

## LUTKUH AND HUNZA

BY REGINALD SCHOMBERG

**T**HE state of Chitral in the extreme N.W. of India consists primarily of one long valley through which flows the Chitral River, known by various names in different parts of the valley but remaining the same stream none the less. The chief tributary to the river is the Lutkuh or Great Valley joining the main valley 5 miles above the town of Chitral, and which drains the major part of the western area of the State. This valley is usually reached by road from the capital to Shoghor, the first important village in the valley proper, and light cars can unfortunately approach quite close. From Shoghor the track leads right up the Lutkuh valley to the Dorah Pass on the Afghan frontier, one of the lowest passes leading over the main Hindu Kush range.

This method of entering the Lutkuh is a prosaic one, and it fails to give any idea of the mountains that enclose the valley.

As we happened in 1935 to be in the Rumbur valley, to the immediate S. of Lutkuh, I determined, although it was only May and rather early in a late year, to cross over the watershed between the two.

The usual pass from the Rumbur into the Lutkuh is the Otak An (An means 'pass' in Chitral), sometimes known as the Trashtiweli or 'Wild Onion Pass.' The highest point on this route, the actual crest, is 15,250 ft., but it has the disadvantage of being, in actual fact, two passes, as the track rises over the right of the Chitral Gol (Gol = valley) and then over the watershed into the Lutkuh. I was advised, by the local people, to try the pass to the W. of the Otak An which led directly over the watershed. This pass was the Ashanger An, 15,900 ft., and so far as I know, a pass unknown to Europeans. Looking back, I think the advice received was thoroughly bad.

The higher part of the Rumbur valley is now occupied by Kafirs who have recently embraced Islam. Unfortunately, their change of faith has not resulted in a change of customs, one custom being that the men never carry loads but leave that to the women. We therefore suggested that the women should carry our luggage, but the proposal was frowned on. I am afraid that our morals were unjustly regarded as doubtful. Had I had any idea what miserable coolies these men would prove, I should never have attempted the pass with them, but have obtained porters elsewhere.

We started from the village of Kunisht whence the path led steeply, but without any difficulty, up the Chimarsen Gol. We went up the right of that valley soon entering magnificent forests of deodar, *Pinus longifolia*, and 'edible' pine. Our progress was slow and tiresome in the extreme, as the coolies halted frequently and for a long time. We

were told that the first day was the worst and that matters would be better on the morrow. At last we reached a goat-herd's camp with a few huts and some dry barren ground just above the tree limit. This was Son-o-mul, or the 'Place of the Hut,' where we spent a restless night.

We left the next day at 3.45 A.M. and far too late, as if I had known what was before us, I should have started at midnight since the sky was clear and there was a moon. We crawled slowly and easily up the broad Otak Gol. The snow began as soon as we left camp, but the incline was a gentle one and, with good coolies, we should have made excellent progress. Instead of which we kept losing time unnecessarily the whole way, as once the coolies had halted they could hardly be induced to go on. I felt sorry for them and still sorrier for ourselves. We had to cut steps for the last 2500 ft. or more, and did not reach the top of the pass till 12.45. The ascent to the pass lay up a very steep couloir. The heat was considerable with a blazing sun, while the rapidly softening snow was an added trial. It was entirely due to my men from Hunza that we reached the top. All the work was done by them. I had several spare local men but they were not of much use. I doubt if the Chitrali is of value on snow. He does not know what to do and seems lost. Our poor coolies did not know the rudiments of the game, having spent their lives in avoiding snow. It is remarkable how the men of Hunza are everywhere superior to other hillmen.<sup>1</sup> The crest of the pass was a knife-edge and the moment that we put our heads over, we found that a tremendous gale was raging, blowing the snow into clouds and cutting us to the bone. Yet the sky, of a beautiful, deep blue colour, was clear. We could not stand a second in that blast and plunged accordingly down the slope. There was no view whatever—so I had not to stop to photograph. We went down and down over easy slopes with the snow in just the right state; I ran some 2 miles in 20 minutes. It was not, however, till 5 P.M. when we had descended some 5 or 6 miles that we were able to find a site clear of snow. This place was, curiously enough, Ashanger Ghari (a 'ghari' is an upland grazing place), which gave its name to the pass. The last two or three miles were very trying, and we did not settle in for the night till nearly 6.

