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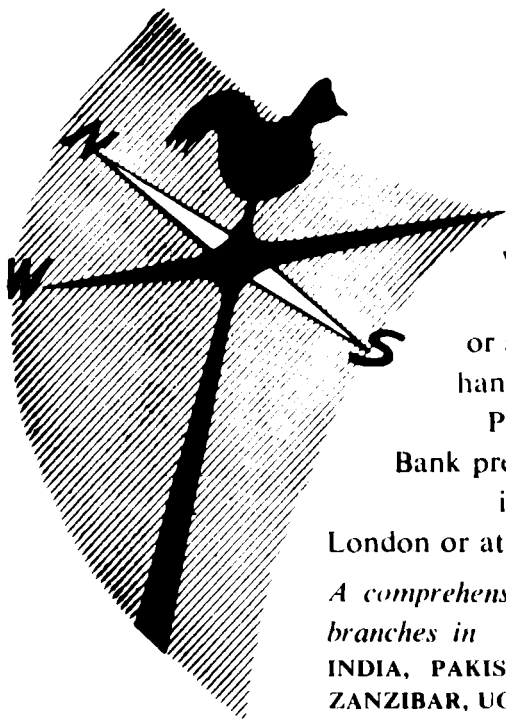
ASIAN REVIEW

INCORPORATING
THE ASIATIC REVIEW
AND
THE JOURNAL OF THE EAST INDIA ASSOCIATION



LORD STANSGATE AT THE MEETING IN INDIA OF THE INTERNATIONAL
PARLIAMETARY UNION, WITH SHRI G. V. MAVALANKAR

See page 69



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The Asian Review

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The Publishers regret that the publication of this issue has been delayed by a wages dispute in the printing industry, a circumstance entirely beyond their control; and wish to offer their apologies for any inconvenience that may have been caused.

first Indian Navy, since, I think, 1632 if I remember rightly. I made the Indian Navy under the most distressingly difficult conditions. Sir Mark has told us some of his troubles—we all had them. I, to start with, was not allowed one anna piece for my navy because the Government just did not believe in India having a navy, and so I had to start off under those rather difficult conditions. However, I had a dream when I went to India that I was going to make a Navy which India would be proud of and although I ought not to say it, I think I did, by fighting everybody because everybody to start with was against the idea. Now, thank goodness, things have changed materially. The Government of India, from what Sir Mark has said, is obviously helping tremendously, not only by good thoughts on an Indian Navy but by money. From what he has told us, I personally am extraordinarily happy to realize after all the setbacks after partition that the Indian Navy has now set itself on the highway of success, which it undoubtedly has. Not only do I say that, but I look forward to the future when the Indian Navy will be even more splendid than it is to-day and will carry out what will be the most important duties in that area to the satisfaction of India and the Commonwealth and Empire as well. I ask you to accord to Sir Mark Pizey the usual acclamation for his extraordinarily good address.

The Ascent of Kanchenjunga

By Captain H. R. A. STREATHER

AT A JOINT MEETING of the East India Association, the Pakistan Society and the Overseas League on Wednesday, 26th October, 1955, an address on the ascent of Kanchenjunga, illustrated with lantern slides, was given by Captain H. R. A. Streather, one of the members of the expedition. His Excellency Mr. M. IKRAMULLAH, President of the Pakistan Society, presided over a large attendance.

Mr. M. IKRAMULLAH: This evening I am sure that we are going to have a very interesting lecture from Captain Streather, who was a member of the recent expedition to Kanchenjunga, which successfully climbed the peak. I think quite a number of you already know Captain Streather better than I do, but to those of you who do not I wish to say

that Captain Streather joined the Indian Army in 1945, but soon transferred to Pakistan's Zhob Militia and, later on, to the Tochi Scouts. He was for some time also A.D.C. to Sir Ambrose Dundas, who was Governor of the North West Frontier Province; now Sir Ambrose Dundas is Governor of the Isle of Man. While he was in the Frontier Province Captain Streather went on an expedition and successfully climbed Tirich Mir, which I think is about 25,263 ft. Thereafter he had an opportunity of accompanying the American expedition to K.2 in 1953. That expedition was very unfortunate and we are very happy to have Captain Streather with us to-day. As a result of these two expeditions he was asked to accompany the Kanchenjunga expedition, with Dr. Evans as the leader and which you all know was successfully climbed. I would mention that Captain Streather has returned to the Gloucestershire Regiment, and is in the Army still. May I introduce Captain Streather.

