



# Himalaya Shuttlecock

HANS  
KOPP



*Photo: Fosco Maraini*

The prison wall—northwards lay the hope of freedom

HANS KOPP

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HIMALAYA  
SHUTTLECOCK

*Translated from the German by*

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*London*

HUTCHINSON

HUTCHINSON & CO. (*Publishers*) LTD  
*178-202 Great Portland Street, London, W.1*

London Melbourne Sydney  
Auckland Bombay Toronto  
Johannesburg New York



*First published in Great Britain 1957*

*(“Sechsmal über den Himalaya”, first published  
in 1955 by Verlagsanstalt Hermann Klemm,  
Freiburg im Breisgau.)*

*Set in ten point Times Roman,  
two point leaded, and printed in Great Britain  
by The Anchor Press, Ltd.,  
Tiptree, Essex*

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*Photographs not otherwise acknowledged are the Author's own*



**“There are various ways of transliterating Tibetan names. In this book the form *JONG* has been used in preference to *DZONG*.”**





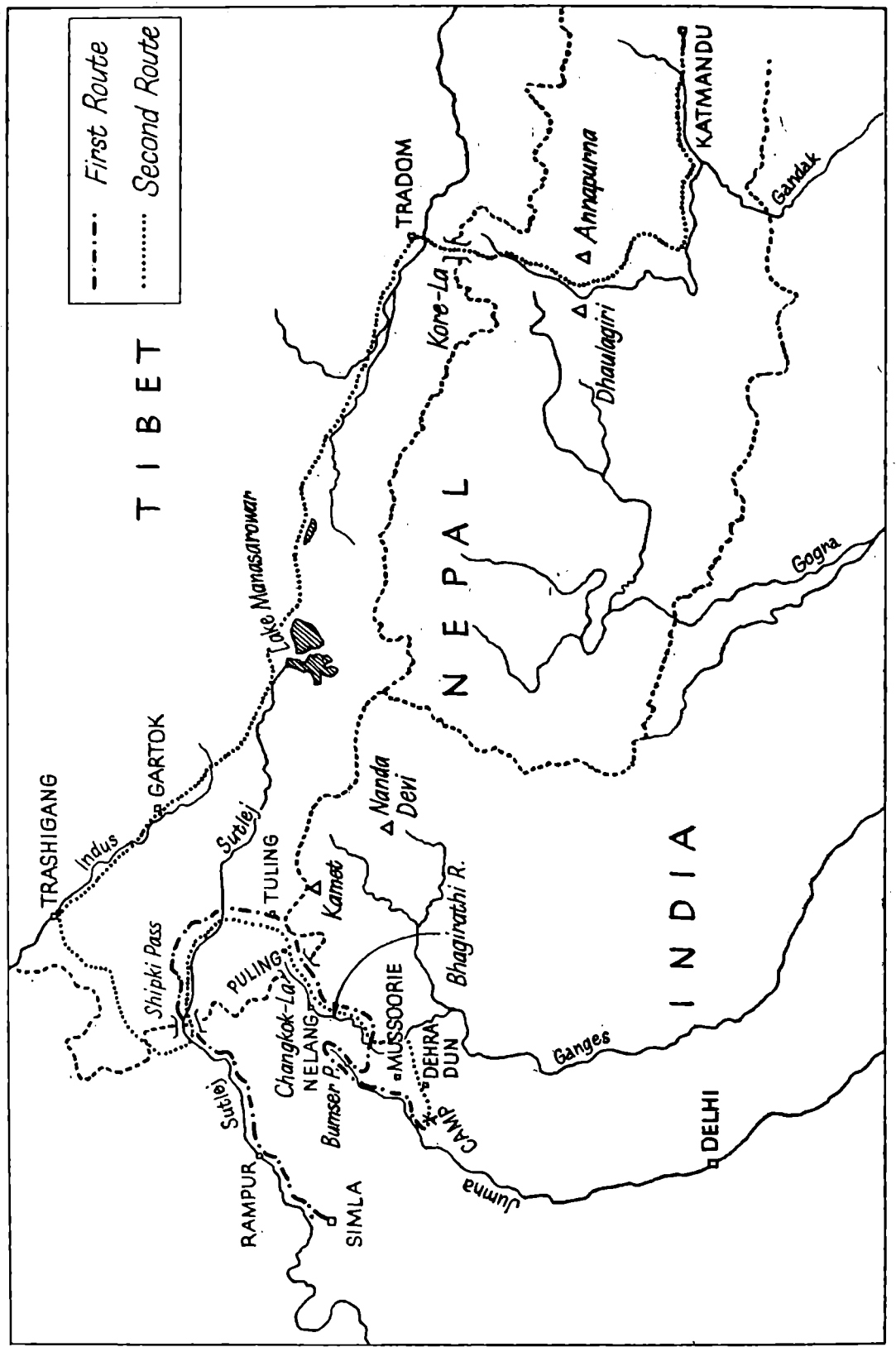
# PART ONE

- - - - First Route  
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T I B E T

N E P A L

I N D I A



# I

ALL my life I have prized freedom more than anything else. Even as a child I had a good idea of its importance, and was really happy only when I could go my own way and please myself what I did. I dodged all attempts at constraint, and when forced to do anything I tried to get out of it. As long as I can remember, I was always moved by a desire for adventure and had an indomitable longing to be independent ; and these feelings have governed my life ever since.

The environment in which I spent my childhood played a large part in developing this attitude. I was born in the bush country of South-West Africa ; my father was an engineer on the Otavi railway. I was still a child when the First World War broke out, but I remember that it brought trouble to the Black Continent, as it did elsewhere. Our family had the bitter experience of being broken up ; we suffered hunger and want, and all but died of thirst in the bush. Wherever we went we found need and insecurity. The natives broke out into open revolt. And so, even as a small child, I was driven out of the peace and safety of my parents' home into a life of turmoil and danger. The effect of these experiences did not fade as conditions slowly returned to normal. Possibly I had come to know the delight of adventure and free existence too early to find it easy to submit to the yoke of compulsion and obligation. In any case, the small school which I attended in the little town of Karibib did not seem very promising to me. I played truant whenever I could, preferring to sit in some hide-out and try the taste of the natives' pipes and tobacco, or alarming the district with my dangerous games of trappers, Red Indians, and Hereros. Once, after I had been given some punishment which I thoroughly deserved, I went so far as to run away, and lived for three months with the Ovambo people in the African bush.

Thus the days passed adventurously and swiftly, and, like all young people in that happy and fundamentally easy age, I, too, believed that the transient was really permanent. Unfortunately, the year 1919 put an abrupt end to everything, including my wonderful liberty : my father was expelled from the country and had to go back to Germany. In the meantime our family had been reduced considerably, for we left my mother and younger sister lying in the

local churchyard. So I found the new life in our new home town of Berlin particularly hard to bear. I felt forsaken and imprisoned: I suffered under the constraint and conventions of life, and I could not get on with the people; they were strangers and I couldn't understand them, any more than they could understand me. True, my professional training as an engineer, including evening school and technical courses, brought me new and interesting activities; but nothing could make up for the loss of my freedom. I could not suppress my longing for wide-open spaces, and in secret I matured a plan to set off into the unknown at the earliest possible opportunity. With the first money I earned I bought a motor-cycle and sidecar, and one fine autumn day, without a word of farewell, I set off southward, into the great world. This was the prelude to many years of roaming and adventure in the course of following my profession. I wandered through many European and non-European countries and greatly widened my knowledge.

At the outbreak of the Second World War I was in the Middle East, thirty miles outside Baghdad, working on a construction site in the heart of the desert; but the war put a sudden end to my comparatively carefree and above all unfettered life. Soon afterward I was taken by way of Basra and Ahmadnagar to a British internment camp not far from Dehra Dun at the foot of the Himalayas, in India; there I was held prisoner together with many more of my fellow-countrymen.

## 2

SO NOW I was behind barbed wire, and had to adjust myself to my new situation as a prisoner. Generally speaking, we had good and humane treatment; the British officers especially were loyal and correct in their attitude. The diet was generous; we had our own kitchen, butchery and bakery. We also had a tailors' shop, a laundry, and shoe-repairing shop at our service. We formed a large orchestra which enjoyed great popularity wherever it performed; we staged plays, and we were regularly given film shows. Many of us practised all kinds of sports with the object of keeping ourselves physically fit; I joined a wrestling group, and the training was to prove useful in more than one respect. Every one of us took up some work, some kind of occupation, if only in order to earn a little extra cash. We were even allowed to go on excursions and to move

about outside the camp as we wished ; but we were always put on parole and had to return by a previously stated time. A well-equipped hospital and dental clinic, provided with first-rate medical supplies and run by German specialists in tropical diseases, were available. So we appeared to lack very little : only our freedom.

We lived in straw-thatched barracks which in their layout were reminiscent of a Friesian village. Forty men occupied each barrack, and we curtained them off into smaller rooms, each accommodating eight men. Our close association in a very confined space led to our swiftly getting to know one another all too intimately. The enforced, monotonous community life poisoned the atmosphere, played on our nerves, and at times grew quite unbearable. And I had got to spend precious years in this slowly stifling milieu : I, who had always fought to keep my personal freedom, even though it meant sacrifice !

Naturally enough, as the days and weeks passed I grew more and more rancorous and rebellious ; my desire grew stronger and stronger to escape from this repellent internment-camp existence. Whenever I went on excursions with my comrades, striking through the dense jungle, watching rare animals living in freedom, or climbing the nearer spurs of the Himalayas, that other stupid, irresponsible, meaningless existence and the crushing restrictions of the barracks seemed quite unreal. As though in a dream I would rest in some beautiful spot, gazing at the mighty mountain chain, at the peaks with their dazzling, everlasting snows ; and I succumbed more and more to the call of their gigantic power and majesty, to their promise of a free life to be found in the mysterious and little-known land of Tibet, which lay on their farther side. But could I ever succeed in getting there ? I had read of the incredible difficulties and dangers which even fully equipped expeditions had encountered. It appeared that strangers were not welcome in that country and might suffer expulsion at any moment. So how could I, on my own, without mountaineering experience, without the requisite equipment, without carriers, pack animals, and weapons—how could I venture to cross those gigantic mountains and wander through Tibet ? For that matter, how could I even escape from the strongly guarded camp ? These questions tormented me : I brooded over them day and night, and no longer had any rest ; the idea of escape had taken possession of me and would not be denied.

I wandered round and round the camp, watched the guards and sentries, took note of the times at which they were relieved.

I examined the barbed wire, and studied every thinkable means of breaking out. But in the end I concluded that my only hope of winning my way to freedom was by cunning.

As I considered all the possibilities I was struck by the regularity with which the carts which carried dung out of the camp arrived and departed. I noticed that the guards never halted them ; probably they thought it beneath their dignity to bother about them, for the drivers were sweepers and belonged to the very lowest caste in India.

Gradually I thought out the details of a daring plan to hide under the load of one of these carts and thus be carried out of the camp and escape. I secretly set to work to make preparations. My greatest need was a good comrade with whom I could share the loneliness of the journey, someone who was ready to participate with me in the joy and the danger of freedom. I decided that my comrade must be a man both intrepid and physically strong, and selected Edmund Krämer, who in those days was well known in the Middle East and Asia for his prowess as a wrestler. He, too, had been interned in the camp at Dehra Dun. He immediately fell in with my plan, for, like me, he was fed up with internment and he liked adventure. We set to work secretly to gather equipment together. Unfortunately, we had not had enough experience nor did we know sufficient about the conditions we could expect to be able to discriminate between things necessary and superfluous. As the result we accumulated a lot of ballast and later on had to go without a great deal which we desperately needed. Our chief aim was to acquire as large a store of long-keeping food as possible. The bakery supplied us with excellent biscuits and lumps of glucose, which we put in a petrol can and crushed quite small. In addition we 'organized' an enormous side of bacon, two lengths of hard sausage, ten pounds of sugar, fifteen pounds of dripping, grape-sugar, cheese and tea in large quantities. And—one never knew whether they might be useful—a full twenty-two pounds of surgical instruments and medical goods, including Epsom salts and aspirin. The mountaineers Schmaderer and Paidar, who had brought all their equipment with them into the camp, gave us a fifty-foot length of climbing rope, a storm-tent, two woollen blankets, five pairs of woollen socks, mitts, and snow-glasses. Nor did we forget a change of under-clothes and light tennis shoes. To provide for all eventualities we packed a fishing net, not to mention such small items as frying-pan, saucepans, water flasks, and torches, with spare batteries. Our camp smith gave us two hand-hammered lance-heads for weapons ;

we fastened them to the ends of bamboo poles and they formed our sole means of defence. As crown to all our endeavours Peter Aufschnaiter, one of the most experienced experts on the Himalayas, gave us a very detailed map of the State of Garhwal, the most northern part of India, and Western Tibet. To carry all these treasures we were made extra large rucksacks, which were capacious enough to hold our entire stock. Now we had obtained all the most important requisites, and our next task was to make our getaway.

It was obvious that we could not get out without the help of others. So we cautiously took our closest friends into our confidence and, as we had expected, had their promise of active and effective support. But most important of all, we had to select a suitable cart and prepare it in advance. We soon decided on one and, some days beforehand, we unobtrusively sawed a small strip out of the front so that we could see out and get fresh air. We got the driver to do as we wanted by giving him presents every day.

### 3

WE FIXED on 30 April, 1943, as the day of our escape, and by promising the driver special gifts we persuaded him to make an extra journey at midday. We made out that the camp commandant had severely censured the filthy state of the goat-stalls and had ordered that they were to be cleaned up immediately. Besides carrying out the dung, the driver was also to bring back some bushes which we had got ready outside the camp during our last excursion, with the object of adding them to the camp garden.

Everything went perfectly. In expectation of the promised gifts, of which the most attractive were a flask of schnapps and a pair of trousers, the driver turned up punctually with his empty cart. We lay as still as mice, with our rucksacks beside us, in the goat-stall. The comrade who was helping us at this end took the driver round a corner, handed him the coveted trousers and talked to him about all sorts of things while he plied him with liquor. He impressed on him again and again the task he had to perform. The man nodded thoughtfully and promised faithfully to take out the dung and to load the cart with the shrubs exactly as he had been instructed.

Meanwhile Krämer and I were hurriedly preparing the cart. We put in a bottom layer of dung and spread fresh straw over it. Then we climbed inside, our faces pressed hard into handkerchiefs

soaked in disinfectant to counteract the filthy stink. Other comrades spread a further layer of straw on top of us, and then more goat dung was thrown in. By now our driver was in such a jovial mood that he didn't want to drive away. But when our comrades told him the guards would punish him because he was drunk he set off reluctantly, driving very slowly; the cart with the two of us inside rolled along the camp road towards the entrance gate. Our assistants escorted it for a short distance, advising the driver very emphatically to drive extra quick so that the guard would not notice the state he was in. They also reminded him once more about the shrubs. We drew nearer and nearer to the entrance, and had just reached the gate when the soldier on guard ordered our driver to halt. That was so very unusual that our hearts stopped beating. Had someone betrayed us after all? But the guard only ordered him to load some stones on to his cart and take them with him. The man climbed down uncertainly and piled the stones on top of the dung. That, of course, made things much worse for us. Our nerves were strained to breaking point; but we held out, until the last stone was put in the cart and the man drove on.

Some three hundred yards along the road was an Italian internment camp, and fate so arranged matters that just as we were passing it a dung-cart drove out of the gate and lumbered along ahead of us towards the tip. The unprogrammed advent of this idiotic cart formed a serious threat to our plan. We hurriedly considered every conceivable possibility of our getting out of the cart unobserved. To add to our troubles our tipsy driver began to sing at the top of his voice and to carry on a shouted conversation with his companion in front. He drove along more and more slowly, but finally, after several terrible minutes which seemed like hours, we arrived, all but suffocated, at a turn in the road where two of our friends, who had the day outside the camp on an excursion, were waiting ready to help. Berif, known as Nepomuk, stopped the cart and ordered the driver to go with him to load up the bushes lying near by. But the man was now in a state of drunken merriment, and instead of doing as he was told he set off after his fellow in front. Nepomuk energetically seized the buffalo by the rein, pulled it round, gave the driver some cigarettes, and finally got him to climb down and go off with him. Nepomuk could well imagine what we were feeling like under that stinking load.

Meanwhile our second assistant, Hettberg, was crouching in some bushes beside the road, at a point where it bent almost at



right angles. The military often drove along that road, and Hettberg's task was to watch and give us the signal that all was clear. In our stifling lair we were suffering the torments of hell ; under the straw we sweated all over. The stench all but choked us. We waited and waited, holding our breath ; but nothing happened ; we heard no whistle. Through the small chink we had made in the front we could see the other cart ahead of us. It had come to a stop, and stuck there as though rooted to the ground. Presumably its driver had decided to wait for his merry companion. Precious time was being lost. We trembled with agitation. At last the other man found the wait too long ; he slowly set off again. And at that moment the longed-for whistle sounded. We swiftly struggled out of the dung, and were just about to stand right up when those damned stones began to roll off and fall to the road with a loud crash. We hurriedly seized our rucksacks, heaved ourselves up and . . . found ourselves staring into the startled face of our driver, who had come back to see what was making all the noise. But now nothing mattered ; there was no turning back for us. We sprang out stiffly after our heavy rucksacks and ran with them to a young plantation of trees, to put them down for a moment and wait on events. We lay concealed in the jungle so long as there was any danger of the alarm being sounded in the camp. But when evening came on and all was still and quiet we crept out of our lair, loaded the rucksacks on to each other's back, for they weighed a good seventy-six pounds apiece, and began our march to freedom.

#### 4

THE seven-mile walk to the foot of the Padrash, the nearest spur of the Himalayas, was a trying experience. Our luggage was far too heavy, and it began to weigh us down. The straps cut into our flesh, and more than once we were tempted to throw away some of our equipment. But as we had no idea what we could most easily dispense with we told ourselves that all our labour and pain was very little compared with freedom ; we gritted our teeth and kept on, panting and gasping as we went. After several hours of agony we safely reached the River Suarna at the foot of the Padrash. Now we began an arduous climb. But we did not get far. We had gone only some two hundred yards when we missed our way in the jungle and quickly realized that we were hopelessly lost. We threw

the baggage down in a clearing and set out to look for the narrow track. When, half an hour later, we turned back to collect our packs, it was night, and pitch dark. With the aid of a torch we got back to our starting point, but fell back in alarm as a full-grown panther suddenly emerged in the beam of light. He was squatting down by our packs ; at the sight of us he made one dive and with a violent bound vanished abruptly into the night of the virgin jungle. In all probability he was as frightened as we were. But we gladly fixed our lance-heads to the bamboo sticks, to have rather more protection against similar surprises. Then once more we began to climb the mountain.

As soon as the grey morning broke we took to the jungle and prepared a hide-out for the day. We pitched our camp beside a small brook, but we avoided lighting a fire, and only stretched ourselves out on the ground, with our poles and packs beside us ready to be snatched up. When evening fell we renewed the climb, and by nightfall we had reached the summit of the Padrash, where we took shelter under some cliffs. That night we had the impression that the jungle drums, which the natives have used from time immemorial to signal from village to village, were louder and more menacing than usual.

In the early morning we took out our field-glasses and stood with perfect composure gazing down at the camp far below us, with the sun just beginning to light it up. Now for the first time we had the sudden, overwhelming realization that we were free. About midday we were having a drink of tea when we saw a man climbing the mountain with long, even strides. As he drew nearer, by the hat he was wearing we recognized him as a fellow prisoner, Peter Aufschnaiter, who was just setting out on an excursion. He was highly astonished to find us sitting there drinking tea, but he was delighted too, and sat down with us to tell the latest news from the camp. Our flight had not been discovered until the roll-call next morning. Fortunately the British had not decided to place any restrictions on the freedom of movement of the other prisoners. We were glad of this, for now we need not worry any more about the possible consequences to those left behind. Then Aufschnaiter listened closely to our story. He laughed his head off when we told him of our adventure with the dung-cart. He would have been very glad to join us in our flight, but he was on parole ; and in any case he was already making his own plans. So we took a warm farewell of one another.

As the evening deepened we continued our march through a district already known to us from our excursions. But farther down the valley, along the Jumna River, it grew damnably difficult to make our way through the jungle. Here the terrain was unknown; the night was perceptibly colder, and the weight of our baggage hindered our progress. Then the moon dropped down behind the mountains, and we could hardly see the way; it had already been difficult enough to follow, but now we groped through the darkness like blind men. We avoided using our torches. I grew very cold, and in order to get warm I pulled my track-suit trousers over my best treasured breeches to protect them. We could not see a thing, and as I went on in front I suddenly stepped into space, slipped, and slid over a fifty-foot cliff. Fortunately I was able to break my fall a little, otherwise I would have been smashed up at the foot. But as I had to use my bottom as a brake I landed on a small ledge, badly grazed and half stunned with the violent descent.

"Hanne, Hanne, has anything happened to you?" I heard Krämer's anxious voice above me. As I was silent, for I had momentarily lost my breath, he called still more anxiously: "Hanne, don't play about! This is only the start!"

After I had collected my five senses I told him what had happened and how I was placed, to which he retorted in obvious relief: "Rubbish! A few grazes! Where's the rucksack?" With some difficulty he managed to climb down and get at me from one side. We found the rucksack too, after a search; it had lodged in a bush. We considered ourselves fortunate when we reached the top again, though I looked a pitiable sight. My breeches were in ribbons, and the saucepan and tea-kettle were badly dented. Krämer set to work to treat my grazes with iodine. "Keep smiling, Hanne!" he told me as he worked. "Take no notice of it." With a smarting backside I dragged along after my comrade. The path ran downward. Bushes which we could not properly discern in the darkness scourged us with their branches, and tall nettles stung our faces, necks, and hands. We were more than glad when at last we reached a flat stretch of grassland.

My backside was in a sorry state, and energetic treatment with ointment brought very little improvement. But we dared not let this mishap hold us up. Every mile we put behind us increased our chances of success. The moon was high in the sky when, weary and exhausted, we reached the suspension bridge over the Jumna River. Here we lay in concealment for a while, as there was a danger

that guards had been posted on the bridge. We felt very sure that the next hill station was already mobilized, especially as the drum signals had not ceased once during the last two nights. After spending some time tensely watching we decided to risk stealing across the bridge in our socks. We passed the guard-house at a swift run and breathed more easily when we had put the danger zone behind us. Now we followed the only signpost that enabled us to get our bearings: the River Jumna, which rises in the Himalayas a little on the Indian side of the Tibetan frontier.

Next evening Krämer, who now felt quite safe, proposed: "We'll try to catch a good fat fish; I feel like trying out my painfully acquired skill as a fisherman. And besides, I'm frightfully hungry." We drew out our large Indian net, which was weighted with pieces of lead, and folded it in accordance with all the rules for making a professional cast. Unfortunately, our first attempts were unsuccessful, for the net hooked around a boulder in the stream. We did not want to abandon it, so I roped myself to Krämer and shuffled unsteadily into the ice-cold water. I managed to free the net, but as I stepped back on to the bank three native fishermen unexpectedly appeared, staring in astonishment at our pale faces. In broken Hindi we informed them that we were from Mussoorie and had come to fish in the Jumna. That was a credible enough story, for many foreigners lived at Mussoorie. We exchanged some cigarettes for a splendid fish, got a fire going at once, and had a good feast on the first hot food we had had since our escape. Our spirits rose again, we felt happy to be free, and we went on our way feeling stronger. We wandered along all night beside the river. In the early morning, on a small island we discovered a flock of birds with unusually brilliant plumage, among them birds of paradise with magnificently iridescent tail feathers. We spent the day in an empty cow-shed. In the evening we set off again, and during the fifth forced night march we came to another bridge, at the village of Jumnachatti.