After a couple of days' rest we ascended the Lutkuh to its head. We were now in the heart of the Southern Hindu Kush, but the mountains here lack the height and magnificence of those further north. The average height is about 16,000 or 17,000 ft., but the formation of the range is almost commonplace; its main axis forms the frontier between Chitral and Afghanistan.

The upper Lutkuh offered a contrast between the striking desolation of the precipitous valley-sides and the abundant cultivation of the floor where between thick grey walls, reminiscent of western Ireland or the Hebrides, grow fields of hard-won barley and wheat. Trees

<sup>1</sup> On *rocks* only: Sherpas and Bhutias are by far the best Asiatics on ice and snow; see also p. 118.—*Editor*.

were few but some were planted in sheltered places. By the sides of the streams birch, willow, tamarisk grow, and at times a little juniper on the hillsides. I was much struck by the absence of glaciers. This, of course, was due to the steepness of the sides of the valley. The few glaciers that I saw were rudimentary.

At the head of the Lutkuh is the well-known and frequented Dorah Pass (14,900 ft.). At this time of the year—the end of May—the last 3 miles to the summit lay under heavy snow which, with a keen wind blowing, made the ascent very disagreeable. Later in the season, the pass is usually free from snow and a considerable number of caravans cross it.

From the top the view looks down on to another valley running parallel with the main range; it is most unimpressive. I was disappointed at not seeing Lake Dufferin which lies immediately below the pass on the Afghan side. So steep is the descent and so narrow is the bottom of the valley that it is only from a considerable way down that the lake—now frozen—can be viewed. This lake is said to be free of ice when the mulberries are ripe, that is, about the end of June.

From the head of the Lutkuh, I determined to cross direct to the Arkari valley, the chief tributary of the Lutkuh on the left. This long valley flows almost due N. and S., and if I could reach it direct, would save travelling first down, then up the Arkari and back again; by this means I should avoid covering the same ground twice. The pass to be crossed was the Sut Qulachi, or 'Seven Spans.' I knew that this was not an easy pass, but the local villagers declared the route to be quite simple. They were, however, converted Kafirs who abhorred carrying a load and, as our coolies would come from elsewhere, were quite indifferent as to our fate.

Our route lay up the Siruik valley. With ten very lightly-laden coolies we left on May 31, 1935. The Siruik proved a very attractive valley with pleasant, level pasture grounds, plenty of willow and birch trees and gay with flowers. At first we found tulips, but soon a more Alpine flora appeared with quantities of pink dwarf-primulae and yellow ranunculus. It was early in the season and the whole of this valley, which much impressed my men, was deserted. We camped at Afsik, the highest place free from snow where wood could be procured. I should have preferred to go on, but had to consider the coolies. These were Maulais or followers of the Aga Khan; on the whole they were very satisfactory.

We left on June 1, at about 1.30 A.M. on a clear starlit night but with no moon. We had some difficulty at first in groping our way down snow-slides and rocky corners. As soon, however, as we had reached the long, snow-filled valley leading to the pass, we proceeded with little difficulty. About 5 miles from our camp was a summer grazing-ground with huts, where I should have liked to have spent the previous night. The dawn overtook us here, revealing a vast, dreary and featureless landscape of snow. Worse still, clouds appeared and the weather prospects were discouraging. After toiling

up a steep but easy snow slope, we found ourselves at 11.30 A.M. at the foot of the pass. This proved to be a wall of rock 250 ft. high with narrow and precarious ledges. Always awkward and at this time of the year covered with much soft snow, it offered a somewhat disconcerting approach. We went straight up in the snow for some 100 ft. and then turned for over 200 yards along the face of the cliff, cutting steps all the way. There was just room for our feet and no more. The snow was soft, rotten and precarious and, with men not accustomed to snow, our progress was poor. The last 60 ft. lay up an abrupt slope, as steep as any wall. There was no alternative, as elsewhere large corniches of snow stopped all progress. One coolie in particular did splendid work. At first the porters very naturally disliked the idea of working along the ledge, but happily their very light loads, as well as the necessity for going on, finally spurred them on to try. We had no sooner all reached the top of the pass, than a blizzard struck us causing us not to linger.

We descended endlessly but very steeply indeed; it seemed that the pass was worse on this, the N. side, than on the S. We reached the first huts in the Agram valley at about 5 P.M., where a poor night was spent. One of the tents broke with the weight of the snow which fell constantly till 8. A.M. the next day. The coolies were not better off, as the huts were so badly roofed that all the snow came in. The next day we marched down a snow-bound valley till we reached Owir, the chief and highest village of the Arkari valley.