Captain STREATHER: It is a great pleasure to me to-night to be able to talk to the Pakistan Society and the East India Association, because I am really a Pakistani mountaineer. The first mountain I ever climbed really through sheer accident was in Pakistan. I happened to be stationed in Chitral, which many of you will know, and while I was there a Norwegian expedition came out to climb Tirich Mir and I went along with them as their interpreter and transport officer, to look after their coolies, and again, really by accident, finished up on top of the mountain with them. And that started me off. The next mountain I tried was K.2, again in Pakistan. From there I was led on to India and I went this summer with the Kanchenjunga expedition, led by Dr. Evans. I have since then climbed once in Wales; I climbed a hill called Tryfern, but I think I can really claim to be a Pakistani and an Indian mountaineer.

I am going to tell you the story now of the successful Kanchenjunga expedition this summer and I have got with me slides which are a set taken by the various members of the expedition. I will go straight on and take you along on the story as we went to the mountain. The story really starts in Darjeeling, which many of you will know, and from Darjeeling if you look out North you have on the horizon that wonderful panorama of Kanchenjunga, which seems to float in the clouds about fifty miles away. Kanchenjunga is very different from Everest—the highest mountain, as we all know—and K.2, the second highest mountain; Kanchenjunga is the third highest and you can see it from Darjeeling. Everest and K.2 are tucked away in the remote parts of the Himalayas or the Karakoram, and you cannot see them unless you are prepared to walk for possibly two weeks through very rough terrain. So there are

few who have had the chance of seeing Everest or K.2. There must be many who have been on leave to Darjeeling, who have lived in Darjeeling, or who have gone up there in the summer from the heat of Calcutta and have looked North at that wonderful view of Kanchenjunga. And in the Planter's Club, as many of you will know, there is a telescope on the lawn and many a person has sat looking through the telescope at Kanchenjunga and saying "Of course, it will never be climbed." And because the south face, seen from Darjeeling, is so steep and threatened by avalanches, the main previous expeditions, in 1929, 1930 and 1931—two of them Bavarian led by Paul Bower and one international, led by Dyhrenfurth—have been round from the North. There has been no real serious attempt on the south face of the mountain; it was considered by many to be impossible.

About three years ago Gilmour Lewis went out to have a look at Kabru and while he was there he had a closer look at the south face of Kanchenjunga and thought that possibly there was a route if one was very careful in winding through the snow face there; and so last year a small reconnaissance party led by John Kempe, a schoolmaster from Hyderabad, went to have a further look at that face, and they thought there was just a remote chance of getting up on to the great shelf, which is the mass of ice which one sees from Darjeeling running along the south face of the mountain about 3,000 ft. from the summit, and if one could get to that great shelf it did look as though there was a possible way to the top. On the strength of his recommendations, this year a joint committee of the Geographical Society and the Alpine Club, with Sir John Hunt as the Chairman, sponsored an expedition, which was to be a reconnaissance to see if there was a feasible route to the summit. When we went out as a reconnaissance we ourselves were determined—and we took with us the wherewithal—to get to the top if the opportunity should arise. We had enough oxygen and enough food and enough tentage, and we were determined that if our first role of a reconnaissance should find a route on the lower part of the mountain then we would have a crack at the summit.

So in March of this year we all assembled in Darjeeling at Rungneet, a house which many of you again may know, and there we sorted out all our heavy baggage, unpacked our crates and packed our equipment into loads of sixty pounds, which the coolies would carry from here about ten days to the mountain. After a day or two, when we had sorted out our loads, we were ready to motor to Mani Banjan, about thirty miles away, to the beginning of the track which would lead us along the Singalila ridge north between Sikkim and Nepal, towards Kanchenjunga. But just before we reached India we heard that the people of Sikkim,

