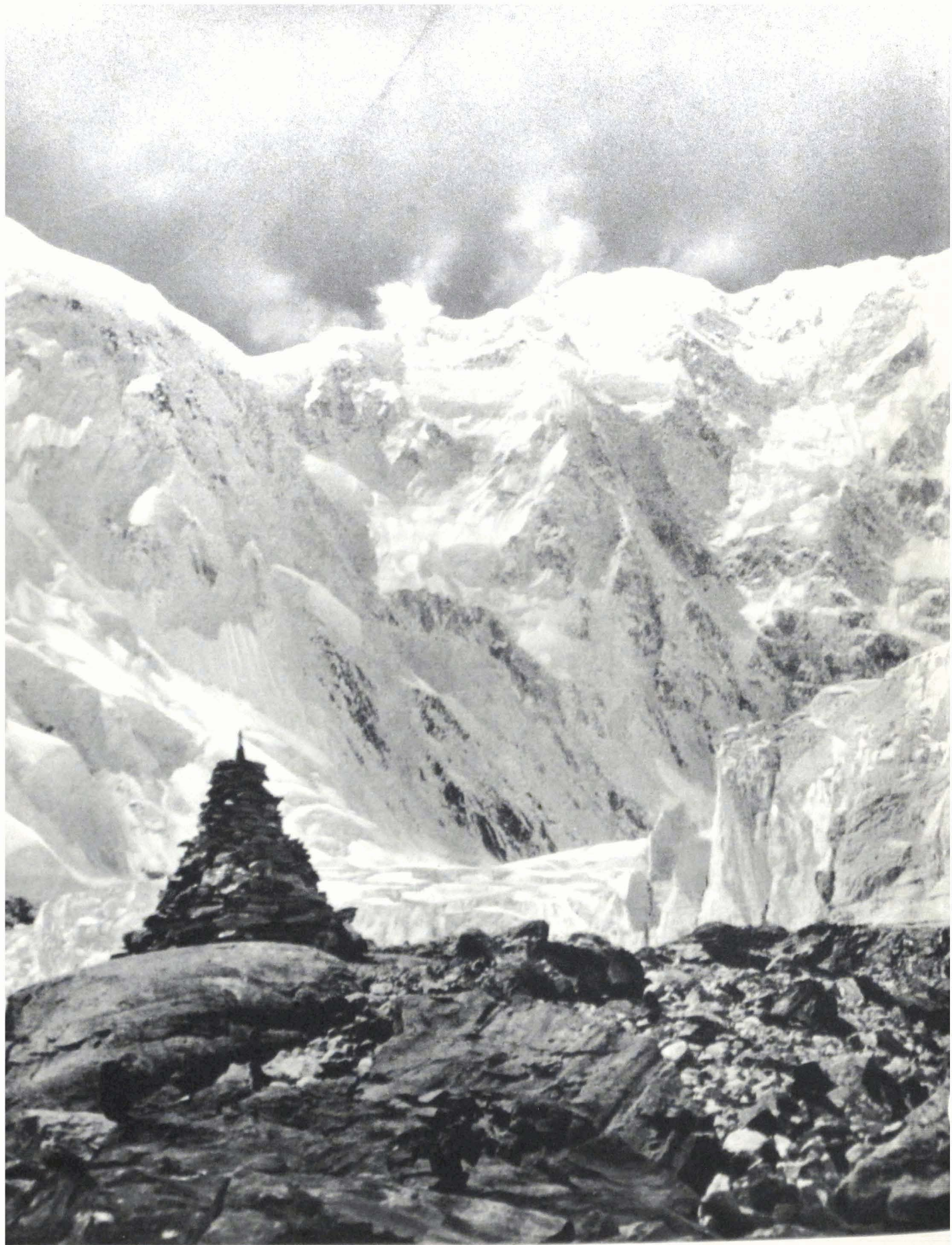


PLATE 56. *Hermann Schaller's grave*

PLATE 57. *Kangchenjunga, with the Zemu glacier in the foreground*

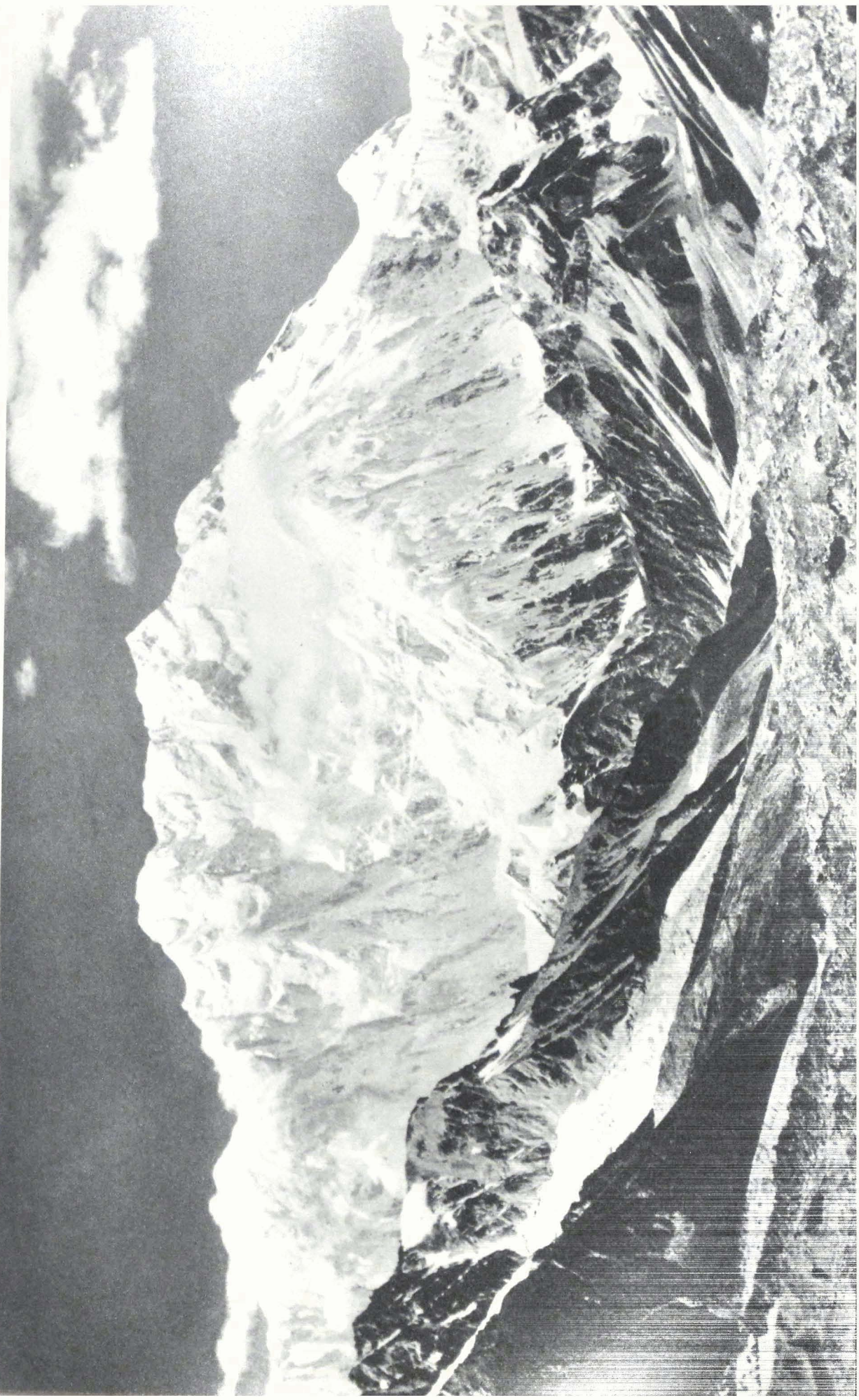




PLATE 58. Bauer, Göttner and Wastl, with Kangchenjunga in the background

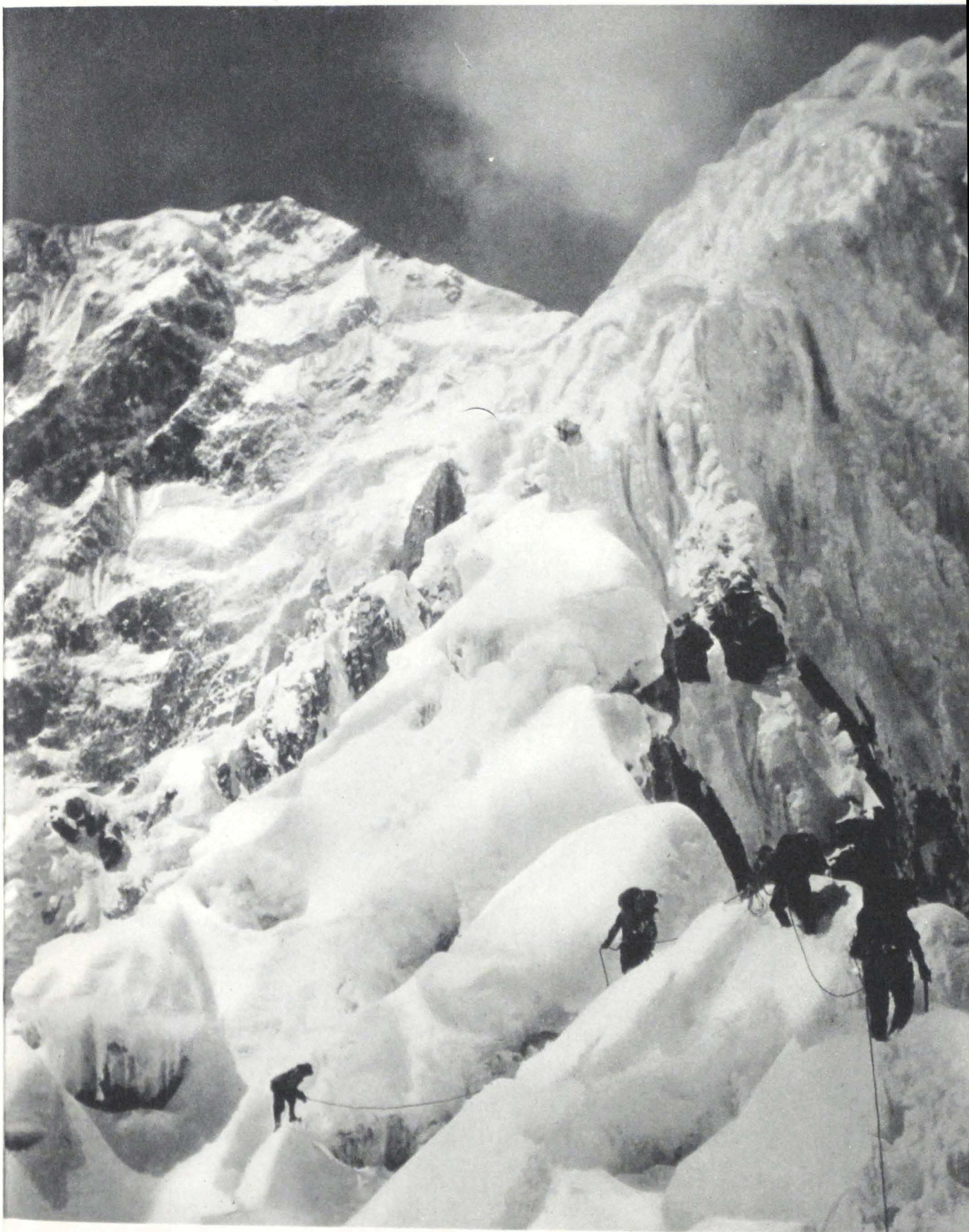


PLATE 59. *The German Himalaya team on its first attempt on the north-east spur of Kangchen, in 1929*

PLATE 60. The ridge camp (c. 19,750 feet) on a vertical tower of the north-east spur



Through the Passanram Valley

the rocks on the right-hand side. I had roped myself up with Mingma and Girti, and Nima and Dorji followed on another rope, Nima, as last man, securing his partner in his thoughtful way and with all necessary care. We progressed only very slowly, and it was not until twelve o'clock that we reached the rocks, which were covered in deep snow. We traversed on a belt of rock towards a steep scree-filled gully which led right down to the level surface of the glacier and apparently held no further difficulties, but a steep rock wall still separated us from this gully and this we had to negotiate before we could reach the more easy ground. Squatting at the top of this wall, I belayed ; Girti descended easily and got down without a hitch. Mingma followed, and everything appeared to be going well when suddenly, when he was already fairly far down, he fell. I held him safely on the rope and slowly let him down to a suitable stance. However, while he was suspended his load must somehow have jammed so that the forehead girth and the two shoulder straps came away. I heard a shout that Girti was trying to hold the load . . . but in vain . . . it hurtled down and disappeared into the mist.

It was the photogrammeter.

We descended about another 230 feet and found the tripod, the plate-boxes and the food, together with the rucksack, and another 130 feet farther down the photogrammeter, badly damaged. It was a hard blow for me, for it was obvious that I should not be able to do anything more with this instrument and my cartographic work was now quite out of the question.

We felt our way in the mist farther down over the rock and the subsequent steep and dangerously churned-up part of the glacier, and when the surface began to level out we pitched our camp. I intended to go on in spite of the mishap, for I could do some surveying without the photogrammeter.

30th September, 1936. As the sun rose above our camp on the upper Passanram glacier, Siniolchum was visible for a short time, and from this side looked impossibly steep. I sent Nima and Dorji back over the Simvu Saddle to the Zemu glacier and waited until the agreed signal assured me that they were well over the difficult parts and had reached the

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safer ground. Then, at nine o'clock, we continued our descent and were soon in dense mist and snow, which farther down turned to rain. Only 170 feet above us the clouds were again beginning to gather. Then with my two porters I pitched camp on the east bank of the Passanram glacier about 3000 feet above its tongue. I found a leech on my shoe—here, at a height of over 11,000 feet ! It rained heavily during the night.

EXPLORING THE WAY TO THE LEVEL GLACIER

On the 1st October in spite of the rain I tried to reach the level glacier on the south side of the Simvu massif in order if possible to secure a view into the Talung valley. With this object in mind I climbed on the western flank of the Passanram valley towards a ridge bearing down from Simvu. A casturi crossed our path and we also found here three kinds of berries—payan, pamnima and keva—and the little plant which the porters called troiche. The steep gullies in the Siniolchum massif which faced us were interesting ; their course lay for the most part only over rock, but we had many opportunities of observing how great avalanches came down, augmenting the quantities of compressed snow. The feeding of the Passanram glacier by these falls of snow over the steep gullies (representing a variety of the Turkestan glacier type) together with the covering of detritus no doubt accounts for the fact that the glacier extends so far down although it faces south. From the upper ice-fall on the Siniolchum side to our second camp we counted about fifteen of these gullies.

We ascended to the ridge which formed the left-hand boundary of the debouchure of the level glacier ; on the far side it dropped down steeply as far as one could see. We were forced to the right again and arrived at the edge of a glacier lying more to the north, where we finally pitched our tents. We slept soundly after our 3500-foot climb.

2nd October, 1936. Although it snowed during the night I dispensed with breakfast and, at 5.30, set off with Mingma. We encountered frightfully deep snow on the glacier, but reached the far edge in two hours.

Through the Passanram Valley

Our way now lay over a rib of rock, then a traverse to a second rib, and then the level glacier came into view. The slopes we had traversed were the lower reaches of the inner Simvu basin. At eight o'clock we were hopelessly enveloped in mist. It would have taken me hours to trudge over to the level glacier and I should have still been unable to see into the Talung valley. One would need at least two days for an ascent to a camp on the level glacier, although I feel sure that the route we had taken was the most practical one. The glacier debouched into the Passanram stream below the end of the Passanram glacier, but as far as I could see the approach to it, which directly followed the debouchure up from the stream, was overlaid with smooth slabs of rock. In the afternoon we descended to our camp and then spent a second evening in the camp in the beautiful verdant country above the Passanram glacier stream.

3rd October, 1936. We proceeded down the glacier, which fell away fairly steeply. Once, shortly before the end of the glacier tongue, Siniolchum Needle was to be seen for a brief moment rising due east high and steep above the rocks which bounded the glacier on the north-east. I took the opportunity of measuring the end of the glacier tongue, which lay extraordinarily low, so that I could on later occasions check up on any intervening recession or advance. Below the glacier tongue we had to cross the stream and found ourselves for the first time in contact with grass so tall that it closed over our heads; among it payan berries grew plentifully, and they made an excellent midday meal. Somewhat lower down, the river had cut its way deep and narrow and was flanked on either side by steep slopes which, even at this height, were wooded. From here it could be seen that the lower part of the level glacier was very unpleasantly broken up, just as it had appeared from above. A gradual and overgrown slope rose on the west bank of the river, bearing towards the crest which Allwein and Pircher had crossed in 1931.

BELOW THE PASSANRAM BRIDGE

We continued to drop down the valley on the left-hand side of the stream, then we crossed it and pitched our camp. I climbed on alone for

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about 600 feet on the western slope beyond the tree-line into the grass zone in order to get a view of the surrounding country. The whole of the upper part was unfortunately hidden in mist, but I was able to see the lie of the land lower down and worked out a way by which I thought we could reach the Passanram Gap. It was my intention to enter the Zumtu valley through this gap in the ridge which separates it from Passanram valley, a march which might have yielded some very important topographical material, and by this means we should have reached the provision dump which we had established on the Gantsa glacier about five weeks previously.

4th October, 1936. It was not until towards midday that, still on the descent, we reached the point in the Passanram valley from which an ascent to the Passanram Gap had seemed possible ; this was a gully which I imagined led up to the gap. In the afternoon we worked our way upwards some 350 feet through dense rhododendron bush, but investigations which I carried out on the same evening showed that this route lay over some very steep stretches and smooth, thinly overgrown slabs of rock, and was so difficult that with the porters it could be negotiated only under very favourable conditions. The descent to the camp was in some places even more difficult than the ascent. A long and tiring day for me—ten and a half hours on my feet. My food supply was coming to an end, and Mingma made a tsamba porridge.

On the following morning, the 5th October, it rained in torrents and our surroundings were blotted out by dense mist. It was impossible, or at any rate it would have been foolhardy, to have attempted to climb over the steep smooth rocks in this weather. A descent would have been particularly dangerous if such a necessity had arisen. So, on with the anorak, and down again into the dripping undergrowth.

I decided to proceed farther down the valley and, after the next rib, make another attempt to pass through the Passanram Gap. Our path lay mostly parallel to the river along steep slopes, and towards midday we reached the next stream flowing in from the left. I made a preliminary trial, but there was no doubt that the lower section here was considerably more difficult than at the spot I had investigated on the previous day ;

Through the Passanram Valley

it was definitely impracticable, and as I had no idea how the land lay farther up, there seemed to be no point in getting ourselves into difficulties here. The weather had become cold and heavy rain poured incessantly on the roof of foliage which vaulted above our heads. We were obviously in for some thoroughly bad weather which would bring a great deal of snow higher up, and if it persisted there would be no hope of our reaching the Passanram Gap.

We were in a not too pleasant position. Two courses lay open to me : to return over the Simvu Saddle to Green Lake, which would have taken about six days, or to try to get farther along the Passanram valley and so reach the Talung valley. We had been eight days *en route* and had brought enough tsamba for twelve days, so that we now had full rations left for four days. If I ate tsamba too we should have to go very carefully to make the food last for six days, but in six days it would surely be possible for us to make our way through the Passanram valley. In either case our supplies were meagre as we had been unable to collect reinforcements. The consistent heavy snowfall in the comparatively low-lying district in which I was occupied led me to suppose that conditions were even worse higher up and I conjectured that my comrades on the Zemu glacier would almost certainly have been held up in camp for some days. However, deep snow could render an ascent to the Simvu Saddle extremely dangerous and I therefore decided on the downward route, although I realised that food would be running very short towards the end of our march. Allwein's route, which I could have safely followed into the Talung valley, could not now be taken as I had been forced too far down the valley on the other—the left—bank of the river, and a deep gorge separated us from the ridge on the other side ; however, there seemed to be a possible way on our side, for the wooded ridge lying on the opposite bank of the tributary which flowed before us looked easy. If we could descend on the other side of that we should be in the Talung valley, probably already by the Sackyong bridge, where on this side the path must certainly begin.

In the afternoon we camped on a little level pitch between the waterfalls and made a huge fire at which we dried our clothes. Five hundred

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feet below us the Passanram stream flowed through a deep gorge. There was still time during the night for me to reconsider my decision.

INTO THE TALUNG VALLEY

6th October, 1936. In the early morning, while we were still packing up, rain set in again, falling from the high clouds with even greater force than on the previous day. My decision must therefore be—down. We set about the wild struggle against bush, forest, thicket and water, which was to last for seven days, rendered more than ordinarily difficult by the incessant downpour. It became more and more impossible to find our bearings in the tangled undergrowth, and the damp—which soon penetrated everything we had—hindered our progress and badly depressed my two porters, while rations had to be heavily reduced.

The 6th October was a terribly strenuous day. The wood gave place to undergrowth and in places dense rushes through which any sort of progress was extremely difficult. The incline was very sharp and every now and again one would break through the undergrowth and plunge downwards if one leaned forward ; added to that, there were sheer falls of rock and smooth rock slabs. One after the other we would lose our footing and slither down—but in any case everything was wet through. No midday rest was possible ; standing, I ate my last bar of chocolate.

In our attempts to find a better route we often climbed high up the slope and thus lost a great deal of time ; the afternoon found us at the entrance to a subsidiary valley in which flowed the only large tributary which joins the Passanram on its left bank ; this obviously had its source in the mountains to the east of Siniolchum Needle. Above us our slope became a series of rock walls, below it was wooded and fell away steeply. The river itself flowed about 900 feet lower, probably in a gorge. We roped up and I let Mingma down first ; he slithered over vertical roots until he could find a foothold ; then came Girti, who stared at me speechlessly from time to time, completely unnerved ; finally, I abseiled down in two stages, as the porters had gone the whole length of the rope. Everything was wet and slimy ; our faces were

Through the Passanram Valley

grimed over and over and we looked like monkeys. The abseiling manœuvre had to be repeated three times and it was five o'clock before we finally felt firm ground beneath our feet and could walk again. We pitched our camp in the midst of the wood ; everything was soaked, but Mingma managed to make a small fire and prepare some tea and soup. We were all thoroughly exhausted after this wet day, having had to fight for every inch of progress for ten hours on end. Wonder of wonders, Mingma produced a whole billycan full of mushrooms which he had somehow managed to gather, but we decided not to cook them until morning. Now we must have sleep. Rain beat on our tent the whole night through.

7th October, 1936. We started off again at about eleven o'clock but were soon hopelessly stuck ; however, we eventually managed to get through the thick undergrowth and down to a second stream-bed. After the heavy rain the stream was carrying as much water as the Passanram had borne the last time we had seen it. It flowed in a narrow ravine—but not a gorge—and in order to cross it we had to build a bridge. Mingma was immediately all helpfulness, but Girti again lost his nerve and just said “ No ” to everything. For a time he was incapable of moving, but after a while he mustered some energy, set to and simply surpassed himself ; with my ice-axe he felled a tree twelve to eighteen inches thick in ten minutes. We had some difficulty in placing the felled trees across the stream and it was three o'clock before the bridge was complete—too late to go any farther. We had to camp. I had bad pains in the left side of my chest, obviously caused by a fall on the previous day, but the coolies were in good spirits as we now had the descent behind us and on the morrow we were to ascend to the ridge which faced us and, if possible, continue down on the other side. Unfortunately the mountains remained shrouded in mist and from the bottom of the valley there was nothing to be seen apart from Point 10,571 feet, Sugarloaf mountain, on the other side of the Passanram river, which had been our constant companion for days.

8th October, 1936. The stream was less swollen than it had been on the previous day and the crossing was rapidly accomplished. On the

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opposite bank we had to rope up again and Girti hauled up the loads—he had terrific reserves of strength. For the rest of the day—which soon gave itself up to more pouring rain—we climbed on towards the crest of the ridge, which we had to cross in order to circumvent the lower gorge-like section of the Passanram valley. This ridge was not more than 1000 feet high and yet at three o'clock in the afternoon we were still far from the crest. At four o'clock we pitched our camp and an enormous hollow tree made it possible for us to get a fire burning in the merciless downpour which to-day had tried us sorely ; our sopping clothes clung to us like dead weights ; we removed our soaking breeches in the evening only to don them just as wet in the morning ; and now, with the sleeping-sack thoroughly drenched, I could no longer hope to get my underclothes dry during the night. Everything was running with water. Neither rucksacks nor baggage packs had been able to withstand the incessant rain of the past few days, and during the day both on the march and in camp we were tormented by small black leeches which clung not only to our legs but, as we crawled through the dripping undergrowth, attached themselves to our faces, necks and hands. In the tent we were to some extent free from them. Our path was overgrown with dense foliage, rhododendron bushes high up and fern lower down in the valley.