The Sut Qulachi offered us no view. I had time to have a good look in many directions before the snow began to fall. I gave the coolies a goat, some *ghi* (clarified butter) and flour and they had a good feast. They certainly deserved it. Owir was rather a dismal village of thirty houses, so as soon as the weather improved we started up the Arkari valley to its head. I was certainly surprised at the abundant and well-grown trees and brushwood in this valley. There was ample fuel right up to the head and our journey up was easy. We halted at the mouth of the Nuqsan valley which leads to the pass of the same name. Climbing up to it the next day, I was rewarded with a fine view to the E. but unfortunately Tirich Mir, the chief mountain of Chitral, 25,200 ft., though only 14 miles away as the crow flies, was hidden. We saw however the so-called Ghul Lasht Zom with peaks of 22,000 ft., as well as the peak on the left-hand Gazikistan Glacier of about 19,500 ft. The features of this end of the Arkari valley are the two Gazikistan glaciers—the word meaning ‘grassy place’—the upper and lower flowing into the main valley on the left.

Gazikistan itself proved to be a pleasant camping-ground just N. of the lower glacier; it had grass, water and wood, at an elevation of about 12,000 ft. The Lower Gazikistan Glacier is now retreating, but its black and ugly snout blocks the whole valley. The glacier flowed across to the right of the Arkari valley, until forced to turn S. and follow the general trend. At present the path leads over glacier to Gazikistan, but it is also possible to scramble along the ablation

valley now occupied by the main stream from the head of the valley, between the right side and the glacier. The stream from the glacier itself sweeps down from the present living ice, passing on its right under cliffs 80-120 ft. high which were once, years ago, level with the glacier now dwindled and sunk to but a shadow of its former self.

Standing on the old dead ice on the extreme right of the glacier where it struck the right wall of the main valley, the cliff referred to above is seen stretching for nearly a mile. Below are the débris of the glacier with small, glacial lakes and smooth slopes of naked ice. At the head is a beautiful hanging glacier while on the left is a splendid precipice of snow and ice, of snow caps and corniches, forming a long gleaming line of pure white and a truly noble piece of Alpine scenery. The contrast offered between the upper glacier and its black, dreary end is very remarkable.