Our good fortune so far had made us rather too confident, and we thoughtlessly walked across the bridge about nine in the evening without taking our usual precautions. We had to pay for the error, for on the farther side two policemen suddenly stepped out to bar our way. We were seriously alarmed, and we felt strongly tempted to deal with this ticklish situation by resorting to our wrestling and boxing experience. But fortunately we kept our self-control and adjusted ourselves to the situation. Of course we had no papers to show, so they made us go with them to a *dharmasala*, or pilgrims'

inn. Here we resorted to a subtle diversionary manoeuvre. We at once opened an attack with a generous distribution of medicines, which in this land of innumerable ailments is always an effective trick. The people thronged around us, and during the distribution we managed to exchange a small gold cross for ready money, though we lost considerably on the transaction. Then we boldly invited the policemen to come and have a drink in the schnapps distillery which was close to the *dharmasala*, and they readily went with us. And the 'knock me down' and 'kill me quick', as we immediately christened the fearful stuff, promptly had the desired effect. That evening, as we sat in our room we heard the guards lying outside our door struggling desperately to keep awake by monotonously humming. But we energetically shouted "Shut up!" at them, and in a few minutes they were sound asleep. We lay very quiet, and not till midnight did we venture to steal out in our socks, carrying our packs.

This adventure showed us one thing clearly: if we wished to avoid similar difficulties in future we must be far more cautious in approaching bridges and main roads. So we avoided the frequented pilgrims' road to Jumnotri and made our way to Kharsan, with the object of taking a circuitous route across the Bumser Pass to the little village of Sukki on the Upper Ganges. Shortly before we turned off the high road we impudently went into a *dharmasala*, for we still had need of money to buy warm quilts and provisions. We found the inn full of both rich and very poor pilgrims journeying to Jumnotri, the headwaters of the Jumna, which is the second most sacred river of India. To encourage them to buy we took out some sparkling, coloured Gablonz artificial gems, and said they were genuine precious stones. We sold some for a total of a hundred rupees, which we immediately turned into padded cotton quilts, rice, potatoes, onions, and flour. Now we were splendidly set up for our further journey to the Bhagirathi valley. About two in the morning, when everybody was sound asleep, we noiselessly crept out of the inn and made off eastward, leaving no trace behind.

But this deviation from our course and down side roads which we knew only from the map was a mistake which later was to threaten us with the loss of our liberty. We turned off in the direction of Bhagirathi, on the Upper Ganges, and moved along the foot of the Bandar Punch (20,000 feet). In the late afternoon we made a halt at the last village before we passed into the unpopulated wilderness. To avoid arousing suspicion we gave ourselves out to

be doctors, which was quite feasible, for we still looked tolerably respectable. We spread out our medical treasures over a clean towel, and soon saw that we were making an impression: the boxes, phials and ampules, the stethoscope, dental forceps, scissors, needles, and hypodermic syringe were only too convincing. An empty house was put at our disposal for surgery and lodging, but we did not use the inner rooms and for security reasons camped out in our tent on the verandah. Our belongings lay close at hand, all ready to be snatched up.

The inhabitants began to arrive early in the morning and we played our farce. I had to put across the broadest of hoaxes, and to do it with an air of deadly seriousness. Our success was amazing, but it was obvious that if we went on distributing our stock of medicines so lavishly we should soon be left with nothing. And as not one of the patients made any attempt to repay our labours with money or gifts in kind, we finally decided to pack up. In any case it was high time to stop, for the fearful crush around us made us nervous: the people were picking up and examining everything, and as we could not watch everything at once there was a danger that articles would vanish unnoticed. Untroubled by the threatening air with which they received our decision, we packed our wares and retired into the tent, ready for anything. There could be no thought of sleep; we rested for only a short time, always on the alert, the lances at our side. To crown matters the drums began to beat once more. The news was being passed on, and we had good reason to think it concerned us. We decided to get away at once.

We got away without being seen during the night. I had already discussed the possibilities of various routes with the inhabitants during the day, and had been warned against traversing the Bumser pass, as it was deep in snow. But as that was the only way we could safely reach the Bhagirathi River we had to dare the impossible. We marched for two hours in the direction of the Bandar Punch, and slept splendidly in the jungle till morning. But then the bitter cold drove us out of our tent. The view the mountain presented in the early light was quite terrifying, and it made us conscious once again of all the magnitude and danger of our undertaking. It rose up to heaven before us in majestic might, and made us realize what we were facing in attempting to cross the Himalayas. But the decision had been taken, and each of us endeavoured to conceal the anxiety which disturbed him in the quiet presence of this giant of nature. At any rate, the solitude and desolation of the scene

justified us in slackening our safety precautions. Here we could travel without fear even in daylight. The only living beings we disturbed in this waste were snowcocks, pheasants, and, more rarely, a species of chamois. On the other hand, the crows were our persistent and sinister followers. The ascent grew more and more difficult, for our feet sank deep into half-melted snow.

In a fir forest we came upon enormous ancient trees with a girth so great that it would have taken three men with outstretched arms to span them.

There was no longer any trace of a path to be seen, but we followed our obscure, suddenly awakened sense of direction, and trudged on resolutely. Right ahead of us we started up a snowhen from her nest at the foot of a birch. In the nest we found five large eggs. As we hoped to find a suitable place for camping quite soon, we decided to set a snare and try our luck. I had had much experience of snaring birds in Africa, and quickly got to work. Retiring to a distance of two hundred yards, we watched with tense expectancy, but unfortunately to no purpose. The snowcocks, which resembled our mountain cocks, flew off to one side and from their point of vantage watched our doings with great interest. As we could not go on waiting in the snow for a miracle, we resolved to investigate the snare next morning. Meanwhile, it was now midday. We marched on a little farther, and, to our joy, in a snow-covered upland meadow we found two half-ruined huts built of boughs, and around them saw traces of partridges, chamois, and even panthers. It would be just as well to be on our guard! After a brief examination we chose the best-preserved hut as our quarters, used our kitchen utensils to scrape out the snow which the wind had driven inside, and set up a by no means unpleasant camp. Soon a small fire was flickering under our tea-kettle; we lay down and discussed the situation. As there seemed to be a remarkable quantity of snowcocks in the neighbourhood, we decided it would be a good idea to take a day off from marching, and use it for hunting.

## 5

NEXT morning we set quite a number of traps on the best hunting principles, and while Krämer set to work to cook eight pounds of rice and to bake *chapattis*, the Indian pan-cooked flat cakes, I scrambled down to the birch, to bring back eggs at least, if not a

snowcock. I cautiously worked my way up to the nest, where the hen was again sitting on the eggs, and hurled myself at the bird. She started up in a flurry, but I caught at her wings; even so she slipped out of my hands, leaving me only a handful of feathers. I was terribly disappointed, and I would have liked to see my face at that moment! But luckily we had the eggs at any rate. I tied them carefully into a handkerchief and, taking the knotted corners between my teeth, crawled on all fours up the heavily iced scree slope, concentrating all my attention on the prize. Edmund was greatly delighted. As he was still cooking and baking, and the eggs seemed to be fairly fresh, we broke them into the pan at once, and seasoned our magnificent dish of scrambled eggs with a hefty pinch of pepper. Our meal set us up, and we went out to investigate the snares. But it was labour in vain: not one bird had been caught in them. We crawled back somewhat crestfallen, stuffed our cooked rice into a canvas bag, put the *chapattis* into our packs and went on.

Now we were climbing all the time, and soon we had left all vegetation behind. No trees, no shrubs were to be seen, not even the scantiest of undergrowth. After a stiff climb, coughing and panting we reached the ridge, and entered the region of everlasting snow. An icy wind blew around our ears. The going grew more and more difficult; the rarefied air made us short of breath, our limbs felt as heavy as lead, and we had to fight off increasingly frequent attacks of dizziness. In view of the greater danger, we decided to rope ourselves together before going any farther. We slowly trudged on, and spent our first night on the ridge in our storm-tent behind a snowdrift. When we got up next morning our clothes were so wet through that the cold pierced to our bones, and our spirits sank perceptibly. Yet we had a far more dangerous road to traverse on our way to Tibet. We should need all our courage and strength if we wanted to reach our goal.

That morning Krämer was in the lead, which we always took in turns. We were dragging silently along with heavy, monotonous steps through the snow, when suddenly the rope tautened and gave me a sharp tug. At the last moment I managed to brace myself against the pull and throw myself back to take the strain. In front Edmund slid away and vanished into a crevasse. Fortunately the pull of the rope slackened immediately; evidently he had been caught against the wall of the crevasse. I held the rope fast in both hands and cautiously began to haul up the heavy load of man and pack. He was able to lighten my task by bracing himself with knees



and arms on both sides, and thus decisively assisted my labours. I could never have pulled him out with my own strength, and in fact I myself was in constant danger of slipping and falling down after him. At last I brought him to the top. The poor wretch had gone quite green in the face and his legs seemed to have turned to water, which did not surprise me in the least. This serious incident revealed yet again how dangerous it was to move across such a terrain without mountaineering experience. We had had another close shave. Although I was a non-smoker we both felt greedily with trembling hands for cigarettes and tried to regain control of our nerves. From now on we proceeded with the utmost caution.

The next day strengthened our secret doubts whether we had done right in choosing this dangerous route. Heavy clouds gathered threateningly above Bandar Punch and veiled its peak. They boded no good. A high wind violently buffeted us ; its howling never ceased, and communication was difficult. Late in the afternoon a blizzard set in and developed into a raging snowstorm. It grew so dark that we could not see our hands before our eyes. For a little longer we tried to resist the onslaught of the elements, but then we gave it up. It was impossible to move another step. Neither of us had any doubt of what such foul weather at such a height might mean for us. Our eyes blinded with snow, our teeth gritted together, we tried to pitch our tent. But the snow was so deep that it was impossible to get any purchase on the ground with the tent-pegs. So, after freeing an extensive area of snow with our saucepan lids, we weighted down the bottom of the narrow side of the tent with our packs, and crawled inside to erect the poles. The storm howled and blew frightfully, and more than once we thought we would go flying off with the canvas. But the tent stood and held, so our next step was to make ourselves comfortable to some extent inside. Meanwhile great walls of snow had risen around us. These protected us somewhat from the terrible gusts of wind, and gradually in our thick cotton blankets we began to feel secure. Edmund lit a cigarette and remarked : "Well, Hanne ! So we can hold out. I myself find this little spot very comfortable." Our situation would have been relatively tolerable if we had not had to take turns every hour to rake the heavy weight of snow off our tent. As fast as we raked it off it was replaced by fresh falls, and so we were kept in continual activity until morning came.

In the early hours the snowstorm stopped, and next morning Bandar Punch seemed no more than a handstretch away in the

brilliant sunlight ; only its peak was still lost in cloud. The unbroken snowfall had made our situation much worse. Far and wide there was nothing but deep white snow to be seen. How were we to get our bearings in such circumstances? Our rice had frozen into a heavy ball of ice, and we could not make ourselves a hot drink, for there was nothing we could use as fuel. Everywhere danger lurked : snow-holes, crevasses, and abysses threatened our further progress, and in these conditions it was quite hopeless to attempt to strike up to the pass. Our only hope was to return to the Jumna, if we wanted to avoid ending our journey in this snowy waste. Fortunately the sun soon shone out warmly and quickened our will to live. We jettisoned our frozen bag of rice in order to lighten our pack, put on our snow-glasses, which now rendered us excellent service, and, roped together, began the descent. We calculated how long it would take us to get back to our starting point, but we did not allow for the fact that now both old and new snow was lying on the track. So our return was delayed by a whole day. On the afternoon of the third day, after we had had a good sleep despite our soaked clothing, about four hundred yards away we caught sight of the two huts in the clearing. To shorten the route, we decided to drop down with full equipment over a steep slope some three hundred yards high. There seemed to be no danger, the ground was smooth. So we sat down roped together one behind the other, and began to slide on our bottoms. I was in front. We used our feet as brakes. I piled up the soft snow in front of me as I slid, so my speed was reasonable ; but Edmund was following in the smooth track I had made, and suddenly he started to move forward at an alarming pace. Possibly, too, he failed to brake his descent satisfactorily with his feet, for he shot past me like an avalanche. I kept my presence of mind, braced myself firmly in the snow and clung to the rope with all my strength. One tug, and Edmund was struggling like a fish on a hook-line. Although the situation was anything but funny I had to laugh out loud, which sent my comrade into a fury. With a second tug I brought him back on to his feet ; after he had recovered I freed myself of the rope to climb back and collect his stick, which he had lost on the way. After that we climbed down cautiously, zigzagging down the last stretch of the slope. We arrived at the huts as night fell, exactly five days after our departure from them.

As we were soaked through, our first task was to get a fire going and make some hot tea. From the nearby forest we gathered armfuls

of dry wood and piled it up in the hut. Fresh panther tracks showed that our house had not been left empty during our absence. We found the remains of a chamois not far away. The huts had been knocked together very primitively from dry branches and foliage, and only the back wall with its fireplace was bedaubed with clay. All the same, we had a roof over our heads, and we breathed freely. We kindled the fire, slipped off our wet clothes as soon as the hut had warmed up a little, and stretched ourselves out on the foliage which was scattered all over the floor. The strong, boiling hot tea, which we drank with Indian raw sugar, called *gur*, made us feel inexpressibly good, and set us up again. But despite the drink and the fire we froze horribly. Our teeth were chattering audibly, and we were shaken with violent bouts of coughing. We had caught filthy colds, so we decided to lie up here for a couple of days, where we could feel safe, and regain strength.

Krämer, who was frozen quite seriously, squatted in his underclothes right by the fire, and piled on the dry branches. The flames crackled and the tea-kettle sang, and with grim humour we could now call our situation tolerable and our place of refuge almost comfortable. We stared silently at the dancing flames; each of us was sunk in his thoughts and was glad to think that there were days of rest ahead. The boughs slowly rose to a little hill on the glowing embers. I was about to say, 'Man, don't put too much wood on!' when what I was afraid of happened. A long tongue of flame suddenly shot up to the bough roof of the hut, caught at it like lightning, and in a moment the whole place was blazing. We sprang up, flung such of our things as came to hand into the snow outside, then stumbled out into the icy night. There was no hope of saving anything else. We stood helpless in face of that gigantic torch, which lit up the night for a long distance around. I was boiling with fury, and was about to let fly at the culprit, who was standing in the snow and shivering with cold, when he said quite drily, "Drop it, Hanne, these are the blows of fate!" Whether I wished to or not I had to laugh out loud, so comical and helpless did we seem, and in a moment my anger was gone. With what was left of our belongings we hurried to the second hut and, as panther tracks were visible all around, crept cautiously into the upper bunk. There we wrapped ourselves tightly in our scorched blankets and tried to sleep. But at first our thoughts would give us no rest. Undoubtedly the fire had betrayed our whereabouts, for it must have been visible for miles around; and so we could not take a rest as we had planned.

We would have to move on as soon as possible. Only late in the night did the sleep of exhaustion overcome us.

## 6

OUR first step when the dawn came was to search through the ashes of the burnt-out hut, for in our precipitate rush we had not been able to save our spoons, our drinking mugs, a torch, and other valuable items of equipment ; also I must have left one of my boots behind, as I realized to my horror. But we could have spared ourselves the labour of looking ; the flames had destroyed everything. The worst blow was the loss of the excellent tent, for from now on we would have to camp out in the open, and that at these great heights and in the bitter cold. Our spirits were very low as we set off again in mournful procession. My left boot was charred, so I was wearing tennis shoes. My good breeches, of which I had been so proud, were scorched right to the knees ; and Krämer had lost trousers and a pullover. It was lucky that, with all our groaning and cursing, we had dragged our over-heavy packs so far as we had, for each of us still had a reserve stock, some spare warm clothing, to replace the burnt articles. But this adventure had not improved our physical condition. We were coughing fearfully, and as, step by step, we made our way down, I began to run a temperature. We made a forced halt in the dense forest. I felt wretchedly ill, but Krämer nursed me so well that on the third day of our compulsory rest I was fit enough to go on again, though my knees were weak. We swiftly passed the village in which we had been so notoriously active as practising medicos, and by the evening reached the Jumna ; we followed its course downstream, now moving with lighter step. Just above the village of Ganganini we intended to turn off to strike across to the River Bhagirathi, which runs parallel with the Jumna. For long stretches our way ran through blossoming woods of rhododendron. Every little bush which we knew so well in Germany was here growing to the height of a majestic tree, and their purple-crimson splendour was visible even in the darkness. After three and a half night marches, fortunately without a single incident, we made our way into the Bhagirathi valley and reached our first objective : Uttarkashi. From here a well-frequented road runs to the sacred spot of all pilgrims, to Gangotri, the headwaters of the Ganges, where there is a magnificent temple. In their pictures and

sculptures the Indians represent the Ganges as springing out of the mouth of a cow (called Gaumukh), and so the cow is honoured everywhere as a sacred animal. As this road was maintained in good condition we moved on rapidly as far as Bhatwadi. A little way outside this village we had to cross a bridge—always a dangerous undertaking. Although we took our time and set to work with the utmost caution, we were seen and watched by shepherds. Long after we had passed the dangerous spot we heard the beating of signal drums, and we redoubled our precautionary measures.

It must have been about two in the morning when we tried to pass through a rather large village. We had almost reached the farther end when suddenly four torches shone out in the darkness, and our further progress was barred by a voice shouting, "Hands up!" The torches belonged to four policemen, who did not stand on ceremony but took us straight to a *dharmasala*. During the night, by the flickering light of a pine torch, they attempted to discover who we were and where we had come from, submitting us to interrogation. However, we united in presenting an inflexible front to the pestiferous fellows, and were determined to get some sleep, for we wished to be fully rested in readiness for whatever might come next day. As they knocked time after time on the door and disturbed our sleep we grew angry and adopted a threatening attitude, so that at last they left us in peace. Early next morning a police officer turned up and demanded our documents, since in order to travel beyond Bhatwadi it was necessary to obtain special permission in the Indian area. As we were unable to give a satisfactory account of ourselves and in our beggarly condition must have seemed highly suspect, we were held in custody to await official instructions.

However, this procedure hardly suited us, and in any case it would have involved a long delay. We were not under very close watch and we succeeded in getting away through a back door the very next night. But we did not get far before we were caught, and this time we were taken back under escort as far as Uttarkashi. As, in order to shake off any pursuit, we had gone back on our tracks, when we were arrested the second time we maintained with every show of right that we were already on our way to Uttarkashi in any case. In addition we claimed to be Americans. Presumably for this reason they did not take us to a lock-up, but to the pilgrims' inn; but they set a strong guard over us. They did not appear to have much trust in us, which after all was not surprising, for in our scorched, wretched makeshift clothing we looked decidedly

suspicious. They asked us whether we knew the camp at Dehra Dun, and we said 'no' with the most innocent of airs. In passing they dropped a hint that quite recently two Germans who had escaped from Dehra Dun had been arrested not far from Nakuri, but that they had got away again. Luckily for us the telegraph wire which ran to Uttarkashi was broken down, and so they could not obtain any more detailed information to establish our identity.

We let two days pass here comfortably enough. As our food was coming to an end, the police allowed us to go under guard to the bazaar to buy fresh provisions. We badly needed some ready money to make extensive purchases, so we tried to sell a gold watch to a goldsmith. At first he seemed very keen to buy, but he avoided coming to a final decision. We had the same experience with a gold bracelet. Now we felt quite sure that the people had been ordered by the police, who were closely informed of all our movements, not to give us any encouragement. That was provoking, but we did not despair and went on playing our part with a touch of bravura. In the evening a wealthy landowner from the Bombay district arrived with his caravan in the *dharmasala* ; he was going on pilgrimage to Badrinath, a holy place in the northern Himalayas. He was very friendly, invited us to join him in a plentiful meal, and as we felt a good deal of confidence in him we told him our secret. He encouraged and supported us in the best possible way, giving us ten pounds of Indian sweets, which were a highly welcome contribution to our sustenance. Now we resolutely devoted our minds to the problem of escape. One great obstacle was the four guards, two of them posted outside our door and one each to left and right of the two stairs. They maintained a sharp watch on us and kept themselves awake all night by quietly singing. This monotonous humming got on our nerves, for we were in desperate need of sleep, and we decided to pour a bowl full of water over the head of the nearest guard. This made them all draw back a little, cursing aloud. We sent still louder abuse after them and threatened them with even more drastic measures if they annoyed us any more with their sing-song outside our door. We took a very strong line in our role as Americans. And our action proved effective : they did not come back, and we could set to work in earnest to carry out our plan of escape.

The very next night we discovered that our guards were fast asleep. But we found that there were two more lying down at the end of the long verandah, and one of these was always awake ;

so we couldn't get out that way. Moreover, our hanging around on the verandah was rather suspicious, and the police renewed their vigilance. As we walked back into our room our eyes fell on the Indian beds, called *nirwar*, which were spanned with a broad canvas band interplaited between the frame. We looked at each other ; and a plan took shape. One of the canvas strips was swiftly unwoven, to provide a long and strong climbing rope. In its place we spread our fishing net over the frame. Then we turned the other bed over, and I, as the leader, squatted on the end of the frame. Krämer seized the two lower feet and tilted the bed so high that I was able to reach the upper window, which, as usual in India, was high up by the lofty ceiling. He held the bed up in this position while I, working as quietly as possible, broke the window away from its frame. Naturally this inevitably made some noise, so Krämer swiftly let me down with the window in my hands, and then, as though by previous arrangement, we lay completely still on the two beds and began to snore quietly. A moment or two later we heard the guard approaching ; obviously they were coming to find out what had caused the noise. The door opened and the beam of a torch slipped across our faces. We lay still for an hour after they had gone, then the guard outside began to snore, and we set to work again.

Once more Krämer raised me high on the bed, and, squatting doubled up in the small window, I hauled up the two rucksacks and let them slip down to the ground outside the house. I had fastened one end of the canvas band round my waist, and now Krämer, holding the slack in his hands, slowly paid it out to let me slip down through the window. When I reached the ground I drew him up. He had picked up his bamboo stick, and had fastened his end of the rope to it. He jammed it across the window on the inside and slid down the band. We pinned down the free end outside with a stone, to prevent the stick falling back with a clatter into the room. As we were still suffering from severe bouts of coughing we had previously eaten some sugar to prevent an attack at the crucial moment. All our escape had been achieved without making a sound, and the guard still appeared to be fast asleep. We swiftly climbed over our last obstacle, the surrounding wall, and made off into the open country. Our long, involuntary rest had greatly restored our strength and we went off at a smart pace, keeping it up in order to put as great a distance as possible between us and the inn. Our packs now weighed no more than fifteen pounds each. Yet again we had made a successful getaway.

As we already knew the way to Maneri, we stopped to take breath only when the danger zone lay well behind us. Turning for some distance off the road, we had a rest and rejoiced in our newly regained freedom. We all but killed a porcupine: but Krämer's spear missed its mark, and the animal vanished with a rustle into the thick jungle. To get round Malla and Bhatwadi we climbed right to the mountain ridge, though the going was very hard. But by so doing we dodged the police station at Bhatwadi, with which we had already made unpleasant acquaintance. On the farther side of the town we returned to the pilgrims' road, for the climb along the ridge with its many inhabited huts guarded by dogs could have proved fatal to our plans. Even so we found the march through the night difficult enough, for everywhere Bhotias were camping with their flocks of sheep and goats and the inevitable watchdogs. The Bhotias are traders who travel over the high passes from Tibet and carry on a brisk trade between that country and India; they also travel to Nepal. They have retained their ancient customs and usages as well as their religion. Like the Tibetans they wear their hair long, and fur caps with ear-flaps and decorated with red and gold; they all wear the Tibetan high felt boots with soft leather soles. The women's costume consists of a garment like an apron, which is held together at the hips by a woollen girdle; the men's dress is a long black smock. They use sheep and goats as beasts of burden, loading them with up to fifteen pounds of sugar, rice, or meal from India, and with chiefly salt from Tibet. A flock consists of from fifty to two hundred animals, and they are guarded by black dogs which are a species of Chow. To protect them against panthers and even stronger creatures, they put a broad metal neck-band, thickly studded with sharp points, round their necks, thus making it impossible for the dogs to be throttled. If anyone comes near the flock the dogs set up a tremendous hullabaloo long before there is any real danger; as they are quick to bite we had to use our spears and bamboo sticks to ward off their attacks. In one such battle Krämer lost a large piece of his trousers. The drovers sleep close to the camp-fire, and so when they are awakened they are momentarily dazzled by the blaze and are slow to discover the cause of the excitement. Although we had to pass two great flocks, we marched unmolested as far as Ganganani, where there were two large suspension bridges to be crossed. We arrived safely at Jhala, the place we had tried to reach during our attempt to cross the Bumser pass to the Bhagirathi.