9th October, 1936. It was becoming more and more imperative that we should get into the Talung valley. For the past few days I had given out only two more bowls of tsamba and only one tsamba porridge a day was now being cooked. Things had already reached the stage when I dared not have any more tsamba myself, for the coolies would lag if they had nothing to eat ; I was feeling the effects of under-nourishment and my strength was dwindling. However, the pains in my chest were better.

The crest was soon reached to-day and the weather had somewhat improved. We viewed our surroundings from a tree. Deep below us lay the Talung valley, the slope on that side being very steep and covered with dense undergrowth among which we could see the dreaded smooth rock slabs. I abandoned the idea of descending into the Sitangram valley as being too uncertain and we descended instead on the crest of the

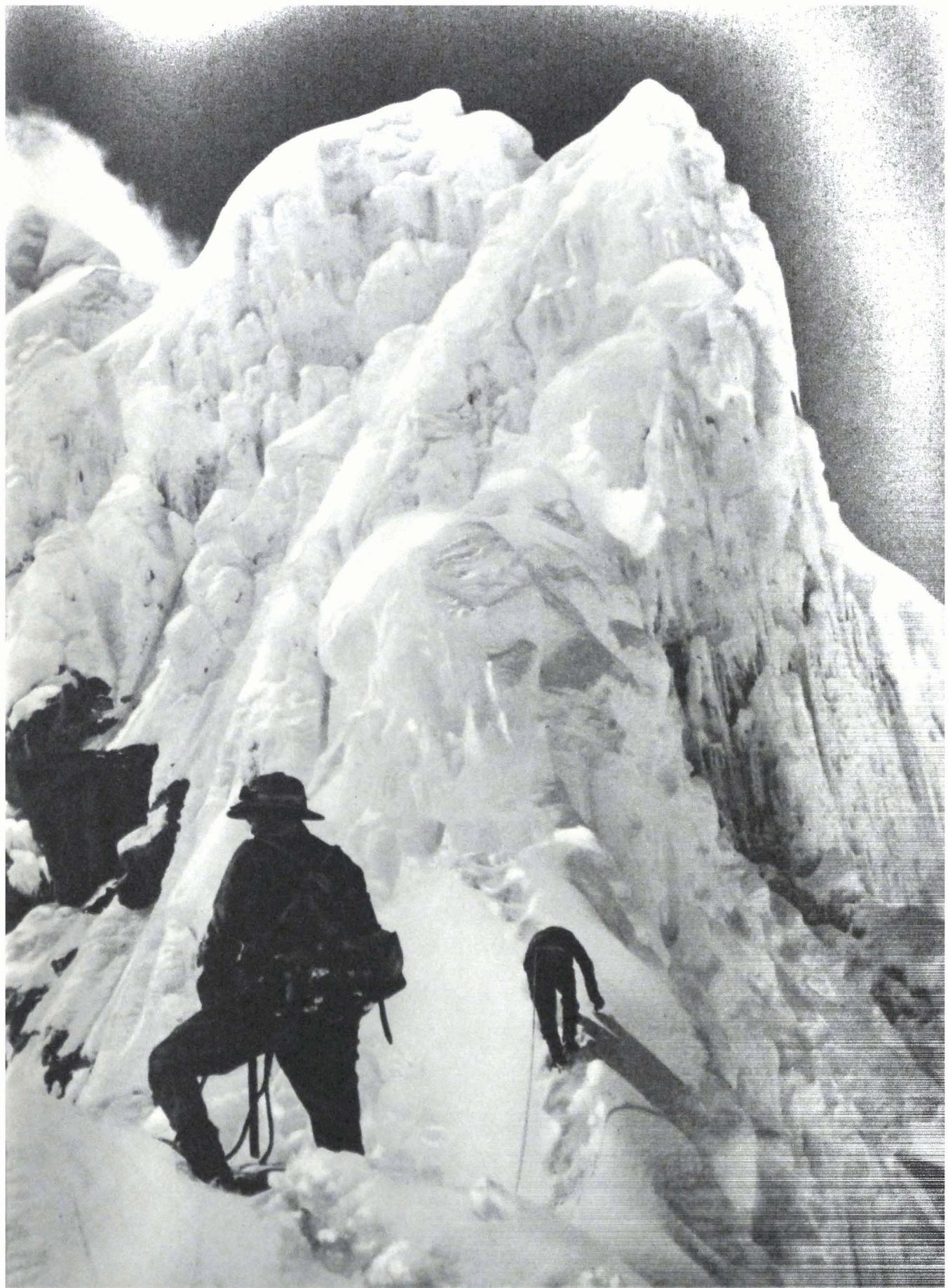


PLATE 61. At about 21,000 feet on the north-



PLATE 62. The camp below the Stone Gap. Siniolcbum in the background

c. 27,890

28,146

c. 27,500



EAST RIDGE —

NORTH-EAST SPUR—

— SUGARLOAF

— SPUR SUMMIT

— THE TWINS

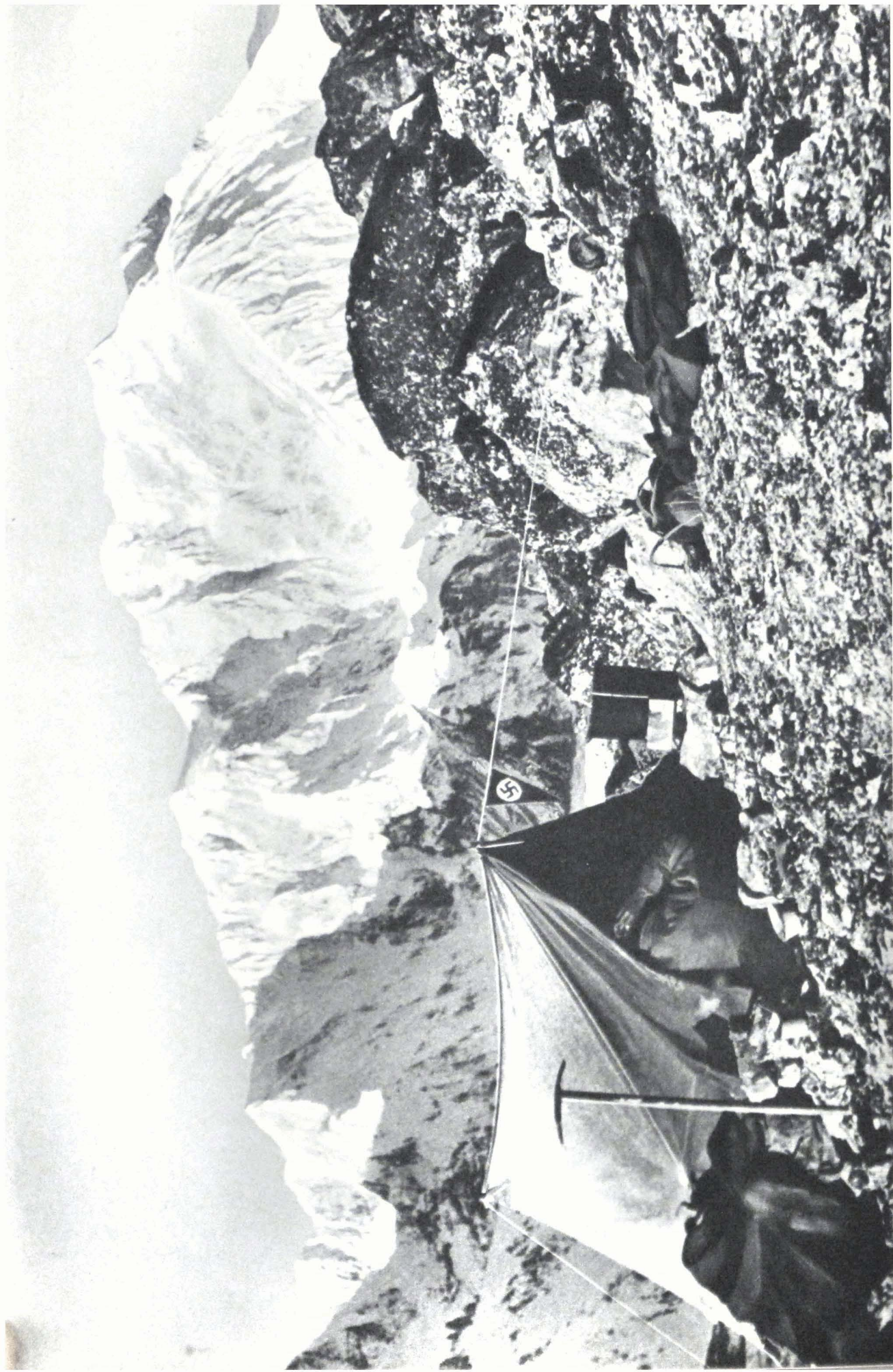


PLATE 64. Kangchenjunga from the Camp below the Stone Gap

Through the Passanram Valley

ridge itself, then to the left on slopes leading down to a little stream. We were heading for the bottom of a ravine and this was soon reached ; then we traversed to the left below smooth walls of rock to a shelf in the ridge. This shelf is visible from Singhik, and from it we could see down into the Talung valley, which lay about 1600 feet deeper. The sight of this familiar valley—Girti had been here before—stretching away before us right to Mangen, enheartened the porters. It was now one o'clock. From here a steep flank overgrown with tall grass and in places scattered with rock slabs led down to the valley. We slid down most of the way on our behinds, holding on to the long grass, a strenuous performance when it is prolonged. The last part above the Talung valley became steeper and steeper and more thickly overgrown, but as evening approached we were camping by the Talung river about a mile and a half from the highest native village. It had not rained to-day.

On the other side of the river lay Bontong ; presumably, therefore, we were about a mile and a half from the Sackyong bridge, where there was sure to be a path. Perhaps there really was, as the map led one to believe, a permanently inhabited native settlement in Pingting with a path reaching out in our direction nearly as far as the Sitangram river, which lay about three-quarters of a mile below us. To-morrow we should almost certainly come across some other people. My plan to divide the rest of the tsamba so as to have some in reserve for one more day received a setback when we discovered that a good deal of it had been spoiled by the rain and that apart from that only enough for one small meal was left. The crusted remains were of course eaten too. For me there was still a little ovomaltine and a carefully hoarded *pain*. On this evening I felt absolutely played out ; I ached all over and the pain in my chest was particularly trying, but I slept well. To-day we had eaten the last of our food, which anyhow represented a very much reduced ration. The next two miles would take us two and a half days, for which we had not a single mouthful.

10th October, 1936. The day opened with some nasty shocks. We had to traverse the steep wooded bank of the clamorous Talung stream over smooth rock slabs—an unpleasant business. We roped up again and

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then landed in some quite impossible thicket through which for the next two hours we made practically no progress. Then, farther down, we saw that the river disappeared in a murderous ravine, so once more we had to seek our salvation higher on the steep wooded slope and began to move obliquely upwards, struggling slowly forward step by step. In the evening we reached a gap, still about 1000 feet away from the Sitangram. But here a land-slip barred any further progress and to circumvent it we had to sacrifice 170 feet of our hard-won height. Then we climbed up over steep rock faces, for the Sitangram river plunges into the Talung river in two mighty waterfalls.

A whole day without food and the critical position in which evening found us told on the porters and they relapsed into complete dejection and apathy. We were now immediately opposite Bontong and could see the people on their evening return to Sackyong. The Lepchas in the highest settlement on the opposite bank could not have been 1300 feet away, but between us lay the ravine of the Talung river. My coolies whistled and the people whistled back. We camped on a rough pitch without water or fire. However, sleep alone refreshes.

11th October, 1936. A three hours' battle with the undergrowth brought us to the foot of the wall which was to take us above the waterfall to a place where the stream could be crossed, and here Girti on his own accord discovered traces of a route obviously prepared by the hand of man, for notched tree trunks were placed against the steep places like ladders. True, this path had obviously not been trodden for some long time and much of the wood was rotten, but in another hour and a half we were by the Sitangram, which, flowing here in a ravine above the waterfall, could be crossed with ease. The path continued on the opposite bank, but then all traces of it disappeared, so that our progress along the remainder of the valley was again very slow. We made our way along the next slope which still separated us from the place where we had seen the highest Lepcha settlement. Then the track led down among dense rushes to a stream—and then finished. The spirits of my coolies were no longer equal to disappointments of this kind and, thoroughly exhausted and dejected, they threw themselves on the ground ; however, I

Through the Passanram Valley

sent Mingma above and Girti below to see if they could find any further traces of the path, but "No pata, Sahib," was their verdict when they returned. Girti was now thoroughly worn out and Mingma took turns with me in forcing a way through this frightful undergrowth, but soon he too was exhausted. So it now rested with me to fight through the last part alone, and by four o'clock I had reached the upland field where the highest Lepcha huts were to be found. There were no signs of life, but we discovered a few corn cobs and we at least had the hope of finding some people on the morrow. This Lepcha farmstead was an isolated ploughed field which had been planted with maize but which had already been harvested. We ate some roasted maize, which helped to appease our gnawing hunger.

12th October, 1936. In the morning we followed a path which dropped for a while and then rose again to the highest permanently inhabited settlement on the north side of the Talung valley—Pingting. Fourteen days had passed since we had left the Simvu Saddle. We were received hospitably in the hut of an old hump-backed Lepcha who, with his smooth hair, resembled a Red Indian. The land surrounding the huts had developed into a swamp in which black pigs were to be seen floundering wildly and the only likely spot would have been a maize field, but the tent could not be pitched there, so I moved into the Lepcha hut, where I was given a place of honour by the wall. A dish of rice was placed before us and the food had a particularly rapid effect on Girti, who launched upon a loud and colourful description of our adventures for the benefit of his gaping audience, illustrating his lecture with all sorts of objects, such as the primus stove, a watch, climbing boots and camera, all strange, unknown things to these Lepcha peasants. His listeners comprised an old woman, two men and any other occasional lookers-on. There were not more than fifteen to twenty people living in this little village of four or five huts, and the day I spent among these poor Lepcha peasants gave me a deep insight into their lives. The Talung valley, which begins south of Kangchenjunga and extends from west to east towards the Teesta valley, is one of the chief refuges of the Lepcha people, who, it is maintained, were the original inhabitants of

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Sikkim before the Thibetans from the north and the Nepalese from the west migrated into the country. About eight thousand souls, they represent to-day only about one-tenth of the population of Sikkim ; they are honest and intelligent folk, living in strangely close contact and harmony with Nature.

In a further two days' march I passed through the Talung valley to Mangen, and at its junction with the Teesta, at the Singhik bungalow, I awaited my friends.

CONCLUSION

So much for Wien's account of his adventurous journey through the Passanram valley.

On the 13th October Göttner and I had arrived in Yaktang, and on the following day Göttner, with the eight Lachen porters who had arrived meanwhile as arranged, went up to evacuate Camp III. I stayed on alone in Yaktang with Dorji—" Adonis "—and spent a restful day amid the interesting and varied plant-life of the humid Zemu valley. Dorji showered me with affectionate attentions and brought me all sorts of different berries and herbs. On the 15th October Göttner descended with the porters and Hepp came with them. I had gone to meet them and I handed Hepp the telegram containing the news that a son had been born to him. His joy was great.

But I now learned that there was absolutely no news of Wien, and I was greatly disturbed, for he had gone off on the 29th September with supplies for six days and since then seventeen days had elapsed. He was far behind schedule and it was clear that we must go to his aid immediately. Our only possible course was to take a rescue party into the Talung valley, into which he had probably been forced.

That same night I walked from Yaktang to Lachen, secured a horse there and, as soon as it was light, rode on downwards. Near Chungtang I met Girti and he described his adventures to me both graphically and volubly. However, when he had finished his recital he was quick to take advantage of my good mood and asked if he could keep the rope he was carrying. On the following day I found Wien in Singhik, safe and well.

Through the Passanram Valley

The valleys bearing down from the Kangchenjunga massif to the south and south-east are by far the wildest part of the whole district ; the walls of Siniolchum plunge down to the Passanram valley in one vast drop of 11,400 feet ; the valleys are chiselled out deep and narrow and in their beds flow great rushing streams for the most part in ravines or gorges. The wild profusion of the vegetation and the continual heavy rain so augment the difficulties of the slopes that Wien in 1936 and Allwein and Pircher in 1931, in spite of unremitting toil, could progress on an average only a mile and a quarter a day.

Thus ended happily the Sikkim expedition of 1936. We could be content. The ascent of Siniolchum had become a reality, and we had conquered Liklo and five other 16,000-foot peaks in the Zumtu district ; we had trodden six new glaciers and two important passes ; we had stood upon Nepal Peak, and Simvu had fallen to our attack ; in the north chain we had climbed four 19,000-foot peaks and had besides made many attempts ; Wien and Hepp had been able to collect valuable data on the subjects of meteorology, geography and physiology, and above all we had paved the way for the coming expedition to Nanga Parbat.