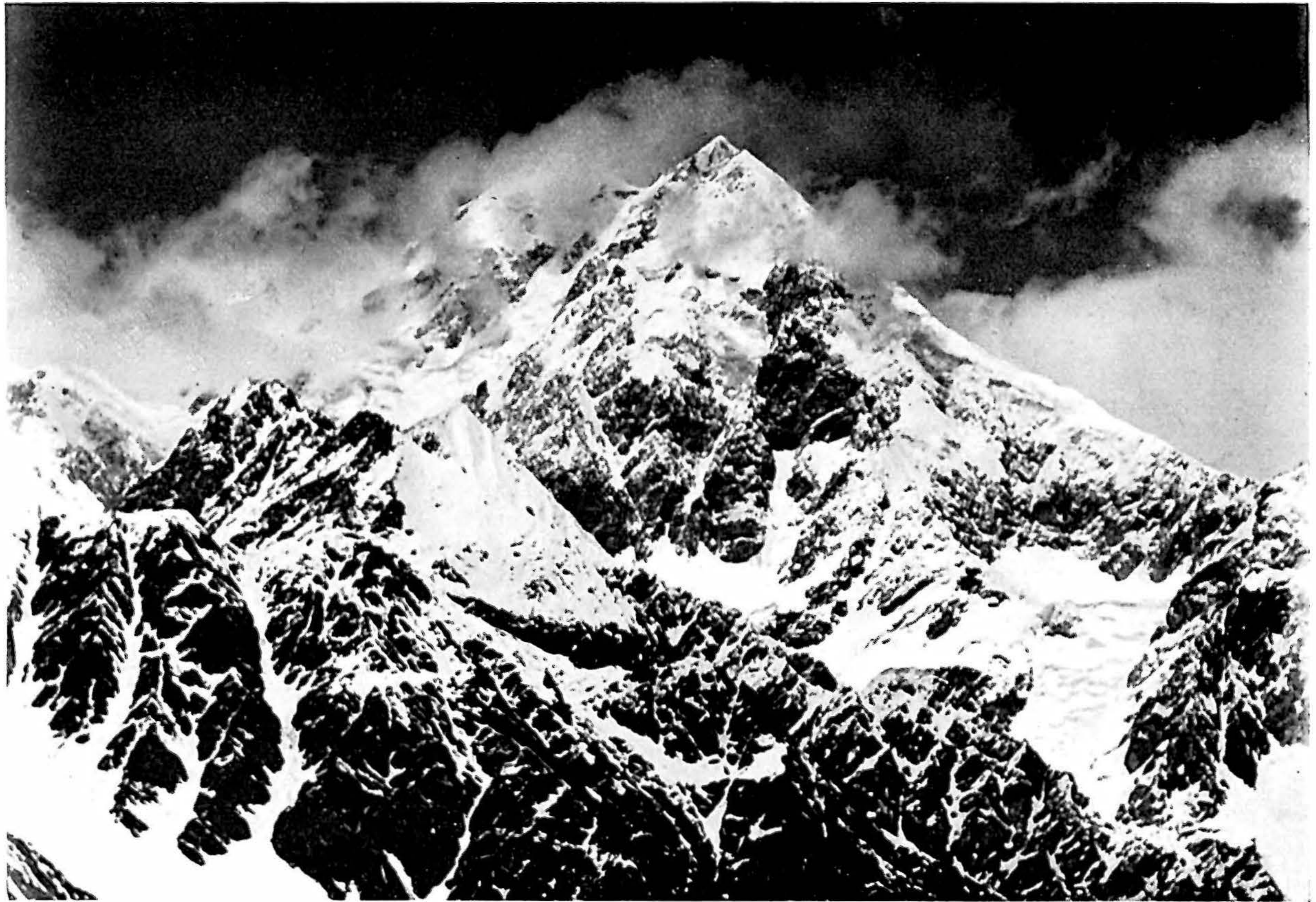
The upper Gazikistan Glacier is not nearly so impressive as its neighbour. It is now also in retreat, ending abruptly in a Chinese wall. Its bed is much narrower than the lower glacier; the slopes on its right are more sloping and carry a good deal of snow, exactly the reverse to the other glacier. The feature of this latter glacier is a twin conical peak, about 19,500 ft. high, to the right, or N., of the snow fields at its head.

On our way down the main valley and about 3 miles before reaching Owir, we halted at Yun, a summer village. Here we went up the Mushtaru Gol to examine the glacier at its head. The valley itself runs E. and W., but the glacier flowing N. and S. forms almost a right angle. We ascended to a considerable height up the Khada Barma, a peak of about 15,000 ft. We hoped to see Tirich Mir, but were again disappointed. We saw, however, the glacier below us, finding it a poor affair and very dessicated. The cliffs at its head were so steep as to give little purchase for the snow; this glacier can only be expected to regain its former vigour by an unusually severe winter.

Descending the main Arkari valley, we went up the parallel one of Ojhor to the E. Here we found ourselves at the head of the valley, right up against the southern end of the Tirich Mir massif. We obtained a very fine view after waiting a day or two. The glacier was retreating, as seems to be the fate of most Chitrali glaciers and, instead of a fine stretch of ice, we saw only a dreary, whitish-grey moraine with much dead ice. The question as to whether Tirich Mir can be climbed is much disputed. From the Ojhor valley, it appears excessively difficult. The height of the mountain is 25,200 ft. but its appearance is unfavourable to the climber. There is so much precipice, hanging glacier and corniche, that no apparent line of approach is offered.

Daulat Shah, a good judge, at once agreed that from the Ojhor side the mountain could not be climbed. His views agree, I believe, with those of members of the Alpine Club who have examined the mountain from this side.

After our departure from Ojhor we left the Lutkuh and this note



*Photo, R. Schomberg.]*

TIRICH MIR FROM A POINT ON THE LEFT OF THE BARM GLACIER ABOVE DONU GHARI.

*[To face p. 128.]*



*Photo, R. Schomberg.]*

VIEW OF THE S. END OF THE TIRICH MIR MASSIF LOOKING UP THE HEAD OF THE OJHOR VALLEY.  
TAKEN FROM 1,000 FT. ABOVE KIYAR VILLAGE.