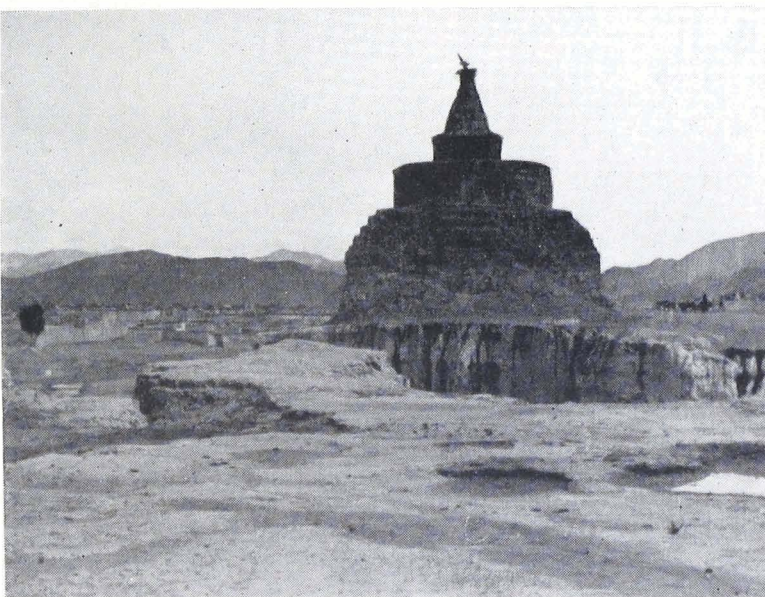


An *obo* with *mani* flags at the top of the pass marks the frontier between India and Tibet



*Photo: Schäfer-Bavaria*

A Tibetan soldier



A chorten

Outside the village we turned into the forest and were about to settle down for a rest when we were startled by a loud cracking noise. We were even more alarmed when not men but a large bear suddenly emerged from the bushes and, probably in search of food, came slowly straight towards the spot where we were lying. Gripping our spears tightly, we remained perfectly still, hardly daring to breathe. Just before he reached our place of concealment he turned away and waddled off in another direction. But this disturbance of the peace was not an isolated incident. Goat-herds with their goats and dogs came upon us, and as we felt far from safe we packed our things and hurriedly continued our journey along the pilgrims' way to Harsil. Fortunately the road was deserted. Harsil lay far below us on the Bhagirathi River, and with its azure banners of smoke presented an idyllic picture of perfect peace. Every winter the peasants from Nelang, Yadhung, and the other upland settlements flock down to Harsil for winter quarters. Often they go even farther south, since the snow lies deep on the mountains and the bitter cold puts a stop to all labour.

At a bend in the road we took out our field-glasses and attentively studied the place. We had squatted down, and were fully occupied with our examination, when two policemen arose before us as though they had sprung out of the ground. For a moment we were startled out of our wits; but we regained our presence of mind and roughly asked in Hindi, "What do you want?" "Show your passes!" came the answer. We were in the middle of discussing in German what to do when yet another policeman, with sergeant's insignia, came up. This time certainly there was nothing else to be done than fight our way out. Krämer was so excited that I had to advise him to act warily and deliberately. As we had previously agreed, we immediately made a show of the utmost good-will, bent over our rucksacks, and began to rummage through them as though searching for our papers. But instead of the passes we suddenly drew our knives and adopted a threatening attitude. All three were completely taken aback and stared at us in stupefaction. The sergeant was the first to recover from his surprise, and he made to seize Krämer. But Krämer was quicker, and went into action like the experienced wrestler he was. As swift as light he dropped his knife, took a hold, and before the man could realize what was happening he went flying high over my comrade's shoulder, to fall heavily to the ground. I threw my knife away and hurled myself with a flying tackle at the other two, who were standing in consternation with their eyes

starting out of their heads. They turned and fled as though they had the devil after them. Krämer, who now felt absolutely in his element, picked up his knife and turned to attack the sergeant; but the man promptly pulled himself together and set off after the others as fast as his legs would carry him. I had great difficulty in getting Krämer to see reason, for his blood was up and he was waving his knife ferociously, in two minds whether to go off in pursuit. Of course we had no time for that sort of idiotic caper, for the officer would undoubtedly return with reinforcements. Even though we had presented a fearsome and intimidating sight, we could not assume that they would simply abandon the chase. We hurriedly gathered our things together and rushed panting to the concealment of the jungle, remaining in its protecting cover until, close to Harsil, we turned left and found shelter in the dense upland forest of the mountains. We realized only too well that this little adventure could have serious consequences; if in the end we were caught we might well spend more than twenty-eight days sulking in the camp prison.

## 7

CLOSE to Harsil we again had a small, primitive wooden bridge to cross over the River Bhagirathi. As we heard much later, that same bridge was fatal to our friend Harrer and his companion in their own escape from the camp. We lay in hiding all the next day, closely watching the crossing and the surrounding area. As our store of Indian sweets had been reduced by now to some two pounds, we had to reach a settlement on the farther side of the frontier as quickly as possible, so we could not stay in this place long. When our stomachs grumbled too much we each ate a heaped spoonful of these sweets made from a mixture of meal, sugar, and spices, which were now thoroughly crumbled. We were very glad we still had a spoon left after the fire, so that we could measure them exactly.

The following night we ventured to cross in our socks, and got over without being seen. Our footwear was completely worn out. I was still wearing my dilapidated tennis shoes. Krämer's military boots were broken to pieces, but he did at least have a pair of gym shoes still in good condition. As we no longer possessed any pack worth speaking of, carrying only a few medical goods and some

underclothing in addition to our sleeping blankets, we made rapid progress. Passing the village of Kopang, by following the excellent map which Peter Aufschneider had supplied we reached the long-expected fork from which one road ran to Gangotri, the other to Nelang and Tibet. We were happy to have got so far so soon, renounced all thought of rest, and took the road to Nelang. There was not a single footmark to be seen on this track ; evidently we were the first to follow it this year. As we had not sighted any pursuit, which we ascribed to our energetic reaction to the policemen, we ventured to go on in broad daylight. We had considerable difficulty in crossing a small river. The track was carved out of the cliff, and chasms were crossed only by means of tree-trunks laid over the gap ; we found that most of these had been washed away or displaced by the melting of the snow and the wintry weather. The vegetation grew more and more scanty ; for a good two hours before we arrived at Nelang we came across nothing but juniper bushes and a low-growing plant with spongy roots.

Once more we had a short rest, using it to think carefully over our situation and to make a sober appraisal of our chances. We calculated that we had still three or four days' journey before we reached Puling in Tibet. But supposing we could not get hold of provisions even there ? On the other hand, a survey of the fearful hardships of the past two months, which despite our expectations we had survived and had come through well and fit, strengthened our courage, so we resolved to go on and to remain together as good comrades. However, we were being more and more tormented with hunger ; our ration now consisted of only a few spoonfuls of the meal and sugar mixture. Our talk turned constantly to the flesh-pots of the camp, and we sighed as we recalled the scraps we had fed to the ducks.

Late in the afternoon, as we were wearily toiling over a scree slope, we descried a small village of some sixty houses, which, if our map was correct, must be Nelang. Behind it towered the massive Gangotri peaks, their summits lost in the clouds. Though we were deeply moved by the sight of the village, we advanced very slowly, gasping for breath, for in that rarefied atmosphere some ten thousand feet above sea level every movement called for considerable effort. Over a snowfield so immaculate that it was obvious no human feet had trodden it before us, we drew near, full of hope, to the little place. Surely here we would find human beings, from whom we could get food ? But as we got closer we realized that the whole

village was deserted. The narrow alleys and the yards lay under deep, untrodden snow.

We could not remain out in the cold. So we at once took determined steps to look for the farm that presented the most prosperous appearance, and climbed through the roof of an outhouse, where we expected to find a store-room. In any case there was no other way in, for all the usual entries were fastened and barred. Our instinct had not deceived us, for we landed in the middle of a packed store-room. Everything the peasants had left in safe keeping before their departure to warmer climes was at our disposal. We found raw sugar, barley, rice, tobacco, plates, pots, pipes, knives, ploughs, and even a can bearing the inscription 'motor oil', but which, as we discovered on tasting it, really contained oil of mustard. We immediately took possession of this treasure-house. Our first job was to light a fire, so that we could get some warm food down our throats. However, owing to our privations and hardships, not to mention the mountain air, we found this difficult; when we bent down or blew on the flame we went giddy, and even after the food, which our stomachs were no longer used to and could not digest easily, we had severe attacks of dizziness. We rested in this place two days and nights. It was marvellous to have a roof over our heads again, for since the loss of our storm-tent in the fire we had lived in the open like beasts. As we were still physically in pretty poor shape we couldn't take with us all we needed, but we did use the opportunity to provide ourselves with an abundance of food, as well as a new copper saucepan, for the journey into the unknown regions of the Himalayas. For me personally the most precious acquisition of all was a pair of worn military boots, for now very little of my tennis shoes was left. Although we were still racked with coughing we set out again, and followed a small river along an untrodden path which was only discernible here and there by the melted patches along its route. The silence was eerie. Only occasionally did we see a single animal. We passed by old camping sites of the caravans which travel between Tibet and India when the passes are free of snow. This route was marked on our map.

We had been 'rambling' thus for two days when an unexpected incident all but deprived me of my comrade. We were trudging along a path, deep in old snow, which ran along a cliff some five hundred feet above the river. At one spot the path was broken by a mighty landslip which had covered the whole slope with redly gleaming scree. On the farther side of the break we could see the

continuation of the track. We cautiously started to cross the slope, but the ground crumbled under our feet, and to avoid being carried away we decided to make our way round the break. With great effort we returned to firm ground and climbed up the mountainside, to get back to the path over the top of the break. Our climb sent great rocks rolling down, and we heard them drop with a muffled splash into the river. I was in front, Krämer behind. Suddenly I heard a sharp crack, almost as though a metal box had been banged hard. I turned back and saw to my horror that Krämer was rolling over and over down the slope in a confusion of scree and stones. I stood on the farther side impotent, unable to do a thing. He desperately tried to get some purchase with his feet, but as he was still clasping the rucksack firmly with both hands he could not obtain any grip, and he went on rolling till he fell into the raging river. The water closed over him. Before I could recover from the shock he emerged and got a foothold. With his last strength he waded across to the other bank, flung down the rucksack he had dragged with him, and sat down on the stony scree. I called to him and asked whether he had suffered any damage ; but he only shook his head, he was still unable to speak. I realized all too well how serious it was to be wet through in that bitter cold ; something must be done about that at once. I put my pack in a secure spot and climbed down cautiously to the bank. Then I threw off my clothes and waded stark naked through the rushing torrent. I lost my footing on the stony bed more than once and was carried away ; but, half swimming, I managed to reach the bank. We made our desperate way back, supporting each other through the stream. Krämer was physically very strong and could stand a great deal, but he was trembling all over. The water was so cold that we went absolutely stiff. We should have to move pretty quick if we wished to avoid getting inflammation of the lungs. But we managed to reach the spot where I had left my rucksack. And with our joint efforts we also managed to drag up Krämer's things. Then, still naked as I was, I tore the dry sleeping blanket out of my pack, helped Edmund to strip off his icy clothes, and swiftly wrapped the blanket tightly round us both. In this scanty covering we breathed in our warm breath until we went giddy, and when life began to return to our numb limbs we rubbed each other with my dry undervest. Then we shared out the rest of my dry clothing. With stiff fingers still trembling with the cold I searched in my rucksack for a Bidi, as the Indian cigarettes are called, and thrust it between Krämer's lips. By now it was dark.

In a hole a yard or two behind a great boulder we found a wretched shelter. We put on everything we still possessed in the form of dry clothing as protection against the fearful nocturnal cold. We wrung out Krämer's dripping garments, but we could hardly hope that they would ever dry out. In fact, for several days we spread them out again and again in the meagre sunlight, but at last he put them on just as they were, and let them slowly dry on his body.

Our situation had changed seriously for the worse, and the prospects now looked pretty grim. That night neither of us slept a wink. We were both completely crushed by the fearful experience which had almost cost Krämer his life. We sucked nervously at our cigarettes; a pair of oil-soaked woollen socks gave us a foul-smelling fire. Once Krämer broke the silence, to remark, "Well, Hanne, what do you think?" "The same as you." "And what's that?" I was silent. Neither of us wanted to be the first to utter the bitter words, "We'd better turn back". And yet it was really madness to go on, it was tempting fate. Only towards morning did we doze off for a few moments; but the biting cold forced us up again before sunrise. We trudged out on our numb legs to dig up the spongy roots of the meagre low-growing plant with our knives. With the help of the oil we made a fire and cooked the stinky tea we had 'organized' in Nelang. To this we added raw sugar and grains of wheat; up here their husks were a lilac colour. The warmth helped us a lot; we found our meal the most appetizing breakfast we had had since we left the camp. To avoid the danger of catching cold we took large doses of aspirin; but, as it transpired, that was an idiotic thing to do, for when we started our climb again we sweated like bulls, and felt even weaker than before. Finally Krämer told me how he had come to fall: I had got halfway across the scree when stones began to slip down from above us and one huge rock hit Krämer's rucksack, which had the saucepan packed in the top. The sudden blow was so powerful that it knocked him off his balance, and he went rolling head over heels with the scree into the river. But once more we had come safely through. We silently packed our things. "Off we go!" I said briefly; and Krämer, who still showed the bloody traces of his adventure on his face and hands, nodded silently.

Judging from our map, we could not be far from the top of the pass. We moved very slowly; we had to stop again and again. The air grew more and more rare, and we began to think we were choking. For a long time we did not say a word to each other. Our lips were



cracked and crusted, our feet covered with wounds. We found the going easiest if we breathed in as we raised our right foot and breathed out as we set down our left foot. We both presented a remarkable, not to say fearsome, picture. The privations of the past few weeks had left their traces ; our clothing was in ribbons ; Krämer's trousers, pants, and jacket, all frozen stiff, swung from our rucksacks, where we had hung them to dry. According to our reckoning we had come upon the last trace of the track at some thirteen thousand feet, where some old goat dung had betrayed the existence of a caravan route. But higher up no sign of any path was to be seen. We walked in the sunshine over melting snowfields, spongy moss-grown flats and mossy summits. But at least we had left the chill of the shady valleys and ravines behind us.

Shortly before midday we at last reached the top of the pass, which was covered with a thick pall of brilliantly glittering old snow. We had conquered the Changkok-La (16,000 feet). Our first indication that we were about to enter the mysterious land of Tibet was the sight of the *obos*. *Obos* are piles of stones on which the Tibetans erect bamboo and willow poles, from which they fly their prayer-flags with the words '*Om mani padme hum*' painted on them. All around the piles of stones were scattered remarkable horns taken from wild mountain sheep and yaks. With a silent hand-grip we congratulated each other on our success in getting so far. We could truthfully say of ourselves that we were the first Germans ever to conquer the Himalayas with no more equipment than a couple of rucksacks.

We spread Krämer's clothing out on the *obo*, then sat down on the stone wall and ate some *gur* and Indian corn. For the first time since we had left Nelang the look of strain vanished from our faces. Our gaze roved all around us ; we gazed in almost reverent wonder at the towering mass of the Himalaya peaks confronting us. The banners, bleached with sunlight and torn to ribbons, fluttered wildly in the whistling wind. We said not a word ; we thought of all we had come through, and attempted in the silence to find answers to the many questions that assailed our minds concerning what lay before us. How would Tibet receive us ? Would it put up with the foreigners and let them live in freedom ? I remember that here, on this hardly won height, I fathomed all the depth of meaning in my favourite quotation from Weng Ching Ming, 'A single day is as a little year, and every hour of mountain solitude is as an eternity.'

The descent in our soaking wet boots was a torture. Although

for some time we had been treating our feet with Indian ointment, they were sore and painful. Hardly had we reached the bottom when our way was barred by the River Op. Exhausted as we were, we did not attempt to cross at once, but lay down and rested inside the customary Tibetan stone wall. The mountains all around us looked grim and bleak; only where the snow had been blown away could we discern a meagre vegetation. We gathered some material for a fire and once more swung and turned Krämer's blanket over the flames. With our scanty evening meal, consisting of the usual tea, *gur*, and Indian corn, we ate the kernels of dried apricot stones which we picked out of the dry goat dung lying about. In the middle of the night Edmund woke me up, for he felt a need to have a frank talk about our position. We could have done that equally well in the morning, but I understood how he felt. I persuaded him to continue the journey next day. As we still had some corn and a lump of *gur* left, we hoped to be able to hold out.

In the morning we went down to the river, which did not seem to be dangerous; but by the afternoon, when we attempted to cross, the water had risen considerably, presumably as the result of melting snow. But we had no wish to spend another night behind the stone wall, and we undressed, rested our bundles on our necks, and waded through the ice-cold water. We had happened to select an unusually deep spot, so there was nothing for it but to stagger about, sounding the water to left and right, until at last we found a shallow place and made the crossing. Unfortunately, we had to go back to bring over the rest of our belongings, so we plunged once more into the icy stream and made our way to the other bank. The strain was as great as the actual cold itself; we huddled under my dry blanket, wrapping ourselves in it just as we had after Krämer's accident, to warm ourselves up a little with our own breath.

It need hardly be said that our further march made more and more demands on us. Our food consisted only of the small quantity of Indian corn and *gur* which was left, and the nights under the open sky were horrible. Only rarely could we discern the path beneath the snowy pall, but we went on, in the hope of reaching a place called Puling which our map indicated as within Tibetan territory. Once we came across a small pack of wolves, and the sight added further to our secret fears. I snatched up my stick and set the dagger on its end, while Krämer, who had lost his stick during his accident, gripped the knife in his hand. But evidently we were more hungry than the wolves, for they took little notice of us and

roamed off. Again and again we were plagued with doubts whether we would ever find our way out of this labyrinth of deep ravines, lofty walls, and stony confusion. It was almost as though we had been transplanted to a land of dolomites. We climbed up and down, we wandered off the path, we came across it again, only to lose it once more. Time and again we felt that we had come to the end of the earth. But at least we were no longer suffering from shortage of breath, so the going was a little easier. We exhorted each other to further efforts, tried to give ourselves courage, and hoped that before long we would emerge out of this lonely wilderness to find human habitations. Here and there absurd little marmots, animals I had previously only heard about, slipped across our path. The air slowly turned warmer, the snow vanished, and on a slope in the distance we saw herds of cattle grazing. A little later we found a flock of sheep, but we could not see any shepherd. Now we particularly felt the lack of the field-glasses, which, unfortunately, Edmund had left lying on the stones at Harsil after our encounter with the three policemen. The sight of the first familiar domestic animals since we had crossed the frontier put new heart into us, for now we could not be far from the nearest lodging.

The friendly Hindoo in the *dharmasala*, who had given us the sweets without which we might never have reached Tibet, had told us: "The Tibetans are very uncommunicative; but if you win their trust they are extremely hospitable. If you come to a monastery you can ask for food with confidence; they will set it before you in abundance." We remembered these words and put all our hopes in Puling, which, if our map was correct, could not be far away. True, there was no monastery there, but we still could expect a friendly welcome. After crossing a deep river, round the last jutting cliff we caught sight of a settlement of some fifteen houses. We took a deep breath, and went tensely towards it, though we could see no signs of human beings. But footprints, and holes dug deep into the ground to serve as stalls for sheep and goats, indicated that the village was inhabited. The doors were open, too; but when we shouted in German and every other possible language we got no response whatever at first. At last, after some time an old woman came running out; her strange behaviour astonished us. She stuck out her tongue as far as it would go, and put her two hands together again and again to her mouth, as if she were drinking water from her cupped palms. "What's the matter with her, putting out her tongue like that?" Krämer muttered angrily. While we

were still puzzling our heads over this extraordinary sight other people came out of the houses, and soon we were surrounded by men, women, and children in a dense circle, all of them behaving as remarkably as the first woman. I assumed that it must be some kind of greeting ceremonial, and tried to reassure Edmund, who was highly excited and showing signs of intending to compel 'a proper respect'. To get to the bottom of the mystery we thought we would see what happened if we behaved likewise; so we stuck out our tongues and imitated the hand movements. That seemed to please them mightily; evidently they regarded us, too, as people with very good manners. Although they were only simple country folk, their attire, apart from its lack of cleanliness, was quite remarkable. All of them, men, women, and children, had long hair, partly drawn into pigtails, partly hanging loose and unkempt. Their clothing consisted of a jacket like a blouse, over which they were wearing a half-length sleeveless mantle of tough woollen material, which was crossed over the chest and held by a strap at the hips. Their leg-boots were made of home-woven woollen material and double-soled with wool and leather. The women's and men's dress was very similar, except that over their blouses the women wore aprons with horizontally woven, gaily coloured stripes. All the Tibetans' clothing is made of wool, and is usually dyed brown, blue, red, or green. The dyeing is done by the women, and as the dyes are definitely not Indian they must consist of some secret formula handed down from generation to generation.

In the evening we were invited to a meal with the village elders, and had our first taste of *tsampa*, which we were able to watch being prepared. Over a fire fed with yak and goat dung and a little brush-wood, they heated a tin bowl filled with fine sand. Indian corn was mixed with the sand, and in the heat the corn swelled and popped. When it began to turn brown they sieved the sand away and pounded the puffed kernels in one of the small stone mills which are inseparable from the Tibetans both at home and when on their travels. The meal thus made is eaten, or stirred into tea to make a thick gruel. It tasted like malt and was not at all unpleasant. But after our long period of fasting this food did not appear to agree with me and Krämer, and we suffered the painful consequences all night.

The friendly welcome these villagers had given us encouraged us to attempt to exchange some of our valuable possessions for a horse. But this aroused the distrust of the frontier people, who treat all strangers as hostile intruders. They refused our request,

and gave us only a little dried yak flesh, and that probably because we looked so wretched. We spent the first night in a half-ruined hut which they assigned to us for quarters. It was not clean, nor was it comfortable ; but we thought ourselves fortunate to have at least a roof over our heads at last. With the aid of a fishing line I managed to catch two doves, hundreds of which were perching close to our shelter. Since our failure with the snares on the Bumser Pass we had made no further attempt to catch birds in this manner. We cooked the birds, and they tasted much better than the horrible dried yak meat, which was iron hard and had to be beaten between two stones before we could tear it to shreds like a couple of cannibals.

## 8

Now we needed to learn the road to Duchang. The villagers gave me full details, and when I presented the elder with a ring he declared himself ready to lend us a pack-horse for the journey. We preferred not to unpack our medical goods here, for we considered we might be able to make better use of them later on. We set out with our pack-horse and escort as dawn was breaking, and after a forced march arrived at Duchang in the late afternoon. The mountain Kamet (25,500 feet) rose behind the settlement. Just outside the village were six *chorten*, as they are called—a form of monument which we now saw for the first time. They are stone, cupola-shaped erections built in honour of high Tibetan lamas or priests. They are hollow inside, and all round the walls are openings the size of a hand, in which the pilgrims lay small votive articles made of baked clay, which are usually bought from monks. Here, as everywhere else, the *chortens* were filled to overflowing with these articles, so we did not think we were doing any great harm by taking some as mementoes. But our hopes of receiving a hospitable welcome were rudely shattered. We found only two families in the place, living at the very end of the street. They hesitated to give us any information, and only after long negotiations did they offer us anything to eat. Unfortunately, as we learned afterward, the monks of the small monastery which was hewn out of the loess cliff had gone on a pilgrimage. So our hope of finding shelter in the monastery was dashed. However, before our escort set off with the pack-horse on his return journey to Puling, he persuaded the people to show us more hospitality. Our attempt to free ourselves of certain articles

of value came to nothing, but in the end they did allow us to sleep in a small ante-room. We were flatly refused a horse. It was lucky for us that our packs no longer weighed very heavy.