Nanga Darbat 1937

PLATE 65. Kangchenjunga, Tent Peak and Langpo Peak, from Lbonak

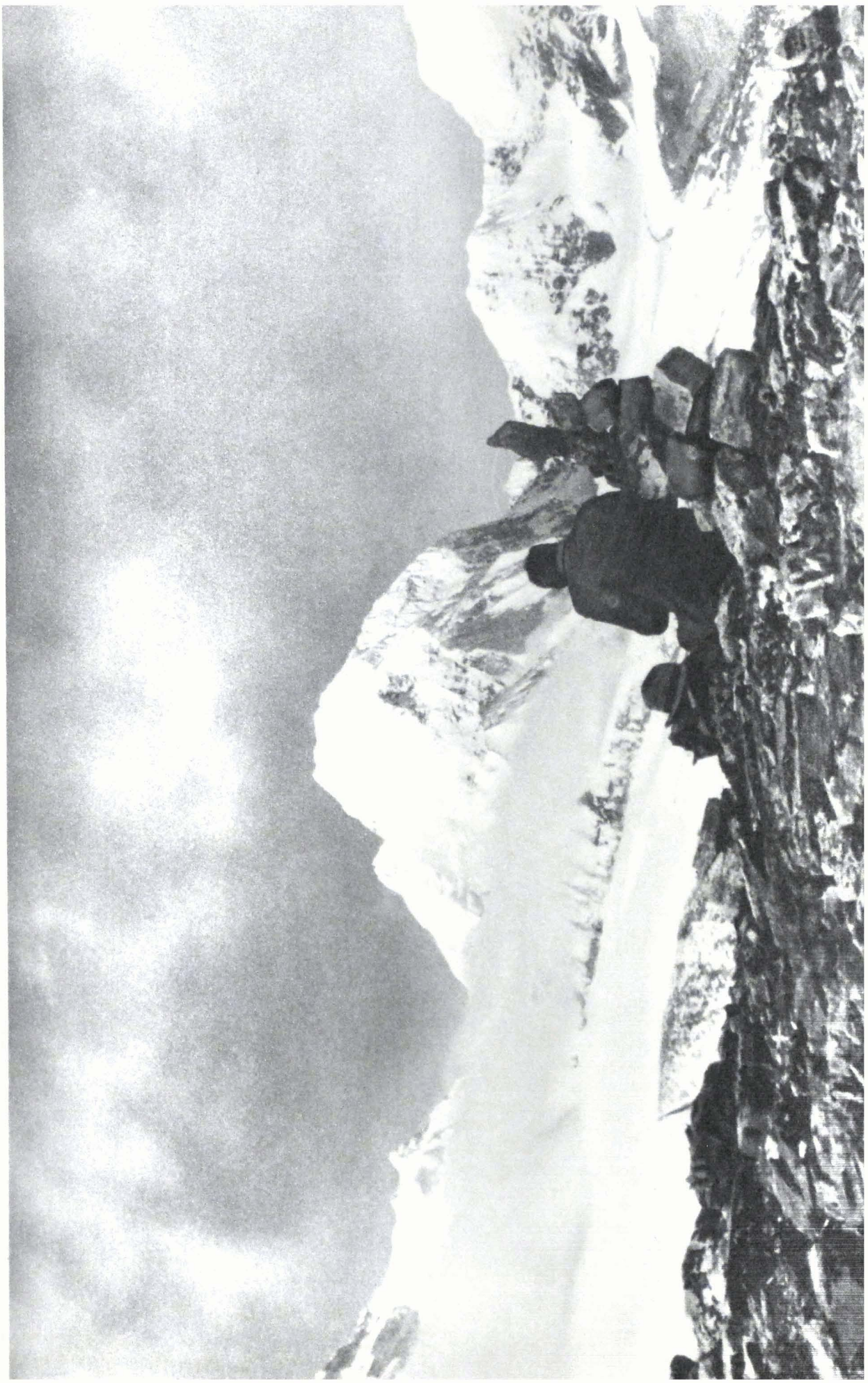




PLATE 66. The high plains of Lbonak near Langpo. View towards Chomiono

PLATE 67. House-boats on the Jbelum in Sringgar

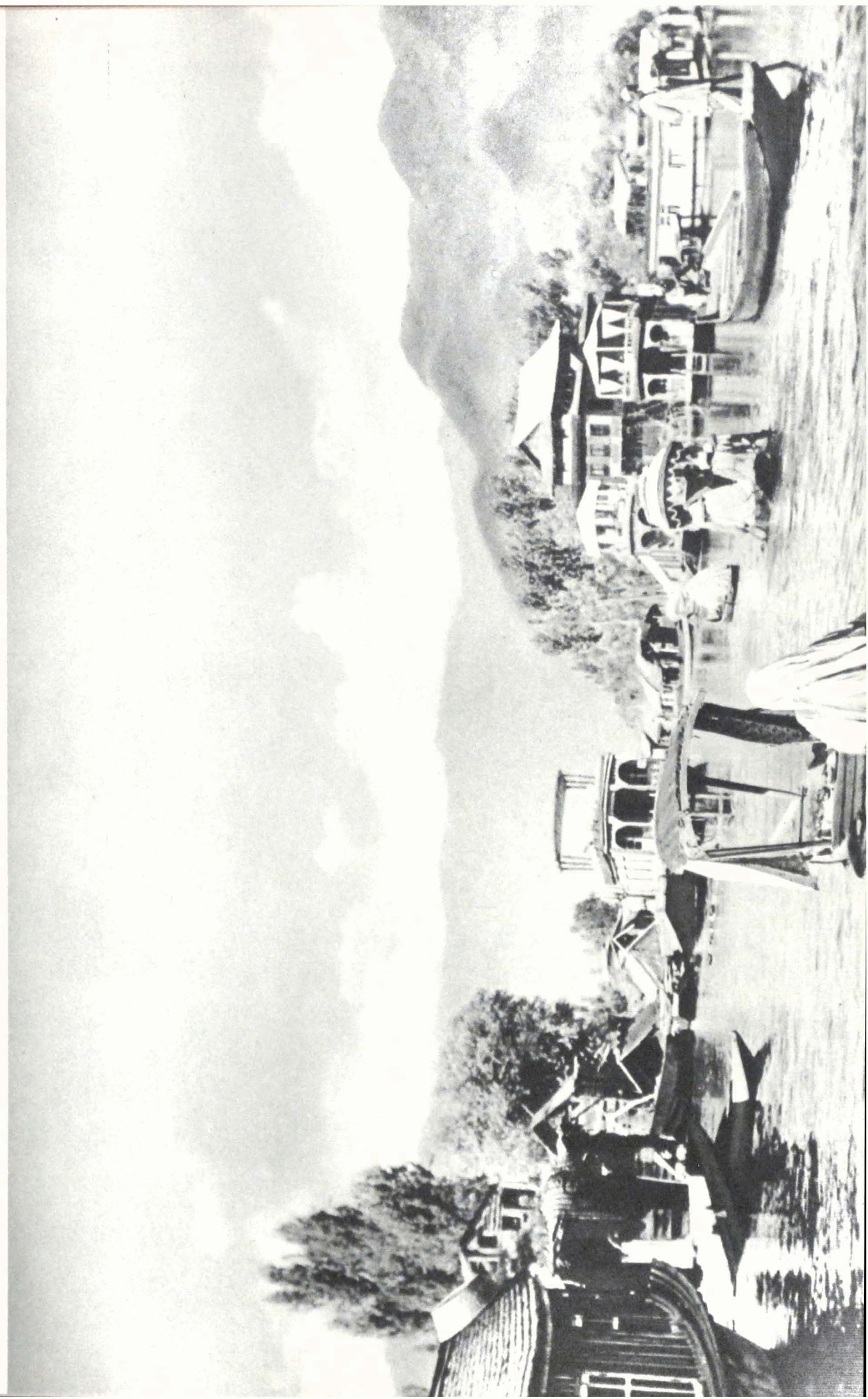




PLATE 68. *In the Astor valley, between Godai and Astor*

PLATE 69. High above the Astor valley near Muscokin





PLATE 70. View from Buni towards Nanga Parbat

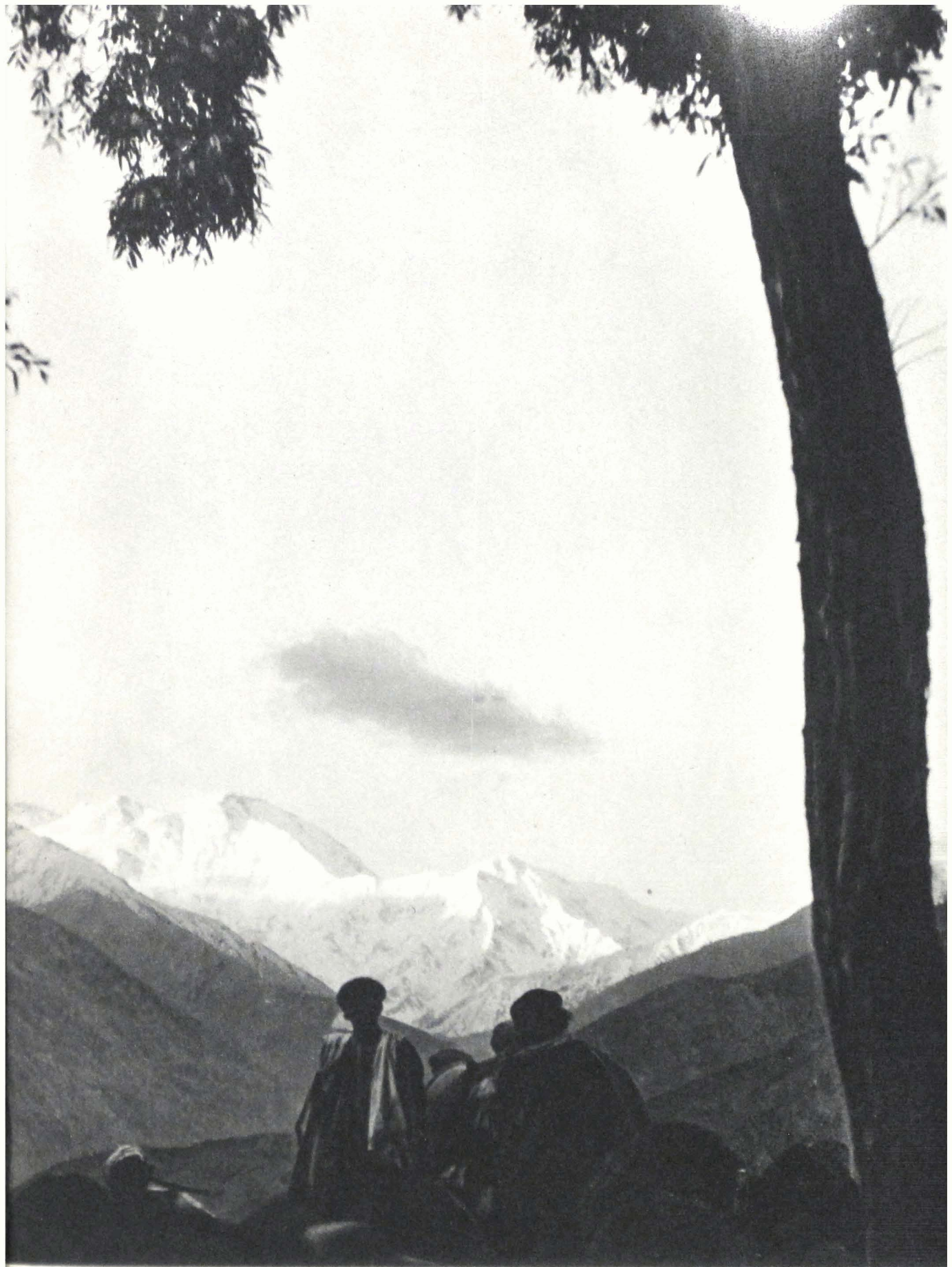


PLATE 71. *Early morning in I*



PLATE 72. *Native Musicians and some of our Sherpa porters*

Introduction

OF the countless wonders of this earth of ours, the Himalaya is surely the greatest and most overwhelming. The immensity of its mountain giants and the wild play of the forces inherent in them convey to the mind perhaps more forcibly than anything else the grandeur of creation. And what eternal variety is to be found within the fastnesses of this range itself ! In the east Kangchenjunga and Siniolchum thrust their feet into the unfathomable depths of ever-verdant tropical forest ; a sea of blossom covers the Sikkim mountain slopes sometimes to a height of over 13,000 feet ; orchids and rhododendrons and a multitude of different kinds of butterflies make an enchanted paradise of colour and beauty, while above are towers and pinnacles of glistening ice and fantastic patterns of filigree and fluting formed by the falling masses of snow even in the steepest walls. But on approaching Nanga Parbat, which towers as a corner-pillar at the western extremity of the Himalayas nearly a thousand miles from Kangchenjunga, quite a different type of scenery is encountered. The foothills are covered with bright woodland and flower-strewn meadows, calling to mind friendly Alpine scenes, but the deeply chiselled valley in which the Indus winds its grey and murky way through the mountains is a bare waste of rocks and one can imagine no greater contrast to it than the shimmering ice wall of Nanga Parbat, whose summit pierces the sky 23,000 feet above the Indus yet only fourteen miles from its banks.

It was on Nanga Parbat that the history of man's fight for the world's highest peaks really began. Here, in 1895, Mummery, one of the most illustrious of mountaineers, made the first attempt of this kind.

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His only companions were two native porters and with them he tried to ascend the Diamirai face. To-day we know that this was a well-nigh hopeless undertaking, although it was not here that he and the two Gurkhas lost their lives, but later, when they were trying to cross to the Rakhiot glacier for a new attempt on the summit. His end,* as his life, seemed wreathed in the magic of an old saga, and it was Mummery's courageous attempt that inspired Welzenbach and Merkl to apply their energies to Nanga Parbat—the mountain that was to bring such tragedy to German climbers.

With Mummery's unfortunate experiences on the Diamirai face in mind, Merkl decided to attack the mountain from the north-east, the Rakhiot side, and when in 1932 he and Bechtold were forced back by deep snow from a height of nearly 23,000 feet and had to abandon the attempt, he at least had the satisfaction of having found a possible route to the coveted summit. Two years later, in April, 1934, Willi Merkl left Germany with a fresh team for another attack on Nanga Parbat ; by the beginning of July they had overcome all the difficulties of the approach and were in striking distance of the summit, when a storm of incredible severity broke which not only destroyed their every hope of reaching their goal but brought about the death of three of the best climbers and six native porters. Willi Merkl, Willo Welzenbach and Uli Wieland died from exposure on the way down ; Alfred Drexel had already died of pneumonia on the ascent and his grave lies at the foot of the mountain which claimed also the bodies of his comrades.

In spite of Kangchenjunga and all that had been suffered and achieved there, the object of the next German expedition to the Himalayas had once more to be Nanga Parbat if the efforts and last sacrifice of so many of our comrades were not to be in vain. So that preparations and organisation should be as perfect as possible, the Sikkim reconnaissance was next carried out, the excellent results of which far exceeded all expectations, and which also formed a link with the Kangch expeditions of 1929 and 1931, whose basic principles of disciplined co-operation and

* No trace was ever found of Mummery and his companions ; one can only assume that they were overtaken by an avalanche.

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careful choice of a team—principles created by the war generation—set an example for all time.

The existence of a nucleus of tried and reliable men is a factor of decisive importance in the formation of a good Himalaya team and from this standpoint the 1937 team could almost be formed along logical lines ; the results testified to the efficacy of this method. There were in the first place Wien and Hartmann, and Hartmann's Kangch diary is a permanent memorial to the friendship which existed between these two men. When it was settled that Wien was to lead the expedition it naturally followed that Hartmann should go too, but he did not arrive at his decision without some difficulty, as is shown by the thoughts with which he opened his diary, found on him after his death.

On 6th May, 1937, when they left Srinagar, Hartmann made his first entry :

“ Let cold and pain do what they will,
One binding oath I will fulfil
Which burns like firebrands
Through sword and heart and hands—
Whate'er Fate may decree,
Germany, I stand by thee !

“ I feel I must begin with these words of Flex which I heard for the first time on the 11th November, 1934, at the memorial service for those who had lost their lives on Nanga Parbat that year. They occurred in the Sports-Führer's speech and have since remained in the forefront of my mind ; they have in fact haunted me. My decision to join the 1931 Kangchenjunga expedition was reached with difficulty, for I had to admit to myself that others with sound feet * would probably be more useful there than I. But will and enthusiasm finally triumphed and it was with a grateful and humble heart that I claimed this great experience. Then came the 1937 Nanga Parbat project—and Karlo was to lead. And here I am once more ! But there were not many who understood or approved of my joining this expedition.

* Hans Hartmann was so severely frost-bitten while climbing on the Bianco Ridge in the Alps that the front halves of both his feet had to be amputated. He afterwards wore short boots which gave his feet the appearance of horses' hooves.

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“ ‘ What about his wife and children ? . . . His scientific work will suffer ! . . . Why must he go again ? He only just escaped alive last time.’ Criticisms of this kind were heaped upon me from every side, but I regarded the matter differently. ‘ Let cold and pain do what they will.’ I was always browsing in Scott’s diary and in the account of Alfred Wegener’s last journey. ‘ One binding oath I will fulfil. . . .’ I thought of my Kangch comrades—Pircher, after Schaller had fallen, bent low over his ice-axe, breathing heavily, waiting for strength to return ; Bauer, whose iron will still caused his eyes to shine when, above Camp X, his heart nearly gave out . . . and Karlo, who was to lead, and who had called me. Here they are again on their way . . . and I with them.”

In 1931 Hartmann with the advance party had reached a height of 25,400 feet, and at the same time he had carried out his scientific research into the effects of high altitudes on the human body and made a valuable contribution to this branch of science which to-day is of considerable importance. This work was to be continued, and to assist him he took Uli Luft, his assistant at home—a fine choice, as was to be proved later. The other members of the team were all friends of Wien, who made his selection with intelligence and foresight. It was taken for granted that Günther Hepp and Adolf Göttner should take part after having proved themselves so splendidly on the Sikkim reconnaissance, and together with Wien they gave the team a solid foundation. Fankhauser, whose fine character and abounding strength and vitality spoke for themselves, had been a great deal in the Kaiser mountains (where his friendship with Karlo Wien had developed) and he had done some difficult rock climbing there. He was an Austrian, and with him the “ Greater Germany ” idea of the German Himalaya expeditions was embodied in the team.

Martin Pfeffer had had many opportunities of proving his worth both as man and mountaineer, particularly on that momentous climb with Leo Maduschka on the Civetta north-west face, when a terrific storm had attacked them with falling stones and floods of water while they were bivouacking ; Maduschka had gradually weakened, they had sung the mountaineers’ song together and then he had died in Pfeffer’s arms.

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Pfeffer summoned enough strength to let himself down the difficult wall on the following morning and then led a rescue party to his dead friend. Peter Müllritter had been on Nanga Parbat in 1934, when in spite of every effort he had witnessed the end of his comrades from the closest quarters without being able to help. We have him to thank for many superb lantern slides ; he had assisted Bechtold in the making of the film and had now been preparing for months to make a film record himself of this new attempt. He was the most hilarious and high-spirited member of the team. Professor Carl Troll, who travelled out with the Nanga Parbat team to undertake geographical and botanical work, was also a close friend of Karlo Wien ; in 1933 and 1934 they had worked together for nearly a year in the mountain districts of East Africa.

A considerable despatch had left Munich for India as early as autumn 1936, and this, together with the supplies which had been purchased in India and the equipment still available from the Sikkim expedition, was sent on over the passes to Talichi. In assembling the equipment and supplies the strictest economy was observed, and in this direction the lessons learnt on the Sikkim reconnaissance were most useful. Many great expeditions—nearly all of them in fact—had suffered from having too much weight to carry ; a high degree of comfort had been achieved at the expense of mobility and the enormous parties resulting were not regarded at all favourably in India, for a disturbance in the economic balance of the poor mountain districts through which they passed usually followed in their train.

It had been settled that the company should set off from Srinagar on the 1st May, but on this day the *Treuenfels* had only just reached Bombay, and in order to minimise the resulting delay as far as possible, Wien decided to continue the journey by train on the same day, although they all would have liked to celebrate the 1st May with the Germany colony in Bombay. After a two days' journey they arrived in Rawalpindi, where they were heartily received by Emil Kuhn, a Swiss domiciled there, who had been with them on Nanga Parbat in 1934.

They reached Srinagar after a day's drive from Rawalpindi and here

Introduction

there was a joyful reunion with the twelve Darjeeling porters whom Wien had selected in Darjeeling and engaged for Nanga Parbat in the autumn of the previous year. It is impossible nowadays to contemplate a Himalaya expedition without the help of these fine Sherpas. On many occasions they have proved that they will remain loyal to their masters to the very end. These twelve were a picked bunch, several of whom had been up to the highest camps on Mount Everest. Their leader was once more Nursang, a man of iron constitution, who remained at his post day and night. Nima Tsering and Mingma are well known to the reader from the 1936 Sikkim journey, and Pasang Picture, a brother of Mingma, was also among their number. In 1929 he had come from his home in Nepal to Darjeeling to join an expedition for the first time—Bauer's Kangch reconnaissance—and since then no German Himalaya expedition was without him. Brenner had trained him to assist with the photographic work, for which, with his high intelligence, he was admirably suited; Bechtold, too, used him as his photographic help and assistant director. His cheerful disposition made him a pleasant companion. The other Darjeeling porters were Nim Tsering, who had taken part in the French expedition; Mambahadur, who had been our cook in Sikkim in 1936, Kami, who in 1936 had carried his load to Camp IV on Mount Everest and who, according to Ruttledge's testimonial, was a good character; Gyaljen Monjo, Jigmay, Chong Karma, Angtsering (not the 1934 Angtsering) who in 1936 was the only porter to stand with the Japanese climbers on the summit of Nanda Rot; and Da Tondup, who had been with us in the high camps of Nanga Parbat. They had all travelled over from Darjeeling—for many their first railway journey—and welcomed their masters with great joy when they arrived in Srinagar.

Through Kashmir to the Indus

A MEMORABLE DRIVE THROUGH THE BEAUTIFUL spring-time scenery of the Kashmir basin, through flowery meadows where lambs and goats gambolled beneath blossoming fruit trees, and through wet paddy-fields, took us to Bandipur, at the foot of the mountains. Around us shone the summits of Pir Panjal and the Tragbal chain, their mantles of glistening snow sweeping down to below the 10,000 feet mark. Soon we were rushing along the banks of the River Jhelum, which winds its way in innumerable twists and turns through this well-watered country to the shores of the mirror-smooth Wular Lake, where our twelve Sherpas had already neatly piled our one hundred and fifty loads. Hundreds of rascally-looking Kashmiris were hanging around, making persistent efforts to secure for themselves a load that was both light and comfortable. Nursang cut himself a stout willow wand which he brought down heavily and uncompromisingly on to the backs of the insubordinates, and at last the seething mass took on some semblance of order and the loads were distributed.

TRAGBAL PASS

Slowly, and taking several rests, we moved up towards the Tragbal bungalow with our column of one hundred and forty coolies. Adi Göttner and Martl Pfeffer had to stay behind in Srinagar to await the

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important consignments of petrol which were not due to arrive until that day from Rawalpindi.

Late that evening we were sitting round the fire in the Tragbal bungalow. It was perceptibly colder up here, for we were now at a height of nearly 10,000 feet ; we had a wonderful view to the south over the plains of Kashmir with their myriads of glistening lakes. The following morning was clear and cold as we climbed through dense forest to the bare heights of the Tragbal Pass (12,000 feet). We encountered snow a short distance above the hut, but it had hardened and held well. We rested a short while at the shelter at the top of the pass and viewed our surroundings ; the encircling mountains, though already 13,000–16,000 feet high, distinctly resembled the Alpine foothills. The porters were in high spirits and went running and sliding down the steep ravine into the valley on the other side. They were carrying fifty pounds each on curious wooden frames ; their footwear was remarkable—light straw sandals, of which each man carried half a dozen spare pairs.

Ramona, the cook, hurried on in front of us to the first mountain hut and awaited us there with hot tea. He had been on Nanga Parbat in 1932 and 1934 ; he was familiar with expedition conditions and knew what was expected of him. Whenever we asked him when the tea would be ready we always received the same comforting reply, delivered in thundering tones : “ Panch (five) minutes, gentlemen.”

Our serpentine column straggled along the valley to Kanzalwan. In the early afternoon heavy rain and snow began to fall, and we were soaked to the skin when we reached the miserable rest-house situated at the junction with the Kishanganga valley. There was only one bed available, but immediately after our meal our sleeping-sacks were spread out on the tables and on the floor. We had all settled down to our rest when we heard a shout above the noise of the storm. It was Pfeffer and Göttner. They had led the petrol porters the twenty-nine miles from Bandipur over the pass in fourteen hours, and we all congratulated them on this fine effort ; to-morrow we should be able to march as one company.

The path along the Kishanganga to Gurais (eleven miles) was inexpressibly lovely, passing through a forest of tall, leafy trees and by meadows