*Photo, R. Schomberg.]*

THE TWO CENTRE PEAKS OF GHUL LASHT ZOM, 22,000 AND 19,500 FT.





*Photo, R. Schomberg.]*

LOWER GAZIKISTAN GLACIER.

*[To face p. 129.]*

should now appropriately end. We crossed the very easy Kiyar-o-an or Kiyar Pass, 14,200 ft., and, passing through the extensive but rather treeless cultivation of the Owir valley, which should not be confused with the Owir in the Arkari, came to the smaller village of Barm. Here a small stream is fed by two glaciers from Tirich Mir. I went up to a very high point on the left of this valley, almost due E. of that mountain, and was amply repaid for my trouble. I looked down on the main Barm valley and on to its glacier formed by the two tributary ones referred to. From the surface of the valley Tirich Mir rose up straight and abrupt for 10,000 ft. A slight cloud or banner was resting on the brow of the mountain when we first arrived, but I hoped that it would lift. Unfortunately, clouds rapidly rolled up and the entire view was spoiled.

The appearance of the mountain on this side was even more unfavourable to a mountaineer than on the Ojhor. Once again, it was the remarkable rock precipices combined with hanging glaciers that offered deterrent obstacles.

The main Barm Glacier was broad but was also retreating, and had a considerable ablation valley to its left. It has, besides the two small tributary glaciers referred to, five hanging glaciers on the left and a smaller one on its right. Of these five glaciers, two flow into the northern tributary glacier, but the main ice stream receives the others direct on its left; the smaller glacier to the right flows in between the two major tributaries.

There are other minor glaciers of no particular significance but, as a whole, the glacial contributions have failed to maintain the Barm Glacier in its pristine state.

#### UNKNOWN PASSES IN HUNZA, 1934

In North Hunza the last village but one is Sost, a pleasant little place inhabited by Wakhis—Iranians of an old stock—it is well cultivated, with a number of trees bearing good apricots.

In early August 1934 we left this village. Our plan was to reach the Shingshal area, not the village of that name, but the Pamir-i-tang or stream that leads from the Shingshal Pass on the watershed of the Indo-Central-Asiatic mountain system. Major C. J. Morris had already descended the Ghujerab valley, and I hoped to reach the upper part of the same valley by crossing the untraversed passes between it and the Hunza valley.

Leaving Sost we crawled up to the top of a ridge, the Sost-i-sar, a hot march, without shade or water which meant much discomfort to the coolies, on a steady but not very steep gradient. We had two donkeys with us, but when we reached the crest and found that the descent on the other side was down a precipitous 'chimney,' the owners of the animals were in a dilemma. The loads had to be removed. One man held the head of the animal, the other man the tail, and the reluctant beasts were shoved and dragged over the awkward

place. We had hoped to reach Gur-i-dur, the summer village and pasture, that night, but the track was too bad and it would have been unfair to the men to ask them to push on. Between us and the village were two parallel ridges or spurs, forming the sides of the narrow, steep, lateral *nalas* that led down into the main valley, and which, in many respects insignificant features, always gave trouble. In the Karakoram particularly and, above all, in Hunza, any divergence from the beaten track entails laborious ascents and descents of these lateral valleys. They may be small in size but they are prodigious obstacles nevertheless.

We found Gur-i-dur a pleasant enough place, and we camped the next day as far as we could up the valley on a level grassy spot with the commoner Alpine flowers growing and a sea of stone all round. Our climb to the pass began next day. The track itself, usually invisible, ran up the bed of the valley and later over a shale slope on the right. It was a steady pull all the way, but nowhere precipitous except for the final hundred yards. The coolies felt it, while we ourselves panted and puffed a great deal.

On our way up, we passed on our right a fair-sized glacier and above this, near the head of the pass, was a smaller one. The actual crest of the pass was a 'saddle' glacier from a massif, the joint property of the Gur-i-dur and the valley we were entering. The height of the pass was 17,000 ft.

It was bitterly cold on the pass, with squalls of driving sleet, hail and whirling mists. These would now and again clear away and the sun would come out, but it invariably clouded over again. We found ourselves just below the head of a narrow valley which, after its upper *nalas* had joined, was only half a mile wide. Below us was a smooth glacier and facing us was a fine solitary peak to the S. or right of which was another 'saddle' glacier which had flowed over into the opposite or S.E. valley. It had taken us 6 hours to reach the crest of the pass, and as we peered down we could see no sign of even the most makeshift camping ground.