Next day our road ran through some of the most magnificent loess scenery we had found so far. We might well have been on the moon. A vivid imagination could find every possible type and style of architecture, Hindoo temples, pagodas, Gothic cathedrals, in these grotesque peaks, towers, and cones. We wandered fascinated through this fabulously carved loess region. Chabbrong Jong with its fluttering prayer-banners towered high above us, looking like a mediaeval castle. I remembered having read that at one time, during the days of Tibet's greatness in the eleventh century, Chabbrong Jong had been the country's chief city, and the size and extent of the incredible rock monastery seemed to bear this out. At the foot of the mountain were two larger buildings, in which the Jong Pen of Shangsi takes up his winter quarters during his quarterly journeys to enforce taxes. We vainly tried to obtain a night's lodging at Chabbrong Jong. We were driven away roughly, so we went on up to the deserted monastery building. We found entire storeys carved out of the loess cliff, and interconnected by a labyrinth of stairs and passages. We climbed up along some of these staircases, and came to a quadrangular building painted brick-red. We approached it from the roof, so through a skylight we were able to peer into the dilapidated and dusty room below. Suddenly we noticed a gigantic bronze Buddha, at least fifteen feet high, right opposite, glaring at us with its uncanny eyes. On each side of it hung gaudy cloths and strips of material, and at its feet was an altar with bowls arranged in a pyramid, in which the everlasting flames were burning. Everywhere in Tibet these lamps are fed with melted butter. Although in general Krämer and I were not easily disturbed, the gloomy sight made a deep impression on us. "Is he trying to warn us?" Krämer snarled. The monastery, built in normal storeys, presented us with a number of other surprises. In the passages we came upon holes and niches containing small figurines and paintings, and we stared in amazement at the lofty wooden entrance gate; it was well over twenty feet high, and was carved all over its surface.

We slept in one of the holes, and early next morning set out for Tuling, which we reached in the afternoon. Now the loess scenery was left behind us. Tuling has an ancient monastery, with a hundred to a hundred and twenty monks. Beside the lama, the religious head, a government official also has his residence here; he and the

lama share the task of administration. West of the town there are innumerable *chorten*, and not far away many dwarf poplar trees were growing in a small valley. Behind the monastery flows the River Sulej, which here is very broad, but shallow. As in Puling, so in Tuling at first there was nobody to be seen. When at last a Tibetan came out to us we tried to explain that we wished to see the 'boss'. As soon as he understood what we wanted he proved very willing and took us by side ways and passages to the monastery courtyard. The monastery itself stood on the left side of the yard, and on the right was the lama's residence, which was quite separate. A Cerberus of menacing size and aspect, black, shaggy, and growling, barred our entrance, and all but choked itself with its collar in its fury. At last a servant appeared and drew the dog's chain back through a hole in the wall, to enable us to pass. As soon as we had entered the chain was loosened and the way was barred once more.

We waited tensely for the next step. Through a great throng of inquisitively staring servants we were led by way of an inner courtyard up to the first floor of the lama's residence. We were conducted to a verandah and invited to sit down on two iron chairs, genuine Berlin Beergarden specimens. Presumably these 'seats of honour' had been brought from India. It was a remarkable situation to be placed in, and we did not feel at all comfortable during the long time we were left sitting there alone. We avoided talking, and communicated with each other only by glances. We warily held our knives ready for use beneath our shabby jackets. I was in the very act of taking a stealthy look around when to my alarm I saw two lean, wrinkled and yellow hands appear on the edge of the wall at the end of the verandah. "Edmund, look at that!" I whispered; but was at once struck dumb again, for a bald head and grimacing face with slanting eyes followed the hands. After eyeing us inquisitively the hideous, pock-marked visage disappeared, only to reappear a moment later accompanied by a second, equally hideous. While this weird and disturbing phenomenon was occurring several Tibetans noiselessly hurried past, but without bestowing a glance on us. This procedure was repeated several times. Our outward appearance was so unprepossessing that really we could hardly object to their caution; but the way they acted on their suspicions seemed decidedly uncanny.

After some time their curiosity appeared to be satisfied, for a servant arrived to summon us to the room of the exalted personage. As we entered a stifling, musty scent struck our nostrils. At first

we could not see a thing. Only after our eyes had grown accustomed to the dim light did we realize that the mask we had seen a few moments before had now adopted the guise of a human being and was confronting us. But now the spy was robed in a sumptuous vestment and was sitting on a dais. Meanwhile Edmund had recovered his habitual impudence, and murmured in German : "Good day, old boy ! Yes, it's us !" The lama remained quite impassive, which in view of our own extreme courtesy was not surprising. His adjutant asked us to take our seats on a dais opposite, which was richly strewn with rugs and cushions. A chest standing before it served as table, and soon servants arrived with tea, to which to our sorrow a large quantity of cinnamon and other spices had been added. In addition biscuits from India, a kind of sweet, and small cakes of bread were served. During this ceremony not a word was said, but that suited us perfectly, for we fell on the food and packed it down without looking up for one moment. In retrospect I feel rather ashamed of our greed, especially as in all probability we were expected only to taste a little of each item, and thus observe the prescriptions of good manners for a guest. But our ravening hunger would not let us stop to think of considerations of that kind, and we crammed everything down indiscriminately until the last crumb had vanished from the tray. When we were really satisfied, and even felt rather too full, we gave the servants to understand by a gesture that our powers of absorption were exhausted. In the manner of the country we confirmed this joyful news with mighty hiccups, which would be well understood by our hosts, and which we had no difficulty whatever in producing. Then the low chest was dragged to one side, and the second act began. It was rather a strain to both parties, since, though the high dignitary tried hard to make conversation, the result was inevitably failure. The Tibetans spoke as little German as we did Tibetan, and here we could do nothing with our English either. Finally, when we tried out the few broken words of Hindi which we had picked up during our internment and flight, they sent for a Tibetan who spoke Hindi fluently. We mangled the language with reckless abandon, but our vocabulary was not really extensive enough for conversation. After we had wrestled and struggled with one another for some two and a half hours our hosts evidently had had enough, for they offered us shelter and graciously dismissed us. Our departure was far more polite than our entry ; we even bowed as we had seen the servants do, and murmured something in our beards that the charitable could have taken as



expressions of thanks. To get out of the monastery we had to pass the foaming Cerberus again; but the servant drew the animal back on his chain, and the gateway closed behind us as we passed through.

The room to which we were conducted across the monastery yard was bleak, and solidly coated with soot; it contained no furniture whatever. There was a fireplace arranged in the floor. But after so many fearful nights out in the open we felt really secure here; we enjoyed the *tsampa*, butter, and meat which were brought to us, and after a long interval were able to spend a peaceful night in deep and untroubled sleep.

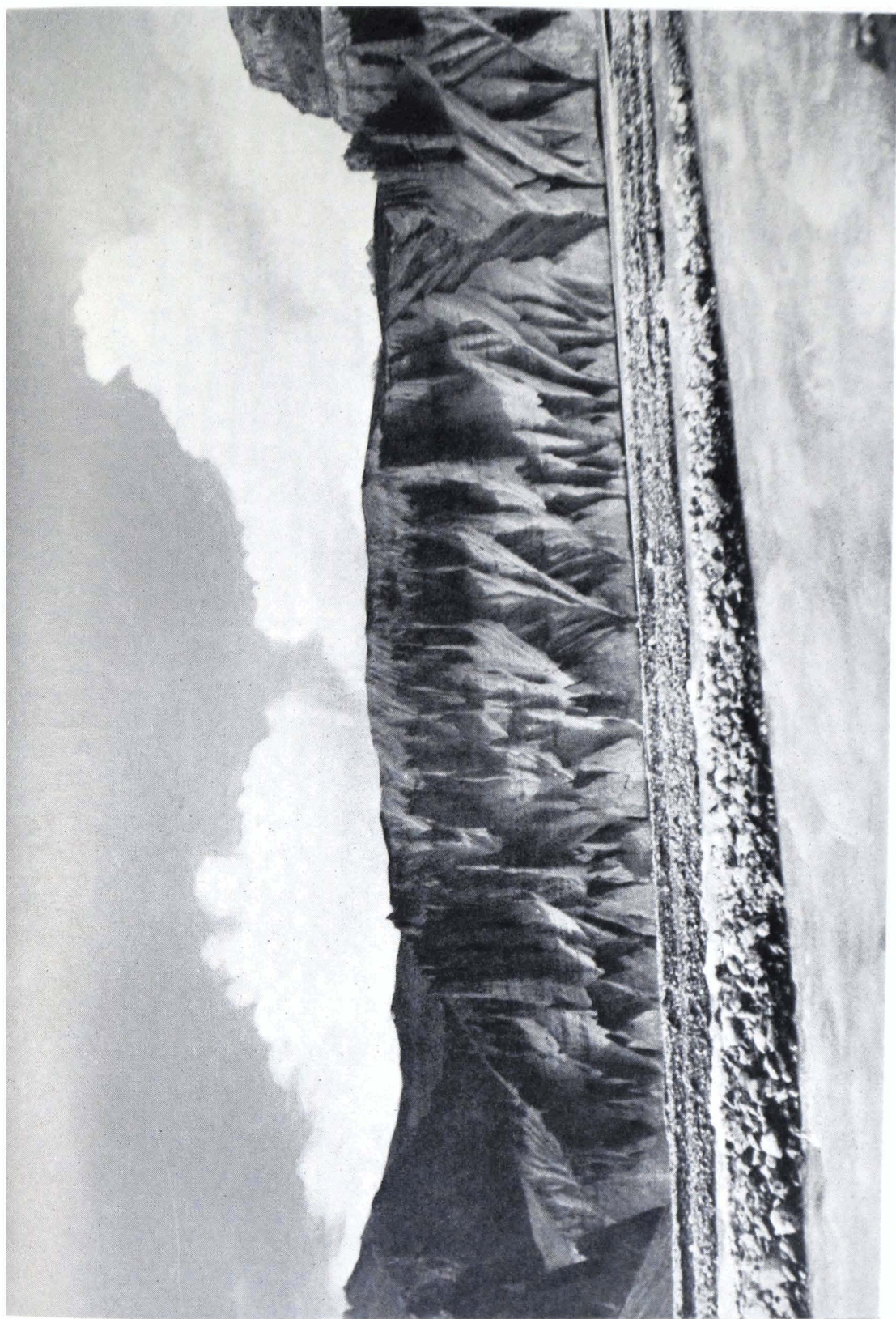
Next morning we had visitors quite early. A group of some twenty monks and officials appeared, and we made another agonizing attempt to reach a mutual understanding. We for our part were particularly anxious to do so, for we urgently needed new boots, and hoped to make several purchases. But our imploring speeches and gestures, even the exhibition of our worn-out footwear while we pulled mournful faces, and even the offer to pay for everything with gold articles, seemed to make no impression whatever on them. Their faces remained quite impenetrable and impassive, and we found it difficult to keep our tempers, for our fruitless attempts to make them realize our need gradually wore us down and finally reduced us to utter fury. Yet evidently we had been doing them some injustice, for some time later a servant arrived with a great pile of Tibetan footwear, and spread them out before us. Krämer was lucky and found a suitable pair at once; but there was nothing whatever to fit my feet: every one of the boots was too small. I was sitting mournfully before the mountain of magnificently new and warm sheepskin boots when I had an idea. In my desperation I fished the very largest pair I could find out of the pile, cut away the toes, and later stitched thick woollen patches over the holes as protection against stones and the cold. At Krämer's request they brought him a long bamboo stick, on which he could mount his knife, and thus was equipped with a weapon again.

The lama visited us every day in order to persuade us to return to India, but at first we behaved as though we didn't understand; finally, when this pretence got us no farther, we flatly refused to go. On the other hand, we could not travel further in an easterly direction, for the Tibetans kept us under close observation, and as soon as we started to put butter and *tsampa* aside as a store of provisions they spotted what we were doing. After the first three days we were given

only as much food as would keep us alive; we tried to obtain larger rations, but our efforts were fruitless. Evidently it was high time to leave Tuling. We discussed the matter with various individuals, and at last obtained permission to journey in a northerly direction, towards Shangsi, which according to our map we could reach in four days. Our request for travelling rations was coldly ignored.

## 9

WE LEFT Tuling on the sixth day of our stay there, and some five miles farther on came to a remarkable suspension bridge across the River Sulej. As a matter of fact the footway consisted simply of two heavy forged chains, each link being one and a half inches thick. We stared in wonder at this sight, and could only surmise how these chains had been brought to this remote spot. It seemed to us that their presence here must be due to the fact that at one time Chabbrong Jong had been the most important town in all Western Tibet. Under the bridge the torrent poured through a gap in the cliff. On the farther side we followed the customary track. Though we felt rather stronger and in better fettle after our five-day rest, our experiences with Tibetans generally and with those of Tuling in particular had not exactly been encouraging. We certainly hadn't seen much of their highly praised hospitality; as for help and readiness to meet us halfway, we had had no evidence of this at all. Nor had we been able to exchange our valuables against money in the monastery, and as our need for provisions had been deliberately ignored our prospects seemed far from rosy. And now to all these cares were added further plagues. We had been suffering from a terrible itch for some days, and on making a thorough inspection we found it was caused by lice, presumably picked up in our last quarters. We scratched and rubbed from morning till night, but of course the ticklish little blighters were not to be disposed of so easily as that. And as if we were not suffering enough, while passing along a valley we were attacked by clouds of tiny stinging flies, which fell upon every bare patch of our skin and made life utterly miserable. We would have needed at least the ten hands of the Indian divinity to deal with these malignant bloodsuckers. Not until we had been thoroughly scratched and flayed all over did we think of drawing old, ragged vests over our faces and necks as protection;



Loess mountain  
formations at a  
river's edge in  
Western Tibet



In a Tibetan village

The hair style of Western Tibetan women



then, with only a small hole in the vest to see through, we wandered on like a couple of ghosts.

The next few days were miserable beyond expression ; it looked as though our luck had completely deserted us. We could stand the hunger at first, we could still suppress it or talk it away. But we went on and on in a rancorous silence which steadily grew worse, and neither of us felt any desire to break it. At the end of the valley we fell in with a shepherd, but our attempt to buy one of his flock was fruitless ; he handled us roughly and forced us to continue on our way. A hunt after an ass which we saw grazing alone in an expanse of meadowland also led us nowhere. Then, as it galloped smartly away, we realized that it was not an ass, but a wild kyang—animals which wander about the country singly or in herds. Their general build is similar to the zebra's, but their coat is a light brown, with just one white patch on the belly. We turned wearily back to the path, which was hardly discernible in the loess of the valley floor. We lost it again and again, and had to trudge back over the ground we had covered at the cost of so much exertion. This was a further drain on our strength. In his heart of hearts each of us blamed the other for losing the way ; but as we said very little more than was absolutely necessary our illwill was stored up in our subconscious and gave birth to a strange, sullen mistrust, which really had its only foundation in our terrible and increasing hunger. We continued for two more days without seeing a single human being. Close to the village of Niang we did come across six Tibetans, who with their families were tilling the ground. When the men had rolled the field level the women and children slowly crawled along on their knees one after another, making holes in the earth with pointed wooden pegs, and dropping a single barley corn in each hole. As they slid forward they pressed the soil down over the seed with their knees. We watched this activity for a moment or two as though bemused ; then we went up and asked for food. But despite our wretched appearance and the hunger staring from our eyes, they took no notice of us.

Even in the village, which consisted simply of two mud huts and holes carved into the loess cliff, we got not a bite of food, though the people were very willing to show us the way to Shangsi. Presumably they were very glad to see the two sinister strangers hurry on. Depressed and weary, we shuffled on through this unending labyrinth of loess scenery with its narrow ravines and its wide, comfortless levels. We spent the nights under the open sky ; but our

hunger would not allow us any real rest. Again and again we started up in alarm, and listened to see whether help would come from somewhere, or stared at each other with flaming eyes. Now for some days we had no longer been sleeping side by side ; the mental gap which was more and more widening between us without our exhausted minds being able to realize the secret cause was reflected in our physical relations. It was as though each of us had entrenched himself behind the wall of his own need and despair ; as though, following some obscure primeval instinct, each saw the other as his enemy. Agonizing were the minutes when we did come together to share out the last remnants of our food, and the gaze with which each watched the other's movements as we shared it was fraught with danger. In silence we divided the smallest crumb, and silently we swallowed it down. There was nothing more to be said, for there was hardly anything left to hope for. Only once did we work together. That was when, right in front of us, some animal, a hamster, I think, scampered across our path and took refuge under a flat stone. We rushed to the stone, heaved up a great boulder, and smashed it down again and again on our victim's hiding-place ; then we tore the half-squashed animal out of the earth and greedily devoured the raw flesh. Strange as it may seem to anyone who has never known what hunger can do for a man, after that bloody feast Krämer and I were afraid of each other. Never during all those horrible days did one of us walk in front of the other. We could not stand the thought that the 'enemy' was behind, or give him any really good opportunity by stepping ahead of him. Side by side, silently we staggered on, always on the alert, our hands always on our knives. Our brains, though we did not know it, were growing deranged. Our sense of time was wiped out, madness was closer than we realized, and our hope of salvation was a delusion.

We no longer had any doubt that we had lost our way, we felt sure that we would never arrive at any human habitation along this path. Probably the Tibetans had given us false directions. According to our map Shangsi could not be more than four days' journey from Tuling, so we should have reached the place long before. Now we were faced with a miserable death by starvation in the nameless solitude of this desolate region. We cast about desperately to find the impress of a human foot somewhere, but we found none. Our luck had abandoned us. We tottered along, swaying with exhaustion, side by side during the day ; at night we started up from the ground in the grip of sudden fear and stared at each other with

suspicious eyes. For three days now we had had nothing but a little strong tea and some salt. We lit our Indian clay pipe again and again ; for, although the smoke was bad for our stomachs, at least it assuaged our hunger a little and flung a pleasant smoke-screen over our half-disordered thoughts.

At last, after making yet another vain attempt to find traces of human beings, while on our way back to the hole which served as our refuge and shelter we decided that as we had never come upon footprints other than our own we would give up this hopeless quest and use our last strength to return to the little village of Niang, where we had watched the peasants working in the fields. This decision was difficult beyond words, but it did offer at least some prospect, if uncertain, of escape. In fact there was nothing else to be done, for our situation was such that if we remained here a mournful, and even a gruesome, end was beyond doubt. Even so we were not at all sure that our strength would be sufficient to enable us to cover the long way back.

About ten o'clock next morning I got up, summoned what little remained of my energy, and stumbled down to the nearby river, to get some water for tea. The very effort that such an activity required was indicative of our desperate plight. As we walked, as we stooped, and above all when we climbed up we were seized with a violent dizziness, which forced us again and again to a standstill, in order to recover. The least exertion made us sweat fearfully. Now as I squatted down with the saucepan and watched the water flow in I pondered over the one question which for so long had been oppressing me : how could we get out of this hell, how escape from these terrible cliffs, ravines, and holes ? My mind even turned to the money which we were carrying with us and which we had been unable to make use of. What was the good of it to us if we had got to die miserably anyway ?

Suddenly, in the dreary silence I caught the sound of a fine tinkle like a bell, coming from some distance off. At first I thought I was suffering from an hallucination, that in my weakness I was dreaming. But the faint sound grew stronger, came nearer ; and as with trembling knees I straightened up I thought I recognized a human figure in the distance. I did not feel like calling out. So I climbed up the slope to our hole and, taking hold of Krämer, who was lying down apathetically, dragged him to the entrance. Now we could see more clearly that a man and a dog were coming ; with each step the man took he set a jingling bell-stick on the ground.

In our agitation Krämer and I trembled all over, and as our eyes met, for a fraction of a second I was frightened ; for his glance lit up all the sombre potentialities of his being as though by flashlight.

Meanwhile the man was steadily drawing nearer, and his dog, which was running in front and evidently had scented us, made for our hole and came up the short slope, its nose raised and sniffing. We had no idea what its master wanted or where he was going, but Krämer and I had tacitly decided to kill the dog. Gripping our spears ready for the cast, we lurked at the entrance to the hole until it appeared, and made our throws simultaneously. In my agitation my spear flew past it ; but Krämer's caught it full in the flank and it dropped with a howl. Now the man had drawn level with the opening, and he must have seen the whole affair. He stood dumbfounded for a moment, but as I stepped out and called the Tibetan greeting, "*Kam zang bo !*", he turned and fled. In a flash I realized that if we took the way he went it offered us a last chance to find a human settlement. So I shouted and began to run after him. But he ran faster and faster and made straight along the path through this loess chaos, whereas I ran in zigzags and lost the track again and again. He was soon out of sight, and I gave up the pursuit. In any case I hadn't the strength to keep on.

On returning to the hole I found Krämer already cooking pieces of the still-warm dog-flesh. We hurriedly swallowed down a couple of half-raw mouthfuls, for we had no time to eat enough of this loathsome food to satisfy our griping hunger. It was imperative that we should set off at once to follow the tracks of this man, who in fleeing opened up a last chance of salvation. We took some pieces of the dog-flesh with us, and dragged off, our weary gaze fixed on the faint footprints clearly distinguished by a hole in the man's leather sole.

Today I can hardly recall how we managed to go on and on and struggle across the vast plateau which opened before us at midday. Stubbornly we followed the faint imprints in the dust. We had hoped that we might see the man at least in the distance ; but evidently his terror had given him wings, for it was as if the ground had swallowed him up. We wearily fought our way along over every yard, every rise and fall in the path, and mentally shivered at the possibility that in the end we might, after all, lose these tracks. Just as evening was coming on they led us up over a height, which we climbed coughing and choking, then down into the valley again.

And there, as we raised our eyes from the ground, far below us



we saw houses, a village, the settlement which we had sought so long, so desperately. Completely exhausted, we sank down on the slope and remained a long time prostrate. We were right at the end of our tether, and we had to recover our breath and our senses before we could think of getting up. But the hope of food and a roof over our heads soon started us to our feet, though gloomy doubts accompanied our expectant hopes. We had suffered too many rebuffs to have any faith left in the Tibetans' readiness to help. We sat for a while on the slope, and there we exchanged our first words since hunger, mistrust, and desperation had divided us. As the gruesome reality of the past few days slowly faded the frightful tension began to ease. We threw away the rest of the dog-flesh and slowly, very slowly, staggered down to the nearest houses.

## 10

As we entered the village an unexpected sight awaited us. Everything on two legs was gathered at the entrance, to stare at the two astonishing white faces. Evidently the man with the bell-stick had told of his meeting with us and the murder of his dog. I later discovered that he was one of the runners or bearers who travel for miles between one settlement and another, walking, or sometimes riding, to carry news through the countryside.

Fortunately, we did not have to say much. They took us at once to the Jong Pen, the government representative, and from the conversation we soon learned that we were at last in Shangsi. It was a picturesque room that we were shown into in his house. It was very large, and the ceiling was supported by a wooden pillar in the centre. The whole of the ceiling was covered with gaily coloured silk cloths, with red, yellow, and green predominating; on the walls I recognized Tibetan inscriptions in black and white. One entire wall was hung with weapons. The official himself sat on a dais to the right of the door. Evidently as a mark of his rank, in his left earlobe he wore a gold ring with a finger-long, drop-shaped turquoise; the gem was so heavy that it was supported by a silk ribbon passed over the ear.

We had to take our seats on cushions, and the small chest serving as table was set before us, which by now we had come to know so well. Although we felt pretty down in the mouth because of our hunger and exhaustion, we pulled ourselves together, and

were on our best behaviour until the first servant appeared with food. To start with we were brought Tibetan tea, which we gulped down greedily. Then came the food, which, contrary to our expectations, was plentiful, for soup, meat, and sweets were set before us. We resisted the stupor which every movement engendered in us, and hurriedly swallowed down everything. After the meal we were offered a barley brew, called *chang*, which was of a greyish-green colour, but had a quite tolerable flavour. One can imagine what effect this *mélange* of solid, fatty, and fluid food had on our cruelly tormented stomachs ; it had revolting consequences.

Now the Jong Pen's wife also appeared, bringing her two daughters and son. Outwardly she was very different from all the women we had chanced to see so far in the villages. Her face and hands were clean and well tended, and beneath the garment in the style of a mantle and crossed below the breast, she wore a snow-white, long-sleeved blouse and a striped apron of very beautiful colours. Her hair was carefully braided, and, as usual with Tibetan women, was thickly smeared with butter. This smearing process is carried out once a month, and besides conferring an 'aroma' it gives the coiffure a special 'set'. On her crown she had a triangular parting, which is the mark of a married woman. I especially admired the long ribbons which hung from her hair down her back. In her case they were adorned with turquoises and pearls, but the daughters had only imitation pearls and silver coins. The neck and ear ornaments appeared to be very costly.