PLATE 73. *The Indus valley near Talichti*

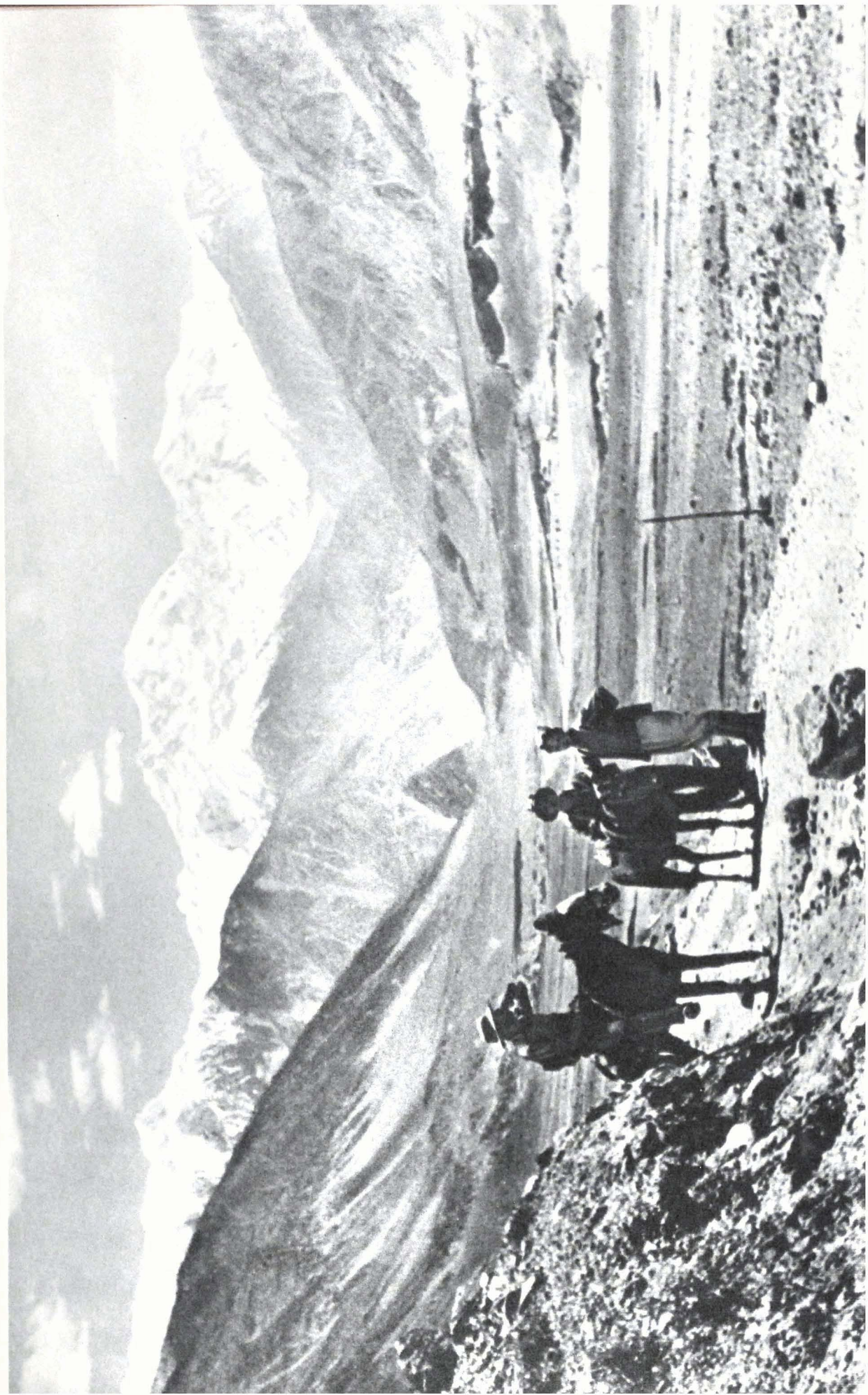


PLATE 74. Sabibs and porters at the Base Camp



RAKHOT PEAK

SILVER SADDLE

PLATE 75. *Woods and meadows on the way to Nanga Parbat from Tato*



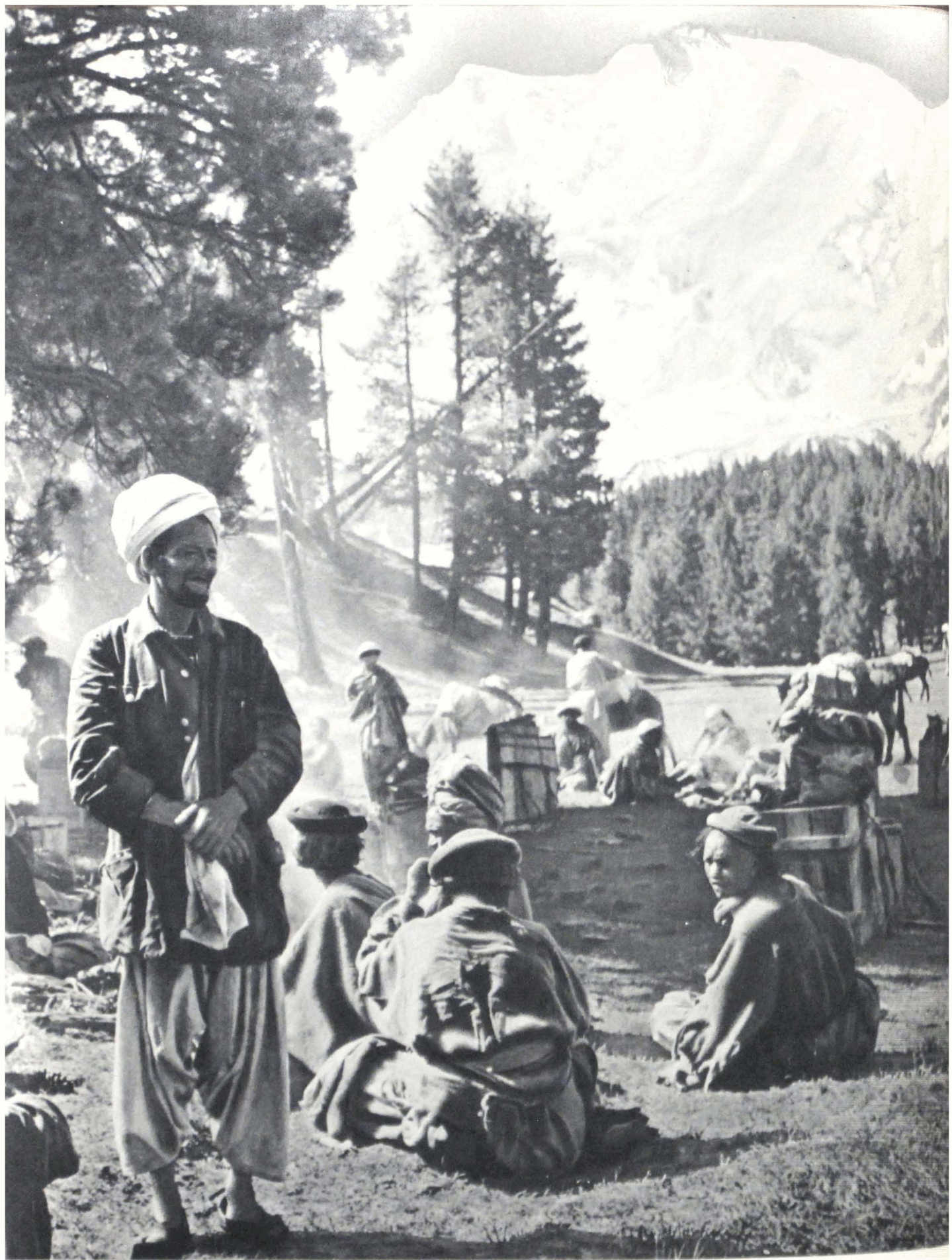


PLATE 76. *The caravan resting in the Fairy Meadow*



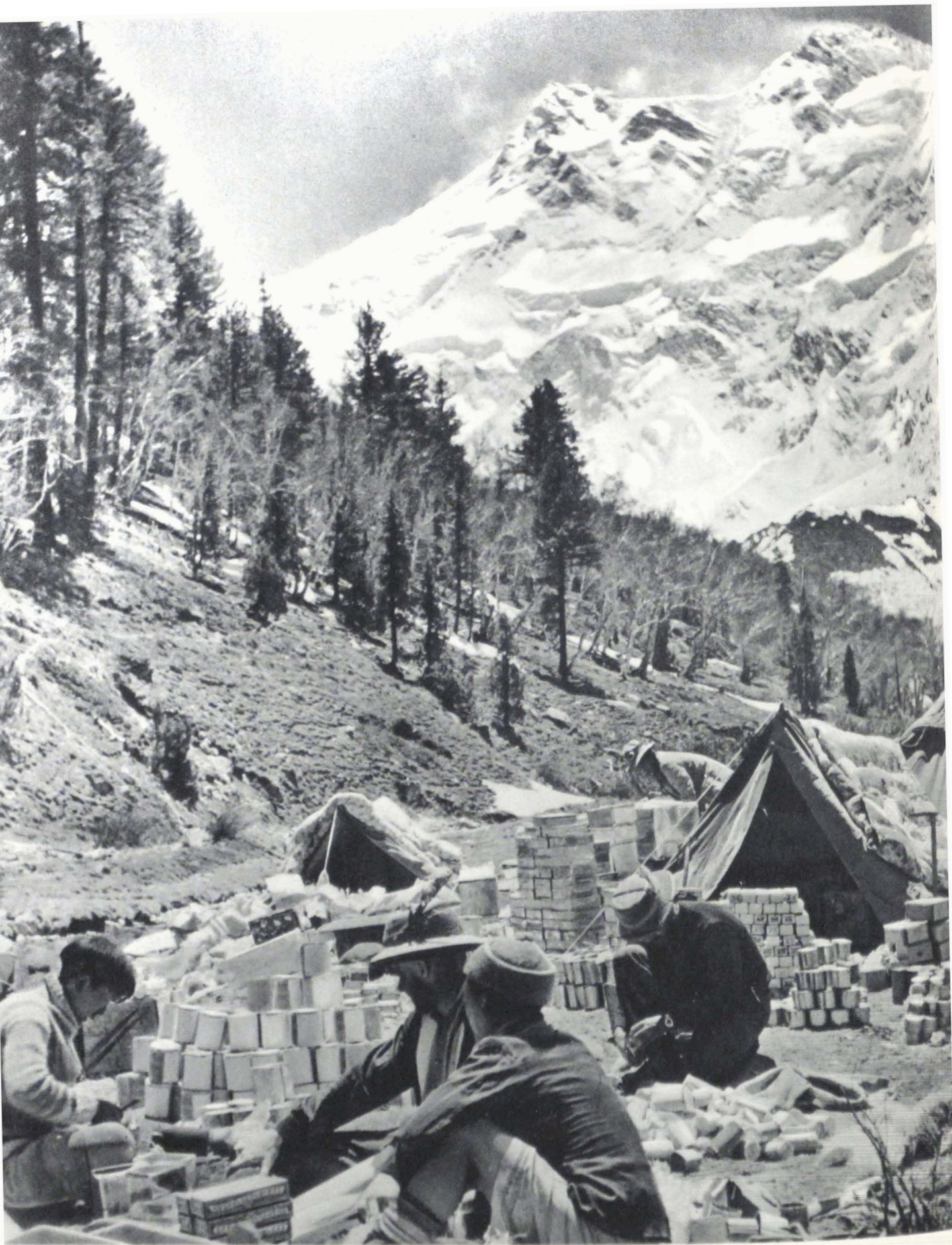
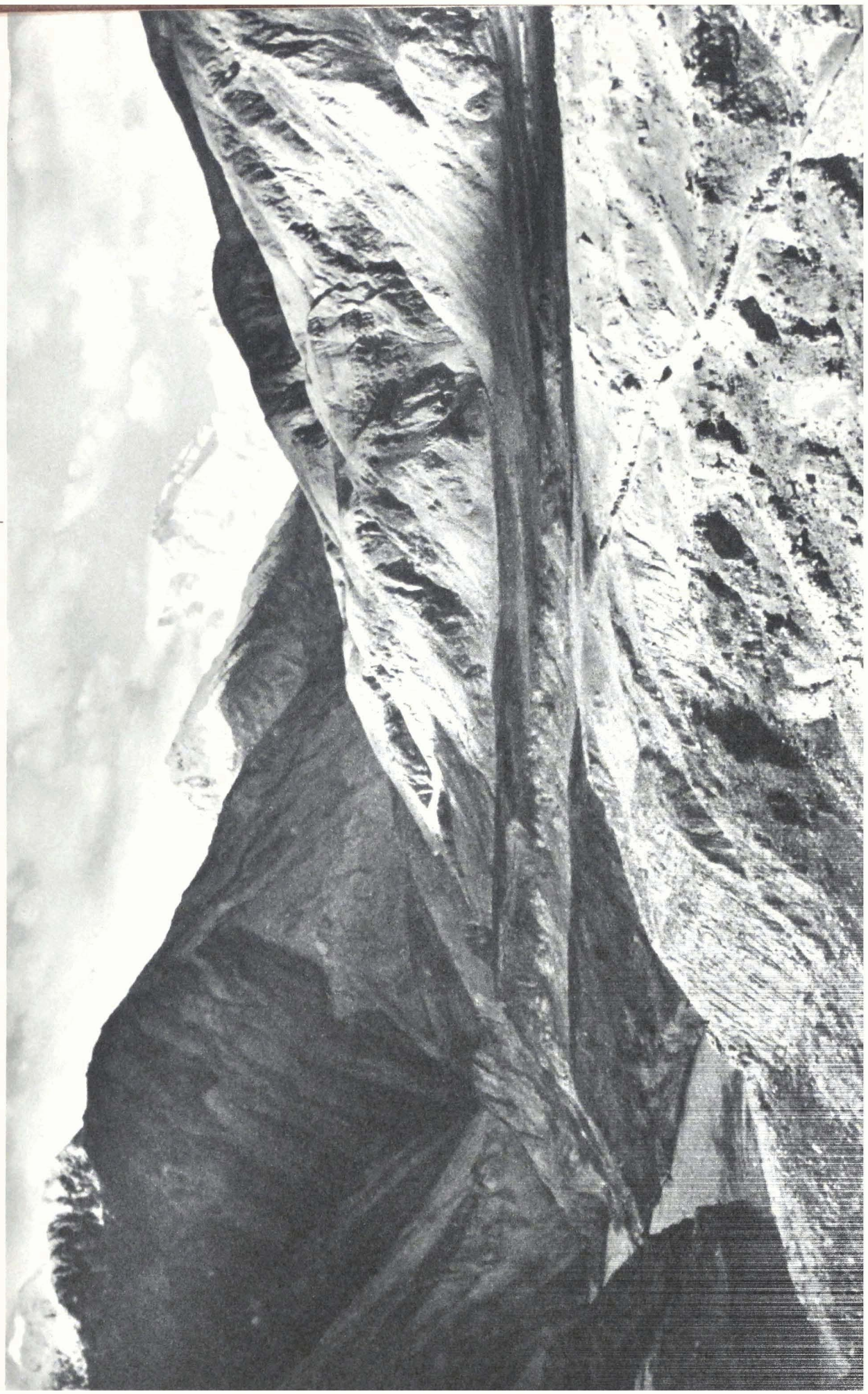
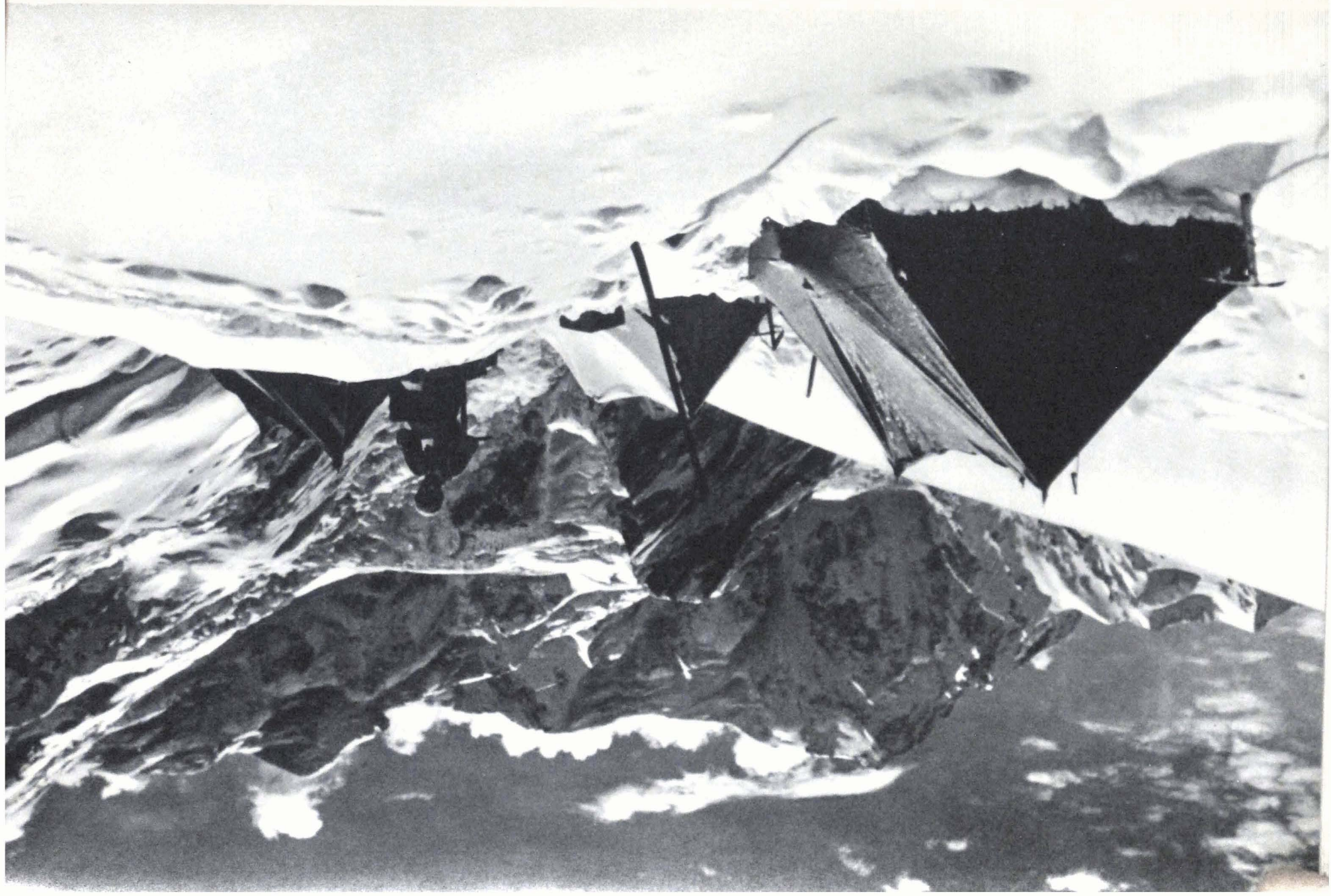


PLATE 78. Supplies piling up in the temporary Base Camp

PLATE 79. *The column on the march between Talichi and the Rabbiot Bridge*

NANGA PARBAT





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bright with primroses, tulips and crocuses to the Gurais rest-house. All the porters had arrived by midday and we had a half-day's rest. Here we had to enlist fresh porters as it is forbidden to take the men more than two days' march from their homes. We camped on a pleasant site by the river bank, busied ourselves with packing, sorting and writing and received a visit from the Tahsildar, a cultured Sikh, who wore European dress.

The fresh porters were on the spot long before sunrise ; they were an unruly band and only the most brutal measures on the part of Nursang and his guard of Sherpas could achieve any discipline in their ranks. After a fight over the loads, in which it was surprising that not more of their number were seriously injured, we were able to start. Our way now lay through fourteen miles of fresh blossoming countryside, in which the peasants worked small widely scattered fields, while one could still see the courses of great avalanches from the mountain slopes right down to the river. It was easy to imagine that one was in the Engadine. At the high rest-house at Pashwari, we spent one of those memorable camp-fire evenings. Hardly had our musicians, Martl Pfeffer and Günther Hepp, sounded a note on their accordions, when the porters began to crowd round us. Even the venerable old Kirgheezes who had pitched their camp nearby came over and joined us. Soon the flames of our fire were leaping house-high, their flickering light playing on the forms and faces of this quaint mixture of peoples, Germans, Indians, Thibetans and Kirgheezes, squatting closely together around the blazing campfire. A certain amount of rivalry developed between our Sherpas, who touching shoulder to shoulder beat the ground faster and faster in a monotonous rhythmic dance, and the Kashmiris, who executed a grotesque dance pantomime with wild, exaggerated gestures to the accompaniment of shrill pipe music. By the dying fire our cheerful mountain songs and hearty camp choruses resounded long into the starry night.

BURZIL PASS

The next bulwark thrown in our path from the main ridge of the Himalayas was the 13,775 feet high Burzil Pass. The march from

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Peshwari along the Kishanganga was long and tiring, and from time to time our way was barred by huge masses of snow. We soon overtook the column of Kirgheezes, who on their little steppe-horses found these difficulties hard to overcome. They were patriarchal old gentlemen with flowing white beards and arrayed in costly robes and trappings. One of them offered to exchange with me some old Russian roubles bearing the image of the Czar. The oldest was over eighty. They were returning from their pilgrimage to Mecca which for two years had led them over seas, steppes, mountains and deserts.

We approached the pass from the little village of Minimarg, the path up to Burzil Chauki leading over scree and finally over snow in which stood solitary birches. Here an astounding view over chains of distant snow-covered summits opened out before us. In the afternoon we rested outside the shelter, watching the stragglers of our party and the Kirgheezes, whose horses were floundering helplessly in the deep snow, as they made their slow ascent. A sturdy fellow lifted one old man and carried him over the last stretch on his shoulders. The mountain-tops were still glowing in the failing light as we slipped into our sleeping-sacks, for we had to be up at two o'clock on the following morning.

As we climbed up to the pass by the light of lanterns and torches over the firm snow, frozen board-hard, we appreciated the wisdom of our early start. With good solid ground beneath their feet, our porters reached the pass just before dawn with practically no effort. We made rapid progress down over the snow slopes to Sardar Chauki, where Ramona had breakfast waiting. The porters were in good form; we had given them all drops in their eyes as a precaution against snow blindness and at ten o'clock we set off again along the valley. Soon the heat of the sun had turned the firm snow into a quite unmanageable pulp which came over our ankles, and it was late when the last porters laid down their loads in Chillam after a long and exacting day. We had our meal in a green meadow in front of the rest-house and congratulated ourselves on our successful night crossing of the notorious Burzil Pass.

There was a great deal of merriment on the following day as the Sahibs mounted their horses and swept over the boulder-strewn path like

Through Kashmir to the Indus

the hordes of Genghis Khan, and we had many frantic but harmless spills before we became accustomed to the erratic gait of our mounts and the primitive wooden saddles. We were leaving the wonderful scenery behind all too quickly now, but the murmuring river accompanied us the whole day, swollen by the waterfalls which plunged into it from the mountains on either side. Müllritter, in ambush, "shot" us with his ciné camera as we rode into Godai at full gallop.

From here our loads were carried forward on fifty ponies, but we on our eager steeds were soon far ahead of them. Gently the valley inclined towards Gurikot and side by side we trotted along in the clear morning air. Our stony path was lined with blossoming apricot and mulberry trees; a wooded fore-ridge rose gradually before us like a coulisse, and at a bend in the path a distant ice ridge, glistening in dazzling clarity against the sky, came into view. We stood still and gazed at it, spellbound. There, where the glittering crest of snow rose high above Rakhiot and the fore-peaks, there lay our objective—Nanga Parbat.

We dismounted and walked up a nearby hill to take in every detail of this fantastic spectacle. With our eyes we followed the route on which in those frightful days of storm in 1934 Merkl, Welzenbach and Wieland had battled and fallen. The scene was imprinted unforgettably on our minds as we rode into Astor that afternoon.

This quaint little place lies on fruitful terraces among the swaying poplars high above the ravine of the Astor river. Lieutenant Smart awaited us here in the shady bungalow. He had already served three years in Gilgit, that far outpost of the British Empire, as officer in the Gilgit Scouts, and had many tales to tell about the native risings in the tribal territory and on the north-west frontier. He had just returned from leave, which he had spent not in the noise and bustle of the towns but in the hunting grounds of the Pamirs, a significant fact which gave us a key to his character. We were soon friends and his long experience of dealing with the natives was to be extremely valuable to us.

The next day, which took us to Doian, was the most eventful of this part of our journey. As day broke we led our horses down the steep path into the wooded Astor ravine; behind us, the huts and poplars of

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Astor showed up like sharp silhouettes against the sky and the snow-covered mountains. We now raced along the bank of the rushing Astor until the path rose precipitously to Dashkin, which stands above the ravine like the stronghold of a robber baron. We had our tiffin in the rest-house, while just outside the village schoolmaster held forth among a crowd of dirty children who were babbling phrases out of their tattered lesson-books and drawing the intricate curves of the Urdu characters on wooden boards. Later, the Dashkin wood embraced us in its shadows and between the trees one could glimpse the steep rocky pinnacle of the Dichil Finger on the other side of the valley. At the end of this long day's march we sat on the verandah of the bungalow above Doian and in the light of the evening sun gazed into the distance at the graceful summit pyramid of Rakaposhi above the Indus valley.

BY THE INDUS

Our ride to the Ramghat Bridge was hot and dusty. The steep winding path lay along a narrow ledge, from which a vertical rock wall fell away right down to the river. As we rode out on to the wide plains of the Indus, a view to the north-east flank of the mighty massif of Nanga Parbat opened up before us. In Bunji, a lush green oasis in the stony waste of the Indus valley, we met the first porters from Baltistan, whom Lieutenant Smart had engaged on our behalf. These robust and hardened mountain folk had stood the test of previous expeditions.

The rest-house lay in the shade of mulberry trees in a large garden and here Wien, assisted by Smart, had a lengthy hagggle with the crafty trader from Gilgit who was to supply us with food for the porters ; we others stretched our weary limbs in the cool grass while the coolies brought us baskets full of juicy mulberries.

On the following day the ferryman who was supposed to take us over the broad-flowing Indus simply refused to do so. Neither gentle persuasion nor wild curses, not even a threat from Smart that his wages would be reduced, could get him over from the opposite bank ; he stood there and roared across at us that the stream was too fast. On account of

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our ignorance of the language we unfortunately missed the fine points of the benediction which our Sirdar Nursang called forth upon his head, but nevertheless we fully agreed with all he said.

So now we trudged through the deep sand of the Indus plains. We felt almost like desert pilgrims when we found the sun-bleached skeleton of a horse lying by the wayside. Drop by drop the sweat trickled down from our topees and we sighed with relief when we saw our horses again on the Indus bridge. This detour had cost us fifteen miles, and we raced all the more madly on our fresh mounts to Talichi, where we were greeted on the edge of the oasis by an orchestra of curious wind instruments. Captain Mackenzie and Captain Graham, who after six months were exchanging their posts in isolated Chilas and Gilgit, had met here and invited us to celebrate Smart's birthday with them. Once again there were some lively scenes in camp; two hundred porters from the surrounding district who on the following morning were to carry on the loads which had been brought here the previous autumn were gathered there and Müllritter picked out from among them the old comrades of 1934. Swarms of lizards slithered about among the warm stones on the edge of the track; Adi Göttner had a clever way of catching them in a noose and in the course of our march he made a considerable collection which was carefully preserved in alcohol. The Englishmen invited us to dinner and drinks flowed freely. In the evening an enormous fire was whipped up to a glow by a hurricane of a wind; the natives pranced madly round the flames, dancing to drums and shrill pipe music—an unforgettable scene, the glistening white valley-head of Nanga acting as a backcloth. It was on this day that Troll left us to begin his special work in the province of Gor and in the Astor valley.

Our last night on the Indus plains by the Rakhiot bridge was strangely oppressive and sultry. The sandy camping site by the river bore the unmistakable signs of the countless caravans of camels and horses whose custom it is to rest here on their long journey to Kashgar. Martl fittingly christened it "Horse-Dung Camp." The whole night through Karlo, with the help of Smart and Nursang, haggled with the porters, who were demanding ridiculously high pay. We noticed that nearly all of

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them kept producing guns ; they were mostly old rifles which no doubt had seen some adventurous days and which would fetch high prices from antiquarians at home. With patience and tact, Smart succeeded in settling the argument to our advantage.

INTO THE RAKHIOT NULLAH

We all felt relieved when we were on our way to the steep path which led up a sheer 4950 feet into the Rakhiot Nullah. Pert Fankhauser had hurried on ahead and quickly reached the first arm which stretched down from the Buldar ridge, and we could hardly keep up with the heavily laden porters in their first enthusiasm. From a height of 8580 feet we gazed into the lovely valley of Tato, into which our path led, Nanga and its vassal peaks forming a mighty curve at the head of the valley. At the bubbling sulphur spring which gives the place its name (tato pani—hot water), the column passed through the fields which the natives had painstakingly freed from stones and planted with corn. The low huts were buried deep into the clay hills and overgrown with grass. At the highest farmstead we pitched our tents close to the roaring Rakhiot stream into whose grey-brown waters massive boulders thundered down from the heights.

In a short time crowds of sick natives were gathering round our Doctor-Sahib, Günther Hepp, who had a pill or a plaster for every one of them ; they even brought him a veiled woman, a rare occurrence in a Mohammedan community, and two of her teeth were extracted—not without some trouble. In return they brought us a basket of eggs. In the evening we once more had music from Martl's accordion ; it seemed almost home-like up here in this mountain village, in the wooded valley bottom, and long and cheerfully we sang round the huge fire.

An hour's march on the steep moraine ridge led us into dense woodland, and suddenly we found ourselves in the Fairy Meadow.* Any description, any picture, could be but a pale reflection of the beauty which here surrounded us, while lambs and goats frisked gaily among the

* So named by the 1932 expedition.

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spring flowers, now free from snow. We had only a short rest, for to-day we were to press on towards the glacier. At the end of the moraine we began to ascend, now completely fascinated and enthralled by the mountain kingdom which opened up before us. The sound of muffled thunder was heard in the distance and we saw a great white cloud rolling down the north-east face of Nanga Parbat. Its clouds of snow were shot far over the glacier. Never before had we seen such an avalanche.

Thus did the mountain greet us.

The Assault

THE 22ND MAY SAW THE BEGINNING OF OUR assault. Müllritter, Hepp, Fankhauser and Smart ascended on the sparsely wooded moraine edge which fell steeply down to the glacier and in just over two hours they reached the site of the 1934 Base Camp ; a layer of firm snow still lay over the old pitch. After a rest they climbed steeply over the crest of the moraine to Camp I, which lay above the glacier on the highest extremity of the moraine, and from here it was possible to get a good view of the ice-fall through which lay the way to Camp II. Müllritter, who had been here in 1934, thought that conditions were comparatively good. Smart accompanied the Balti porters back to the temporary base camp.