We descended very steeply finding that the whole valley, 7 miles long, consisted, except for the last mile, of a glacier stretching from one side of the glen to the other. This glacier, covered with a thick layer of brown stone and gravel, had two ridges cutting the surface into three depressions or troughs. The moraine was thick and we saw little ice except, when by inadvertence, we slipped where the layer of earth or stone was thin. This nameless valley was surprisingly arid and desolate. The glaciers at its head were not very significant, while the main glacier was clearly in an advanced state of dessication. At last, falling almost headlong so steep was the gradient, we reached the considerable valley of the Unakin-i-dur, which flows into the Ghujerab. We camped amid abundant juniper at its edge at a height of 12,385 ft. The glacier stream by the camp was almost undrinkable, being full of a blue-grey sediment and it was not until the following day that the water cleared.

Our object was ultimately to reach the Ghujerab, but higher up than

if we were to follow down the Unakin stream. The latter joined the Ghujerab where it flowed through a defile, and our onward journey would be very difficult if not impossible. We decided therefore to go up the Unakin valley to its end and trust to finding a pass at its head. An unclimbable or impassable hillside is almost unknown to the men of Hunza, especially if it is clean rock undefiled by snow or ice. There he is at home. We continued, therefore, up the valley for 6 or 7 miles, as far as the limit of fuel. After 9 arduous hours the previous day, the coolies were tired; and we had, too, to explore the route which led over a formidable obstacle to the left side of the Ghujerab valley.

The Unakin itself was easy enough. Its stream flowed in an ample bed: its sides were open and the floor was almost level in the lower part. After an easy march we found a charming site and camped by a spring amid the tamarisk. The weather, too, had improved by now and the view up the valley was fine.

Our only problem was to find our way out of the valley that would not be too far for our men. We sent three men to look for a pass but they made a muddle of the job. They found a way all right, but it was neither the best nor the easiest. Fortunately for us, Daulat Shah had gone to a great height on the left of the valley to shoot some ram chikor, or Himalayan snowcock. He had no luck, but he spied a narrow ravine which his mountaineering instinct told him was the way up to the pass.

After two nights in our pleasant camp we ascended the right of the valley till we reached the glacier at the head. This glacier was retreating. I had already been up to the head of the Unakin, and found that it was a long ridge of snow and névé with the glacier below. On the right, N.W., of this ridge was a peak height 20,786 ft. and to the right and westward again was the conspicuous peak height 19,741 ft.

This latter peak gave no help to the main glacier. No more did the other glaciers in the valley, of which there were two major ones, both on the left facing N. and high above the valley bed. They were drained by narrow nalas or ravines, and their ice was far removed from the main glacier. The latter had, in 1934, retreated some 600 yards only, and was 4 to 5 miles in length. After traversing the right of this glacier we reached the narrow approach to the pass. The gorge was pretty with a stream of clear water cascading down. Happily, too, it was not really difficult. The coolies had to be helped but they managed it without an accident. After a mile we emerged on open slopes of shale and gravel, and after a further very stiff climb over these we camped below the pass at a height of about (?) 17,000 ft. There was no fuel, but a little stream of good water, while the shale was soft enough for us to level the ground for the tents. The day we spent below the pass was brilliant but it clouded over later with clouds (alto-cumulus) rolling up from the S. Immediately above us, not half a mile away to the E., was the isolated massif of peak 19,741 ft. We were so near and so high up that this noble mass was much less impressive than from a distance. We could see the whole of the Unakin-i-dur with its

curious red stone pinnacles and the two large, isolated glaciers already mentioned.

Although it was fine at 2.30 A.M. on the morning of our ascent from our camp to the pass, it had clouded over by 5.30. We first crossed a mound of black, soft shale and then up a narrow ablation valley between the edge of the glacier from peak 19,741 ft. and the reddish-brown gravel on the side of the valley. This glacier was a very wide smooth sheet of ice flowing down from the peak; the drainage found its way down the gorge up which we had come. Two men who had gone back to collect yak-dung for the camp fire, had great difficulty in coming up the ravine on account of the rise in the torrent. After a mile by the side of the glacier, we turned up a very narrow nala with reddish sides and patches of snow. The going was good but steep, we just plodded up, gasping and puffing, until,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  hours from camp, we reached the top of the pass. On the left or N. of the pass was a huge rock finger-like pinnacle and below, or to the W. of it, were three smaller ones. The large solitary pinnacle marks the exact site of the pass. The pass itself was a knife edge running almost due N. and S., about  $10^\circ$  E. of N. Below us was the Sho-sho-in (or wild Rose) nala flowing into the Ghujerab.