which is a small, semi-autonomous state to the East of Nepal, were very worried about our climbing Kanchenjunga. We had not in any way applied to them for permission because we were going through Nepal and the Nepalese Government had granted us permission to go through and try the mountain from their side. We were not going into Sikkim and so had not, in fact, approached them. When they heard of our coming they had objected to the Indian Government and that got through to us through our High Commissioner, and we learnt then that they look upon Kanchenjunga as being a sacred mountain. As you know, they are all Buddhists and they consider that the mountain is the home of some of their gods. The word Kanchenjunga, in fact, in Tibetan, means "The Five Sacred Treasures of the Snow." We were still not sure whether, in fact, when we got to Darjeeling, we would be able to go to the mountain we had come to climb. So Charles Evans, our leader, went down to Gangtok, the capital of Sikkim, to talk with the Raj Kumar, the Maharajah's son—the Maharajah himself is a very old man now and does not have much to do with State business—and after a long discussion they came to agreement whereby, having come so far and made all our plans, we could still go to the mountain, but we would only go as far as was necessary to ensure that there was a route to the summit and, if we found a feasible route, then in any case we would not violate the actual summit. That seemed a very happy agreement and so we set off, knowing that whatever happened we would not, in fact, tread on the very summit of Kanchenjunga. Having got final clearance, our plans went on and we set out from Darjeeling to our base camp, which we thought would take us probably about ten days. We motored down to Mani Banjan and from there we hoped to move along Singalila Ridge, which many of you will know is a very popular trek from Darjeeling, but it is about 12,000 or 13,000 ft. and we knew that there would still be quite a lot of winter snow on it, and so we could not go, as we had hoped, all the way along the ridge to the mountain. We had to drop off very soon down into Nepal, into the hot valleys where there was no snow.

When we came back, in fact, we came right along that ridge and many of you will know the wonderful views we had of the Everest group on one side and the Kanchenjunga group and the mountains of Sikkim on the other. As we went along on the first two days of our march, along the Singalila Ridge, in the mornings when it was clear we had in the distance the wonderful view of Kanchenjunga, luring us on towards our goal. Most afternoons it clouded over and our view was then rather restricted. To get us from Darjeeling to base camp we required about 300 coolies, so when we set off we split into two parties of about 150 each. I followed up with the rear party with the last of the loads. We had

that large number of loads because we had to take with us all our food for the whole summer—about three months—and a lot of oxygen which we reckoned was going to be essential for our plan of getting to the summit in the short time between the end of the winter, when it is really too cold to move on the mountain, and the onset of the Monsoon, towards the end of May or beginning of June. The drop down from the Singalila Ridge into the hot, humid valleys of Nepal, for three or four days led us through the Eastern part of Nepal. We then climbed again out of the valleys and we had to cross rather a high pass; there was quite a lot of snow about and we had quite a bit of trouble with the coolies from Darjeeling who were not really used to this sort of thing—we found they were used to rickshaws and to comparative warmth—but we managed to get over all right and while we were there we had a wonderful view of Kanchenjunga and the south face which we hoped to climb. We then followed for a few days a very attractive wooded ridge with all the time the snow covered peaks just visible to the north. Rhododendrons grow in profusion in that part of Nepal and make travel so very attractive. Sometimes we saw a whole mountainside covered in red, yellow and white wild rhododendrons. Soon we dropped down into the Yalung valley and started up through the thick jungle towards the Yalung glacier, which was the one we were to follow to the south face of Kanchenjunga. As we got higher above the treeline the jungle began to thin out and we could see the peaks of Ratong and the others at the foot of Yalung, which led us up to our peak. At last we reached the little alp of Tseram just above the treeline at about 15,000 ft. and there our only companions were a few hairy yaks and a shepherd who looked after them, and his son. Here we established our acclimatization camp, and here we paid off all the 300 coolies who had come with us from Darjeeling or had been recruited in the villages as we came along. Only ourselves—the climbers—and the Sherpas who had come down from Sola Khumbu and who were going to work with us through the summer, remained. Here we sorted our loads further, collected a stack of firewood from the forests just below us and that later was to be carried four stages up the glacier to our base camp. From here parties went off to acclimatize on the smaller mountains—20,000 footers—round about and while they were doing that others of us were working away forward up the Yalung glacier, to where we hoped eventually to establish our base camp. As many of you will know, the villages of the Sherpas who were going to work with us during the summer, are anywhere from 12,000 to 14,000 ft. above sea level, so high altitude means very little to them; they are quite at home at anything up to about 20,000 ft. They are very likeable people, extremely cheerful, and will always go out of their way to find the funny side of life.