23rd May, 1937. A group of eight selected and well-equipped Baltis left the temporary base camp at five o'clock under the leadership of Pfeffer. The morning was fine, and Wien and I accompanied him over the now well-trodden path which led quickly up to Camp I. At about 10.30, from the top of the moraine, we saw the advance party who had yesterday established Camp I now making their way to Camp II ; they were having a slow and laborious task up there, seeking a way through the grotesque labyrinth of the steep ice-fall. They would not be able to establish Camp II until the following morning. The midday heat in the hollow around Camp I was unbearable and Wien and I soon hurried back to the temporary base camp.

24th May, 1937. As early as three o'clock, Nursang, our energetic Sirdar, was hustling the Balti porters out of their shelters—which they had somewhat inadequately roofed with leaves and twigs—in the manner

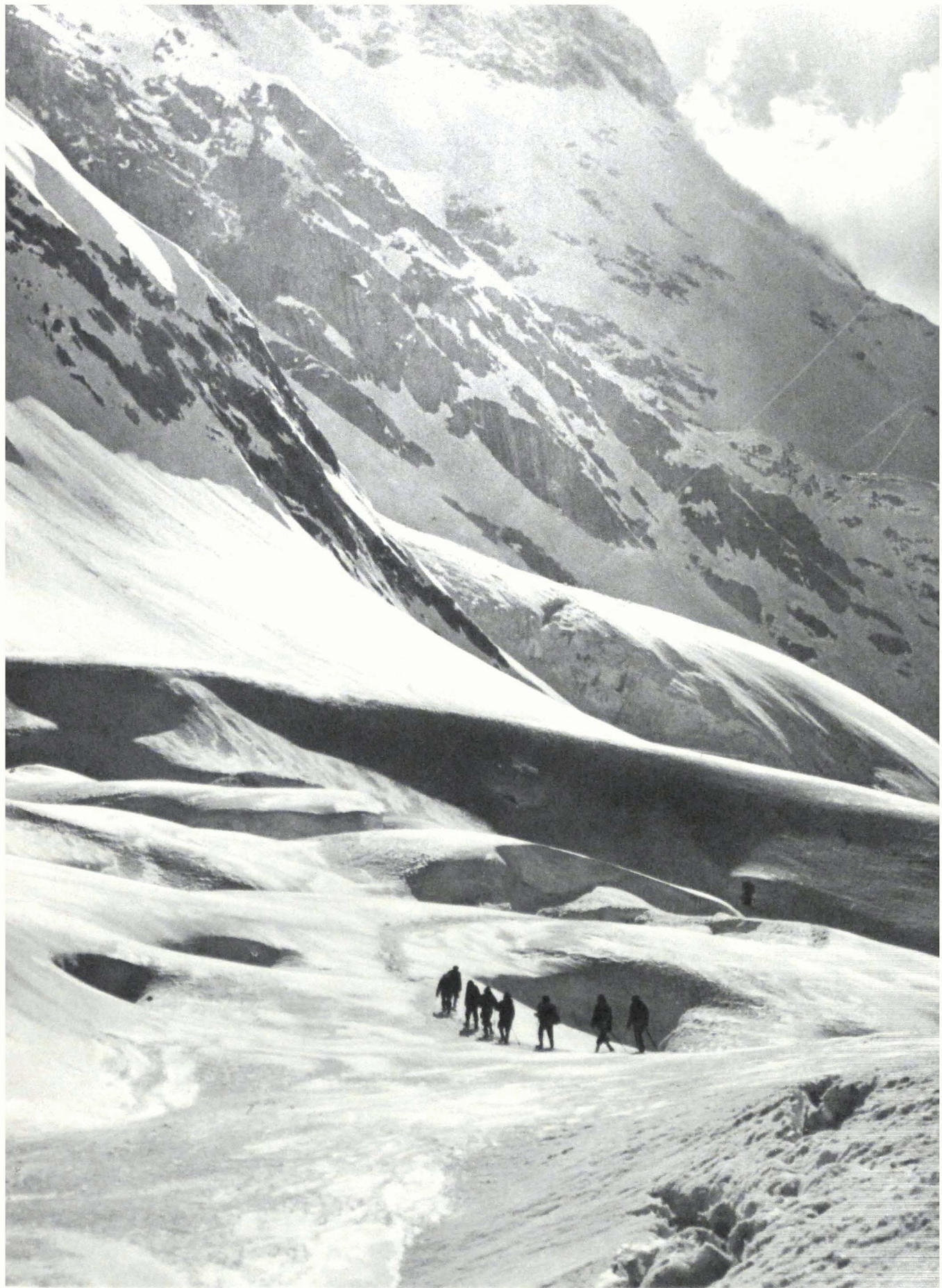


PLATE 81. *Below the steep face of Nanga Parbat, near Ca*

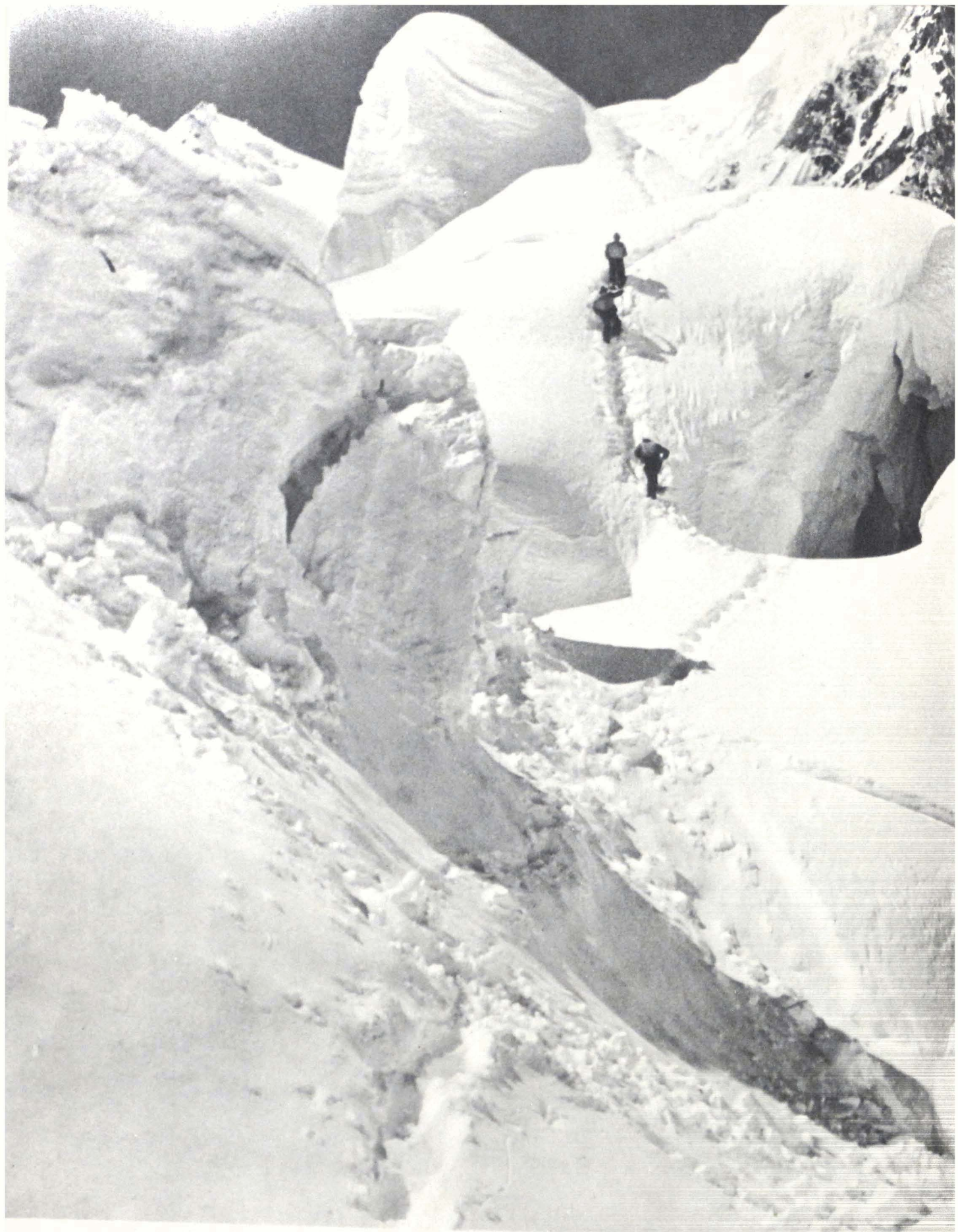
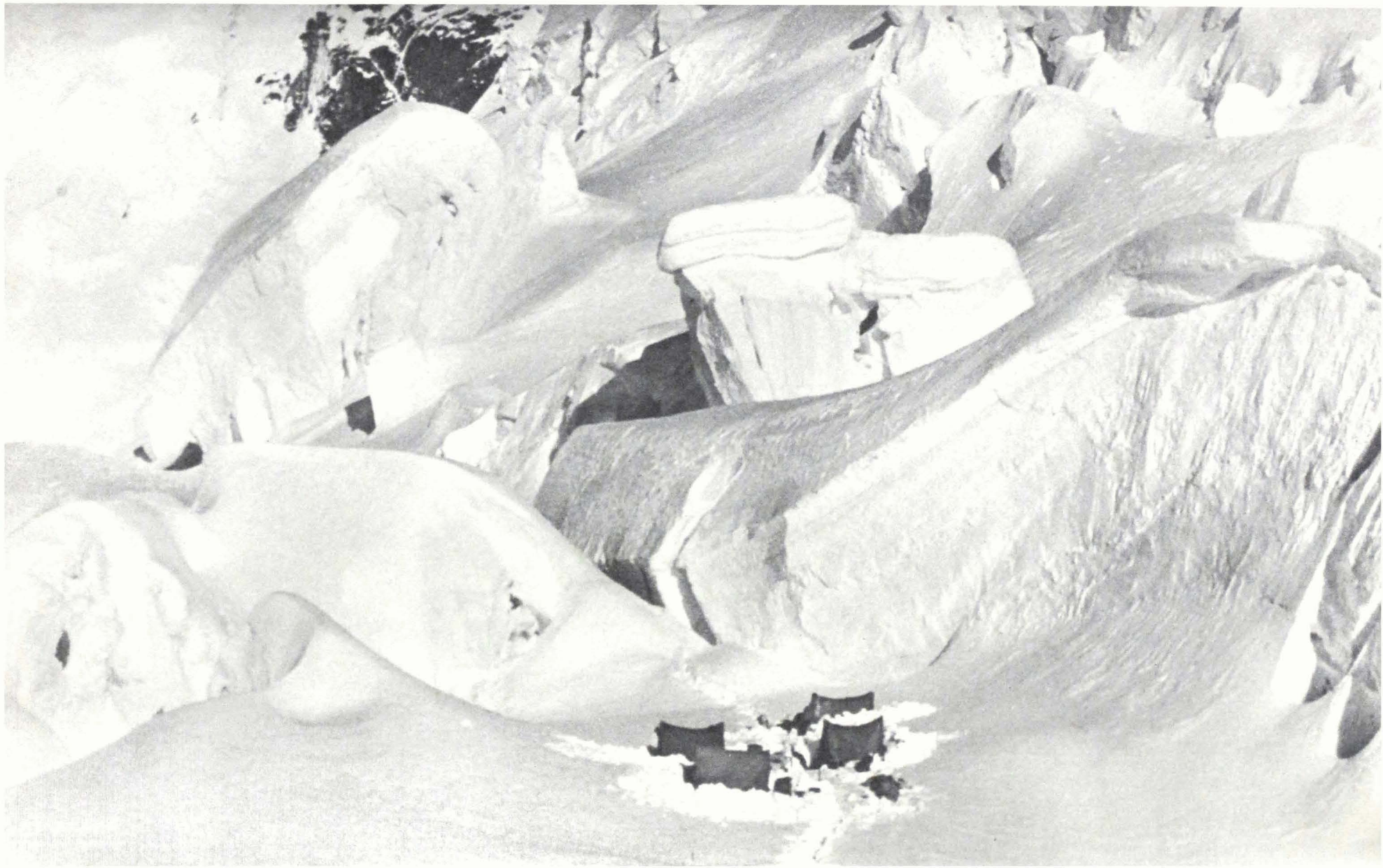


PLATE 82. *Crossing the glacier on the way up to Camp II*



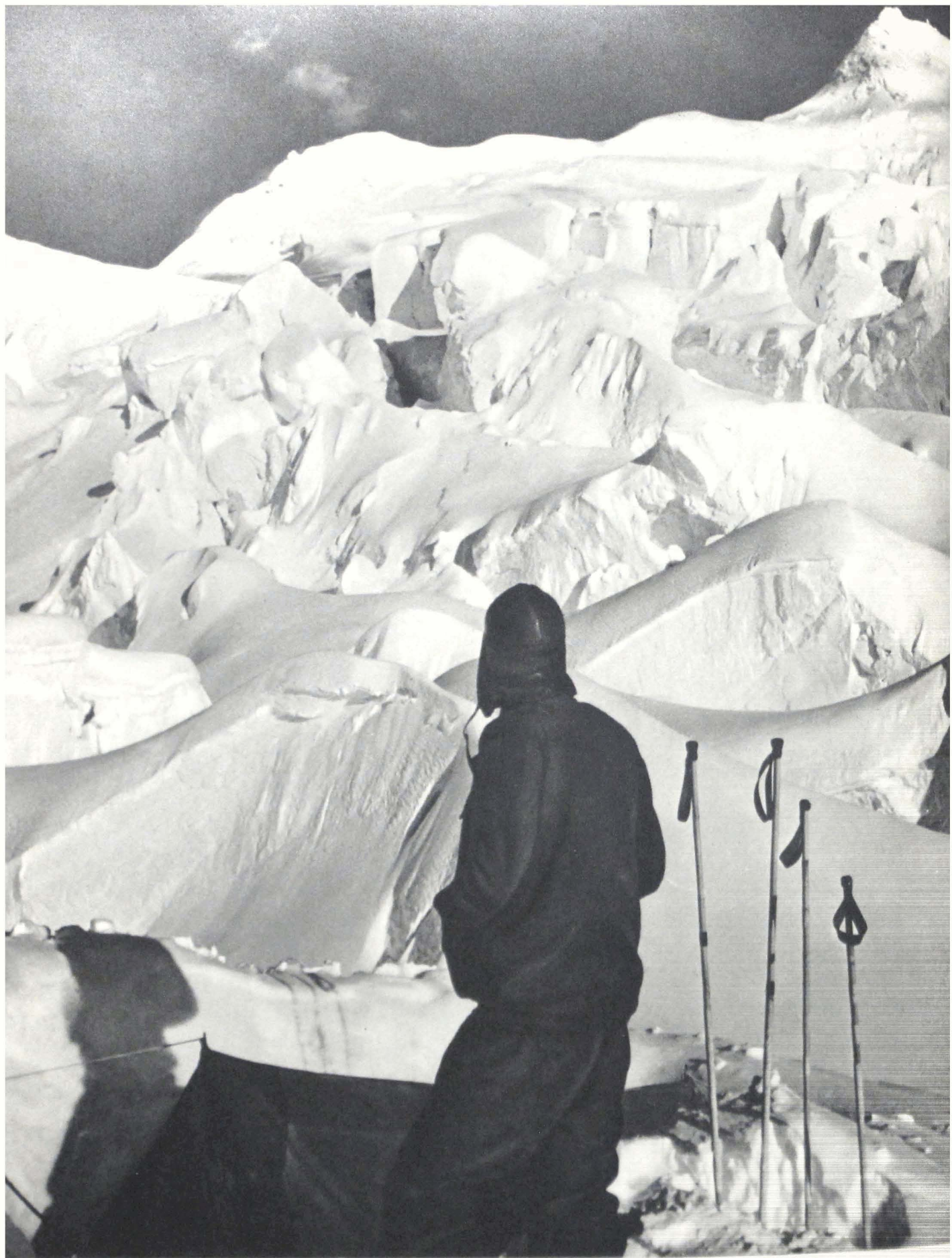


PLATE 84. *View from Camp II towards Rakhiot Peak and the site of Camp IV*

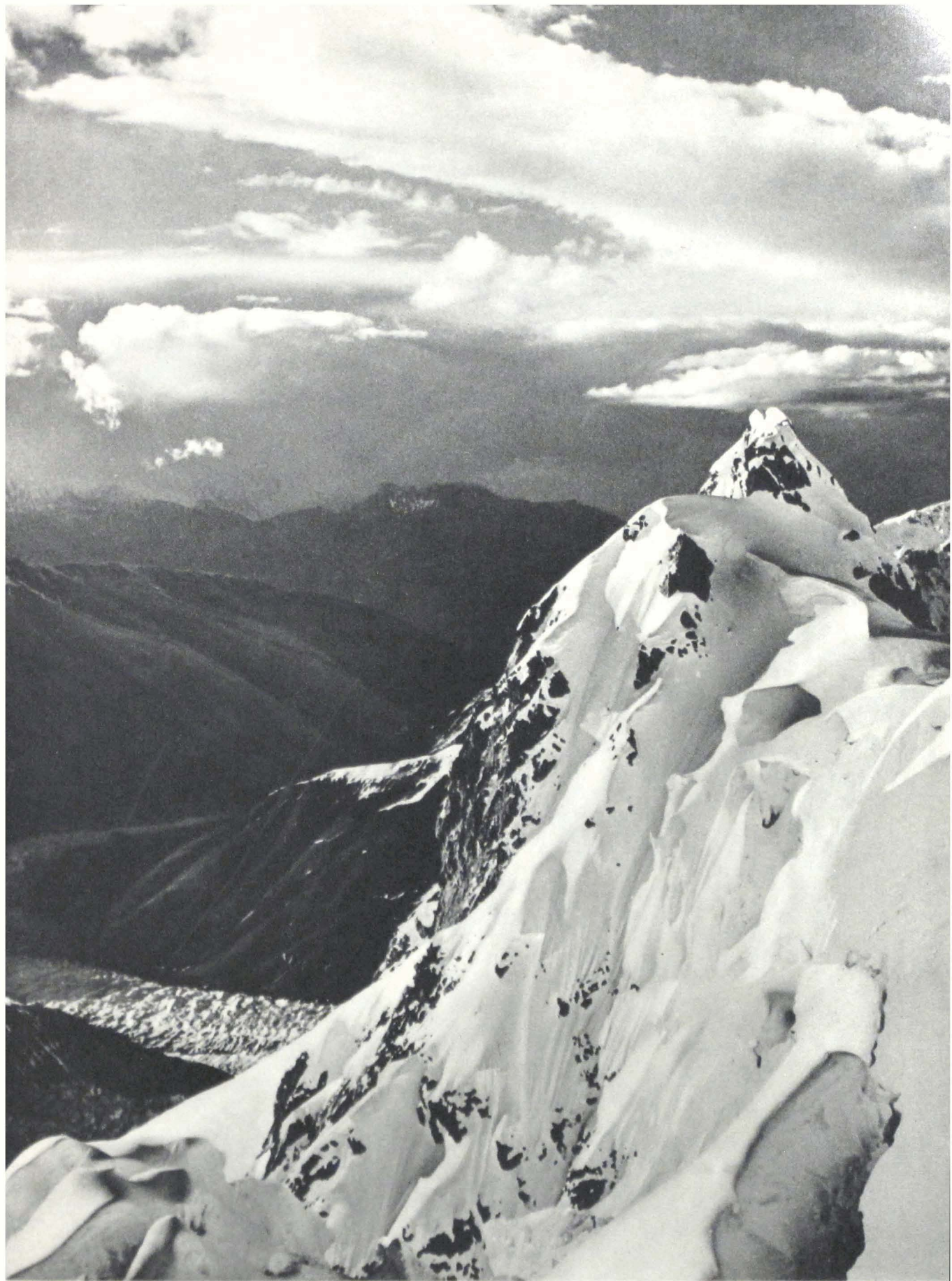


PLATE 85. *View from near Camp II down to the Rakbiot gl*



PLATE 86. En route between Camps II and III. View towards the southern Chongra Peak



PLATE 87. *Emerging from an ice-cleft between Camps II and III.*



PLATE 88. Camp III, showing Great Chongra Peak and the Buldar Ridge

The Assault

of an experienced sergeant-major. By five o'clock all was ready and Hartmann and Göttner led the procession to the dump at the Base Camp where among other things the food sacks for the high camps were to be packed. Special delicacies like spinach and fresh coffee were to be included and heavy punishment threatened anyone who dared to touch them before the time. Then the column moved on to Camp I. Through our field glasses, Wien and I excitedly watched the movements of the advance group high up on the glacier from an eminence above the temporary base camp. Difficulties seemed to be exceeding expectations, for they reached the plateau of Camp II only after eight hours of toil, and some of the Balti porters, even before they reached there, had to lay down their loads and, exhausted, return with Pfeffer to Camp I. Hepp said that all of them suffered badly from the unwonted exertion and the first effects of high altitude. We below had a visit from the Moham-medan village priest from Tato, who described to us the devil who dwells upon the summit of Nanga Parbat ; apparently he can call forth the storm wind simply by flapping his huge ears ; however, the priest said he would do what he could by prayer to influence him in our favour. While we were at our evening meal in the falling darkness we were surprised to see Göttner ; he had taken the trouble of making the long descent in order to inform the " Bara-Sahib " of the position up above. It appeared that we had made the mistake of expecting too much of the Baltis, and from now on they should be used only on well-prepared paths. Wien was to go up in the morning.

25th May, 1937. Wien and Göttner led another group of laden porters to Camp I. Ramona and his assistant accompanied them as they were needed above to give the Baltis their usual food and to have tea ready early in the morning. Wien rested only a short while in Camp I and in the afternoon hurried on with his orderly Mingma to Camp II. The distance from the temporary base camp (12,200 feet) to Camp II (17,650 feet) was no trifle. They would certainly be surprised to see Karlo up there to-day.

26th May, 1937. I dodged about all day with eight Balti porters between the temporary base camp and the Base Camp, in order to prepare

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for our removal there ; the site would soon be suitably levelled out. Göttner, Hartmann and Pfeffer advanced to Camp II with a large team of porters. A bank of clouds hovered over the ice-fall and I was ignorant of what was in store for my comrades, who were all to meet to-day in Camp II. I learned of their experience later from the graphic account in Hepp's diary : " We were all busily occupied, unpacking and sorting the loads, when suddenly we heard a terrific rending and crashing above us. At first we could see nothing, but in a few seconds I realised that the ice-fall hanging from the east ridge, whose threatening appearance had caused us some anxiety on the previous evening, was advancing on us. With one mighty sweep, men, tents and loads were hurled to the ground. I fell on top of two coolies and grasped their feet ; my anorak was drawn over my head and for a half a minute I was unable to get my breath. I was forced to the ground as if by an icy fist. ' As long as no large ice blocks come down,' I thought, ' it won't be so bad.' I felt the violence abating and saw Karlo rising from the ground. Someone called out : ' Are you all there, boys ? ' Then we laughed. The Sherpas rubbed the snow from their hair, straightened their clothes and said : ' No good, Sahib ! ' The Baltis too joined in the grim humour and we all stood there, thirty men, and laughed. Then we looked to see how much damage had been done. Two tents had been carried away, the tent poles had snapped and everything else was in complete chaos. Adi was the last to creep out from beneath a tattered tent, saying in his broad southern dialect : ' I'm a cautious chap, so I took cover.' In half an hour everything was cleared up, two new tents were erected and our things were in order once more. Shortly afterwards, Göttner and Wien with the Balti porters returned to Camp I. Five Sahibs and two Sherpas remained in Camp II in readiness for an advance to Camp III in the morning."

27th May, 1937. At the temporary base camp. It rained incessantly in the morning while further loads were carried to the Base Camp. As the weather did not improve I was not surprised when at four o'clock I saw Wien, Müllritter, Hepp and Fankhauser coming down with their orderlies and all the Baltis. To press on to Camp III to-day was quite out of the question, and in order to save food for the high camps only

The Assault

Hartmann and Pfeffer remained up there. The others intended to wait here for an improvement in the weather.

28th May, 1937. The persistently bad weather had made the porters low-spirited and at night they all swore by the Koran that they would not stay with us for less than five rupees a day. After lengthy haggling with every single one of them Smart succeeded in finding seventeen who would go up for one rupee. We were worried about Hartmann and Pfeffer in Camp II and feared that with this heavy snowfall they would have to relinquish their advanced position. Wien went with a few porters to Camp I to get a sight of them, and saw them for a while descending the glacier, but as the weather cleared they turned back, no doubt in the hope of being able to assist their returning comrades by stamping out a track towards them on the following day.