I cannot pretend that the unknown land on which we gazed was a cheerful one. On our left was a jutting spur of shining black shale. On our right was a wide open space filled with a saddle glacier from peak 19,741 ft. The glacier had tried to squeeze itself down the bottle neck of the narrow Sho-sho-in and, not succeeding in its efforts, had piled itself up in parallel ridges of ice at right angles to the side of the valley. Part of this ice was black and rotten, and all of it was nasty. The appearance of the Sho-sho-in was so uninviting that we sent two men to find a way across the great, almost flat expanse of glacier below us on our immediate right. This meant crossing another pass at the head of the Sho-sho-in, but anything seemed better than struggling down the narrow valley, full of crevasses and rocks, to the Ghujerab where, on arrival, we might find ourselves unable to ascend or descend that difficult valley.

It took the coolies  $4\frac{1}{2}$  hours to reach the top of the pass, which was 18,900 ft. high. By the time that the coolies had arrived, our two pioneers had returned and reported that there was a way with an easy descent to an uninhabited valley on the other side of the far crest which, as I have explained, was the real head of the Sho-sho-in. We took one of the two men, a very experienced man, Balti by name, who had already been with us earlier in the season and left the other, Abdulla, to break the news to the coolies that instead of a long and easy descent they would have to cross the far ridge.

We first of all descended steeply for over 1000 ft., over soft shale—the coolies subsequently raced down shouting—and embarked on the glacier, which was not difficult. There were a few crevasses but generally the route was easy enough. On our right lay the precipitous hanging glaciers of peak 19,741 ft., a magnificent wall of gleaming ice

and snow. It took us 2 hours to reach the second pass which proved to be on the watershed between the Sho-sho-in and the Spe Syngo valley. The height was 19,600 ft., so it was not to be wondered at that I found myself crawling very slowly up it; I noticed that even Daulat and Balti sat down frequently imploring me to take a breather. The weather unfortunately was rather poor. The sky was overcast and the lower valleys were slightly hazy, due to the remains of a dust storm in the Gilgit valley. The view could never have been, as a matter of fact, really fine, so we were slightly consoled.

From the first pass we saw the Unakin peaks and glaciers, but we were so high up that the bigger mountains, *e.g.* Karun Koh, 22,890 ft., showed only their heads above the nearer peaks. We had glimpses of the summits of many, but all the view was unsatisfactory.

From the second pass we were deprived of a much finer and more extensive view over the Shingshal peaks. The vista here was far wider as the Spe Syngo valley lay open before us, not a cramped and unobtrusive valley but a wide one with the wall of peaks that formed its right side stretching before us. Beyond this rampart was a serried mass of high summits, but the entire prospect was marred by dark clouds and a slight haze. The name of the first pass, out of the Unakin, was the Sho-sho-in: that out of the Sho-sho-in, the second pass, is called the Spe Syngo. I questioned this nomenclature, but the local men were quite certain about it. I do not believe that either pass had ever before been trodden by man, but the names were given on the principle that the passes at the heads of the several valleys should bear the name of the valley concerned. I am quite sure that the names were bestowed on the day that we crossed the passes, as no native had ever dreamed that there was a way over.

We descended from the Spe Syngo pass very easily over soft shale. At last, very tired, we camped about 4 P.M. on a grassy patch close to the main glacier in the Spe Syngo valley. This was not a very happy choice as there was no fuel, so we moved a few miles further down the next day to Spe Syngo Wa Dest, or 'the level place in the Spe Syngo valley': and camped at a height of 13,460 ft. Here were huts for the coolies, fuel to cook with and a good deal of primitive comfort. The valley was uninhabited. Every two years or so the villagers from Shingshal come here. The place was full of their yaks who pursued our small dog ferociously and persistently, but as their droppings provided valuable fuel we thought their behaviour pardonable. We crossed to the left of the valley by a bridge, descended easily almost to the mouth of the valley, forded the stream, and found ourselves at last on the left of the Upper Ghujerab after a 9 days' journey by a wholly new and unknown route.