After the meal the official proudly led us up to his weapons and asked me to try them out. To my surprise I could discover nothing wrong with any of them, and in my admiration I tried to tell him so ; but the ammunition was rather old. The Jong Pen's soldiers, dressed in picturesque costumes, also came in, and we could not help thinking of Wallenstein's camp. Indeed, these distinctive fellows with their broad-brimmed hats decorated with coloured bands, and their knee-length wide-cut tunics, had quite a resemblance to the old-time German foot-soldiers. Their hair hung down in long rolls to their shoulders ; they had silver scabbards at their belts, and their sword hilts were studded with precious stones. Their breeches were rather like ours, and the points of the long, leather leg-boots turned up to a remarkable extent, almost like mediaeval pointed shoes. We gazed in amazement at our unusual surroundings, and after our fearful experiences in the wilderness we suddenly found ourselves translated to a world of fable.

As the evening wore on our hosts grew merrier. A lively Tibetan brought in his guitar, and soon with strange throaty voices they were all singing songs in quarter-tones. Finally, to the accompaniment of wild shouts and huzzas, a large board was brought in which looked to us like the wing of a door. A Tibetan sprang on to the board and performed a furious step-dance. This appeared to be the climax of the party. The onlookers stamped rhythmically in time with his movements and clapped their hands vigorously. Though we were feeling very much at ease among these cheerful people, it was high time for us to depart, for the food and beer were having unpleasant effects. Moreover, we were so tired that we could hardly remain upright. I unobtrusively made a sign to Edmund, we quietly slipped out and went across the street to our quarters. As soon as we got into the open air we had to vomit. That first night spent among human beings was a pretty bad time for us. We had gulped down the greasy food in vast quantities, and now we felt terribly weak. Neither of us had the night's rest we so badly needed, and we swore that next day we would drink nothing but milk. But of course we soon had to break our good resolution, for at ten o'clock next morning the Jong Pen invited us to breakfast. He must have obtained some information about us from somewhere, for his first question was whether we had anything to sell. I intimated that we had, though I was rather cagey about it, for our wits had been sharpened by all our experiences with Tibetans. From that moment he was the personification of courtesy.

After three days, in which we did very well for ourselves and regained some of our strength, we made another attempt to take our plans farther. We gave our host to understand that we wished to go to Gartok, the summer residence of the governor of Western Tibet, an official appointed from Lhasa, and asked him for a safe conduct. And as Shangsi was a lonely spot and we could not travel far from it without pack-animals, we circumspectly asked his opinion on this question. But evidently we were in too much of a hurry, and were touching on a very delicate point, for we had hardly indicated that we were intending to travel farther into the interior when his slanting eyes narrowed and turned almost horizontal. We tried to recover from this imprudence by promising him a gold watch in exchange for the travel permit. But in any case we were quite determined to go in the direction of Gartok somehow or other. At first the Jong Pen maintained a mysterious silence and dismissed us ; but the very next day he negotiated the purchase

of a horse on our behalf. We had already had to exchange one of our Gablonz 'precious stones' for two goats and twenty pounds of butter. He made a point of being present at the negotiations for the nag, and when we came to the question of price he gave his village friend the requisite sign with his hand thrust into the man's sleeve. Of course the price asked proved to be correspondingly high. We had to give not only the gold watch which we had wished to keep, but its gold wrist-strap too. The owner of the horse had no objection to the watch as such ; it ticked regularly with a quiet tick. But he did not altogether trust the gold, and began to peck at the back of the casing with a knife. As for the wrist-strap, it filled him with unconcealed distrust. Before our eyes he took it down to the river and rubbed it again and again with sand. Only when he was quite convinced that it was genuine was the deal concluded. The long chaffering was followed by a carousal with the inevitable barley brew.

We had made a material sacrifice to obtain the horse, but after our previous failures we now considered ourselves quite well off. In furtherance of our plans we had to have the two goats slaughtered ; this kind of execution is carried out by members of the lowest caste in Tibet. The slaughtering is done in accordance with a very distinctive, strict ritual which has been handed down from generation to generation for centuries. On religious grounds the utmost care has to be taken not to let a single drop of blood spill on the earth. We could not imagine how animals could be slaughtered without bloodshed, so we accompanied the two victims to the place of execution. This was outside the village, not far from a small brook. The slaughterer fettered the goats and laid them on their backs. Then he knelt down before one of them, cut off a few of the hairs on its belly, and threw them away over his head, murmuring "*Om mani padme hum*" the while. Then with the utmost unconcern he ran his knife up the skin of the belly, while the poor goat bleated fearfully. Through this incision he slowly ran his knife between the abdominal wall and the stomach and, after groping for a moment or two, thrust it with a lightning movement through the diaphragm into the heart. When the animal was carved up later on I was able to see how neatly this cut, which resembled a Roman V, had been made. As the result the animal bled internally. Now the real work could begin. The belly was opened up and the stomach and intestines removed. These were taken down to the brook to be washed by women and children. Meanwhile the slaughterer slit the

diaphragm from end to end, letting the accumulated blood flow into the eviscerated belly. If there is any stomach fat it is cut up small and mixed with the blood. *Tsampa*, salt, pepper, and other spices which I did not recognize, were added. Then all this mixture was kneaded into a pulp inside the belly. Usually the stomach is added, too, after being cleaned and cut up. About five inches of the lower intestine had been left attached to the anus ; this was drawn through to the outside, so that it hung down like a funnel. Meanwhile the main length of intestine had been thoroughly cleaned, and now it was drawn over the 'funnel', and the spiced blood pulp was slowly forced through into the length of intestine. Women and children sitting in a row passed the filling along with movements of two fingers of their left and right hands, until the casing was filled to the end. After the last bubble of air had been pressed out the slaughterer twisted the two ends, and it was cooked in a great pan of water. The result was a very good blood sausage, or black pudding. Meanwhile the skin was flayed off the goat and the carcass dexterously carved up.

Unfortunately, this little orgy of slaughter must have revealed that we were planning to make a getaway, for from now on we were closely watched. The Tibetans grew more reserved, and appeared to have been given definite instructions concerning us, for when I tried to induce a soldier to sell me a pair of strong leather boots he refused, despite my very attractive offer. On the sixth day of our stay the Jong Pen told us we would be well advised to go back over the Shipki pass to India, for there were too many robbers along the route we had in mind. We let him talk and smiled politely, but we were firmly resolved to let no one and nothing turn us from the course we had planned. But to make this possible we had to win the people over to a friendly mood, so we let it be known that in gratitude for the hospitality they had shown us we would give a wrestling display, as we had often done in the camp. The idea was Krämer's, and apparently he wanted to discover how strong he still was after our severe privations. Carpets were spread outside the Jong Pen's house, and our host with his family and his soldiers, plus the entire population of the village, were present at the display. The bout took a very unpleasant course so far as I was concerned, for Krämer turned unexpectedly rough and wrestled as though a championship title were at stake. To the great amusement of the onlookers I flew about like a straw doll, and thought it advisable to make an early surrender. To this day I don't know what possessed Krämer during

that bout ; possibly he was giving expression to the long-suppressed aversion from the witness of his days of starvation and weakness.

We had to obtain further stores of provisions for our proposed journey, but we could not do so too obviously, so we decided to play the doctor once more. Krämer let it be known that his friend was a very famous medico ; we got a clean linen cloth, spread it out, and arranged medicines and instruments on it. As on previous occasions, the people came running from all directions, and were fascinated by our medical equipment, which still included not only boxes and phials but a stethoscope, a hypodermic syringe, dental forceps, knives, scissors, and needles and thread. A coloured anatomical chart of the human body caused a great sensation. To avoid squandering our expensive medicines, we had prepared a remedy made of a meal dough, flavoured with Atebrin and salt, and coloured with permanganate of potash. We rolled out this lovely dough quite thin and cut it up into tablets, drying them carefully in the sun. We put these miracle-working tablets into genuine chemists' phials, to give our swindle the authentic touch. Apparently the village was swarming with sick people, for our 'clinic' flourished exceedingly. The most common ailment was a rheumatic colic, usually on the left side ; the reason for this is that when at work, no matter how bad the weather, they turn back their left sleeve and lay bare their arm and shoulder, while the right-hand side is left warmly covered. As we had no definite remedy for rheumatism in our store, we hit on the idea of melting down butter and medicating it with a tablet of Prontosil. We moulded this unguent in a Leucoplast box and left it to set. We applied it together with vigorous massage of the afflicted parts. The result was amazing, for the patients felt definitely better after a few treatments with the wonder-balm, and they repaid us willingly with gifts of butter, *tsampa*, and corn. Even a piece of dried yakflesh found its way into our provisions bag. During my examinations of patients I was thoroughly revolted to find that the villagers, like Tibetans generally, were badly infected with venereal diseases, frequently in an advanced stage. But we could not stop to undertake a complete cure with Salvarsan and silver nitrate, both of which we had with us. Edmund was unsparing with his caustic comments as I set my stethoscope against a patient's body, tapped professionally with my finger, or felt a pulse. Naturally, as I went through all this performance my mind was on quite different things ; but I gravely prescribed our patent lilac-coloured tablets, very urgently recommending that they

be taken internally and regularly morning, noon, and evening. All the same, while we were playing this farce I genuinely regretted that I was not a real doctor and could not prescribe better medicine. Medical help was terribly needed here, for no one ever visited these poor people to bring them such assistance.

When our store of home-made pills came to an end we declared the 'clinic' closed, much to the people's indignation. Our end was achieved, we had gathered provisions for the journey, sufficient in fact to last for five or six weeks. And now we planned an early departure. Although we had long since paid the purchase price for our horse, it was still in its former owner's keeping. After some bother we succeeded in getting it transferred to our yard. Nobody could put up any case against the justice of this request, but presumably the step aroused our guardians' mistrust. To allay suspicions we had officially agreed to return to the Shipki pass. Secretly we were intending to get away by night and go in the other direction, towards Gartok. Meanwhile, we were labouring to give the impression that we were thinking of remaining in Shangsi for several days longer. About two one morning we packed our provisions in bags which we had acquired, made of woven goat-hair, and in our rucksacks. We loaded them on to Jim, as we had named our small Tibetan horse, and quietly left the yard. As the village street was very sandy we got away without arousing any pursuit. We were feeling quite strong again, and had made such improvements to our ragged clothing as we could with the aid of wool padding. Only our faces indicated all we had passed through. Our hair had not been cut for six weeks, and we had remarkably luxuriant beards.

We had obtained very detailed information concerning the route, and this time knew the road pretty well. We moved swiftly, and kept up the pace, for we were anxious to put a good distance between ourselves and the village and get well away from any possible pursuit. Next day we had a brief rest in a deep ravine between loess cliffs, but would not risk lighting a fire. However, we had sufficient ready-cooked food to satisfy our needs, and Jim had enough to eat, too. We soon set out again, for we had to reckon with the possibility that we might be pursued and forced to turn back.

As evening was falling we stopped in open country for a moment to listen, and clearly heard the sound of horses approaching at a rapid pace. We made a brief attempt to get away, but quickly gave it up, and allowed the horsemen to overtake us. We at once recognized them as eight soldiers from Shangsi. We put on an air of

composure, pretended to be quite innocent, and asked casually if we were on the right road to Shipki. The men grinned and said no, and ordered us to go back with them to Shangsi. At first we objected and tried all kinds of subterfuges ; but as they were armed and not to be shaken off we put a good face on it and submitted with good grace. Under escort, two soldiers in front and six behind us, we marched mournfully back.

On our arrival the Jong Pen gave it to be understood that he was not 'at home' to us ; but I knew his house well and went in without hesitation, and found him after a while. Once more I urged our case and asked him to let us go. But, unfortunately, he was one of those incorruptible officials who are all too rare nowadays, and he was not to be moved even at the sight of a massive gold ring ornamented with a lion's head, which belonged to Krämer. So there was nothing for it but to agree to go back to the Shipki pass. As the good fellow was not unfavourably disposed towards us, I attempted to win some gain at least from our defeat. I refused to go on foot, and demanded that we should have two horses placed at our disposal. He agreed.

Before our departure next morning we were once more invited to share a plentiful breakfast with the Jong Pen. And during the meal he endeavoured to profit by this last opportunity to get possession of the lion's-head ring, which evidently had caught his fancy. In exchange he offered us provisions, and went so far as to raise his offer until it amounted to a whole horse. But now we could afford to disregard his wishes, for we were assured of two horses in addition to our own 'Jim', and it would be difficult enough later on to find provender enough even for him. When we left the official's house, we found two saddled riding-horses and Jim with our packs already waiting. This time we had six armed soldiers as escort.

Our road ran across rivers and along deep valleys. At times it was far from safe, for instance when we made the crossing of the Tsang-Po, at a spot where it had driven its way with elemental force through a hole in the cliff. The raging torrent shot into the hole and plunged in a thirty-yard-wide waterfall over the cliff face. The bridge across it consisted of only three boards ; but the horses must have been used to traversing such frail gangways, for we got across safely.

Close to Tiok (13,000 feet) four of our soldiers turned back. The vegetation hereabouts indicated that we were approaching India. In a small village we saw the first green poplars and apricot



trees, with still unripe fruit hanging from them. In our travels through the harsh Tibetan countryside we had not noticed that summer had already arrived.

Our ride to Shipki, the village immediately below the pass, took us six days. As we entered the place our soldier escort were given a very respectful welcome by part of the inhabitants, and they graciously accepted the milk which was in duty bound offered to them. The sergeant dipped his finger three times in the dish held out to him, sprinkled a drop of the milk over his shoulder, and murmured, "*Om mani padme hum.*" As usual, the soldiers were provided with food and drink without payment at the *tasam*, or relay station, which is under the village elder ; they were also supplied by the government officers, who possess travel permits for maintenance free of charge. On this occasion we, too, were given some of the milk, but it tasted as though it had been well watered. Even the sergeant was astonished at this circumstance. He angrily ordered the *tasam* official, a dignified old fellow, to come to him, and berated him furiously. Finally he set about the old man with his whip, and lashed him so mercilessly that the victim rolled screaming on the floor. One must suppose that the sergeant was anxious to let us see the power he had over the people ; but the sight disgusted us, and after Krämer and I had exchanged a word or two in German we decided to teach the brute a lesson. When he showed no sign of acceding to our request to stop the beating, but only struck the harder, we seized hold of him. We were all the readier to deal with him because he had behaved rather badly at our arrest a few days before, and nothing pleased us better than to settle that account. As he went on lashing the whimpering old greybeard Krämer strode up to him, tore the whip out of his hand and let fly with a mighty right hook to the chin, sending him headlong to the floor. With a flying tackle which Edmund had taught me while at the camp I seized the second soldier and gave him a punch in the stomach which put him out of action at once. The villagers stood looking on with impassive faces. What we had just done was far beyond their powers of comprehension, for nobody had ever dared to resist the soldiers' arbitrary behaviour before. As the sergeant slowly came to his senses Krämer deliberately drew his knife. But there was no need for further force ; the sergeant silently staggered out of the *tasam* yard.

Before we set off for the Shipki pass we had an excellent breakfast. Though the year was well advanced a snowy canopy still lay over the heights. The mountain slopes were densely overgrown with

wormwood. As we slowly climbed upward, the mournful melodies of the shepherds and shepherdesses reached our ears from the mountain pastures, and a gentle tinkle of cattle bells harmoniously accompanied the song. These sounds are bound up for ever with all my memories of the snowy Tibetan mountains.

At the pass, by a milestone bearing the inscription '200 miles to Simla', the *tasam* official, who had accompanied us so far, said good-bye. The grey-bearded old man made a deep and reverent bow to us, then lay flat on the ground. Unfortunately, we could not understand what he repeated again and again, in a loud, imploring tone. At the frontier between Tibet and India we halted for a moment, bitter and depressed. On the pass we found a great boulder on which others had written their names, and we added ours to theirs. We were crossing the Himalayas a second time, though now we did at least have a pack-horse to carry our baggage. We had been away from the internment camp for four months. What would we find awaiting us in India ?

## 11

WE HAD reckoned that we would reach the lower-lying village of Namgya in about four hours. The farther we penetrated into the valley, the more luxuriant was the vegetation. To the right of us, on the farther side of the Sutlej River, rose the 21,000-foot Riwo Phargyul mountain. As we travelled along the road we came across signboards very typical of India, bearing the letters P.W.D., standing for 'Public Works Department'. These indicate rest-houses in which government officials occupied with road construction can spend the night for a very small charge. Even servants, cooks, crockery and utensils, cutlery and petrol-burning lamps are available. This institution is very necessary, because of the great extent of main roads and the enormous distances between one place and another. As we had come from Tibet, and in addition had a horse and provisions, our arrival aroused no suspicions whatever. We took advantage of the opportunity, entered the rest-house, and were not disappointed. It was empty ; and as the Chokidar, the caretaker who looks after the place and keeps it in order, had no objection to a little baksheesh, we were able to stay there undisturbed. In the oncoming twilight the scenery was enchanting. In the valley below us the Sutlej poured wild and foaming over rocks, and beyond it

rose the mighty mountain, with its everlasting snow and glaciers glowing like fire in the last rays of the sun. We revelled in the warmer climate and the beauty of our surroundings, and felt a little more reconciled to our fate.

During the evening the village elder and a friend of his paid us a visit. We had entered our names in the visitors' book as Mr. Lift and Mr. Miller, and we passed ourselves off to them as Swiss. They both gave us a very friendly welcome, but we could hardly help noticing that our ragged clothing aroused some doubt as to the truth of our statements. We anticipated their questions and told them our packs and clothes had been stolen by Tibetan robbers and we had not yet had any opportunity of replacing them.

In the next village, Phu, we learned that plague had broken out in neighbouring Kanam and had already carried off forty of the inhabitants. The people of Phu were in a state of panic, and we exploited their fears by posing once more as doctors. They were very glad to hear it, and invited us to be present at the religious ceremonies which were to be held in the village to resist the plague and prevent it spreading to them. Thus we had the rare opportunity of watching one of their ancient dances.

It was an extraordinarily exciting and colourful spectacle. The onlookers, both men and women, gathered in a wide ring, and bowed reverently to the ground with their hands placed together in front of their foreheads while the devil-dancers stepped into the circle to the hollow, disturbing roll of drums. They were led by a specially striking figure garbed in blue silk, wearing an enormous mask resembling a bull's head, and swinging a long trident; the others wore grotesque, mis-shapen headgear like the heads of dogs, asses, horses, and all kinds of hideous animals with wickedly protruding fangs and horns—a truly ghastly sight. They held their arms outstretched, and in each hand they had wooden clappers with which they kept time to the rhythm of the drums. They paced round the circle once, then slowly, but at a gradually accelerating pace, they began to spin in dancing movements to the rising tempo of the instruments. They executed all kinds of figures, pirouettes, vaults and springs, until at last, in unison with the shrill, high tone of the furiously beaten drums, they passed into a prolonged, ecstatic whirl. Their glaring yellow, brilliant green, violent red and deep-brown garments, decorated with magnificent patterns, fluttered wildly; their sleeves, costly ribbons, and scarves tossed about in the air, making a weird and spectral sight. Then, quite suddenly, the dance

stopped, though the drums continued to rise to an earsplitting din which surpassed all belief, and the dancers vanished into the temple through the crowd, who swiftly made a way for them and again prostrated themselves.

Before we could recover from the profound impression this performance had made on us the sword dancers entered the ring. They moved with a monotonous, rhythmic step, their torsos bared, their heads adorned fantastically, and decorated with heavy earrings; each held a stiletto in one hand. For a moment or two they circled around in their rhythmic step, while the onlookers watched every movement with bated breath. Then each of the dancers thrust the fine point of his stiletto right up to the hilt through his right cheek, until the blade projected far out between his lips. The drums, which hitherto had been quite silent, began to rage; the dancers took a slightly curved sword in each hand and described figures of eight or half-circles with them in the air, while pacing round in very measured steps. The drums again increased in intensity of sound and rhythm; the men began to spin round on the spot, faster and faster, till the very sight, allied with the nerve-racking music, made one feel dizzy. Suddenly the shrill tumult of the drums stopped; but the dancers continued jerking, and in a flash had thrust both the swords into their abdomens. It was a sight gruesome and amazing. For not one drop of blood came from the wounds; not the slightest feeling of pain was expressed by the dancers; the only outward sign of their strain was that their faces and torsos were bathed in sweat. The crowd stood silent and watched in reverent awe, motionless under the spell of this amazing performance. My forehead burned, I felt feverish, I was uncannily disturbed by the unique atmosphere of this display and its setting. The sacred banners waved in the evening breeze, and the sweetish scent of the azure smoke which arose from the ring of incense burners almost stupefied my senses. I was mistily conscious that I had been witness of a sight that would remain imprinted in my memory for the rest of my life. . . .

To contribute our share to the mastery over the pestilence which this cult exorcism was intended to effect, we generously distributed Atebrin, of which we still had a stock of about four hundred tablets. We praised it as the finest and most effectual of remedies against the plague, and explained to the elder that we would be grateful if the villagers gave us a little charity, in money, for we urgently needed new things because of the loss of our clothing and



A Buddhist mendicant monk of Nepal, with *shambok*,  
*tsampa* sack, prayer drum and bell

In a Nepalese village





A breakneck  
bridge in a high  
Himalayan valley

goods. Also, the medicine was quite expensive. Though not everyone was able to give, the result of the collection was by no means inconsiderable ; we received sixty rupees. In addition, we finally parted with our lion's-head ring, which brought us in a further hundred and eighty rupees, so that our financial position seemed assured for the immediate future. In their joy at having done everything possible to keep the threat from their village, the people invited us to a sumptuous feast, at which we had a very good fill-up. Afterwards, while strolling through the place to have a look at it, we came across some houses built in rather unusual style, and even with wild grape vines growing over the walls. We found out that these houses had been erected by German missionaries who had penetrated to this spot, but had abandoned the station after all their children had died of disease. We saw their graves in the cemetery.

The same evening we left this village and slept in the open, to escape from the crowds of people who wanted to obtain medicine from us. It was high time we formulated a new plan ; it was certainly unwise to go on any farther at random. Through our privations in Tibet we had each lost some sixty pounds, so we tried to make up for the loss by consuming large quantities of eggs, butter, and milk, with a view to building up our strength again. We had no desire whatever to go back to the internment camp when we had lived so long in unconstricted freedom, hard though the conditions had been. We quickly had a new plan drawn up. Krämer recalled a good friend of his, a business man in Delhi, whom he had come to know during his career as a wrestler, and he felt sure that this man would be able and willing to finance our schemes for getting away. We decided with his help to try to reach the Portuguese colony of Goa and from there to travel to Portuguese East Africa on an Arab dhow. I liked this idea greatly, for I knew the Arab language and was quite ready to trust myself to them. My last doubt was dispelled by the imminent prospect of adequate financial resources. So now our immediate goal was to be Delhi.

But in our present state we had little prospect of getting there without difficulty or danger. We thought it over, and hit on the splendid idea of getting some village tailor to make us garments on the lines of missionaries' habits, such as are frequently worn in India. We could not have thought of a better camouflage ; and besides, a habit was exceptionally well adapted for concealing lots of things. At Chini, the next large village we came to, we set to work to carry out the plan. With our gallant Jim we went up to the

rest-house and stayed there, pretending we were Swiss missionaries. And in the village we soon found a tailor who, despite our shabby attire, worked for us with the greatest of respect once we had paid him in ready cash for his white cloth. We told him our habits had been stolen and described them to him, and made sketches for him to work from. He promised faithfully to do his very best for us. Two days later, after a few alterations had been made, the habits were ready; and we were decidedly pleased with his handiwork. We took the precaution of first trying them on in the bush. We had bought some shaving tackle, and now we gave each other a genuine tonsure; but we did not need to devote much labour to shaving activities, as our four-month growth of beard was admirably suited to the parts we intended to play. Clad in our new finery, we strutted about in the thick of the forest, and broke into a roar of laughter every time we looked at each other. We each exhorted the other to cultivate an air of good breeding and a decorous bearing. Edmund especially found this extremely difficult, and I had to train him out of the heavy rolling gait he had developed as a wrestler and get him to adopt a dignified and gentle step. But he, too, had plenty to find fault with in me, and so we practised indefatigably to the accompaniment of shouts of laughter. Krämer's left ear had been badly mauled in the ring, so we stuck some Leucoplast over it, to avoid its arousing suspicion. We spent a whole day practising our parts, till we had them to perfection. We paced backward and forward in the glade, and recited. By the evening our success was indubitable. Our movements were measured, and at times could almost be called graceful; so in our disguise we felt quite happy at the prospect of mixing with people. Jim was highly astonished at our new look, and took some time to realize that he still had the same masters.