29th-30th May, 1937. We made use of our enforced inactivity by finally establishing our Base Camp at a height of 13,000 feet in a sheltered hollow in the moraine. On each of these days we saw the others waving to us on the terrace of Camp II and thus were assured that they were all right. They told us later how things had gone with them. As soon as the sun came through for a short time they looked down to see if anyone was approaching them from Camp I; as this was not yet possible they planned an advance to Camp III and tried with much hard work in the deep snow to press on upwards, but although they took turns, changing over every few yards, the exertion was so terrific that they had to abandon their attempt. They soon lay down in their tent, which was deeply embedded in the snow, and as night began to fall they crept into their warm sleeping-sacks. Of this night Hartmann wrote: "Towards ten o'clock I awoke from a shortage of air, and noticed that my breathing was quite pronouncedly Cheyne-Stokes, with definite pauses and subsequent periods of wild panting. It was the same with Martl, who was tossing restlessly beside me. I tried to light one match after another, but all of them went out at once with a little bluish flame. I crept out of my sleeping-sack and tore the tent open. A match then flared up properly and after a few deep breaths everything was all right again."

31st May, 1937. In the morning when Hartmann and Pfeffer looked

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down into the valley they could see Göttner and Wien coming towards them from Camp I. The ascent in the deep snow and with bright sunshine was terribly laborious. They met midway and decided that they would all descend to the Base Camp as the track to Camp II was for the present not possible for the porters. Wien, acting as postman in this wild world of ice and snow, handed them a bundle of letters which had arrived for them at the Base Camp, and pleasantly surprised at receiving their mail at this spot, they immediately opened the letters and read their news from the loved ones at home. There was now some stirring activity in the overcrowded Base Camp.

1st June, 1937. A day of rest and waiting in glorious and urgently needed good weather ; now the snow should be better high up. This was a favourable opportunity for the physiologists to examine all the Sahibs and porters. The Baltis gathered wood, while for us the day passed quickly in writing letters and reports. In the evening a huge fire flamed house-high and Sahibs and porters gathered closely round it ; our German mountain songs rose on the air, alternating with the strange rhythmical intonings of the Nepalese.

THE SECOND ATTEMPT

2nd June, 1937. In spite of the still unsettled weather Wien decided to let the advance party consisting of Hartmann, Hepp, Pfeffer and Göttner proceed in the afternoon to Camp I. The same afternoon provided us with an exciting spectacle when Fankhauser and Smart assisted by numerous beaters hunted a urial which had suddenly appeared quite near the camp. Skilled sportsmen, they crept up to the unsuspecting animal ; four shots thundered in rapid succession and re-echoed in the surrounding walls of ice. But to everyone's surprise the buck sprang unharmed over the moraine and disappeared from view. The huntsmen returned to the camp by a circuitous route in order to avoid our malicious remarks. After Ramona had displayed his art at midday with a meal of fried eggs, spinach and roast potatoes, a special repast was prepared at four o'clock for the returning advance party, and replete with roast

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chicken and stuffed pancakes, they slowly moved over the steep path to Camp I.

3rd June, 1937. The second assault began in glorious weather. The advance party climbed on firmly frozen snow in the still easily discernible track to Camp II, followed by ten loaded Sherpas. Meanwhile, Wien had gone up to Camp I, where everything was prepared for a concentrated effort to take up more loads on the following day. In the afternoon, in company with Smart and Fankhauser, I led up all the Balti porters with the remaining loads for the high camps. For further transport thirteen men had now to be selected and suitably clothed, upon whose reliability largely depended our advance to Camp IV. Here again Smart, with his knowledge of the language and his assured manner, was indispensable. When I prepared to depart in the evening I had difficulty in persuading his fine dog Whiskers to go down with me, for the faithful animal kept trying to return to his master.

4th June, 1937. At the Base Camp. Towards midday I climbed with a few porters with loads of tschabati (native bread) to Camp I. A huntsman from Tato had brought us a musk-deer and I took this with me, for the fresh meat would be a welcome treat for my friends. I arrived just as Wien and Fankhauser were descending from Camp II; the advance party had now reached Camp III, which was to be established on the following morning. We sat long outside the tents in the evening and allowed our gaze to wander to the north over the boundless ocean of snow-capped peaks. Smart pointed out Tirichmir and Rakaposhi, which towered above all the others. The level plains on the other side of the Indus were striking and already seemed characteristic of the Pamirs. The natives graze their great herds of cattle over there in the summer, and there is conflict every year when the people come from both sides of the frontier and steal each other's cattle and women; it is then that the English have to take a hand with the Gilgit Scouts. In the evening the Balti porters caused us more anxiety. There were some mischief-makers among them who said that their bread ration (two pounds a day) was not sufficient. Four of them were summarily dismissed and sent down to the Base Camp, and I hurried down in front of them to see that their pay

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was ready for them and that they did not make off with their equipment. Nursang and some of his faithful coolies were ordered to drive them well away from the neighbourhood of the camp so that they would not have the opportunity of sowing the seeds of any further discontent among the remaining porters.

5th June, 1937. Early in the morning I went up to Camp I with some more porters to replace the deserters as to-day all loads were to be taken on to Camp II. Similar moving operations were afoot between Camp II and Camp III, and Sahibs and porters carried almost equal loads. The precipice above Camp II gave them, as we heard later, another hard nut to crack and in the upper part a steep ice wall could only be negotiated by strenuous step-cutting. It was while he was thus occupied that Pfeffer's topee flew from his head and disappeared into an abysmal crevasse, apparently for good, but to his surprise he was to see it again two days later, even if somewhat the worse for wear. Fankhauser on his way up had seen the hat in the depths of the crevasse and had got the porters to let him down on the rope to a depth of some 100 feet. It was only after the greatest exertions that he succeeded in reappearing with his trophy, for the Balti porters, whose knowledge of rope work was nil, were more hindrance than help. In the evening Wien and Smart waited in Camp I for the post which I was unable to bring up from the Base Camp until nearly ten o'clock. They had already withdrawn into their comfortable tent and we spent a pleasant half-hour in the flickering candle-light. "Good luck," said Karlo as we shook hands for the last time, "see you again at Camp IV!" Carrying a lantern I trudged down over the moraine to the Base Camp.

The following days I spent alone in the Base Camp. There I had urgent duties of every possible kind and I was kept busy the whole time. I had to order food supplies from Gilgit which I was to take up to Camp IV about a week later with a group of fresh porters; Wien had given me instructions to hold myself ready for his summons, which was to be expected shortly before the advance party stormed the summit. Now and again porters would come down from the higher camps either because they had become superfluous or had fallen out on account of

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altitude debility, and there was plenty of medical work to be done both for them and for the numerous natives who streamed up from the nearby villages. As soon as the mail-runner arrived from Astor, the typewriter clicked incessantly with business correspondence and press reports, the material for which Wien sent down to me from above at regular intervals. The weather became more and more uncertain ; although in the early mornings the peaks gleamed in sunshine, they would be covered with thick clouds which rolled up from the west regularly in the early afternoon. Frequently, even in the Base Camp, several inches of fresh snow fell. In anxious suspense as to the fate of my friends I climbed to the moraine mound above the camp several times a day to follow as far as the weather would allow their progress on Rakhiot Peak. Even at a distance of some miles I could easily see with the aid of the telescope the difficulties with which the heavily laden column was having to contend in the daily increasing soft snow.

There follows a summarised report from the diaries of Wien, Hartmann, Hepp, Pfeffer and Fankhauser, who on the 20th July were found at the scene of the disaster. Their notes provide forcible evidence of their readiness to sacrifice self and of their undaunted courage :

6th June, 1937. The sun had already shone into the tent when the four Sahibs rose. At 9.15 we started our trudge in deep snow towards Camp IV. Pert, who meanwhile had reached Camp III, followed us for a while and reported from below that Wien and Smart had to-day finally left Camp I and taken the last loads up to Camp II. They had had to send Ramona, that fine old culinary artist, back to the Base Camp ; he had had his twin-burner primus stove running at full throttle from morn till night and our petrol allowance for the high camps while adequate was not quite inexhaustible. It was with tears that he parted from his Bara-Sahib. Ten Baltis were on the march to Camp III.

After I had stamped out the trail for an hour, Adi took a turn and over a steep incline the way led up to below Camp IV (20,400 feet). While my comrades turned back I climbed right up to the hollow of Camp IV and looked long up to the ridge where lay the dead of 1934.

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The descent to Camp III, where Adi was already busy cooking, was tiring in the midday heat. I slept in the tent for an hour and when I awoke in the afternoon the weather was getting worse. Shreds of mist chased each other across the glacier and the tents shook in the storm. We crept into our sleeping-sacks early and laced the tent tightly to. (Pfeffer.)

AGAINST COLD AND SNOW

7th June, 1937. The Sherpas were already stamping about outside in the crunching snow trying to get some warmth into their frozen feet when we unlaced our frosted tent-fastening. To-day we were to advance to Camp IV ; the porters would bring fresh loads up to us and then return to Camp III. The distance was short and the sun was shining ; there was plenty of time. As we were expecting Karlo to come up to-day from Camp II with the post, and as there were several things we wanted to discuss with the Bara-Sahib, Günther and Martl waited in camp. We were rewarded, for in a very short time Karlo and Pert appeared, slowly trudging up the last slope to the camp—and then, there was Karlo handing us a bundle of letters. Letters are always a treat up here. We discussed the position. Our only worry was the Sherpas' boots, which were too small, and we sent Pasang and Nim Tsering down to the Base Camp to fetch our marching boots and our reserve pairs. Then we decided on the following plan for the assault on the summit : six Sahibs and eight Sherpas should set out together from Camp V (22,110 feet) and two Sahibs and four porters should return from Camp VI or Camp VII. The great plateau above the Silver Saddle should be traversed by only four Sahibs and four Sherpas, who should then establish Camp VIII as high as possible. From here the two who were in the best condition should attempt to reach the summit while the others should cover their retreat. This plan must succeed ! If only we could have a fortnight's good weather. . . . We parted at about 10.30. The well-marked trail led us to Camp IV in fifty minutes. The Sherpas had already prepared a deep trench for our tents and soon we should be living here. Rakhiot Peak stood quite near ; the snow slopes leading to the summit looked

PLATE 89. *The Karakoram mountains from Camp IV on Nanga Parbat*

HARAMOSHI

RAKAPOSHI





PLATE 90. *The barren slopes of the Indus ravine*



PLATE 91. *The Rakhiot Nullah and Nanga Parbat, photographed from the air at a height c. 12,500 feet*



PLATE 92. *In deep snow between Camps III and IV*

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good and these we hoped to ascend with a right traverse which would take us to the lowest gap between Rakhiot Peak and the Silver Saddle ; in this way we should avoid having to pass right over the summit of Rakhiot. We wondered whether this would be possible. Unfortunately, massive cumulus clouds gathered again at about midday, obscuring the sun ; a storm began to brew and flurries of fine snow were whipped across the glacier. The porters returned to Camp III while we crept into our tent and got the primus going. Outside it was cold, the thermometer showing minus 16° C. The night lay dark around us, for the sky was bare of moon and stars. Even in the tent it was minus 10° C. and frost clung to the hairs of one's nose, nevertheless we were warm inside our sleeping-sacks—which we shared, two men to each sack.

8th June, 1937. The Sherpas Mingma and Gyaljen started at five o'clock to help Smart and Müllritter with moving operations. Pert Fankhauser, who was to blaze a trail to-day to Camp V with Adi, Günther and Martl, came up to Camp IV. Karlo also came up from Camp III to Camp IV where Hatschi (Hartmann) awaited him. It was devilishly cold. In comparing the minimum temperatures at Camp II and Camp III we observed a fall of one degree Centigrade to every 330 feet—nearly double the normal ratio of decrease to height. Added to that, the barometer had fallen 4 mm. to-day. If it does not get any warmer we can hardly let the Baltis work, for their clothing is not sufficient to withstand this. With this wind we shall soon be obliged to make ice caves ! * At about nine o'clock the four men set off to stamp out a trail to Camp V. Meanwhile dense mist had gathered and it began to snow again. We saw the figures laboriously struggling in the loose snow of the first steep rise, which bridges the lowest ice barrier on the right. Soon the mist thickened and it became impossible to see anything. The trail-makers returned as they could not see sufficiently well to find a way through. Karlo and Hatschi compiled a list of the loads which must be brought up to Camp V. In Camp III the loads were piling up nicely. Smart and Müllritter have likewise moved up and, with the twenty porters who are gathered

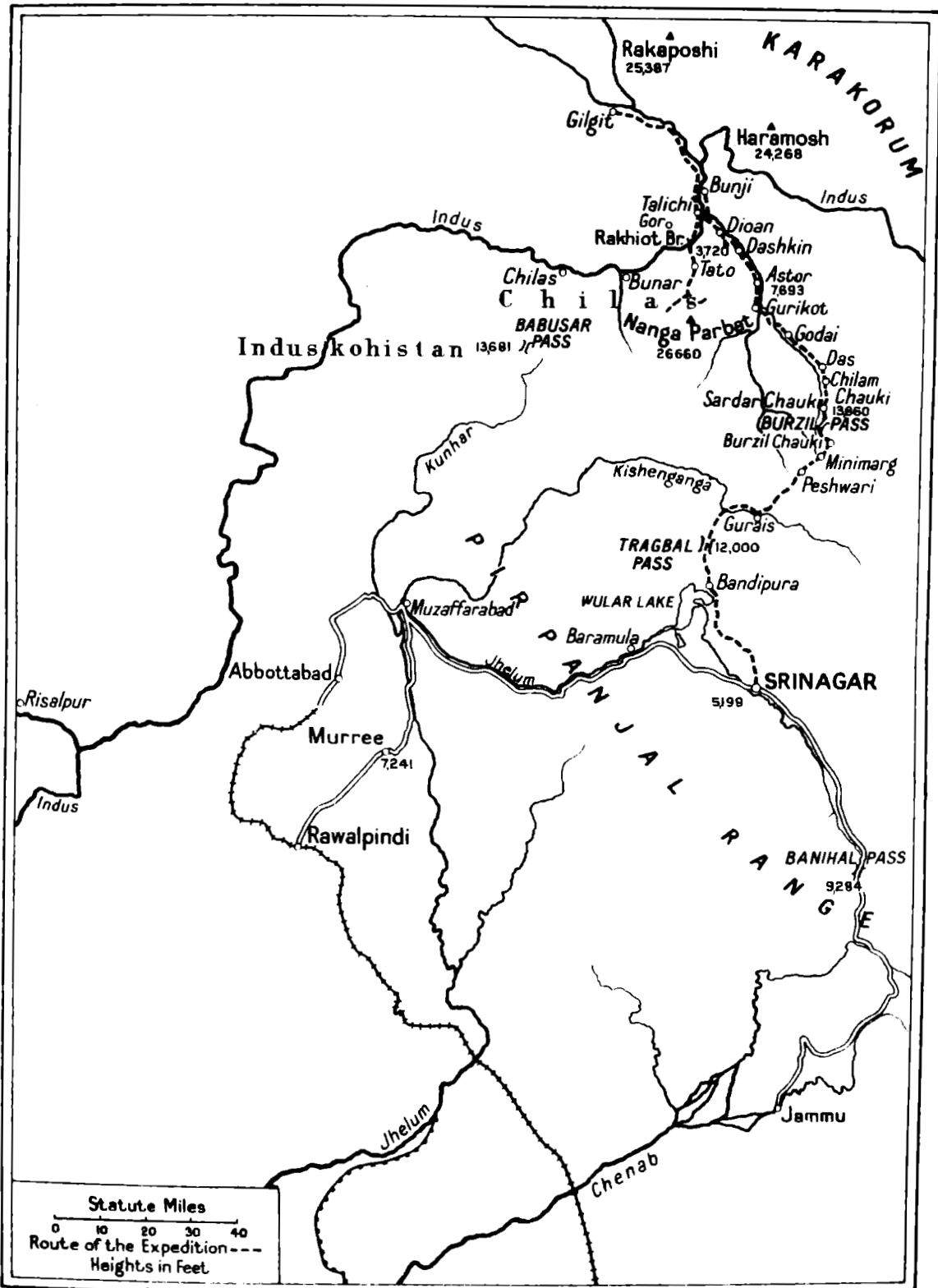
* The German Kangchenjunga expeditions had frequently used ice-caves in preference to tents as being warmer and safer in extreme cold or wind.

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there, could easily get most of the loads up to Camp IV to-morrow morning. In the afternoon there was the usual wind and driving snow and a temperature of minus 8°C . Steadily the loose snow piled up as we sat in the tent and let Hatschi make further physiological investigations on us, while Adi played interminable jazz tunes and folk songs on his mouth-organ. The candle, stuck on to a topee and flickering above the sleeping-sacks, burned down slowly, while the ice crystals on the tent walls grew from the breath of four snuffing men.

9th June, 1937. In the morning the thermometer read minus 16°C . The clouds parted slowly, but mist still heavily enshrouded us. The weather was having a very bad effect on the spirits of the Baltis; three announced that they were seriously ill and only four were prepared to carry loads. In the early morning we had a hard struggle with the primus stove, which resisted our patient efforts for forty minutes before it deigned to burn. During the night in Camp IV there had been some ominous sounds of cracking in the ice beneath us which led us to the conclusion that there was a high degree of movement in the ice and a crevasse was beginning to open; we also felt that we were not entirely safe from avalanches here in view of the quantities of new snow. We therefore decided to move Camp IV some 160 feet higher in the hollow where the camp had been pitched in 1934. The Baltis and Sherpas who were coming up with loads from Camp III were consequently to be sent on past our tent to the upper hollow where the trail ended. The whole afternoon it snowed frenziedly and rendered any attempt at trail-making to Camp V impossible. Will it never stop snowing? We are all in good spirits and can use the bad days here for establishing Camp IV, but higher up good weather is really essential.

10th June, 1937. No improvement! A patch of blue sky at seven o'clock, half an hour's sunshine which melted the top coating of ice crystals on the tent—and then, when the tea was almost ready, the sky became overcast and the snow flakes resumed their dreary patter. The night was particularly cold, and this morning the thermograph in Camp III (19,470 feet) showed a minimum of minus 20°C . So we could do nothing but move the camp up and wait. It was a long time before our



KASHMIR

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new tent, buried deep in the loose snow, could be properly pitched ; then we again covered ourselves with our sleeping-sacks. Pert brought us some wild goat meat which had been sent up from the Base Camp to Camp III, and Adi prepared a tasty meal. Honey cakes with tea also went down well. We sat together for another half-hour and discussed the weather and the mountain—and the men, who in spite of all are going to conquer it.

11th June, 1937. In the cold it took us a long time to prepare our morning tea ; then we left camp while the weather, which had been fine early, began to deteriorate. To-day everyone was moving up from Camp III, Karlo, Smart and Peter and the coolies as well. Ploughing deep in the snow, we once more trudged up the slopes of Rakhiot Peak. Soon the snow was up to our thighs. Adi had his ciné camera with him, as the trail-making in the fresh snow promised some good pictures. Our progress was slow but sure. A traverse, a steep névé slope which had shaken off all fresh snow and demanded firm step-kicking, and in an hour and a half's time we stood on the great terrace which we now had to follow for some distance upwards in a westerly direction in order to reach the saddle in front of Rakhiot Peak. Far below us we could still pick out a few black dots on the glacier toiling up from Camp III, but soon a curtain of cloud was drawn across our view and everything was blotted out. Gigantic ice pinnacles towered up from the fall below us. It was pointless to push on any farther to-day in these conditions. So—down again ! Adi, who was not on the rope, slipped away, and steering carefully took Hatschi with him in his furious glissade, but soon they came to a halt in deep snow. We quickly negotiated the steep slope and in dense driving snow we drew into our tents, which in the meantime had been transferred to a safer place higher up. While Adi began his cooking operations, things became quite lively in our tent. Karlo was there, Smart, Pert, Peter and Günther, and Karlo and Smart invented a silly game—with wrinkled brow one of them would say in English, looking out into the mist : “ I think it's clearing up ! ” while the other would reply equally seriously, gazing at the sky : “ Yes, I think so too.” We talked long into the evening ; here was the whole team ready to attack—

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and the mountain was more unapproachable than ever. From the very beginning it had presented us with a difficult task. Snow and cold, those were the weapons of Nanga Parbat, weapons wielded according to laws unknown to man, for this year they had been brought into play earlier and with greater force than in 1932 and 1934. Still, we were happy to give battle, for a struggle meant more to us than an easy victory, and we should love most the mountain for which we had had to fight the hardest.

12th June, 1937. The sun shone brilliantly in the morning, although the night had been our coldest—minus 23° C. Soon we were all squatting in the sun drinking our steaming cocoa. The endless chain of mountains lying to the north stood out in startling clarity, while above, and seemingly within easy reach, gleamed the Silver Saddle. Whatever happened we must get to Camp V to-day. We left the camp at nine o'clock—Adi, Günther, Pert and Martl, followed by the telescopic lens of the ciné camera—and, with ice-cold feet, we stamped out a track up the gruelling slope. In vain we sought yesterday's trail to the ice terrace. Labouring upwards in the deep, powdery snow we introduced the "thirty step system": one of us would stamp out the trail for thirty steps, then he would fall into the snow and join on behind, while the next man took on the leadership. Above the Indus valley fantastic cloud castles had formed and already the familiar and ominous veils were being drawn over Rakhiot Peak. Snorting heavily, we climbed up until a barrier of ice stretched across our path. While Günther hacked at the ice and forged his way upwards obliquely to the left, mist closed in on us and, feeling thoroughly disgusted with this vile weather, we trudged on up the steep slope, frequently halting to wait for the light to improve. Once for a moment the clouds were drawn aside and we were able to see Rakhiot Peak and, quite near, the hollow in which we intended to establish Camp V (21,780 feet), but before long everything was again wreathed in grey obscurity, heavy snow began to fall and a storm appeared imminent. At two o'clock we turned back and let each other down on the rope over the ice-barrier. Then we plodded down, every man for himself, our faces lashed by the driving snow. Meanwhile Hatschi and

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Karlo had been packing the three food sacks for the high camps (VI, VII and VIII) ; with heavy hearts they had to dispense with this or that choice morsel or remove a tin container in order to arrive at a weight which could be carried above the 23,000 feet line. The descending team was greeted with hot tea and *Lebkuchen*, which brought some warmth to their frozen limbs. To-day, by pitting all our strength against the mountain, we had nearly succeeded in reaching Camp V, and then the advent of the storm had brought all our labour to naught ; to-morrow we have to face the same task all over again. The Baltis are all ill and want to go down and the resistance of the Sherpas is weakening. Little wonder in these conditions ! Smart and Karlo dealt long with the individual porters and finally agreed that to-morrow should be a rest day. Obviously the Baltis will be of no further use higher up and they are to return to the Base Camp with Smart as soon as possible. During the bitterly cold evening the weather improved for a short time, but storm and snow eventually returned. A hard day full of disappointments—but a day which saw the mustering of every ounce of strength, the sort of day we need to rouse and awaken us and make us alive to our limitations, a day which strengthens the will to succeed.

13th June, 1937. Sunday, a rest day, as the Bara-Sahib had ordered. In the morning the weather was fine again, but it had snowed during the night and the trail we had made was hardly visible. Of course, it snowed and stormed again in the afternoon and we lay tightly packed together in the tent, all except Adi, who squatted for hours in the snowstorm busy with his cooking. The day passed in talking and thinking—thoughts winged far away and, as they so often do, came to rest at home in Germany again. Smart was to descend with the sick porters and the now useless Baltis in the morning, and in the evening we gave a little farewell party for him. The eight of us squatted together in our tent, sang, listened to the mouth-organ and chatted while Martl and Günther drew caricatures. So passed this day, a day of rest enforced by the weather—but our hope for good weather remains and our longing to reach our great goal is still unshaken.

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THE LAST DAY

On the 14th June the friends made the following entries in their diaries :

Hepp : Brilliant weather when we got up at seven o'clock. To-day the porters were to carry up a little farther some of the loads which will be needed in the higher camps. Pert, Peter, Martl and I stayed down while the others accompanied the porters and stamped out the trail. At 11.30 mist descended upon us again, but it did not actually snow. We tidied up our tents and after two and a half hours the others returned from above.

Fankhauser : I had a bad night. I could not get to sleep for a long time, could not drag my thoughts away from the mountain. The morning was fine. The coolies had already made tea when we woke up. We decided to transport the loads to-day only as far as the top of the steep slope to Camp V ; Karlo, Hatschi and Adi were to stamp out the trail while nine Sherpas carried. Da Tondup has gone down in order to give his throat a chance of healing ; Smart too is in the Base Camp with four Baltis. All of them were delighted at the prospect of going down. I stayed in the camp with Hepp and Müllritter. Martl went up to the ridge to take photographs, but unfortunately it was not long before a bank of cloud rose again on the far side. I tidied up our tent and the " kitchen," in which indescribable pandemonium reigned. The weather is fine again now.