From our acclimatization camp we had now quite a busy time to get up the Yalung glacier to our base camp, which was to be just at the south foot of the mountain. The previous attempts had been up the Zeemu glacier and the Kanchenjunga glacier from the north. The weather was still quite bad and we had a much harder time than we had expected getting up the glacier. At last we reached Corner Camp, which was the final camp from which we could get a good view of the mountain we had come to climb, and from there we were able to look across at the entire south face of Kanchenjunga and see in more detail the route that we hoped to take. I must admit that it wasn't very cheering. When Charles Evans, who was ahead here, went up to the Corner Camp he came back very quickly with the few porters he had taken with him and told us it was much too cold, the winter was still with us, to work forward. He had woken up one morning in his small two-man tent which he was sharing with Brown and heard something brush past him, and heard rather a lot of shouting; he poked his head out of the tent and saw lying in the open in their sleeping bags, two Sherpas. When they went to bed the night before they had been sleeping inside a very heavy dome tent weighing about eighty pounds. A strong gust of wind had carried the tent away—he had felt it brushing past his tent—and deposited it about a hundred yards away over the edge of the glacier. The Sherpas, when they saw this happen, looked out of their sleeping bags, decided it wasn't a very nice morning, and had curled up and gone back to sleep. That set us back a bit and we had to wait lower down, but soon the weather did clear and we were able to work forward to Corner Camp and then on towards the mountain itself. Charles Evans, the leader of the expedition, was John Hunt's deputy leader on Everest. He went, as you remember, on that first summit assault with Tom Bourdillon. They were very unlucky and had trouble with their oxygen, freezing up of valves, and they had to turn back from the south summit when the summit itself was only some 200 ft. away.

From our Corner Camp we could look down on to the top part of the glacier and we could look across towards the mountain and see the route we hoped to climb. Running up between two rock buttresses was a very prominent icefall. From Corner Camp to Base we had to be very careful, because we were surrounded by a complete basin with the snow-covered peaks all round us, great cliffs of snow and ice hanging off them poised to fall off, and there was continual threat of avalanche. So we had to find a route, which we did, winding through the middle of the glacier, which was not threatened. We had a lot of cutting of steps to do in the initial stages, past frozen lakes, but it got better every day as we went backwards and forwards over it, and eventually John Jackson, who was the only

married man on the expedition, said he could wheel a pram along it. The party went forward to the foot of the lower icefall and there we established our first base. It was decided to send a party on ahead to reconnoitre this possible route on the Lower Icefall and George Band, with his knowledge and experience of the Everest icefall, was selected to be one of them. He was on Everest in 1953 from Cambridge, and last year he was a member of the Cambridge University mountaineering expedition which went out to Rakaposhi in Gilgit, Pakistan. Not content with going out there to climb a mountain, they decided they must do something even more enterprising so they motored out. Half of them went out by car, and the other half of them drove it back—across Europe, through Persia, up into Pakistan, Rawalpindi, and from there they flew on to Gilgit. With him was Norman Hardie, the only New Zealand member of our expedition, who had been a member with Edmund Hillary the previous year in his expedition to the Barun glacier. These two went forward to have a look at the lower icefall, and the first reaction we heard from George Band, over the radio set which we had for keeping in touch, was that the Khumbu Icefall into the col of Everest was like a pile of bricks in a children's playground compared with this. He didn't like the look of it at all. They pushed forward, determined if they could to find a way through, because this, as far as we knew, was the only route on to the Great Shelf. If we could not get up this, it would have meant that we were being defeated by our mountain before we had even reached 20,000 ft. They came eventually to a cliff which ran right across the icefall, just before it eased off into the cwm, and this appeared to defeat them. Eventually they did get up it, but it was decided, when Charles Evans went forward, that the route was far too difficult to use as a route on which we had to take porters and which we would have to go over many times; it was too dangerous, and so Evans had to make the sad decision that we would have to abandon this icefall route. Those of us who were working below bringing supplies up to base camp were very demoralized because it seemed that this was as far as we would go; that now we may as well pack up and go back to Darjeeling. But while they were there Hardie had noticed away upon the left a very small gulley running down off the ridge and he thought that possibly if we could get to the top of the ridge we could drop down on to the icefall and miss this difficult part. So before packing up we decided just to have a look at this. We moved our Base Camp from the glacier to a little rocky spur, which is marked on the map as Pache's Grave. In 1905 a small expedition led by Alastair Crowley, who some of you may remember as "the Great Beast," had come out here, and on a glacier quite near there had been an avalanche and Pache, a Swiss officer, and two Sherpas had been killed.

We found, after all this time, a cross left there amongst the rocks made out of their packing cases, and carved on a stone which we found amongst the snow was "Alexis Pache, 1905." We established our base camp there and we decided to try and find a route on to this hump which led above the Lower Icefall and which would sidetrack the difficult part.