At first we walked rather shyly along the road, and wore newly acquired sun-glasses to conceal our eyes. Fortunately, our shabby footwear was hidden by the length of our habits. But in fact we had really nothing to worry about, for people everywhere gave us a friendly welcome, as missionaries could expect. And as they made their way with their pack-horse along the Tibetan highroad into India the two white missionaries aroused no surprise whatever.

Just outside Rampur we fell in with a group of Indian prisoners. They were wearing handcuffs linked by an iron rod with a ring round their ankles, which made it quite impossible for them to escape. The sight of these poor wretches greatly upset us, and we breathed



more freely when we were allowed to pass the bar at the town entrance unmolested, indeed, almost with a courteous welcome. But this meeting left us feeling rather weak in the legs, and we moved on from that unfriendly spot as quickly as possible.

Now a remarkable early autumn landscape opened out before us. All along the road the golden hue of apricots glowed from the house roofs where they were laid out to dry. The people of this locality gather such a rich harvest of this fruit that they cannot make use of it all. Often it is left to rot where it falls, and only the small kernel is gathered, oil being extracted from it for domestic use. We had long been deprived of fresh fruit, and reached greedily for the largest apricots and stuffed our mouths full, which, however, was rather bad for the digestion. As we still had money to spare, we lived in style. One day we had chicken with rice and the next rice with chicken. We drank milk by the pint and demolished a small mountain of butter. Meanwhile we had got into our new roles so thoroughly that nobody dreamed that we were two adventurers who recently had been presumptuously wandering through the Tibetan wilderness.

At Tannedar, forty miles from Simla and nine thousand feet above sea level, we made a point of calling on a Mr. Stokes, an American missionary, who had lived in India for forty years. Over many years of laborious toil Mr. Stokes had developed a large fruit farm with more than 1400 trees, the fruit of which was carefully packed in boxes, transported on mules to Simla, and was in great demand in Delhi, Bombay, and Calcutta. He received us in Indian dress, and was just about to go out to weed the garden together with a group of Indian workers. With him, too, our habits had the desired success, especially as we had carefully washed them snow white in a brook. When we introduced ourselves to him as Swiss missionaries and said we had come from Lhasa, he amiably invited us to stay in his guest-house. While we had half an hour's talk a servant got a bath ready for us with two large buckets of hot water; after our past six months' experience we not only greatly enjoyed but desperately needed it. Unfortunately, our thorough wash did not get rid of the lice, which obviously felt perfectly at home with us. We spent four peaceful days on the apple farm, and when we departed the friendly American gentleman gave us a gift of money as well as a present of some of his finest fruit. Then, speeded on by his warmest wishes, we made our way down to Simla, the summer residence of the British Viceroy.

Now hardly anything went wrong for us. Our disguise took us everywhere, and we felt quite safe. Just outside the town, close to the Wild Flower Hall hotel, we suddenly met two very fashionably dressed young ladies on horseback. I readily admit that at the unexpected sight my heart beat faster, for it was long since I had seen anything so charming and cultivated as these two Amazons. But I took myself in hand and, as was seemly for a missionary, simply scrutinized them discreetly through my dark glasses. They had got well past us when I noticed that friend Krämer was still staring fascinatedly after them, intent on keeping the dazzling visions in sight as long as possible. I had to recall him to his senses. "Edmund, you can't stare like that, a man of God like you. What on earth are you thinking of?" We went on with a smirk.

We passed unhindered through the toll-bar at the entrance to the town. At Sanchauli, before we entered Simla, we sold our faithful horse for eighty rupees. The poor beast looked about to fall to pieces; his bones were sticking through his skin. We hired two rickshaws to take us to the Simla railway station. We had already taken our seats, were leaning back comfortably and listening to the shuffle of the bare, slapping feet of our coolies, their warning shouts to the passers-by, and the melodious tinkling of the bells when suddenly behind us a loud uproar and swearing broke out. We looked back in alarm, ready for the worst; but, fortunately, the hubbub was caused only by our nag, which out of habit had set off behind us at a trot. The new owner shouted and ran after him, and with the aid of some passers-by managed to catch the fugitive. Krämer and I did not feel at all happy to part with this faithful creature, who had shared our travels from such distant parts. But a horse could not be included in our plans, so we sorrowfully left Jim behind.

Krämer knew Simla from previous visits, and he told me in an undertone of all the objects of interest. The town is beautifully situated some seven thousand feet up on several ridges of the foothills of the Himalayas. As it was the summer residence of the Viceroy of India the place was swarming with soldiers and police. But we were not to be put out by this circumstance; on the contrary, when our rickshawmen tried to extract a double charge from us we made an impudent and indignant appeal to an English military policeman. Of course, he came to the missionaries' aid and helped us to get away with no more than the usual fare.

At the station we bought inter-class tickets, the price of these

being between second and third class, and climbed into the mountain railway, which left soon after. The view on the journey down was remarkable, and rich in variety, for the track runs for a total distance of fifty miles, and passes through a hundred and three tunnels as well as over viaducts, amidst magnificent scenery. Before leaving Simla we had bought newspapers, which we opened wide and 'studied', their main function really being to enable us to examine our fellow passengers through a small hole in the paper. We had no cause for alarm, so we gazed through the window and enjoyed the beautiful picture. Even the smallest of level expanses on the slopes was cultivated; the land dropped down to the valley bottom in terraces, which call for incredible exertions to keep them watered.

At Kalka, the first station, we had to change. Once more we ran a melancholy glance over the mountain landscape behind us. We were already missing the pure air of the heights, to which we had grown so accustomed, and, somewhat depressed, we mingled with the swarming crowds in the station. Although the first-class dining-hall was largely patronized by officers, we impudently walked in and ordered a meal. As, with devoutly lowered eyes, we sat spooning our soup, Krämer murmured to me as though muttering a prayer between the sips, "Terribly thin, this broth; and it's dear too." At this remark, which was so utterly at variance with our disguise, I had difficulty in maintaining my devout bearing; with my hands folded as though in gratitude for the heavenly refreshment I muttered back, "Eddy, be so good as to keep your mouth shut, otherwise I'll let fly." But Krämer was not prepared to behave himself. "Listen, I think they've forgotten to put in the rice!" he whispered, turning his eyes piously upward. This gay banter continued all through the meal, until I couldn't hold out any longer and, feigning an attack of coughing, I fled to the toilet to give vent to my laughter.

After the meal it was high time to return to the platform to make sure of getting seats in the train for Delhi, which was about to leave. We obtained places, and once more made use of the holes in our newspapers to study our immediate neighbours. We passed safely through Ambala, the largest military town in Northern India. The train had been packed with soldiers, but most of them got out here. During the night we had a little sleep, and arrived pretty fagged at Delhi next morning. Although the station was infested with military police and detectives in civilian dress we passed unnoticed through a small side door used by lower-caste travellers. The great test had

been passed, and we had no cause to distrust the effectiveness of our disguise.

## 12

IN THE street we were greeted with an earsplitting uproar. The tonga drivers were shouting noisily, attracting passengers to their two-wheeled one-horse vehicles; the hotel boys were as vociferous in recommending their houses, and the innumerable traders were screaming as though they were paid to make as much noise as possible. They shouted and screeched one above another. Beggars flocked around us in droves, and, after making our way through the noisy, colourful mob, we were genuinely glad to turn with our small cases into a little hotel close by the station, where we tried to get a room. We expected to be asked for our documents immediately, but as we pretended that we only wished to have a quick wash and change, they let us have a room for several hours without asking any questions. But, of course, we could not think of staying there, and we would have to find some other place. It was as clear as daylight already that we would not find it easy to stay in Delhi without identity documents.

Owing to the quite proverbial frugality of missionaries in India it occasioned no surprise that we carried our cases ourselves as we wandered across old Delhi to the New Town. Krämer, who had been here before, pointed out the noteworthy buildings and squares to me, and acted as guide. We had no need for hurry, so we roamed at our ease through the streets, gazing in admiration at the magnificent exhibits in the shop windows, at the bewildering street traffic and the energetic crowds of people. We tried our luck in one of the larger hotels of New Delhi, a place swarming with British officers of all ranks. The proprietor proved to be very accommodating, and cordially asked what we wanted, where we had come from, and where we were going to. We explained that we were Swiss missionaries and were travelling to our home station at Bangalore in Southern India. We had got hold of this name by chancing to remember that the words 'Swiss Mission, Bangalore' were stamped on the roof tiles of our camp barracks. The miracle worked. We engaged a room without being asked for identity papers; but we had to wait till the evening, as it was still occupied. All the same, we felt rather uneasy in the dining-hall, which was crowded with

military. And we broke into a cold sweat when we ran unexpectedly into one of the high British officers staying at the hotel. But the slogan 'impudence pays' proved true. We obviously played our parts perfectly, for everywhere we were greeted with the greatest of friendliness. One can imagine how we felt when one high-ranking British officer bowed courteously to the two 'missionaries', quite unsuspecting that he was paying his respects to two escapees from an internment camp.

In the room which we occupied that evening we both felt rather more secure. We had forbidden the staff to enter our room without knocking, because we were going to be greatly occupied with 'work' and 'meditation'. Each evening before retiring we washed our habits in the bath and spread them out to dry on the easy-chair beneath the great ventilator in the ceiling. But we soon got bored with staying all the time in our room. We were beginning to need money again, and our thoughts turned to ways of getting some. Finally we hit on the idea of obtaining delicately tinted sketches on ivory, picturing the famous places of India, sticking them on white pasteboard, and selling them. With a pile of these productions under my arm I boldly set foot inside the American military camp and disposed of the lot for a good sum. We grew more and more audacious, enjoyed ourselves in the town, and even visited a cinema.

But now it was time to think of our next step, and we decided to seek out Krämer's friend, who was one of the largest car-dealers in New Delhi. So that no third person should be present at the forthcoming talk with him, on the inside of a cigarette packet I wrote a note saying that his friend Krämer was here and was counting on his help.

I was received, introduced myself by a false name, and in the course of conversation offered Krämer's friend the packet of cigarettes in such a manner that he could not help reading what was written on it. He suppressed his astonishment, and only asked curtly where Krämer was stopping. I told him Edmund was waiting for me on the other side of the street; and, after some hesitation, he promised to bring two thousand rupees to our hotel room the following evening. He would give a sharp knock, open the door, and then behave as if he had inadvertently entered the wrong room. He would drop the envelope containing the money on the floor. Now I had to give him the name of the hotel, which I did not like doing, for from the first I had not been at all impressed by him. But there was nothing else I could do. So I left the beautifully furnished

house, expressing my thanks, but tormented with serious doubts. I went out and across to Krämer, and, just before drawing level with him, I dropped the newspaper I had with me. As I stooped to pick it up I looked back, and saw that our 'benefactor' had followed me into the street and was staring after us. In a neighbouring park I told Edmund how things had gone and the result of the conversation, and did not fail to express my scepticism as to his friend's good intentions. I told him frankly that there was still time to clear out of the hotel and to go into hiding somewhere. But Krämer felt quite certain he had the Indian's sympathy, and relied so much on his loyalty that I allowed myself to be talked over. I agreed to wait for the following evening, though somewhat reluctantly.

Unfortunately, my sixth sense had not played me false. We were fast asleep that night when I was awakened with a start, for a light suddenly lit up the room. There was a loud shout, "Get up, Krämer ; get up !" Before I could gather what was happening I was given a violent blow in the chest. "What's your name ?" someone bawled at me. I started up in stupefaction, to find myself staring right down the barrel of a 'six-shooter'. Without moving I squinted sidelong across at Krämer's bed and saw him sitting on its edge, an English captain beside him. Now it didn't take me long to guess what had happened. We had been betrayed. The room was filled with police ; we were both made to stand against the wall with our hands up. I whispered in German to Krämer, "We're done this time !" "Shut up and don't try any monkey tricks !" one of our guards shouted. As a matter of fact, tricks of any sort were the last thing we could have had in mind, for we were unarmed and outnumbered. Our dream of freedom was ended. As we were in our underclothes we were ordered to dress ; so we crept into our prim and proper missionary garb, which we had spread out to dry and of which we now for the first time felt ashamed. Hardly had we drawn the habits around us when the captain, the detectives and the police burst into roars of laughter ; luckily this eased the tension a little.

All the hotel had got up to see us taken off. The guests peered inquisitively out of their rooms to discover the reason for the nocturnal disturbance of the peace. Our room neighbour, a British chief of police from Lahore, stood disconcerted at his door, with only a dressing-gown round him, and stared at the pseudo-missionaries. The hotel proprietor, who had been so thoroughly taken in by us, pushed through the waiting crowd which had gathered on the ground floor, and presented us with his bill. But we drily told him

his best plan would be to send it in to the Home Office. The poor fellow looked thoroughly upset; but that was not surprising: he could count on having to face serious consequences, if only because he had not checked our identity documents, in itself a serious misdemeanour.

Outside, the 'Black Maria' was already waiting to take us at a dash to the nearby police station. The questioning we were put through was thorough, and lasted until the early hours of the morning. In few words we told the police officers of our flight and adventures in Tibet. We could tell by their faces that our achievements impressed them, but their respect did not prevent their locking us up in single cells, where we both had time and to spare to meditate on the sad end to our escape. I certainly did so, and I hardly derived encouragement from the words some Australian soldier had scratched on the wall, 'Once you've told a lie, stick to it.' As Edmund and I were separated only by a cell wall, I tried to make contact with him, and shouted, "Tell me, Eddy, how do we get out of here?" But Edmund only muttered that he felt no desire whatever to try another break-out. His friend's breach of faith had thoroughly shaken him and even robbed him of his usual self-confidence.

So I, too, accepted the inevitable and told myself that the most sensible thing was to wait quietly for whatever came along. Hardly had I fallen into a sound sleep when I was roughly shaken out of it and taken off for further questioning. No sooner had I got back and dozed off again when I was hauled out once more. This continued for two days and two nights. Then we were each brought a shirt and breeches, a dress which was about as good a match for the missionaries' buckle shoes which we had bought in Delhi market as salt is for sugar. Three days later, early in the morning, we were taken to the provincial prison. Our police gaolers generously thrust the missionaries' habits into our arms, but we had to promise not to put them on again. A small wicket door was opened in the ponderous steel gate of the prison entrance, and we passed through it.

We at once saw all the comical side of this situation, and made appropriate remarks to each other. On the left side of the prison yard were communal cells with grilles twenty-four feet high, behind which Indian prisoners were squatting. There were also single cells in low barracks, and in them we saw natives grinding meal between antediluvian grindstones. Then to the left we came upon a sign-board, 'European Ward', in English. A door opened, and as we

entered we saw a small, very well-kept garden, in which were three smaller houses, painted yellow. They did not look very inviting; but beggars can't be choosers, and we were glad that we were allowed to occupy one of these small houses together; it had four rooms. A high stone wall ran round the garden, with barbed wire and broken glass along its top.

We had been in this tolerable prison for some time when the governor turned up, to welcome the newcomers. To my surprise his face lit up when he saw Krämer, for he had known my friend before the war, having been an enthusiastic follower of his wrestling bouts. Of course this had a considerable effect on our treatment. It became noticeably better, and finally food was even brought to us from an hotel. But a prison is always a prison, so we hoped that our fate would be decided quickly. Meanwhile, one late afternoon we suddenly heard loud, heartrending screams and lamentations. When we asked the guard what it was all about he curtly explained: "It'll stop at 6 a.m. tomorrow morning. It's a man condemned to death." At this dry remark we both felt uncomfortable, as though a clammy shade had breathed on us.

We lived in our little house for some time, always taking the same walk round the little garden. Then one day we were informed that we were to be taken back to Dehra Dun. We were very glad to be leaving the gloomy precincts of this prison, but we were just as depressed at the thought of the constraint and compulsion of internment-camp existence. It was a real blow, and even Edmund, who was not easily downcast, was in the dumps. Before our departure our guards quite seriously asked us for our autographs. They seemed to think that this time they had had to deal with very special cases. Under a strong escort we travelled in the 'Black Maria' to the station, where the train for Dehra Dun was already waiting with two second-class compartments reserved for us. Here, to cap everything, a serious argument broke out. The officer in charge of the secret police, an enormous Pathan with pock-marked visage, insisted that we were to be transported in fetters, and called his assistant, who came up rattling handcuffs. This was of course a high-handed step, for we had not committed any crime, after all. Edmund and I had a quick talk over the matter, and agreed that we weren't standing for this degrading treatment whatever happened; if necessary we would resist it by force. We felt strong enough for a fight and were all ready for it, even if it did mean going under. I turned to the officer in charge of the escort, a young Indian



captain, and told him we should defend ourselves if anyone tried to lay hands on us.

The captain understood how we felt, and agreed that we were in the right. We had, too, the sympathy of the many bystanders, who had recognized Krämer as a great and successful wrestler, and were pressing inquisitively round us. In his capacity as transport commander the Indian officer gave the order that we were not to be fettered; the Pathan at once made objections and insisted that his own order was to be carried out. The captain turned to us again, and after much humming and hahing we gave him our word of honour that we would not try to escape. He ordered the police standing around to leave the compartment, and as he entered he smilingly put his pistol into his case. He had a difficult time with the secret police, but at last he managed to explain to the other officer that he himself, and he alone, was responsible for the transport and any consequences that might ensue.

As the train set off the public broke into an ovation for the wrestler, Krämer.

The journey was extremely pleasant, not least because of our good relations with the captain. Our word of honour completely satisfied him. He lay calmly on the bench opposite us and slept all the way to Dehra Dun. We took a taxi for the further five miles by road to the camp. As it was only seven in the morning the commandant's office was still closed. We were taken to the soldiers' canteen, and a plentiful breakfast was set before us. Although we were still outside the main camp, the news of our arrival spread like wildfire. After we had eaten we were taken to the camp lock-up, which could hardly have been called a prison even by the most spiteful. We were only fifteen yards from the hospital, and through the barbed wire we recognized some of our comrades and exchanged greetings. At ten o'clock we were taken to the commandant, under military escort. In front strutted the sergeant, we followed him, and another soldier brought up the rear. "Eyes right!" We drew ourselves up, the sergeant saluted, and there in front of us sat the almighty, with a large newspaper held up in front of his face. As he let it fall we noticed that our escape was reported in big headlines on the front page. Then we found ourselves gazing at his smiling face.

For more than an hour I had to relate our adventures to the commandant. Later, when he inspected our pack, which by now had very little left in it, he laughed heartily at the sight of our

missionary habits. But much as he sympathized with us and felt respect for our achievements, it was wartime, and by law he had to sentence us to twenty-eight days' confinement in cells. We still looked pretty wretched, and the medical examination which was ordered revealed that each of us weighed only one hundred and forty pounds.

In this respect our confinement provided an opportunity for us to recuperate. We were supplied with good, nourishing food from the camp, and the tommies, who felt a good deal of sympathy with us, generously provided us with beer and cigarettes. As we were condemned to 'labour', we helped a little in the sergeants' mess, and thus profited by the good things which fell to us from their table.

After twenty days this quiet life began to get on our nerves. So we sat down and wrote a petition in which we referred to our 'fitness for work' and asked the commandant to let us return to the camp. This request was given the O.K., that being the commandant's way of expressing his quite unofficial admiration for our exploits. At the gate our comrades greeted us with a concerted 'hallo', the band played, and the welcome-home feast which was organized exceeded in excitement even that of our farewell party. Innumerable comrades in the camp invited us to come and see them; we had to tell the story of our escape and subsequent adventures over and over again. We learned that soon after our own break-out four other groups, each of two men, had got away, with the same intention of making for Tibet; but they had given up as soon as they were caught. Even on the day of our own escape a German had slipped out of the camp dressed simply as an Indian. Now we understood why the police had given us so much attention.

After the excitement our return had caused died away and I had grown weary of telling the same story innumerable times, camp existence seemed even more monotonous and dreary than before.

## PART TWO



# 1

IT WAS not long before the compulsion and constraint began to get me down again; I fumed over the morning roll-call, and, as before, our outings were my only real pleasure. On one of these excursions I came upon a Tibetan trader and his family encamped beside the River Suarna; they travelled regularly between Tibet and India. I talked to the head of the family, a man named Tortchen, who was distinguished by a remarkably large tooth. He was suffering from a deep cut in the sole caused by a piece of broken glass, and he was very grateful to me for treating it; it quickly healed up. At that time I had no idea that I would come across Tortchen again later on, and that he would help to clear up the mystery of Schmaderer's death.

Again and again I gazed longingly at the panorama of the distant Himalayas, and recalled the land lying beyond them, the 'Roof of the World', where I had lived in freedom. And strange! Although that freedom had entailed such great sacrifice and had all but ended in our death, it began to attract and call me again. And soon I clearly understood that I would not be able to resist the pull for long. And there was something more: the last time we had gone off into the unknown. But now we had done the pioneering work, we knew the route and the living conditions of the country, and were incomparably better fitted to make preparations for a second flight. Those six months had shown what stern training, strong will, and great tenacity could achieve. I was hoping that by 1944 I would have accumulated sufficient money, equipment, and provisions to venture another dash to the 'Roof of the World'. Quite secretly, other comrades who so far had not had the luck to escape came to me to learn about my experiences in Tibet and the escape road. I had numerous offers of companions, and offers for my leadership went up to five thousand rupees. But I was not out for money. On my next venture I again wanted to have a well-trained, suitable, and sporting comrade with me. Edmund, who had begun to feel very comfortable with the good food and the peaceful camp life, showed very little desire to face new hardships.

I set to work to collect equipment. Whereas in 1943 it had been quite easy to buy warm underclothing or aspirin in the canteen, now

I met with decided mistrust, even in respect of small purchases. "Well, Hanne," was the common reply, "thinking of hopping it again?" As I had had much experience even on our first escape of the necessity to possess a large stock of medicines, I tried directly and indirectly to get hold of every possible kind of medical goods and learned from our hospital doctor how to use them. In addition, I now knew that the Indian rupee was valid in Tibet, so I tried to save a really large sum. On our first flight we had thoughtlessly set out without any ready cash at all.

The selection of a travelling companion was really difficult. In the end, out of all the candidates available I decided on Sattler, a centre-forward in another wing team, whom I knew to be a well-trained footballer and also very reliable as a man. When I took him into my confidence he promised to prepare himself very seriously for the difficult task before us.

Gradually, though with greater trouble than before, I completed the assembly of my equipment. Each day I had to go and fetch the rations, so I was every day on the road; in addition I was on very good terms with our barrack guard, a Sikh. So I was able again and again to smuggle articles out of the camp and hide them in a spot down by the river.

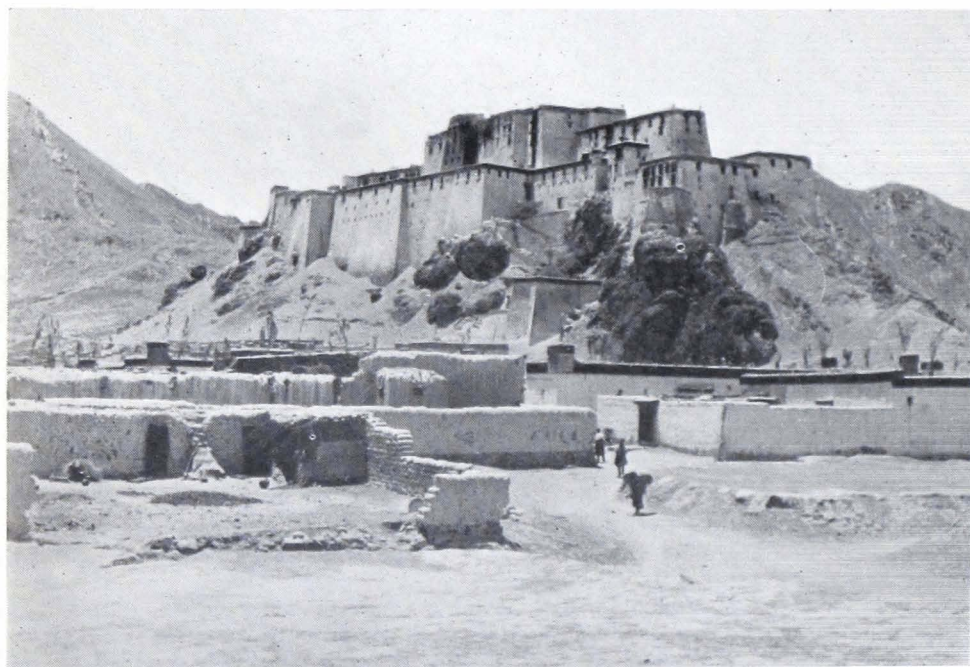
I knew that other groups were planning attempts to escape, and they for their part knew that I was again on the point of trying. There was general apprehension lest I should be the first to complete my secret preparations and should unexpectedly vanish, for if I failed it could be reckoned as certain that there would be a great tightening up in supervision, and the guards would be reinforced. So Krämer was sent as an intermediary to me, to propose that a joint break-out should be organized. The various groups kept their plans strictly secret from one another. Only one detail was generally agreed: we were to start in the spring of 1944. As my own plans were settled and I not only had great experience but knew the road to Tibet, I was not particularly interested in having other groups join with me. But now one man from each of the other groups, namely Magener, Harrer, and Aufschnaiter, came to me to open a general discussion. Finally we agreed to try a large-scale break-out, so as to give all an equal chance.