Hartmann : During the night the thermometer registered only minus 21° C. and at 6.30 the sun was smiling so enticingly that we all felt convinced that the weather was going to improve. To-day Karlo, my little boy, will be two years old. We breakfasted at eight o'clock. Yesterday we erected a special kitchen tent and now our meals are prepared with the help of the Sherpas. To-day all the loads for Camp V which are already packed will be carried up to the great glacier terrace (21,000 feet) so that in the event of a real improvement in the weather, the difficult move into Camp V planned to take place to-morrow will be facilitated. At about 9.30 Adi, Karlo and I set off to stamp out the trail. The nine loaded Sherpas followed and also Müllpeter, who filmed the first stage of our trek as we trailed in the deep, loose snow, and later

focused on us from a distance. At first we took turns in stamping out the trail, but as the angle increased I stayed ahead and trudged away so tirelessly, although I frequently sank in to my knees, that the distance between me and the others was constantly increasing. Then came the steep part, where the snow was board-hard and one had to kick one's foot in five times before one could get a firm foothold. Soon I was standing on the beautiful ice "snout" directly below the terrace where we intended to make our provision dump. (One hour.) The weather was glorious and to-day I was climbing so easily, with no snorting—and that on snow in which I would normally sink deeper than the others and generally make heavy weather of. It seemed a miracle to me * and made me feel grateful and at peace with the world. . . . I believe I wore a broad grin all day. Well, here's to the lad's birthday! Slowly, one after the other, the porters arrived above the ice snout and deposited their loads.

Pfeffer : With a minimum temperature of minus 21° C. the weather is still too unsettled for Karlo to decide on an advance to Camp V. After Smart with Da Tondup and the four Baltis had left us to descend to the Base Camp, Karlo, Hatschi and Adi set off stamping a trail up the great steep slope to Camp V, followed by nine Sherpas who deposited their loads up above. At the same time, 9.15, I made my way alone up to the gap (20,730 feet) in the main ridge to the east of the camp to take some photographs. For the first time I wore snow shoes, which made progress in the deep, yielding snow considerably easier. At 10.15 I reached the gap, but up there, a position which should have offered a magnificent view, everything was obscured in grey mist which, blown about by the wind, rolled darkly up over the ridge. The Silver Saddle still glistened in the sunshine and it was good fun watching comrades and porters on the steep slope as, shouting, they glissaded down in rapid flight. Soon the mist was pressing in from every side and I slowly climbed up to the insignificant snow peak to the north of the gap (20,860 feet)—my first twenty-thousand-foot peak! All around me was grey, everything lay smothered in a black pall. Here and there a protruding rock would appear and disappear in sinister fashion, then a part of the sunlit ice-wall of the

* See footnote on p. 99.

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Silver Saddle would gleam out of the grey mist. Slowly I trudged back to the camp, where the sun was still shining a little, and soon "Khana" appeared, prepared by Mingma. To-day is the first day that has not been thoroughly bad in the afternoon, for quite soon the mists were torn away, the storm whipped the clouds from above Nanga and Rakhiot Peak and the mountain kingdom to the north was revealed in unusual clarity. Only a few of the peaks are higher than us; nearly all the mountains lie well below us and 16,500 feet deeper lies the Indus valley. Rapidly the last bright wisps of cloud raced over Rakhiot and Chongra Peaks and cascades of snow were hurled by the wind over the Silver Saddle and down the flanks of Nanga. We sat out in the warm sun to-day for the first time at Camp IV and our spirits were high, for at last it seemed as if the weather was improving. To-morrow Camp V will be established. Then the attack on the summit can go forward and perhaps by Hatschi's birthday on the 22nd June victory will be ours. Günther and I stayed long in the evening sun watching it as it gradually sank towards the distant mountain chains. I feel grateful that I may see all this splendour. At six o'clock when the storm, blowing across the summit, made itself felt in our camp, Günther and I retired to the tent. The rays of the sun, shining brightly through the tent top, shed a pleasant warm light inside and the storm wind is worrying the tent as we now sit writing in our diaries.

THE CATASTROPHE

On the 18th June in the very early morning a column of men moved over the ice terrace from Camp II to Camp III. I (Luft) was leading five porters to Camp IV, carrying food supplies and the mail which had arrived at the Base Camp on the 16th June. In the brilliant weather, which had now lasted since the 15th, we made good progress and reached Camp III at about ten o'clock. The Baltis were complaining of headaches and I suggested that they should make tea here and rest for an hour while I hurried on so as to be with my friends as soon as possible, for I was extremely anxious to hear how things were going. On the 14th





PLATE 94. *Rakaposhi from the Buldar Ridge*

PLATE 95. *The Nanga Parbat group from Gor*



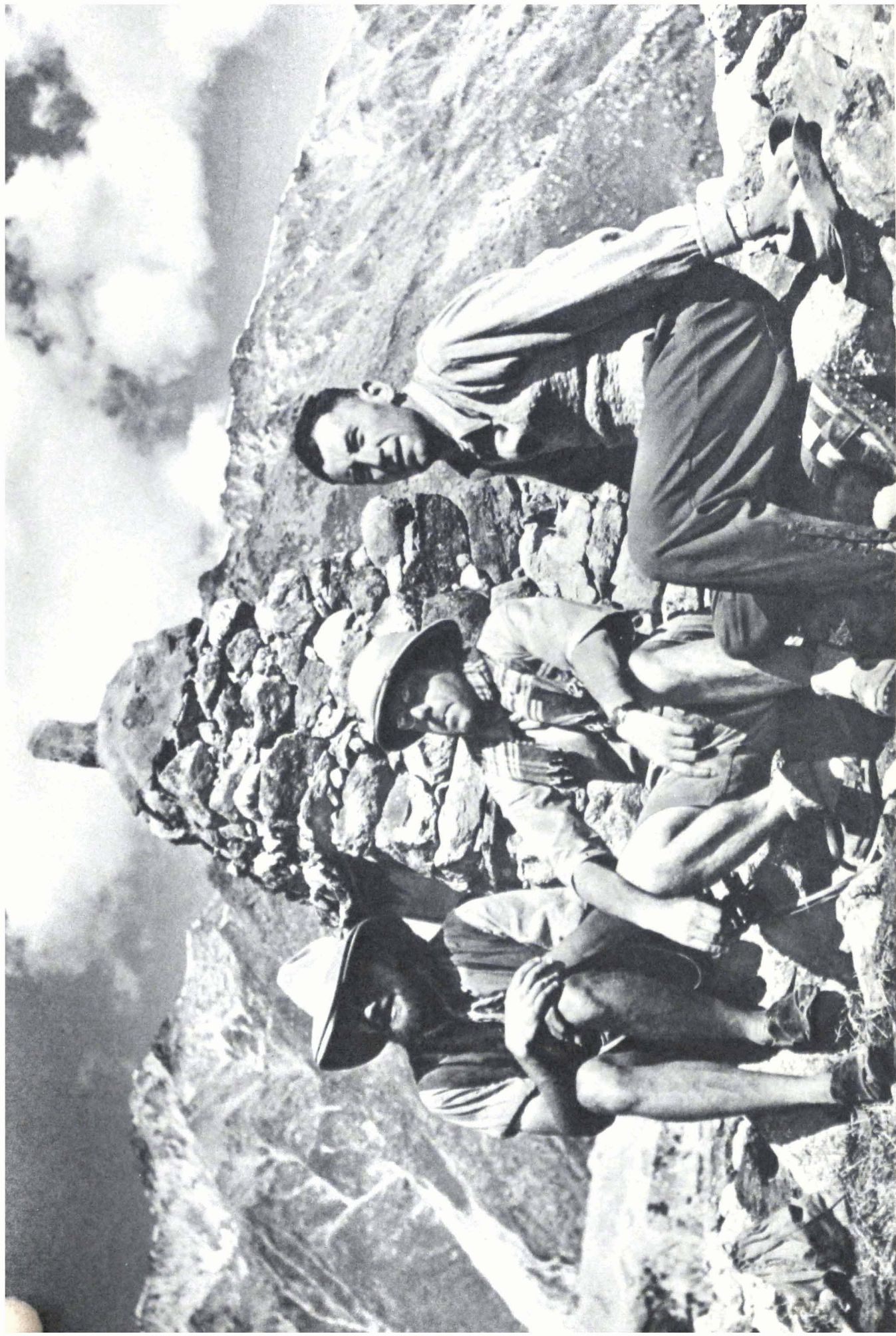


PLATE 96. *Luft, Bauer and Bechtold at the cairn in memory of their dead friends*

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Smart had brought me a long letter from Wien in which he had said that everything in Camp IV was ready for the attack on the summit but that the persistently bad weather had prevented them from establishing Camp V ; as soon as there was any improvement the higher camp would be established without delay. With this in mind, I hurried on alone over the smooth slopes from Camp III to Camp IV, my gaze continually sweeping Rakhiot Peak in an effort to find Camp V on its flank or a trail from there showing that my comrades had moved on—but in vain. By midday I reached the first site of Camp IV, which I knew had been evacuated on the 10th. Signs of a trail were discernible on the slopes above. Breathing heavily I plodded upwards, expecting in a quarter of an hour to be able to hand my friends their eagerly awaited letters. I paused in a shallow basin from which my unobstructed gaze could sweep from Chongra Peak along the ridge to Rakhiot Peak. An oppressive stillness reigned. An almost obliterated trail stretched away towards the ridge in the east as if into eternity.

With merciless force the truth dawned on me. Where I was standing an avalanche of terrific proportions had covered a surface of nearly fifteen acres with gigantic ice-blocks. There was not a single trace of the camp. It lay buried beneath thousands of cubic feet of ice.

The porters came up and confirmed that the camp was standing here when they had descended on the 14th. Far below we discovered some tins and three empty rucksacks which had evidently been carried along on the surface of the avalanche. After three hours' search it became clear that we could never hope to extricate the deeply buried camp with our light picks, for everything had frozen together into a rigid, immovable mass. All seven climbers and their nine Sherpa porters must now be lying under these blocks of ice. If any one of them had escaped I should have had news long ago. As Camp V would have been established in the brilliant weather of the 15th, the catastrophe must have occurred during the night of the 14th–15th.

The Silver Saddle glistened in the sun high above me, serene and withdrawn.

The team was no more.

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ALL OF US AT HOME IN GERMANY WHO HAD been following events on Nanga Parbat were now visualising the team established in the high camps up to the plateau and ready for the assault on the summit; then came the news over the air: "Reuter is informed from Simla of a statement from the British Agent in Gilgit that the German Himalaya Expedition has been overtaken by an avalanche, involving seven climbers and nine porters. The sole survivor is Dr. Karl Wien."

From this moment—it was on the 20th June, 1937, that the news came through—the telephone at the German Himalaya Foundation was not silent for days. We simply could not believe it. It was incredible that all our comrades and their porters had been killed. Could it be true that of these men who had so often defied every danger not one had survived the onslaught of the avalanche? And if it were true, could Wien ever recover from the loss of every one of his men?

The German Himalaya Foundation in Munich became a centre of frenzied activity and anxious enquiry. Telegrams had been sent to England and to India. We were at it day and night, inundated by enquiries from all over the world which had to be answered in a manner which would not destroy the faint gleam of hope that still remained. At last, after a long period of agonising uncertainty, we received replies from the Foreign Secretary, from Delhi, from the German Consulate, from Srinagar, and from the Political Agent in Gilgit himself: there was no

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longer any doubt ; this terrible thing really had happened ; but Wien too lay buried beneath the avalanche, the only climber who was spared being Luft.

The whole German nation trembled beneath this blow of Fate and many people all over the world shared its grief. We who had seen the project take shape and had sent the team out, we who felt ourselves to be part of the team could do only one thing, we must hasten to the scene of the disaster—perhaps there was still someone alive in the higher camps—and even if we could do no more for our comrades in this life, then we must stand by them in misfortune and death.

The idea leapt like a spark from one to the other, immediately kindling us into active flame, and Bechtold, Kraus and I tore ourselves away from our work and our families. Every organisation which we needed for the rapid accomplishment of the journey worked like lightning, deeply affected by the shock of the disaster, and on the 24th and 25th June we left Germany, Bechtold and I with the Dutch air line, Kraus with the English ; two men who had already made reservations in the Dutch plane were kind enough to place their seats at our disposal.

We took only forty pounds of luggage each, but we had packed in such a manner that, in spite of its extremely modest proportions, our equipment was adequate and could, if necessary, be carried without help to the scene of the disaster at Camp IV.

THE FLIGHT TO INDIA

Europe slipped away beneath us—the conical peaks of the Bohemian mountains—the Moldau—the picturesque hills by the Danube above Budapest—the low-lying Hungarian plains between the Danube and the Theiss—Belgrade. Then came the Balkans, higher and more isolated as every minute passed. We saw the sparkle of the sea as we approached Salonika, the evening sun lighting up the islands and reefs of the Ægean ; the land of the classics appeared infinitely small as it swiftly passed beneath us, this land which holds such great variety within its small compass and has for centuries exercised such a great cultural influence.

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We left Athens on the following morning and flew over the Mediterranean to Alexandria, where the warm breath of the Libyan desert was wafted towards us, then we turned to the east. Below us lay Port Said, familiar from many voyages. Palestine approached, by Gaza a narrow strip of coastline patterned with neat rectangular fields. Then came the hills, parched and barren at this time of the year ; Jerusalem lay there comfortably enthroned, and soon groups of long Arab tents became visible, while the Jordan, shrouded in haze, wound its circuitous way southwards down to the Dead Sea. The country became more and more of a wilderness, scattered with the remains of dead villages. We thought we glimpsed the long white crests of the sea again, but it must have been a mirage. For hours we flew over the Arabian desert. The shapes and colours of the sand-dunes were surprisingly varied and interesting. A camp with dozens of long Arab tents all exactly alike lay below us and hundreds of camels were scattered round about ; they fled from the approach of the rushing, low-flying aeroplane and the nomads emerged from their tents and gazed skywards ; then the desert resumed its calm. Below us lay the caravan and motor highway from Palestine to Mesopotamia, which follows the Pipe Line. The courses of the Euphrates and the Tigris became visible in the evening sun in the " land of the two rivers " ; old irrigation plants which had fallen into disuse were surrounded by parched grey barrenness, while those in practical use flaunted green fields as a tree bears twigs and branches. The sun went down as we left Baghdad and a desert haze rose to a height of over 5000 feet. We flew on in the twilight and landed in darkness in Basra, oppressed by heat and gloomy marshland vapours.

There was a strange atmosphere about that night. The warm, moisture-laden air was resonant with the music from a violin and a piano, and a few people, travellers to India and Sumatra and Java, were gathered around ; only yesterday they had been in Europe ; the day after to-morrow would see them in Further India, and now they were passing a night in the land of the ancient Babylonians. Was it the exquisite music ? Was it the breath of the fruitful fields which was wafted towards us ? Or was it only our awareness of the ancient history of this land ?

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Whatever the cause, it seemed that the spirit which had lived here thousands of years before was still hovering near and might once again assert itself. The natives sat chewing placidly in the semi-darkness and one searched their faces for some sign that this spirit still lived.

When we rose mosquito-stung at two o'clock on the following morning, the walls of our room were still hot, like the inside of an oven. In the pale light of dawn we flew over and along by the Shat el Arab where land and sea seemed to merge into one ; barren and sad, confusedly intersected by countless veins of water, the delta lay below us. The solemn daylight rose in mist and haze, but even here was beauty. The water had engraved strange figures in the salty slime and like a tree with traceried branching a system of furrows lay beneath, etched into the silvery, shimmering surface of the mire, the deepest boughs revealing strata of red, blue and black.

For many hours now the sea remained quite shallow and one could see the sand-banks and the ocean bed beneath. The silhouettes of mountain chains soon appeared to the north and we came to earth again in the sand and dust of Bushire. There appeared to be only one good building in the miserable village and that was the former German Consulate, where Wassmuss had officiated until the outbreak of the Great War. For a long time during the War Wassmuss, with the help of the native races, held the hinterland of Bushire against the English. For a while we followed the coastline of Iran with its bizarre mountains, towers of rock reminiscent of the Dolomites and flat-topped mountains with jagged slopes, then the coast receded again and we flew over the open sea. Towards four o'clock desert-like country came in sight again in the midst of which lay a harbour-city. We landed in India at the Karachi aerodrome.

A captain of the Royal Air Force received us and handed us a telegram from Simla. The British Government had placed an R.A.F. plane at our disposal for the flight from Lahore to Gilgit ; the Royal Air Force would see to our welfare in Karachi and in Lahore and desired to know when we should be ready to fly from Lahore to Gilgit.

It was a splendid gesture on the part of the British Air Force, and in

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the ensuing days we enjoyed the generous hospitality and friendship of the English airmen. But there were still difficulties to be met in connection with our flight from Lahore. Kraus, who was travelling with the English air line and who had left Germany a day before us, had not yet arrived. Some mistake had been made in connection with his reservation and he had to wait in Athens for the next plane. This robbed us of three valuable days.

A telegram from the Himalaya Club was also awaiting us in Karachi and informed me that Uli Luft had asked for rope for the rescue work ; fortunately I was able to obtain in Karachi a thousand feet of ship's rope which was of just the right thickness and was so admirably suited to our purpose that in future there should be no need to trouble about getting ropes from Europe. In the evening we embarked on the train and passed through the broiling heat of the Sind Desert to Lahore, where the aerodrome officials looked after us very kindly. We also met the German colony there. All—English and Germans alike—were stunned by this frightful disaster.

The attitude of the press in India as regards the tragedy was exemplary. The principal paper of India, even though politically opposed to the German Reich, warmly supported the cause of the German Himalaya climbers in words which must be repeated here :

“ To Germany Nanga Parbat will call more challengingly still. For German mountaineers have a claim to it that all recognise with sympathy. ‘ Homage to the dead,’ wrote Dr. Karl Wien some weeks ago, ‘ demanded that after 1934 Nanga Parbat should be the goal of the next German expedition to vindicate that tragic blow.’ Seven more Germans lie in that ice and snow to make the argument still stronger. A throwing away of good lives ? When men no longer risk their lives in trying to do things never yet done the human race will be on the downward curve.” (Leading article in the *Statesman*, 24th June, 1937.)

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THE FLIGHT THROUGH THE INDUS RAVINE

We spent three days in Lahore, and there Emil Kuhn, a Swiss from Rawalpindi, who had been on Nanga Parbat with Bechtold in 1934, joined our ranks. He at once left his family and his business and offered to help, and by the time the preparations for the long and difficult flight to Gilgit were complete, Kraus had also arrived. Meanwhile three avalanche probes had been made for us in the aerodrome workshop. On the 3rd July, before daybreak, we started off in a great twin-engined machine, in which we four as well as the crew were easily accommodated. In the grey light of early morning we passed over the Punjab to Risalpur aerodrome to the west of the Indus, where the petrol tanks had to be replenished. A mighty thunderstorm extending from the Jhelum to the Indus forced us far to the south ; even the mountains at the far end of the Indus valley were still shrouded with storm clouds. We could not to-day attempt to fly through the Indus ravine.

In Risalpur we were welcomed by the English airmen and again enjoyed their hospitality. Two days passed ; we were received into the Officers' Club, and, as an English major remarked, no one not already aware could possibly have told which of the men seated round the large table were the four Germans. My experience has always been the same—whenever I have been in contact with the English in India I have always felt that we are members of one race and the closest blood relations.

We left Risalpur at daybreak on the 5th July. A bank of cloud still obscured the mountains, but Gilgit had telegraphed that it was fine there ; and just when we reached the first mountain chain over which we had to fly to gain the Indus ravine, the sky began to brighten. Between clouds and green hills the pilot made his way into the Indus valley. We were flying at an altitude of 12,500 feet and the Indus lay 10,000 feet below us. As one leaned out of the gondola the earth presented a fantastic scene, while it seemed that one could stretch out one's hand and touch the mountains on either side whose summits towered high above. The

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plane wound in and out among these pillars of rock which plunged precipitously down to the Indus, narrowing alarmingly as they neared the river. Here it would be quite impossible either to turn or to land.

Below us lay the wild district of Kohistan, inhabited by mountain races not under British rule. Alexander the Great had penetrated the Indus ravine thus far in order to protect his left flank on his advance into India. The eye could travel over the mountains into infinity and we wondered whether we were already seeing the Pamirs. Chilas lay in a broadened section of the Indus valley ; here and there one could now see quite large stretches of green, well-cultivated land which lay at a height of between 6500 and 10,000 feet on terraces above the Indus ravine. Ignoring the rushing air, I stood in the open pilot's gondola and awaited Nanga Parbat. Its appearance surpassed all anticipation. Rising more than 23,000 feet above the Indus ravine, its peaks still 13,000 feet above us, it dominated the world around like a high-towered castle. Shimmering and clear it lay before us.

First the Diamirai valley opened out, then the Rakhiot side came into view. With heavy hearts we looked upon the place where our friends lay buried beneath the ice, so near, so peaceful, gleaming so serenely in the sunshine. In the midst of all this beauty the difficulty of the task which lay before us was once more borne in upon our conscience.

At the aerodrome in Gilgit we were received by the Political Agent, Major Kirkbride. There was still much to be discussed and arranged. Smart had come down from the Base Camp and awaited us in Gilgit ; he had become quite an integral part of the German Himalaya team and he stood by it with loyalty and comradeship, particularly after the tragedy. He wanted to return to the Base Camp with us immediately. On the following morning we trotted and galloped the whole day and covered the forty miles to Talichi. We must hurry ! Early on the next day we arrived at the Rakhiot bridge. Porters were waiting ready there and took over the loads from the pack-animals ; then we climbed up over the arid mountainside between the Rakhiot and the Buldar valleys. The dry wastes of the Indus valley lay behind us ; when we had climbed 5000 feet the first trees appeared, and now, following a path once more, we

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traversed the slope into the Rakhiot Nullah and made our way towards Tato.

AT THE BASE CAMP

In the woods above Tato a red-bearded apparition came walking towards us. It was Uli Luft. We looked each other straight in the eyes and shook hands. "I'm glad you've come," was all he said. We knew what he must have suffered since the 18th June.

On the following day, the 8th July, we marched from Tato up over the Fairy Meadow, past the temporary base camp to the Base Camp. We townsmen were quite out of training and this rapid ascent was hard work for us. Only on our way back did we realise what a long way it was. We were particularly amazed at the splendid way in which Kuhn endured this strenuous day's march. Troll had set out from the Base Camp to meet us, and Nursang and Ramona and the other porters awaited us in the camp. Grief for the Sahibs who lay beneath the ice overshadowed their joy at reunion, but loyalty superseded all other emotions, and their eyes were alight with readiness to help in whatever work was necessary.

There were about thirty porters there, Baltis, men from Gor, Kashmiris and people from Dashkin and Doian. Above all, Nursang was there, the Sirdar from Darjeeling, the old Gurkha sergeant who had been with me on Kangch in 1929 and at Ypres in 1914—only on the other side. Then there was Mambahadur, the cook, who had been with Wien, Göttner, Hepp and myself the previous year in Sikkim, and Da Tondup, the last of the twelve Sherpas from Darjeeling; he had escaped the fate of the others only by a strange act of providence, for on the 14th June he had had to descend to the Base Camp on account of sickness. Ramona from Kashmir had been the cook on Nanga Parbat in 1932 and 1934.

We had a long talk in the evening and many points about which we had not been clear were explained. On the afternoon of the 18th June, the day when he had found the avalanche, Uli Luft had hurried down to the Base Camp. Smart, suspecting that something untoward had happened, had set out to meet him in the darkness and streaming rain,

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and that same night they sent a runner to Chilas to get coolies with spades and picks. At dawn a dependable messenger was sent to Gilgit with a short telegraphic report for Germany.

Early on the 23rd June Captain Mackenzie, the first to arrive, had come from Chilas. Since receiving the news he had ridden day and night and had summoned all available porters with implements ; soon numbers of mountain peasants and huntsmen began to stream into the Base Camp. On the 25th June Major Cropper arrived with the best of his Scouts who were used to the mountains. He had ridden one hundred and sixty miles from one of the northern frontier stations to the Rakhiot Bridge in two days and had then immediately begun to climb. It was he who brought the news that we were hastening out from Germany by air.

There had been great sympathy and support from every part of India. Major Hadow, of Srinagar, had offered to hasten to the spot in a three days' march with climbers from the Himalaya Club if there should be a hope of extricating anyone alive.