Now at Base Camp let us meet the other members of this expedition: Neil Mather, a textile researcher, who had not been in the Himalayas before, but has been doing some very good work in the last few seasons in the Alps. He is a particular expert on snow and ice. John Clegg, our doctor, who has done a lot of climbing in this country and the Alps but he has not been in the Himalayas before. John Jackson, a school-master from Redcar. Last year he was with the "Abominable Snowman" expedition which the *Daily Mail* sponsored and which you may have read about. He did not, in fact, catch the Abominable Snowman but he sincerely believes that there is one. Joe Brown, who has not been to the Himalayas before, but has been doing some fantastic climbing recently in the Alps and is probably the leading expert rock climber in this country. Tom McKinnon was the oldest member of the expedition, a great character. He has been many times before to the Himalayas and was our steadying influence.

Here at Base Camp we set about our new task of finding a route over the Hump. If we could do that we would be able to miss the difficult part of the lower icefall and so we hoped to get on to the great shelf. At about this time one of the dak mail runners arrived with some photographs taken by the Indian Air Force some weeks beforehand, and when they arrived our morale went down considerably. They made the mountain look very steep and really quite impossible. Above Base-Camp we were faced with a considerable turmoil of crevasses. We wound our way through them and found eventually a site to establish our first camp, Camp 1, towards the top of the Hump. Once we had been over the route for the first time we marked our way with marker flags, because most afternoons we were getting fresh snow which obliterated our tracks. When we reached the Hump we were able to look down on to the top of the Lower Icefall, a mass of tumbled ice and snow frozen one on top of the other, all of them steadily moving down towards the glacier below. Looking up from there we could see the Upper Icefall, up which we hoped to go to the Great Shelf, and then the Gangway up the col and the summit. On the top of the Hump there was quite a considerable crevasse and we had to cross this, using some of the sections of aluminium ladder which we had brought with us. At the bottom of the Hump there was a particularly large crevasse which we had again to cross by ladders and in the few weeks that we had our ladder across,

it opened up considerably, thus proving how the snow and ice there was moving down. We hoped from there to move up to level snow to establish our second camp. The Hump was at about 20,000 ft. and Camp 2 was at about 21,000. Just below it we had our last obstacle, a snow and ice cliff, and here we put in another of our ladders.

People often ask what one eats on these expeditions and I remember particularly a story from Camp 2. We took all the essentials, but we also asked everyone what they particularly liked so they could have their particular fads. When you get high your appetite rather goes and you don't feel much like eating, and then when you do feel like eating you feel like rather peculiar things. At Camp 2 Joe Brown made history, shall we say, by telling us about a meal he had— $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. of Cheddar cheese, half a bottle of tomato ketchup and half a Mars bar, and the story goes that when he went on from there that day to carry a load up to Camp 3 he kept the whole lot down for half an hour.

Now we hoped to find a route through the Upper Icefall on to the Great Shelf. A party had pushed forward to Camp 3 to find a possible site there and while the rest of us were working loads from base camp up to the third camp Hardie and Evans, using the closed circuit oxygen, went off up to the Great Shelf and found a possible site for Camps 4 and 5, so now we knew we had a possible route on the mountain to a fifth camp at a little over 25,000 ft. or about the equivalent of the South Col on Mount Everest. So we set about now establishing that fifth camp which would be the jumping off place for our assault on the summit.

When all the plans were ready for the assault it was decided that McKinnon and Jackson with ten Sherpas should move forward to Camp 4, and from there move on to Camp 5, and there dump the necessary loads which would be required by the first assault party—tents, oxygen, food, stoves and kerosin oil. Following a day behind them would be the first party, which was to be Brown and Band, and with them the support party, Evans and Mather, and following a day behind again would be the second assault party, Hardie and myself. From Camp 3 we set out to put that plan in motion and when the first party went off they got to Camp 4 and next day McKinnon and Jackson set off to Camp 5 with the Sherpas. Some of them made it, but it was a very long climb to 25,000 ft. They were not using oxygen, so four of them fell by the way and we did not get all the loads we really wanted up there. Following a day behind came the first assault party. They reached Camp 4 safely, but that night a storm developed and the next morning was hopeless; they were in the midst of a raging Himalayan blizzard. All through that day the snow piled up against their tents, and the following night they began to think that this was as far as we would go, but the third morning one of the

Sherpas poked his head out of the tent and said " Sahib, I can see from Darjeeling to Everest," and when they looked out they found at last it was clear, but it was still very windy. And so from this camp they sorted out from all the loads buried beneath the snow the essentials and set off towards Camp 5. They found when they were nearly there that the stores that had been dumped by a previous party—McKinnon and Jackson's party—many of them had been smothered by snow and some of them carried away by avalanche during the storm, so they had to spend an extra day there recovering them and getting the essentials to launch the first assault party.