It was not easy to plan and carry through this all but impossible project. The maddest ideas were suggested, and when the days passed and no sensible solution was found we resolved to take Magener's advice and to flee disguised as Indian workers. The one

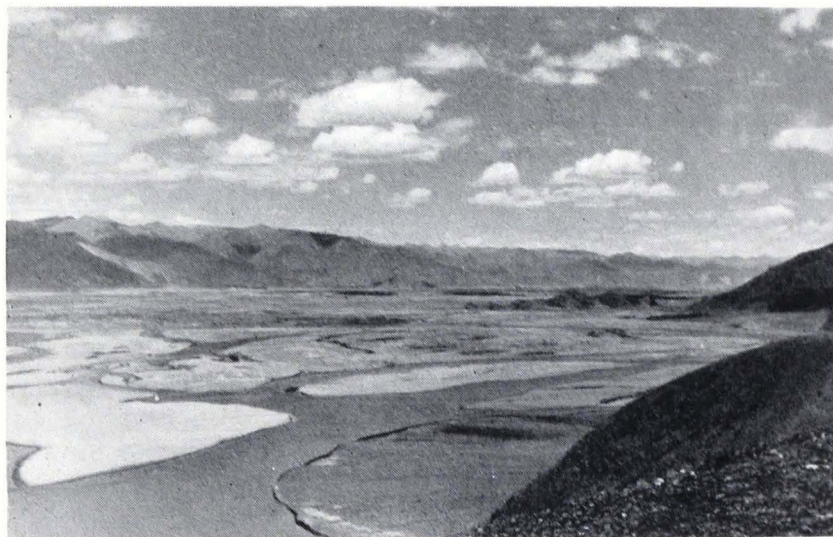


The yak carries everything in Tibet

A Tibetan monastery



River valleys  
of  
Western Tibet





stipulation I made was that my own date for the end of April was to be observed. In any other event I reserved the right to go my own way. Magener and his partner von Have, who did not wish to go to Tibet and who both spoke excellent Oxford English, planned to accompany our group as 'officers'.

Our camp consisted of seven wings, in each of which there were at times as many as five hundred men. These wings were separated from each other by paths which were patrolled again and again during the night. Between the wings a wide, always well-guarded camp road ran to the entrance gate. Some nights before the agreed day Harrer and I began to cut a thirty-yard length out of the barbed wire at a spot not so closely watched, and rolled it into a roll, which we hid in the garden. A bamboo fire ladder was decorated with splashes of lime and traces of tar, and thus transformed into a further piece of equipment for the 'working party'.

Sunday, 23 April, 1944, arrived. The commandant inspected the various barracks as usual, and I shall never forget the piercing look he gave me as he came to my bed. It seemed just as though he had knowledge of what we were planning. At eleven-thirty I was summoned to the camp-leader, who advised me not to try any nonsense, for from that day visits to the cinema would be allowed only on parole, this condition applying to all the wings. The warning was informative and indicated that among our comrades were possible traitors; for we had deliberately and 'strictly confidentially' let it be known that we intended to make use of the cinema party for our break-out. Now we were covered, and were determined to let nothing stand in our way in carrying through the daring plan. As a farewell gift the kitchen chef cooked two succulent cutlets for each of us, and months after, when we had been chewing dried yakflesh for some time, I remembered those cutlets with yearning.

As always on Sunday afternoons, that day sporting events had been arranged between the various wings, and the usual procedure was for a sergeant to collect the men from one wing and escort them to the other. Of course, on this very day the sergeant had to be late. My comrade, Sattler, had been sitting since midday dressed and with his make-up on, waiting for our sign, which we were to give him with a handkerchief waved from the roof of the poultry house just before we started. We hurriedly began to get ready, retiring to the tailor's shop, which was in a distant building. All our clothing, including the two 'officer's' uniforms, had been made by our tailor. The uniforms especially were amazingly well done. True, they had

to be made of ordinary khaki, but on the other hand the shoulder-straps and stars were the genuine thing, and even the tropical helmets carried original British army badges.

The theatrical hairdresser, who by profession was a modeller of masks, was of very great help. With a concentrated solution of permanganate of potash, which had been prepared in advance, we were thoroughly embrocated right up to the roots of our hair, and thus acquired a brown tint with which the whites of our eyes contrasted eerily. I laughed enthusiastically when I saw the others so completely changed, but I was quite startled when I looked at myself in the glass. Harrer, who had sacrificed all his red hair, looked particularly good. And when, to crown everything, a professionally wound turban, which had been made thoroughly dirty beforehand, adorned each head, we looked absolutely top-hole. My dress consisted of colourfully striped pyjama trousers; I had washed the bottom of my small bunk with them to give them the requisite hue, and they were plentifully decorated with splashes of tar. A filthy shirt hanging loose over the trousers completed my attire, and I could pass myself off as an Indian quite confidently. This dress was not likely to arouse any suspicion, for many of the Indian workers in the camp wore clothing given them by our comrades, and the articles included long pyjamas, in which they went around quite unembarrassed during the daytime.

The others, too, were now ready, and waiting tensely and impatiently for our comrades' signal. But they came back with the report that the football team was still waiting and the sergeant hadn't turned up yet. We suspected treachery, though we could hardly believe that any of our very carefully selected confidants had betrayed us, and we began to fidget. Time was pressing, for after 3 p.m. the camp came to life again after its 'well-earned' mid-day siesta. It was absolutely necessary for us to get away before then, to avoid some uninitiated comrade recognizing us. So we staked everything on one throw, gave Sattler the agreed signal, and went out. After all, what had we to lose now? Outside the camp freedom waited and beckoned; we had only to go out and meet it.

We thanked our helpers with a brief handclasp and strode swiftly through the previously cut hole in the wire. Aufschneider and Treipel carried the ladder; Harrer and I were in the middle, with the bamboo pole and its heavy roll of barbed wire slung across our shoulders. We were followed by the two 'officers', Magener

and von Have, who carried genuine officers' sticks and blueprints of the camp layout in their hands.

It had been arranged that Sattler, carrying his equipment, was to join us from wing six as we turned out of the side path into the main road. In fact we reached the spot devilishly late. We could already see the first coffee-bearers coming out of wings two, four, and five with their pots; as they passed they appeared to have no suspicion that their own comrades were concealed under the Indian costumes, for they looked at us without the least curiosity. That made us feel confident. But Harrer remarked, "Hanne, get the air out of your chest!" I contorted myself convulsively to draw my broad shoulders together and to reduce myself to the small build of an Indian, but I was not very successful. Now we were marching along the main road, but Sattler was nowhere to be seen. We could not wait: we must carry through our plan at a regular pace, without haste or interruption.

About a hundred yards from the camp gate Magener and von Have accelerated their step by previous agreement, to overtake us. Just before they reached the gate they halted, unfolded their blueprints and, talking animatedly, pointed their sticks in the direction of the Italian camp. As the 'officers' approached the soldier on guard came to attention, presented arms, and then shouldered his rifle again. While this was going on we 'workers' passed him; he took no notice of us.

We were just moving out into the highroad when we saw two Indian workers coming towards us; they were carrying a ladder, and were accompanied by a genuine sergeant on a cycle. Our hearts beat faster, but, keeping our feelings to ourselves, we went on marching away from the camp, again followed by the 'officers', who meanwhile had finished their consultation. Fifty paces farther on we came to the main highroad. Passing a toll-bar where a policeman was standing, we continued for a while quietly and steadily; then, at a command from Magener, we laid the ladder and the roll of wire down on the left-hand side of the road and calmly went across to the right, where we swiftly climbed a steep slope.

Up in the bushes the 'officers' removed their badges of rank, we shook hands all round, and then each set out to take his own road. Harrer, Magener, and von Have remained together; Auf-schnaiter, Treipel, and I started by going back to the other side of the road. We breathed more easily: we had achieved the break-out.

BUT what had happened to Sattler? Had he been betrayed? Had he been caught? We ran down the slope to the river and, still in our disguises, scrambled over the rubble of the dry river bed, which took us some ten minutes. On the opposite bank I found the things I had concealed. We picked them up, then took one more backward look to make sure we were not being followed. Suddenly an Indian started out of the jungle and ran at a fastish pace straight towards our hide-out. As he came nearer we were about to take to flight when a short, sharp whistle halted us. Beaming with joy, we recognized Sattler by his rather peculiar gait. We laughed at the sight of him, for he was quite fantastically got up. He was spattered with tar from top to toe, his skin was dyed a dark brown, his features were concealed behind a huge moustache, and he even had a genuine Indian pigtail hanging down from the back of his turban. He came bounding towards us on his long legs, an enormous tar bucket on his head; he had cunningly hidden part of his pack in it.

He briefly told us that after waiting for an hour and a half for the signal he had given up hope and had prudently taken cover. Then suddenly he had been told of the signal, had snatched up everything to hand, had run right along the main road to overtake us, and, thanks to his really excellent disguise, had got through the gate without difficulty. Now all was well, and I felt happy and looked forward to our experiences to come. Once more we had made it and gained our freedom. We swiftly assembled our things and set off.

Aufschnaiter and Treipel hurried on ahead; they planned to wait for us just outside Mussoorie. Since on the previous occasion I had had some unfortunate experiences in taking the road to the Jumna River, I followed the route which Aufschnaiter had struck out. As I went along I suddenly noticed that Sattler had vanished. I was beginning to get anxious when he caught me up and proposed that we should take a rest, for he was fagged out. But at this early stage we simply had got to keep moving pretty fast. So I took his rucksack, threw it over my shoulder, and went after the others at a swift pace. Sattler followed. I found Aufschnaiter and Treipel waiting for me at the agreed spot. Sattler had vanished again, and I was beginning to get fed up with him. I told the others to go on

slowly, since I knew the way as far as Suakoli, where we had to turn off. After some minutes the missing Sattler caught me up and announced that he simply could not go any farther that day, he had cramp in his legs.

My fury slowly got the better of me. Without saying a word I took some water from our flask, and with the soap which each of us carried in his trousers I set to work to massage Sattler's footballer calves. During this procedure I gave him energetically to understand that he must pull himself together if we wished to get away. Now that we had entered into partnership I was prepared to stand by it. But it surprised me that the man I had put all my trust in was letting me down so badly and so soon. If I'd taken a football with me, I thought venomously, he might have been the first to arrive in Tibet.

Now our road ran up and down hill, through deep valleys and over lofty breasts of land. And the going began to be really hard. Sattler again began to flag, and gave up altogether. And so, unpleasant though it was, since we were only a day's march from the camp, I had my first, serious quarrel with him. I realized to my horror that this time I had not chosen a suitable comrade as companion. It transpired later that his failure was due to his not having done enough training. While we others had gone climbing up and down the mountains carrying rucksacks heavily loaded with stones, in order to get used to the difficulties, he had sat beside a camp-fire in the valley and watched our exertions. I gave him another thorough dressing-down and appealed to his conscience. Then we went on.

In the twilight we caught up again with Aufschneider and Treipel, who, as previously arranged, were waiting for us at the high-tension pylon beyond Mussoorie. We continued along the road for a short distance, then turned off eastward behind a school building. We marched all night through hilly country. Just before dawn, in a small spring we tried to scrub off the brown dye with soap and sand. But our efforts were almost fruitless: the permanganate had been too concentrated, and the dye lurked in all our pores. As we could not scrub so hard at the sensitive skin around the eyes and inside the ears, we looked frightful and were speckled with deep brown patches.

In the early morning we took cover behind a high pile of rocks thickly overgrown with thorns. We ate corned beef and dry biscuit and then tried to get some sleep. But the danger was still too great for us to rest quietly, and moreover the lair was not large enough

to accommodate all the four of us, for we were all of pretty hefty build. We placed a ban on talking, and communicated with one another only by signs. As evening came on we left our hide-out and warily crept in our tennis shoes up the slope and down the farther side. We made good progress, and Sattler seemed to have pulled himself together.

A little way before we reached Suakoli we suddenly saw four forms squatting motionless on the road. We prudently came to a halt some distance away. We had agreed that in the event of any danger one of us would creep forward to spy out the situation, or the district, while the others took cover and waited for him. On this occasion it was my turn. In broad moonlight I crept through the undergrowth towards the figures, and found that they were four tightly filled coal sacks standing on end. Relieved and amused, I took my report back to my comrades, and we confidently walked past the four 'sleepers'. But meanwhile the dogs of Suakoli had caught scent of us, and began to bark madly in the still night. Aufschnaiter and I, who were used to that sort of diversion, were not alarmed, but the other two were seriously perturbed. We cautiously passed through the village in single file, close on one another's heels. From here we could look far down into the valley, where the lights of our camp were twinkling.

It was difficult to find the way in the darkness, and for quite a time we groped about helplessly, until suddenly at a crossroads a penetrating stench floated out from a house, and Aufschnaiter called a halt. "The road turns off here," he quietly whispered. "There was a foul stink here just the same last year." From now on we went steadily downhill to the Agla River. During the descent we took deep breaths of the spicy scent of the pine forest which stretched on both sides of the slope. The bridge we had to cross was bathed in moonlight. We went into hiding on the edge of the forest, and waited for a while. Against the dense blackness of the meadows we could discern the white of several tents, but we could not discover whether they had any occupants. Now it was Aufschnaiter's turn to spy out the land. He quickly returned and said they were probably the tents of the construction service, and the workers were asleep. So if we were very careful we could get by.

We slipped past in our socks and got across the bridge without difficulty. After groping around for some time we found shelter under an enormous thorn bush on the slope. But as the morning light grew stronger we realized to our horror that our lair was

completely isolated, and the leafy roof was far from extensive enough to conceal us and our packs. Day had come, so it was impossible to leave the shelter without great risk. Finally we improved matters by breaking off all the branches within reach ; with the bandages from our medicine chest we tied them so cunningly to the thorn bush that the result was a good, thick, camouflage. But we still had no rest, for flock after flock of sheep began to pass the bush. The animals always paused to tug at the branches which we were anxiously holding in position, and we thanked our lucky stars that there was no dog with them, for then we would have been routed out immediately. We breathed freely when darkness fell and at last we could go on our way again. After a nourishing light meal we resumed our march. It was a beautiful path along which we now climbed upward, the scenery grew more and more luxuriant. In the moonlight we recognized the purple blossoms of rhododendrons, standing between firs and deciduous trees ; in the pale light of the moon their splendour seemed unusually subdued. The narrow path wound steeply in many curves round the mountain, until we reached the Chur pass. From its height we took a last look back from the northern side down to Mussoorie, whose glittering lights gleamed through the moonlight. During our descent the moon was hidden behind a mountain, so we went stumbling over scree and earth banks in total darkness and were frequently forced to use our torches. Yet this path, which had been trodden by innumerable pilgrims, was at least findable by groping. Without making a sound we crept down in our tennis shoes, until morning broke and we again had to turn off the path and take cover in the dense jungle. Here we experienced our first cold night. To sleep on the ground as we had been doing was no longer possible ; we had to use the tents as ground-sheets and wrap ourselves in blankets.

Still only half asleep, we were alarmed by the sound of loud, sharp steps in the silent night. We started up, thinking that military police were on our tracks and were making so much noise in order to frighten the by no means infrequent panthers. Unfortunately, from the spot where we were camping we could not watch the road, as it was too far off. Then, at a turn the light of a pocket torch shone out, and the firm step came steadily nearer. We could tell by the gait that it was not an Indian. Could it be Harrer, making his own solitary way over the Chur pass ? There could be no doubt, it must be he ! Now quite sure, I ventured to give a short whistle and call. And we were not deceived : Harrer came with long strides through

the jungle towards our voices, until he reached us and we greeted him joyfully. He proposed that we should go on a little farther, for he knew the district from his first attempt to escape into Tibet and said there was a brook in the vicinity ; we could draw water from it for boiling. True, our flasks were still full, but the prospect of a fire and hot tea induced us to go with him. We set off and climbed about three-quarters of a mile down the hill, to a place where the jungle was thinner and a brook ran along. Not far off we heard the cry of a panther ; but the spot chosen was safe enough. So we unpacked our things, gathered some wood and made a fire, very glad of its warmth after the cold night.

We had hardly settled down again when quite unexpectedly two Indians came along the valley. In our alarm we remained squatting quite motionless, kept as still as mice, and only hastily attempted to put the fire out. But they had seen us already ; they turned and hurriedly disappeared round a bend in the path. We had to get cracking. We swiftly gathered our things together, destroyed all traces of the fire, and scattered up the mountain like hunted animals. We passed the day in a state of great nervous tension, lying sleepless beside our rucksacks. But once more all went well, for nobody came after us. Only as dusk was falling did we strike the pilgrim way again and go on. Harrer, the individualist, took the lead ; but he went at such a pace that we could not keep up with him, and Sattler hung farther and farther behind. A short rest was organized, while the straggler caught up with us ; and we again had to exhort him to pull himself together.

As in our view the danger zone ended somewhere close to Kopang, it was decided not to light another fire until we had reached that village. Towards morning we took cover in a thorn bush close to Nakori on the Ganges. But once more we had made a mistake in the darkness, for our hide-out was only twenty paces away from a watermill. But by resort to clever camouflage and observing strict silence we remained unnoticed. We slept till dark, and after a forced march reached the temple town of Uttarkashi. From now on I knew the route to Tibet, I was travelling along an old, well-known road. We slipped through Uttarkashi in the shadow of the houses and the temple. We also passed the *dharmasala* from which the previous year Krämer and I had made our escape. As in this district the pine forest was much thinner on the right-hand bank of the Ganges, we had to seek our hide-out for the day far from the pilgrim way and high on the ridge. We rested all day in profound mountain



solitude among enormous rocks. The following night we travelled over the route along which Krämer and I had fallen in with the large flocks of sheep and had done battle with the dogs. This time we got past easily, and marched, spears in hand, through Bhatwadi and Bhuki, a place consisting of only a few huts.

Just as we reached the last hut, walking in broad moonlight, a dog barked and an Indian started out of the door. Terrified by the unexpected sight of four white-faces, he threw up his arms, ran back into the house, and shouted, "*Ghori!*" (Whites). We hastened our steps, and were going all out to get away from this potential threat, when a new obstacle barred our road. On the right-hand side of the track a powerful bear was squatting.

We went on, one close behind another, like the seven Swabians, with our spear-heads pointed forward, and did not know whether to risk a mass attack on the animal or take to hiding and wait for it to depart. But the noise of our steps appeared to frighten it, for as we drew nearer the giant ambled hurriedly into the jungle.

As we could not hope to reach Manganani that night, we slept through the next day in the jungle not far from the place. Closely hemmed in by the surrounding heights, the houses lay in a narrow defile, through which ran the pilgrim way. We had to go right through the place if we wished to continue in this direction, yet we realized that it was sheer madness to attempt it. All the same we made our dangerous way past open shops and stalls without adventure. But beyond the point where the road ran across a bridge, shepherds were encamped with their flocks and numerous dogs; the spot was anything but peaceful, so we decided to wait till midnight, when everybody should be asleep. But even at that late hour the dogs were still on the watch. A whole pack attacked us, pursued us as far as the bridge and forced us to a desperate defence. Of course, the shepherds were aroused by the hubbub, and in spite of the darkness they must have recognized us, for loud in the night the shout arose, "*Ghoris* have gone by!"

We fled on at top speed, but just outside Jhala there was a repetition of this incident, and once more our progress was marked by excitement, barking, and a furious fight with the watchdogs. We crossed the bridge close to Harsil in moonlight; this was the spot where Harrer's flight the previous year had been brought to an end. Now all was deathly still, not a soul was to be seen. We slept in the forest, started up again betimes, and reached Dharali early in the evening. Outside the *dharmasala* great fires were burning, and

around them muleteers and their animals were trying to get warm. As there was still a lot of activity going on in the village, we sent Treipel on ahead to spy out the land. Unfortunately, his report was not very reassuring. There were lots of people about, and he thought he had seen two policemen. So we remained in hiding; after midnight, observing great caution, we were fortunate in getting through the place.

At Kopang, the next village, we again reached the important crossroads where the roads to Gangotri and Nelang diverge. Now we had little further reason to fear pursuit, and so we took a long rest in a very secure spot.

We were awakened by the early rays of the sun. For the first time since the unlucky 'tea-party' in the forest, we lit a fire and made some tea. So far we had had amazing luck. We were so cheerful and felt so safe that, in the hope of finding more in Nelang, Auf-schnaiter and Treipel ate their last stock of food. Now the path climbed steeply, hewn out of the cliff or crossing deep ravines. Before long we were only three miles from Nelang (11,000 feet). But our hopes of food faded, for as we went on we found everywhere the fresh tracks of asses and the imprint of Tibetan boots. The dung which the asses and yaks had left was at the most a day old. If Tibetans were already in the village the prospects for us were not very bright.

It fell to me to go ahead and prospect. I climbed a ridge from which I could survey the village. Smoke was rising from a farm, and I was able to recognize eight tolerably harmless-looking Tibetans, who had made themselves comfortable. I did not think them dangerous, so we decided to take up quarters in a yard at the farther end. Deep snow was lying everywhere, and even the terraced fields below the village were still partly covered.

In the hope of obtaining something eatable from the Tibetans we paid them a visit as soon as we arrived. But we gave up any such idea when we saw the wretched, ragged creatures, who themselves hardly possessed the veriest necessities. Unfortunately, it was not possible to visit all the farms; if we had done so the news would certainly have been spread throughout the countryside, and that would have greatly damaged our reputation during our further advance.

Sattler was the one most affected by the disappointment. He simply could not reconcile himself to the idea that he had concentrated all his energies and had faced so many dangers just to

camp out in the open in a filthy farmyard. While we others, despite our grumbling stomachs, tried to accept the inevitable, he began to complain bitterly, told us he felt sick, and incapable of going on any farther, and was resolved to turn back as soon as possible. All further attempts to encourage him were fruitless. He sat there completely broken and silent. Sattler's revelations took the heart out of the others to quite an extent. Their expressions were peevish and the 'deserter' had obviously affected them. It was vital to get them out of this mood, so I fished in my rucksack and brought out a pound can of bacon which I had been keeping in store, as well as some army biscuits. These were smashed into crumbs, but they tasted delicious. We shared out the rations on to our aluminium plates, drank some hot tea, and discussed how we could get hold of more food. After all, we were escapees, and there was a war on. We considered ourselves perfectly justified in resorting to self-help, and using any means necessary. There was nothing we could do here in Nelang, but perhaps in the little village of Yadhung, about a day's march away according to the map, we might achieve something.

The previous year I had passed to the north of this place, and hadn't entered it. Obviously it was risky to go into the village on the off-chance and hope for a solution to our food problem. But we had to do something if we wished to conserve our strength. We also considered the road to Gangotri; but it was probable that the temple guards had already arrived there, so we held to Yadhung.

In the grey morning light Treipel and I set off with empty rucksacks, leaving our comrades encamped in the farmyard. Nobody had yet trodden the road to the north, no tracks were to be seen anywhere. The map gave two other place-names, Tirpani and Dusumdu; but, as I knew already, these were only caravan halts, with nothing more than stone walls erected for purposes of protection. We went past them, but lost our way in a side valley, and had to turn and march back through the softened snow. We lost precious time, but we went on seeking the spot where the path had branched off. After two hours' march we came to a half-frozen brook and followed it until great snowdrifts prevented any further progress. The sun was already low, and soon it would be sinking behind the peaks. We had nothing to eat, nor covering to protect us from the nocturnal cold. None the less we decided to go on and, if we could not reach our objective, at least to return to our starting-point the same night.