On the 25th June Luft and Smart had attempted to make the ascent with several porters and the necessary equipment for rescue work. Meanwhile Troll had arrived from Astor and together with Major Cropper undertook to keep an eye on things in the Base Camp. Captain Mackenzie had moved on into Camp I to act as a liaison and send up the Sirdar Nursang with reinforcements should it be possible to extricate the bodies. The way up the glacier had to be sought anew and with much toil ; a new ice-fall of mighty dimensions blocked the way ; steps had to be cut and a rope fixed before it was possible for the porters to attempt the ascent. But Camp II was still far away and there was not enough rope available to negotiate this difficult stretch.

Two days later they had attacked it again, some goats'-hair ropes having been obtained from Tato. They had got a little higher—up to 17,000 feet—and Camp II had seemed within reach, but a network of crevasses still separated them from their objective. The porters had funked and they had had to decide upon a retreat, for after all that had happened they could not afford to take any risks with the now sadly depleted team. Then, upon their return to the Base Camp, they had

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received the news that the Royal Air Force was to fly us as far as Gilgit and that we should soon be with them. In the first days of July, Major Cropper and Captain Mackenzie and their people had left the Base Camp. They had done everything that lay in their power, and their duty demanded their presence elsewhere.

The camp was in perfect order and well set up with food ; fuel was scarce, also tents, sleeping-sacks and cooking apparatus, for everything had been taken up to the high camps in readiness for the assault. Only six porters were physically and morally capable of pushing on as far as Camp IV. One day was taken up preparing for the work, seeing to supplies and giving instructions. The heavy pick-axes which had been brought up by the roadworkers from the Indus valley had to be forged and filed to a suitable size and shape for ice work, and there were scores of other matters to attend to.

We had one more duty to perform at the Base Camp. Drexel's parents had given us some earth and some roses from home and a little candle, and these we carried to the grave. We lit the candle as darkness fell ; its feeble flame was threatened by the cold night air rising from the glacier, but we five men stood closely round the grave and gave it our protection. In deep silence and with smarting eyes we stood and watched the flame until it had burned itself out. Our thoughts went out to our friends lying up there in the ice of the glacier whose chill breath reached us where we stood—thoughts which, seeking some firm ground in the shifting sands of recent events, could find only the gap which it remained for us to fill.

We now had to face up to the certainty that none of our comrades could still be alive. We were reluctant to give up hope that there was perhaps still someone in the higher camps. We thought we saw a tent, but after a thorough investigation with the telescope we were convinced beyond any doubt that it was only a block of ice. . . . In the heights above nothing lived.

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THE ASCENT TO CAMP IV

How we should reach Camp II was still a problem. Luft and Smart had already made two unsuccessful attempts and our first attempt likewise failed. We had to accept the fact that the former trail had become impassable. Great chunks of the glacier had broken off, new crevasses had formed, and it seemed that we should never get over it. The glacier flows very rapidly at this point as the mass of ice is pressed through the narrow pass between the Camp Spur and the lower reaches of the Silver Ridge ; so long as snow and cold render the surface firm it is negotiable, but when the heat of summer loosens the surface it becomes practically impossible.

We studied the glacier minutely with our telescope ; no safe way through was discernible, but on the extreme right-hand side, straight along by the steep buttress of the Silver Ridge, it might perhaps be possible to get through, provided no avalanches fell. But at present avalanches were improbable, as the sun had already cleared the rocks of snow.

We determined to set out very early on the following morning in order to avoid the absolutely unbearable heat which beats down on the glacier in the afternoon. To-day (the 11th July) we had all been near to sunstroke and, in spite of topees and puggarees, were suffering from headaches. Since we had left Talichi we had had an unbroken spell of fine weather ; now and again the wind would blow across Nanga Parbat, but often the air above the summit seemed to be still and motionless. In the afternoon the clouds would gather around the mountains in a variety of forms ; but in the evening or during the night they would disappear again. This would have been an excellent period for an attack on the summit.

12th July, 1937. We set off punctually at three o'clock and marched by the light of our lanterns. However, I soon had to turn back ; my pulse was abnormally rapid and I felt too weak to go on. Very early, before eleven o'clock in fact, the others returned. They had got through

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safely ; with the snow in its present condition it was a perfect way through, and the porters were in the best of spirits. At Camp II they had found two tents, two sacks of provisions, three sacks of tsamba, a good deal of petrol and a primus stove. At last Camp II had been reached, at the same time the fuel crisis was temporarily averted and there was no longer any need for desperate manipulations with the Meta and paraffin burners. I was not at all well and towards evening the porters and Sahibs carried me down to the Base Camp.

On the 13th July Bechtold, Kraus and Luft ascended to Camp II with six porters, Da Tondup, Ramona, Satara, Shukar Ali, Mahadi and Ali Muhamed. On the 14th we saw them arriving at Camp III. On the 15th—I was feeling quite well again, having recovered from the attack of malaria (for that is probably what it was) with the help of quinine—I climbed up to the moraine. It was the first bad day, but a lucky chance at about ten o'clock gave me the opportunity of seeing through the mist a column approaching the scene of the disaster at Camp IV. A day of rain followed—the only wet day we had.

On the 17th July the weather was fine again, the column up above had made its final advance into Camp IV, but I saw that three men had separated from it and were coming down. They were Bechtold and Da Tondup, bringing down Ali Muhamed, who was ill with fever. Bechtold spoke of the terrific exertions the ascent had cost them. To reach Camp III alone had made tremendous demands on their strength. Shortly before reaching the camp Kraus had had a fall, but he had now recovered from it. Bechtold had stomach trouble ; he was unable to eat anything and so it had been arranged that he should bring down the sick porter. It had been a risk, justified only by the peculiar circumstances, to attempt to climb so quickly and directly to this great height, and it was remarkable that they had stood it so well. The chances of finding anything beneath the avalanche were very slight, for it was enormous, covering an area of about fifteen acres, frozen quite hard, and there was no sort of indication as to where one should seek the buried camp. Such was Bechtold's story.

It was now doubly imperative that we should climb up again, for we had to find our friends ; but Bechtold could not come—his stomach was

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so upset that he could eat nothing at all. However, another porter appeared who was willing to accompany me to Camp IV—Jussup Khan.

Jussup Khan was a great romancer. He would spin his yarns in the evenings when darkness had fallen and I am sure he could have chattered away for nights on end. After the disaster he had given one of his evening performances in the village of Tato and had told the people there that every evening dozens of naked white women had come to dance before the Sahibs in Camp IV and that they had then fallen upon and destroyed the camp while all the men were sleeping. When we took him to task he excused himself by saying that he often saw such things, but that if we objected he would not mention them in future.

The people around Nanga Parbat talk a great deal of fantastic nonsense about the spirits which dwell in the mountains ; their attitude is quite different from that of the pious Buddhists who live around Kangchenjunga. The followers of the Dalai Lama revere Kangchenjunga as a god, and our porters, particularly the educated ones, among whom were Tenchedar and Nursang, always approached Kangchenjunga with great awe—but not with superstition. The people around Nanga Parbat have a different religion ; they are Mohammedans, and the priest in Tato said that every time mountaineers approached Nanga Parbat the mountain would shake its head and thereby release storms, snow and avalanches upon them. The people told many other stories and spoke of the white women who had hurled themselves upon the climbers ; one of the Englishmen in Gilgit showed me a picture which had been taken on the Rakhiot glacier in 1934 in which the silhouette of one of these wraiths could be seen on an ice-fall.

On the 18th July we made our way up to Camp I so that we could begin our climb over the glacier to Camp II before daybreak on the following morning. It was a short and restless night in Camp I. The rushes of air created by the two great avalanches which thundered down the north face of Nanga Parbat gave our tents a thorough shaking. It would have been easy to have taken this as a bad omen for our ascent. However, on the 19th July we were away before three o'clock and reached the site of Camp II before the snow had softened.

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The whole of that day I sat alone with my strange companion in Camp II. He was no Sherpa, this Jussup Khan, to whom I had entrusted myself for better or worse for the march through the glacier. He was a Balti from Skardu. He looked cunning and it was impossible to determine to what race he belonged. He knew nothing of the mutual co-operation so necessary in camp life and I had to do everything for him, including the cooking. He was hardly any help to me at all, but experience forbade my attempting to cross such a dangerous glacier alone.

On the following morning we were ready early, packed up and roped, and waited silently until it was light enough to cross the dangerous crevasse near Camp II. Then we began to climb as rapidly as possible. We passed Camp III and at nine o'clock we reached the tents of Camp IV. Seldom can this stretch have been traversed in so short a time. Ramona and Mahadi had stayed behind there as they were ill, and they told us that the others were higher up at the scene of the disaster, digging. They also informed us that on the previous afternoon some fragments of the shattered camp had at last been found—one porter and a rucksack.

After a short rest I climbed to the plateau where the avalanche had come to a halt. Snow was flying from a trench on the edge of this field of ruin. Satara was down there, digging. He shouted loudly and cheerfully when he saw me, and then the other diggers emerged from their holes; silently and feelingly we grasped each other's hands and I felt great gratitude to my friends Luft and Kraus for having persevered so splendidly in such an immense and baffling task.

We had originally regarded the present day, the 20th, as the latest by which we should be back in the Base Camp, for the food and fuel supplies had been calculated to last only so long.

Luft's and Kraus's story ran as follows :

THE EXCAVATION

On the 15th July Bechtold, Kraus and Luft had begun the excavation, and then on the 16th came the day of bad weather. On the 17th they moved their camp nearer to the scene of the disaster and then dug

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and hacked until the late afternoon. On the 18th and 19th they had likewise worked the day through from morning till night. They had made trenches here and there in the immense expanse of the avalanche, continually being discouraged by seemingly hopeless failure but always making fresh starts. The two porters Ramona and Mahadi had fallen out right at the beginning, so that they had the help of only Satara and Shukar Ali.

At last—yesterday afternoon—Luft had found an ice-axe ; it was marked H.C. 114 and had therefore belonged to the porter with that Himalaya Club number. In the same cavity, about eleven feet below the surface of the avalanche, they also found two cigarette ends and an empty tin. The camp could not be far away. Now they had something to go by and they placed themselves at small intervals in the direction of the fall of the avalanche, and renewed their deep digging. After two hours Luft, using the avalanche probe, had noticed some resistance. There could be no doubt about it, the probe must have contacted with a human body. Silently they had continued to dig. Who could it be, lying down there ? A blanket, a woollen cap and then the face of a porter was disclosed. As far as they could tell from the curls and the rigid features, it was Pasang. Sirdar Nursang had made the express wish that the dead Sherpas should be left to lie undisturbed in the place where their lives had ended. Therefore they had not made any further search for the remaining porters.

After this find it was possible to conjecture roughly where the tents of the Sahibs must lie ; they had applied themselves to the work anew and had dug four deep trenches, and towards four o'clock on the previous day they had at last disclosed part of a tent, lying about eleven feet below the surface, and had drawn out from under the canvas a rucksack bearing the initials H. H.—Hans Hartmann. They had also ascertained the position of another tent with the avalanche probe.

Now we all set vigorously to work. There were two great deep trenches and at the bottom of each part of a tent was disclosed. The avalanche lay on top of the camp in a firm, solidly frozen mass ten to thirteen feet thick. This mass consisted not only of ice but for the

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most part of compressed snow, the blocks of ice which had been broken off from the edge of the terrace 1300 feet south of the camp embedded in it.

Martin Pfeffer was the first to be extricated. He lay peacefully at rest in his sleeping-sack, warmly clad in thick socks and breeches and a woollen vest ; with his leather helmet on his head he looked like a medieval knight. His hands and his face were composed, showing no signs of sudden fright. Next to him lay Hartmann, likewise peacefully sleeping. The watch which he wore on his wrist showed 12.20. I put it in my pocket and when I took it out later it was going again. Apparently it had stopped only on account of the cold. The catastrophe must have occurred at 12.20 or a few minutes before.

Someone still lay behind Hartmann, but it was very difficult to get at him. The tent covering was pressed tightly on to the sleepers and the snow shut them in on all sides as firmly as if they had been embedded in concrete. The work was almost beyond human powers, and at this height (*c.* 20,450 feet) made terrific demands on heart and lungs, but at last we freed our dead friend from the ice. It was Günther Hepp. We carried all three of them away and laid them down together.

The tent in the other trench was occupied by Wien and Fankhauser ; it was particularly difficult of access as a block of ice twenty to twenty-five feet across lay wedged in the masses of snow right on top of the tent ; we could not free either of them to-day. However, we already had all the diaries and had found practically all our friends' personal equipment. Everything was miraculously intact, even the barograph which stood by Wien's side.

When we returned to our labours on the following day, the 21st July, prospects were not encouraging. The only two porters who had been able to help—Shukar Ali and Satara, who was as strong as a lion—were right at the end of their tether and were feeling ill. Luft and Kraus likewise were played right out. I could not work any more and I had to confine my activities to sitting on the edge of the great trench and offering advice. In spite of everything Kraus and Luft succeeded in extricating Wien and Fankhauser and bringing them over to the communal grave.

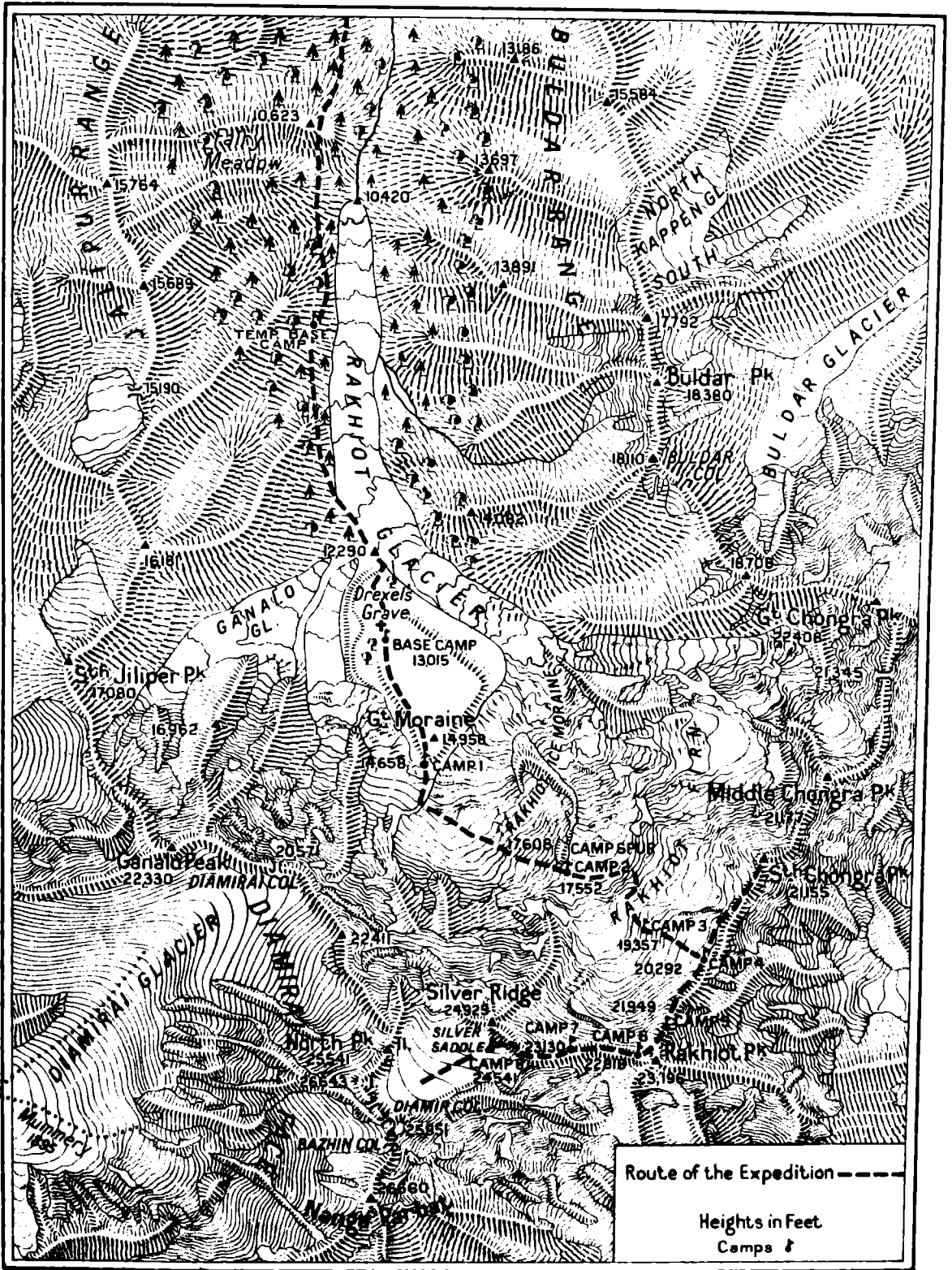
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We sought in vain for the third tent in which Müllritter and Göttner must be lying ; presumably it lay beneath the same great block of ice which had extended over the tent of Wien and Fankhauser. It had been terribly hard work to free them, and soon we had to abandon our attempts to break through the ice-block itself, for every single blow with the heavy pick-axe demanded a terrific effort and freeing the axe from the tough ice again was often even harder. Müllritter's and Göttner's tent must lie beneath this block, but it was absolutely impossible for us to get at them. We had already reached the limits of endurance.

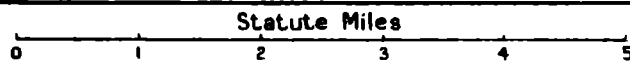
Our strength was failing, our food and fuel supplies had come to an end, and we had to cease work and hurry down to Camp IV. The Rakhiot valley had filled with heavy clouds and snowflakes were fluttering in the air as Wien and Fankhauser were lowered into the grave. Snow and ice were heaped upon them and two crossed ice-axes and a rope marked our friends' last resting-place. On a house-high ice-block at the head of the grave flew the German flag, the avalanche probes from the workshop of the British airmen in Lahore serving as a flag-mast. Luft and Kraus were the last to leave, and lightning whipped across the sky and thunder crackled as they descended. It looked as if we should have to make a hurried retreat before an approaching storm.

Meanwhile our comrades down in the Base Camp were becoming anxious, for we were long overdue. They scoured the Rakhiot glacier and the scene of the tragedy with the telescope, but they could see no sign of life, for we were working in the hollow in which the avalanche had come to rest. Bechtold, who had witnessed the tragedy on the ridge in 1934, was tormented by fears and decided to climb up to look for us. Here again Smart's magnificent comradeship came into evidence ; his instructions were to accompany us only as far as the Base Camp, but now, as Bechtold, full of forebodings, prepared to set off, he took it upon himself to accompany him on his dangerous journey.

But then this ceased to be necessary, for on the 22nd July they sighted us as we descended from Camp IV. We carried as many of our friends' possessions as we could manage, and we had to summon all our strength to get the porters down, some of whom had become quite indifferent to



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their fate. On the same evening, less than four weeks since leaving Germany, we arrived back at the Base Camp, with our difficult task behind us.

THE CAUSE OF THE DISASTER

How could such a tragedy have occurred? That was the question that had plagued us ever since we had heard the news, and we had striven hard to find some explanation. At Camp IV we had found the débris of a great avalanche covering an area of some fifteen acres with compressed snow and ice-blocks, some of which were the size of a house. The avalanche had fallen from the edge of the ice terrace 1300 feet to the south of the camp, and it must have been a terrific mass of ice that had broken away. The ice had plunged down over a short, steep slope and then it had been flung another 650–1000 feet over almost level ground; the whole of the layer of new snow was therefore carried along with it. The bulk of the avalanche had come to rest on top of the camp, just before the slope begins to steepen again. The fact that the avalanche advanced so unusually far is to be attributed to the particular circumstances obtaining at the time. It had been very cold for some days before the catastrophe; on the 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th and 14th the minimum temperature lay between 20° C. and 23° C. below zero, so that the snow had remained cold and powdery and had thus formed a particularly good sliding-surface for the masses of ice hurtling down from above. Furthermore, it had snowed every day, so that the depth of new snow amounted to three to five feet, and on account of its great mass and loose condition it was very easily set in motion by the giant blocks of ice.

In the second place, the tents were pitched in a hollow and the new snow which had fallen so continuously had caused them to vanish even farther below the surface, so that on the 14th, when Smart left the camp, only the topmost points of the tents were visible above the snow. Therefore the camp was not carried away by the avalanche but, lying as it did in a hollow, was crushed on the spot. On digging our friends out we found them embedded as firmly as if they had been in a cement cast. The snow had pressed everything firmly together, but strangely enough it

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had destroyed nothing, scientific instruments and cameras being absolutely unharmed. They had been shut in with equal force from every side by the snow of the avalanche and the same thing had happened to our friends. They lay in their sleeping-sacks in attitudes of peaceful sleep. There was nothing to show that they had been awakened ; it seemed that they had passed straight from sleep to death. The lie of their hands and the expression on their faces as well as the position of their bodies showed no signs of fright.

The catastrophe must have occurred during the night of the 14th-15th June, shortly after midnight. It was through a chain of unhappy circumstances that on this night all the climbers were together and that the camp was on just this spot. They had previously pitched their camp lower down, but it appears from their diaries that they did not consider this position to be safe. We examined this former pitch and it was perfectly true that it seemed more exposed to danger than the spot where the camp had finally stood and been overtaken by the avalanche. Wien, Hartmann, Pfeffer and Hepp had sought out a safer place, and the spot they finally decided upon very nearly coincided with the site of Camp IV in 1934 ; at the most it lay 330 feet to the west of it. The first site, which according to all reasonable judgment was unsafe, was spared, while above, in the deep hollow which had seemed safe, the avalanche had struck its frightful blow.

The fact that practically the whole team was together in this camp is also an unusual state of affairs and occurred only through an accumulation of peculiar circumstances ; the continuous snowfall had held up the advance party, and the rear-guard, following with the porters, had caught it up. On the 14th, the day of the tragedy, Camp V could have been established. Wien, Göttner and Hartmann had climbed up on this day to Camp V with their porters, but as preparations were not sufficiently far forward they had turned back to spend another night in Camp IV. Fate must have willed that the whole team should perish.

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THE EVER-LIVING SPIRIT OF THE DEAD OF NANGA PARBAT

We stayed at the Base Camp one more day, the 23rd July, preparing to evacuate it. The last evening was devoted to the memory of our friends. We sat around the fire and talked about them. They lived again among us, and so it will always be. Whenever we speak of them they will come to life again in our midst. This night as the fire slowly burned down and the full moon flooded the Rakhiot valley right up to the summit of Nanga Parbat with its eerie light, we thought, as we had thought so many times before, about recent events. It had been the best team Germany could have sent to the Himalayas. All morally upstanding characters, strong personalities, each of them a fine type. Müllritter, Göttner, Hepp, Pfeffer, Fankhauser, every one of them had something to contribute to the spiritual unity of the team ; every one of them would deserve a long obituary.

An eminent person has said that Wien was cut out to be a leading personality in the province of geographical science. The same may be said to apply to Hartmann in the field of physiology. The question has been raised whether such valuable lives should have been risked in this hazardous undertaking. One might be tempted to answer in the negative if one could regard their scientific activity as divorced from the human element, that is to say, divorced on the one hand from the genius and urges within them which made of them scientists of the first rank, and on the other hand from their relationship with their students, to whom they represented a living ideal.

But to Wien and Hartmann mountaineering, and particularly their attempts upon the giants of the Himalayas, was the very basis of their scientific activity. It was mountaineering that had awakened their devotion to scientific work and in mountaineering this devotion had grown and flourished, a devotion as pure, selfless and disinterested as was their love for the mountains. Both recognised that their duty lay not only in imparting knowledge but in helping their students to build

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strength of character and in guiding them towards a high ideal. Their attitude to life and their noble qualities demanded that they should be the ones to show the way. Therefore the *scientists* Wien and Hartmann cannot be contemplated as distinct from the *climbers* who so heroically sacrificed their lives on Nanga Parbat.

Their death and that of their comrades is an irreparable loss for the relations and friends who mourn them, for the world of science and for the whole of the German people.

And yet, mingled with our grief are pride and joy and confidence. Joy when in spirit we see them before us so full of life and daring ; pride that there are such men who, resolute and fearless, will strive together for a goal which lies in the clouds ; and confidence . . . ! Since the beginning of history hundreds of thousands of the best of our men have fallen. Are we therefore the poorer ? On the contrary, new life, new strength have come to the German people from the death of these men. Others will be fired by the spirit of the dead of Nanga Parbat and in their hands will the torch be carried forward.

THE END

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