We had been studying the summit closely as we got nearer to it. We had hoped to follow up a ridge which looked quite level, but as we got nearer we saw how very broken it was, with great gendarmes of rock jutting out, making climbing along the ridge almost impossible. So we hoped if we did get that high we would find a way just below the ridge through the snow and rocks to the summit. Camp 5 was established at 25,300 ft. and we hoped from here to place just one more assault camp—as on Everest—one camp above the south col. The assault camp would be just one small two-man tent and in that the first assault pair would spend the night and from there make their bid for the summit. If they could make it well and good; if not, they would get as far as they could and the second assault pair would be following them a day behind to have a crack next day and to gain advantage from the experience of the first pair. The first pair should come straight down that night, back to Camp 5. From Camp 5 we could look across at Jannu, a 25,000 ft. peak which lies off from the west spur of Kanchenjunga, and I think probably, if there is a mountain in the Himalayas that will never be climbed, that is it.

When all was ready at Camp 5 the first assault pair set off, accompanied by Evans and Mather, to establish Camp 6. All of them were using oxygen. As Harvey and I were climbing that day from Camp 4 to Camp 5, we saw the small string of people, just dots against the snow, working their way up the Gangway towards the place where they hoped to establish the assault camp. We wanted to get as high as we could up the Gangway and leave as little as possible for the final assault. Piling up below, reminding us that we had to hurry all the time, were the monsoon clouds. We had been held up by that short storm and we had not got many days left now before the monsoon would prevent any further climbing. Soon the assault party saw ahead of them fairly level pieces of rock where they thought they could establish their high camp. Once there, they set about cutting a small ledge out of the ice and snow. They were all very tired, and no one had much energy left to do it, but suddenly

George Band noticed that one of the Sherpas' oxygen sets was still working; the others had all finished theirs, and he looked at this and found he had a considerable amount left. He could only conclude that while during a rest the sets had been turned off, Tashi had failed to turn his on again. Although this is possibly not a very good advertisement for the oxygen, it certainly is a very good advertisement for the Sherpa who had managed to plod along with his mask still on his face without, in fact, using any oxygen! And so Band took this set from him and with the remaining hour or so that was left he was able to get renewed energy and cut a little ledge for the tent. Brown and Band were left there and the others returned to Camp 5 to wait in support. The same day, the 26th May, Hardie and myself, the second assault pair, came up from Camp 5. As we left Camp 5 we saw two dots leaving Camp 6; they were the first pair making their bid for the summit. We saw them as they moved up the Gangway, but soon they were lost in amongst the rocks and we did not see them again. We ourselves reached Camp 6 to find the tent had been blown down and, with the two Sherpas who had come with us to help to carry our oxygen, we set about sorting out the camp and settling down to wait for the first pair. Our two Sherpas went down and Hardie and I, excited to find out what had happened, remained at that high camp. As the afternoon drew on our excitement turned to apprehension and as there was no sign of the others we went out and looked and shouted. Still no sign of them. We felt that our voices must have carried quite a way and they ought to hear us, but there was no reply and as the afternoon grew into evening we began to be really worried that there must have been some accident. It was too late now to think of going out to do anything, so we had just to wait patiently and hope for the best. As the sun set behind Jannu it was getting rapidly dark and about then we heard bits of snow being kicked on to our tent and realized there was movement about. We went outside and shouted and there at last were the first pair! It was about 7 o'clock when the two very exhausted climbers came into view round the buttress of rock and flopped down exhausted on the little bit of level ice and snow in front of our tent. We heard from them the very great news that they had been to the near summit. There was no time for excitement because we realized now that, whatever happened, the four of us would have to spend a very uncomfortable night in that tiny tent, and we knew that the first pair were very exhausted; one of them, George Band, had slightly frost-bitten fingers where he had handled one of his oxygen cylinders without gloves on. Joe Brown had taken his goggles off for a short time to be able to see better on a difficult bit of rock and was slightly snow blind. We had to get them in, feed them up and give them plenty of liquid. At that altitude one needs

a tremendous amount of liquid. You breathe in very dry air, and breathe out very moist air, and you lose something like six or seven pints of liquid a day just from breathing. Having given them gallons of tea and revived them a bit, we were able to hear their story. That morning they had set out at about half past eight from Camp 6 and had climbed steadily up the Gangway. They made one false start from the snow towards the summit and wasted about an hour, but they put this right and were soon almost on to the col. They stayed this side to be sheltered from the wind and from there they were able to look back at the south summit of Kangbachen and away in the distance, about eighty miles away, the peaks of Everest and Lotse. As they drew near the summit at about 28,000 ft. they were confronted suddenly by a very steep rock wall. Here Joe Brown took the lead. He is the expert rock climber, and as he told us about it in that little tent at Camp 6 Hardie and I thought "We'll never make that." Brown got up and when he was round the corner he shouted back to George: "George, we're up." That was the first time he realized that they were in fact so near the summit.

The night passed somehow. We heard from George Band that, as there was such a narrow ledge, the two of them had spent the night before roped into the tent, with the rope tied to a rock outside. They had drawn lots as to who was to sleep on the outside and George Band had lost. When it came to a question of putting all four of us in, the question seemed to be a little more acute, so we thought that as George Band knew all about it he had best go there again! He told us that he heard the seams of the tent creaking through the night and wondered when it was going to give. Anyhow, we spent an uncomfortable night, sharing the two sleeping bags, and the next morning the other two were fit enough to go down themselves to Camp 5 where Evans was waiting for them. After they had gone down Hardie and I set about preparing our own oxygen apparatus, ready for our own bid for the summit. We thought that, having come so far, and as it was a fine day, if we could get a second pair to the summit, in spite of the fact that the first reconnaissance pair had made it, it would be a great thing. After we had been climbing for some time we passed the oxygen frames of the first party dumped on the rocks. They had left them there on their way down the day before, when their oxygen had run out. We had our first mishap just before this when one of the oxygen cylinders out of Hardie's frame had slipped from its straps and gone falling down the mountain, banging on a rock, breaking open and hissing off down the mountain side. So we were now faced with having to make the summit climb, if we were still going to do it, with a very limited amount of oxygen. But we pushed on up and got on to the ridge, using now a very low flow rate of oxygen. Soon we came to the rock

buttress near the summit, which we had heard so much about and which Joe Brown had climbed the day before. We looked up and did not like the look of it at all, so Hardie and I thought we would just have a look round the corner. We went round five or ten yards and there, sure enough, was a perfect little snow ridge running up to the summit. We reached a point near the summit just below a pyramid of snow. Fifteen feet away from us and five or six feet above was the actual summit of the mountain; and that was the part which was left untrodden.

After a while on the summit, changing our oxygen cylinders and changing the films in our cameras, eating a few biscuits, chocolate, sweets, Kendal mint cake, we set out to come down again. By now Hardie had little oxygen left and I was out of it and had to come down all the way without, and found, in fact, the descent far worse than the ascent. We were met at Camp 5 by Charles Evans, who was waiting there in support, and as we drew near to it he shouted out "Have you been to the top?" We thought a bit, thought it was rather a stupid question, because we could not think where else we had been all that time, so we did not trouble to answer. It was the 26th May. Hardie thought this one up—I am not quite sure how he did it in his rather muzzy state—he said: "Charles, who won the Election?" Charles obviously thought that was a stupid question too and he did not answer. We joined him at Camp 5, rested there, and then went on down to Base Camp; but while we were at Camp 5 we heard from Charles the very sad news that one of our Sherpas had died in Base Camp at almost the exact time that we reached the summit. He had been ill for a few days, and of course the Sherpas, who are in some ways superstitious, were saying that the Gods of Kanchenjunga had not let us get away with it scot-free after all. He was buried under a rock at Base Camp and the Sherpas carved on it the eternal Buddhist prayer:—"Om Mane Padme Hum"—"Hail to the Jewel in the Lotus."

So Pemba Dorje's death was the only cloud on our happiness at having, beyond all expectations, reached, not just with one but with two pairs, the point so near to the summit of Kanchenjunga. That evening, as the sun set, there was very little rejoicing in Base Camp, although we had become a very close team not only of climbers but of the Sherpas who had worked so cheerfully with us.