Treipel was thoroughly depressed, and seemed to have little hope left. I tried to amuse him with diverting stories from my own experiences, and make him realize that really we were only at the beginning of our adventures and probably would have much finer ones to come. But he grew more and more monosyllabic, and at last was completely silent. As the sun sank the cold grew more intense. Just as darkness was falling we scrambled to the top of a hill to take one more look over the valley. Unexpectedly we saw our labours repaid: deep below, in a low-lying, twilight spot, we could see seven houses half buried in the snow. We hurried down joyfully and reached the place before night had quite fallen.

We were lucky to have escaped the cold and the snow. The village seemed uninhabited; only a few snowcocks started up anxiously as we began to search the first house for something eatable. Our greatest expectations were surpassed: the store chamber was crammed with corn, *gur*, a jar full of oil, rice, cloth, and materials, tents, ploughs, pots, pans; in one corner we even discovered a narghile and a stock of tobacco. We immediately lit a fire, cooked a large pot of rice and *gur*, and ate our fill. Then the narghile was brought into action, and after each of us had taken a couple of draws we felt thoroughly cosy in the friendly warmth. Treipel had recovered his spirits and was just about to lean back comfortably when, as he changed his position, with his long legs he sent a pot over. It broke with a crash and a cloud of reddish powder went flying about the room. Sneezing, and with streaming eyes, we fled into the next room, for the damned pot had been filled to the brim with paprika powder, as we later realized.

When we were able to see again we searched the house even more thoroughly; in the course of it I discovered an old Czech revolver, unfortunately without ammunition. Treipel chose a *kukri*, a Nepalese knife, for his own defence. Then we made up our beds beside the fire.

Early next morning, after a darned good sleep, we made tea with *gur* and ate the rest of the rice. We packed some food in leather sacks we had found, as well as in our rucksacks, and went out heavily loaded. Treipel had lost his hat some days before, and in its place he took one of the towels we found to wind a fantastic turban round his head. At the crossroads, which we would have to pass later on our way to Tibet, we concealed our sacks under large boulders, and only took a little of the rice and *gur* for our comrades to eat at once. The provisions we had collected would last for at

least three days. We were extremely cheerful and pictured our friends' delight when they learned of the hidden booty, and cooked their first rice after days of going hungry.

But our happiness was soon disturbed again, for a Tibetan monk, whom we had seen before in Nelang, came along with his ass. We hurriedly fled up the slope, for, apart from some miserable juniper bushes, there was nothing behind which we could hide; but the Tibetan did not notice us, so we were able to continue quite quickly towards Nelang.

A loud yodelling greeted us as we came over the scree not far from a stream which we still had to cross. I attempted to announce the happy outcome of our special expedition with a similar loud and joyful yodel; but I could only produce a true Berliner roar, and it was good that Treipel was able to help me out with all the strength of his lungs. By the tone of the yodel we had immediately recognized Harrer, who meanwhile, after a solitary march, had again made contact with our comrades. Great was the joy as the rice cooked over the fire, for Aufschnaiter and Sattler were as hungry as wolves. Yet neither our plunder nor the news of the hidden provisions could persuade Sattler to continue. He had quite made up his mind to turn back at once. We could survive his defection, but as he had to have his money contribution back a considerable hole was made in our common treasury. Harrer asked me if I would be willing to go on together with him; I readily agreed.

The Tibetans seemed to have settled down for a long stay in Nelang, so the same evening we discussed our further course. Next day, after Sattler had left us, provided with food for his journey, the four of us set out again.

We reached the cache of food in the evening, and spent the night in a stone kraal situated in a valley not far from Tirpani. My proposal that we should take the shorter route over the pass to Puling was approved, especially as the previous year I had come to know the other route only too well. Because of the deep snow and the continual climb the way was very hard going. Again and again we laboriously plunged through snowdrifts, and broke through to hard ground. We began to suffer, too, from the rarer air. Our legs felt like lead, we found it more and more difficult to breathe. Worst of all, Treipel showed every sign of mountain sickness; he suffered from dizziness and headaches and at last sat down on his rucksack, completely exhausted and as white as chalk. I knew that close to the top of the pass was a snowcap shaped like a sugar-loaf. Harrer and

Aufschnaiter offered to climb up and get the prospect from this vantage point. As we knew that in Dharali Harrer had been supplied with an abundance of food by an Indian friend, when they were both out of sight I took the liberty of opening his rucksack and giving Treipel some spoonfuls of sugar from it, to help him on to his feet again. He also ate some fat ; but the oil which we had found in the jar had made us feel ill : it was probably only for oiling gunlocks and barrels.

Meanwhile, Harrer and Aufschnaiter returned from their reconnaissance and reported that the descent on the farther side of the pass was still deep in snow and not negotiable. So for good or ill we had to turn back. In the afternoon we again pitched camp in the stone kraal, with the intention of setting out at first light next morning to traverse the old road which I already knew. On the way we came to the dangerous spot where Krämer had slipped and almost lost his life. Soon after, we began the climb up to Changkok-La (16,000 feet). Now we were moving along dangerous paths and up steep, snowy slopes ; we took breath only with difficulty and our progress had to be reckoned in terms of single steps, while our hearts pumped violently. But by midday we had made it ; we stood at the top of the pass, which was the gateway to my third crossing of the Himalayas.

### 3

UP HERE we felt the wind blowing from Tibet ; we sat on the stone wall and enjoyed the view of the enormous mountains. The *mani*-banner was fluttering in the wind, and Aufschnaiter, who was an old expert on the Himalayas, gave us the names of the peaks which towered above us, beyond Kamet and the Gangotri range.

After the first stretch, which led us down over softened terrain, we chose to rest inside the same stone wall behind which Krämer and I had attempted to get some sleep, shivering with cold, wrapped in our scorched blankets. This year we were better equipped and did not have to look for apricot kernels in the dung. We had a storm-tent, woollen blankets, and food, and so we were protected against the cold.

As the snow had not started to melt, the River Op was still very low, and we crossed it quite simply in our birthday suits. When we reached the other side we struggled shivering into our clothes, but

the climb up the mountain soon warmed us again. Every time we lay down to rest I thankfully enjoyed the security of the tent, and thought with vague horror of that first adventure, when Krämer and I had had to spend night after night in the open. Then our hair had been stiff with rime, and it had taken us hours to drop off into the fretful sleep of exhaustion.

The mighty loess landscape which was now presented to our eyes in all its manifold aspects brought my comrades to a halt again and again in astonishment, and even I, who had seen it before, was affected. One really seemed transported to another planet. The road to Puling plunged into a narrow ravine, the fearful cliff walls rose absolutely perpendicular on either side, and there seemed no visible end to this 'street'.

This year we found the inhabitants of the small settlement not so shy as before. Women and children came out to stare at us inquisitively. But their welcome was rather less hospitable. Presumably our poverty-stricken appearance decidedly detracted from the aura which we as whites possessed. But the people were all the more astonished when Aufschnaiter exploited his knowledge of Tibetan.

We sought out the house of the village elder to pay our introductory call; but we did not make him any gift, as is the custom of the country; perhaps for this reason, we were relegated to the small room of an empty hut. To get hold of some food we haggled and chattered over a he-goat, for which we finally had to pay the excessive sum of twenty-five rupees. We knew we had been rooked, especially as the animal was very old, but as we had to eat we paid up. After the transaction was concluded the seller thoroughly tested our money for its genuineness. Only then were we allowed to lead away the goat; but even that was not achieved without some excitement, for the seller's wife flung herself like a fury on the animal and attempted to drag it back into the stall, so that Harrer and I had to drive her off by force. We slaughtered the goat right outside the village, but not according to the protracted Tibetan ritual; we were too hungry to pay any regard to the feelings of the inhabitants.

We were refused an ass or other beast of burden for the journey on to Duchang. So once more we threw our bundles over our backs and set off on foot. The road led downward; we crossed the Op yet again and then climbed up in zigzags, following the course of a small ravine. Up on the plateau the wind was blowing with a

whiplash edge ; on the high Tibetan uplands it blows steadily from about ten in the morning till five in the afternoon. At times it howled so furiously that we could not hear ourselves speak. The evening came on, and it was time to pitch camp. But we could not use our tents, for the wind would have carried them away. By chance we found a deep hole, some five yards broad and eighteen feet deep, a little way off the track. Without doubt it was an animal trap. But it was highly welcome to us, and when we had gathered sufficient of the spongy roots to light a fire, with the aid of our bamboo sticks we let ourselves down one after another into the hole. In the descent we had one stroke of misfortune : as Harrer's leather sack struck the floor of the hole we heard a sharp, hissing sound, and smoke poured up at once : a well-packed store of matches had caught fire.

Apart from its howling, we were no longer troubled by the wind down in the hole. We spread out our ground-sheets and blankets, wrapped ourselves tightly in them, and spent a relatively tolerable night.

Passing numerous *chorten* on the way, next day we approached Duchang. This time we found a man and five women there. They were friendly, and for a goodly sum sold us some dried cheese, which, however, was so old and hard that it thoroughly upset our stomachs. It might well have been made in the days when the Jesuits settled here, in the sixteenth century.

Unfortunately, during this period petty squabbles arose among us from time to time, and so, when Aufschnaiter and Treipel were not ready betimes with the cooking and packing next morning, Harrer decided not to wait any longer for them. The road was hardly to be missed, and apparently the other two seemed quite happy to come on alone. They promised to follow us.

So Harrer and I went on through the fantastic loess region towards Chabbrong Jong. Again and again we halted to wonder at the remarkable rock formations. As we were standing we heard a tinkling of bells, which swiftly drew nearer. Suddenly two mounted Tibetan soldiers appeared ahead of us, and energetically indicated that we were to turn and go back to India at once. They must have obtained information concerning us from somewhere, for their attitude was very determined, and they even laid their weapons on the saddles in front of them while they talked to us. Now, for the first time, the revolver I had found at Yadhung rendered good service. I swiftly drew it out of my left-hand trouser pocket, threw



it like a juggler into my right hand and slipped it into my right-hand trouser pocket, but held it so that the barrel was clearly discernible beneath the cloth and the soldiers could see that it was pointed at them. In a flash they turned several degrees more accommodating, then had a talk between themselves, and finally rode off without saying another word to us. But after this meeting we hastened our steps, just in case. We also decided we should turn off the track and seek a hiding-place in the loess immediately we heard the treacherous tinkle of bells again. We halted several times to listen. But we were not pursued. I thought again and again of Aufschnaiter and Treipel, and wondered whether they had been forced to leave Tibet.

At midday we reached the dried-up water-course. Once more I saw the gigantic monastery rising like a mountain over the countryside, once more the *mani*-banner fluttered in the wind. Everything was as it had been on my first visit. We reached the village of Chab-brong Jong by the afternoon. The Jong Pen seemed to be at home, for a servant led us straight up into the courtyard. But there was only a Tibetan woman to receive us, and I recognized her at once as the wife of the Jong Pen of Shangsi. Though she gave us a friendly reception, I could see quite well that she was wishing us a hundred miles away. She apologized for her husband, who, she said, was away on a journey. In her capacity as his deputy she showed us the customary hospitality, so we had no reason to complain of our reception. While we were drinking tea and eating sweetmeats, I noticed that the right side of her face was disfigured by a large herpetic scab. In my capacity as miracle-doctor I at once offered my assistance, prescribed Mitigal, and guaranteed its success. She was very grateful for my attention, and brought me some dried meat and milk as a thank-offering. Naturally, I made use of my knowledge of the district to acquaint Harrer with the layout and spaciousness of the monastery buildings. We ascended along the magic pathways, climbed up the steps hewn in the loess, penetrated into holes which once had probably been monks' lodgings and whose ceilings were so sooted up with the everlasting dung fires that they shimmered as though covered with a layer of black lacquer. Finally we came to the enormous building containing the gigantic Buddha; I brought Harrer to a stand right in front of it. "That's my old friend of last year," I reassured him as he started back in alarm. But, as time was pressing, just as it had been the previous year, we did not stop. Next morning we reached Puling.

Aufschnaiter and Treipel had been completely lost to our knowledge, and we began to be afraid that something had happened to them. But unexpectedly, just as we were pitching our tent not far from the monastery, we saw them both coming along at a brave pace. There was room for a second tent, and we decided to call on the lama immediately. True, after my last year's experiences I did not have much hope of results from this visit, yet we felt that in any case we ought not to leave anything untried. Aufschnaiter, who knew the country and people incomparably better than we, thought it important to provide ourselves with a *khata*, a white silk or cotton scarf, since it was the custom to produce one when approaching a high official or dignitary with a request. In addition a present of money was necessary; in special cases resort is also made to sheep's knee-bones. By the manner in which these variously shaped bones are laid out, the official can tell at a glance what supplementary presents will be offered to him. One side represents a sheep, the second an ass, the third a yak, and the fourth a horse. It is very important to know these differences perfectly, as an error can be decidedly expensive. Since I learned all these things I have come to have a tremendous respect for bones, and have never wanted to have anything to do with that kind of symbolic gift.

Again and again a great crowd of Tibetans gathered round our tents. I thought I recognized certain faces from my previous visit, and they, too, seemed to recognize me. But the first question asked was always concerned with our further movements. In our answers we avoided revealing our objective. Suddenly the ring round our tents parted, and through the gap a perfectly hideous figure came striding dignifiedly. He was some secular official. All his face was corroded with pock-marks, and the bald cranium above this loathsome countenance gave me the creeps. He came brusquely up to us, asked what we were doing there at all, and told us to go back to India as quickly as possible, the very next morning. We let him talk, waited till he had departed, then went to the monastery to ask for an audience with the lama. In the course of our walk through the corridors to his private house we had to have the Cerberus on his long chain dragged out of our way.

In the outer courtyard we asked for the lama's cook, for we had been told that he could provide us with a *khata*. We entered into negotiations with him, and for five rupees he let us have one from his own stock. Now we were conducted to the verandah I had seen before; the beer-garden chairs on which Krämer and I had sat and

waited with very mixed feelings were still standing there mournfully. This time we were taken straight to the lama.

As soon as I entered the room I realized that the high office had meanwhile been transferred to another person. Aufschnaiter stepped forward and laid the *khata* on his tea-chest, uttering the customary words of greeting in Tibetan. Faintly smiling, I recalled my first visit to this room and Krämer's far from suitable words of greeting, just as sincerely meant, none the less. Despite the lama's inscrutable Asiatic features one could see that he was astonished at this speech made in fluent Tibetan.

We took our places at the chest-tables, the tea was brought, and before long conversation was in full spate; though on our side it was maintained entirely by Aufschnaiter. All the same, we soon realized that the lama was not at all well disposed towards us and replied to all our carefully presented wishes, requests and entreaties with the words, "You must go back to India tomorrow." All the arts of persuasion were of no avail, even asylum was refused us, the lama was not to be moved, and we left the monastery without achieving the least success.

Meanwhile still more Tibetans had gathered round our tents, to watch with very unfriendly eyes every movement we made. Even as we approached we realized that the atmosphere was very tense and that the pock-marked gentleman was the instigator of it all. But before we came to any decision what to do we went quietly to a hut some twenty paces away, to prepare our food. We were in the middle of baking some flat bread-cakes when we heard a loud murmuring outside, and a crowd of Tibetans thronged around the house and even took possession of the small hole through which the smoke should have passed. We demanded that they should at least leave the doorway free, and were quite serious in this, for instead of the usual yak dung we were using damp wood for the fire, and the room was filled with unpleasant thick smoke.

But the blighters would not listen to us, and one man even dared to come in; he swung his hands about aggressively and loudly demanded that we should go back to India. As I had had experience of the mentality of these people, I resolved to give him a lesson and intimidate the whole crowd. I unexpectedly stepped up to him with a threatening air, at which he grew still more rabid and almost spat rather than spoke. That was too much of a good thing. I gave him a well-aimed blow on the chest, which sent him sprawling back into the crowd. Now it was essential to take them all by surprise.

I could not expect Aufschnaiter to help me with his fists, for he was a man of the pen ; and Harrer, who could have come to my aid, astonished me by holding back. But Treipel gave me magnificent support. In a second we were out of the room and running through the gaping crowd, who in their bewilderment at our vigorous onslaught forgot to put up a fight. With one bound we landed in our tent. I snatched up my revolver, Treipel seized his ghurka *kukri*. Thus armed we dashed back down the ten-foot slope, straight towards the crowd. It was a case of enforcing respect for us once for all, since if we did not succeed we should 'lose face' and be delivered into their hands for better or worse. We stood there with resolute mien and raised weapons. The crowd had quietened down, and even the mischief-maker, who had drawn his sword, let his arm drop and withdrew with the people into the monastery. The way was open, so we were able to join Harrer and Aufschnaiter and finish baking the cakes. And high time, too, for we were famished.

As we were again sitting in our tents the high official himself reappeared with a retinue of six men. In an excessively friendly manner he asked me whether I possessed a weapon. I said yes, at the same time giving him a friendly smile and smacking my pocket, where the outline of a revolver was clearly visible. He opined that of course I would be willing to sell him the weapon, to which I gave a decided negative. I knew the Tibetans generally were greatly afraid of firearms. With this shooting-iron in my pocket we would have been spared a great deal of trouble on our previous journey into Tibet. When he realized that I had no intention of giving up the revolver voluntarily, he warned me against using it and, still smiling courteously, withdrew with his retinue.

We spent the night in our tents, taking every precaution. We were ready for any surprise, but were determined not to be beaten. Early next morning we spoke again to the lama and asked once more for the *lamiak*, the permit to continue our journey in an easterly direction. The most he would concede was a travelling pass through Shangsi to Shipki. So our astonishment was great when in an access of generosity he declared himself ready to put a pack-ass at our disposal, while he expected us to do the journey on foot. There was no doubt that here they still remembered the way Krämer and I had deliberately taken a 'wrong route' and were determined to forestall any such 'oversight' this time. At any rate, by comparison with last year the lama had made us a princely offer, much more than I had expected. Indeed, it was the utmost that this

dignitary could concede to us within the bounds of his jurisdiction and powers. He was also of great assistance by giving us a letter ordering that everywhere we were to be sold provisions. We still had some tea, barley, salt, and *gur*; but these would not last long, so this order was of much value.

The two ass-drivers presented themselves early next morning; each wore a sword, and so they had a warlike appearance. They knew the entire district like their own pocket. We avoided the suspension bridge, and crossed the river where it ran immediately below the monastery; here it was only three-quarters of a mile wide and the water was barely knee high. Our packs were carried across by two men, while the drivers led the small asses in zigzags through the ford. We came safely to the other side, and continued our march along the undulating, deeply eroded path through the loess landscape. That evening we reached Piwang, and next day we passed two villages which were completely deserted. We spent the night there, and on the third day arrived at Shangsi without further trouble. Everywhere I was met by familiar faces, acquaintances who bowed to me courteously. We were offered a lodging in the empty room of a farm. The Jong Pen was still away, and was represented by a deputy. To my surprise I saw his wife, who meanwhile had returned from Chabbrong Jong. Since our last meeting her facial eruption had completely healed, and in her gratitude she gave me a supplementary gift of a piece of meat, for which I had to thank her effusively, though it stank horribly and was fit only to be thrown away.

The Jong Pen's representative, a comparatively young man, left rather a rough impression on me. Yet our reception was as hearty as it had been the previous year; and in fact, against our expectations he declared himself ready at our request to give us a travelling pass as far as Gartok, the chief town of Western Tibet. We had not dared to hope for this, so we returned cheerfully to our quarters, to draw up our plans for the future. While we were talking things over and soberly weighing up our chances, our conversation was continually disturbed by a shrill squeaking coming from the next yard. We followed the sound and found a completely blind woman, who was devotedly turning her prayer-wheel. Besides working this wheel with one hand, with the other she was swinging a *manichor*, a smaller type of wheel which can be swung easily and kept rotating by a short chain weighted with lead. The large *mani*-wheel connected up with a wooden drum containing thousands of

small scraps of paper with *Om mani padme hum* written on them. Every time the wheel turned these 'prayers' were set in motion, thus becoming as good as said and increasing the believer's prospects of passing into a higher stage of being at her next reincarnation. To the movement of the two wheels the old blind woman was adding her oral, 'O jewel in the lotus bloom'. Thus, above all else by her endurance, of which I had already been a witness the previous year, she was assured of taking the best road to a privileged place in Nirvana.

After a peaceful night's sleep we were full of hope when we went to see the Jong Pen next morning. But the friendliness which had so greatly astonished us the day before had all but evaporated. He told us curtly and laconically that he could not give us a travelling permit to Gartok. This was a serious blow. But we hoped to achieve our end by other means, and offered him one hundred rupees for the permit. That did make him rather more friendly, but we were no more successful in our object, for his vaguely indicated offers referred to the farther side of the frontier which we all regarded as the extreme limit of any concession we would make. He probably read my thoughts, for at the close of the interview he said again frankly and cynically, "If you dare to move out of here secretly by night I shall have you brought back by my soldiers and publicly whipped."

We were not to be intimidated by such threats, but all idea of flight was out of the question, for Aufschnaiter had fallen seriously ill. He lay silent and lifeless, wrapped in his blanket, and none of us could tell what was wrong with him. He seemed to have some kind of diarrhoea, together with high fever, and he quickly lost strength. Hardly had we returned to our lodging when soldiers arrived to notify us that next day we were to be escorted to Shipki. We pointed silently to our sick comrade; but evidently they thought Aufschnaiter was simply pulling a fast one in order to delay our departure.

Early next morning three armed soldiers did turn up to escort us on our journey. But Aufschnaiter was far too weak to travel. Anyone could see he was ill, and that we were not putting on an act to secure postponement of the decision. But the Jong Pen's deputy himself quickly came in his own estimable person to turn us out, threatening us with serious punishment if we did not go at once. We bottled up our resentment and only regretted that we were no longer in the position to offer this callous wretch a gold watch or

some other valuable. Presumably some such gift would have appeased him. Harrer did still possess two gold sovereigns, sewn into his trousers. But, although the situation called for sacrifice, he did not offer to hand them over.

We were given only an hour in which to pack our things and get ready. As I did not want to leave anything untried, I went once more to the Jong Pen's deputy, to obtain from him a horse for the sick man, if nothing more. I promised to leave him a large supply of medicine if he granted my request, and, supported by the woman I had cured, pressed our case until, though very reluctantly, he ordered a yak to be made ready. I then obtained permission for us to remain one more night; poor Aufschnaiter spent it in a high fever, and racked with pain.

But next day we had to leave. Clenching his teeth, with our help the sick man dragged himself out and climbed on to the animal. Two yaks carried our packs, an armed man went in front, two horsemen brought up the rear. Silent and glum we journeyed back through the loess mountains, for this seemed to put paid to our Tibetan journey and to bring the end of our freedom much nearer. That evening, in Kinibkuk we were attacked by swarms of stinging flies, and their molestations almost drove us mad. Aufschnaiter especially suffered indescribable torments. Our morale had fallen pretty low, for we realized what lay before us after this joyless beginning to our retreat.

For the next stage we hired horses, to spare our own strength and make swifter progress. Wherever we stopped the people thronged around us, giving us unfriendly looks. One day, as I was attending to our pack, a young woman came up and suddenly spat at me. My reaction was so swift that she received a hefty box on the ear before she could get away.

Towards evening we pitched our camp in a loess cavern of a small cave village. Exhausted with the exertions of travel, Aufschnaiter soon dropped off into a deep sleep, and woke up next day feeling much better. We continued down to Nad Tsang Po, where we saw a picturesque abandoned monastery but, unfortunately, had no time to visit it. We had a fatiguing descent of some three hours, then crossed a bridge consisting of three planks, beneath which the river foamed between narrow cliffs. We halted for a while to admire this superb sight.

Then the path climbed up again and wound over a lofty plateau of enormous extent, only to plunge a little farther on into another

deep ravine. We spent the night at a spot where there were two deserted huts in the valley. As we had used all our drinking water one of our escort climbed up the steep mountainside and brought down a kerchief full of old snow, with which we brewed tea over a fire we had prepared. At Luk, which we reached at noon next day, I managed to negotiate twelve pounds of butter, at which Shonton, as our escort commander was named, asked in astonishment what we intended to do with such a vast quantity. "You'd like to know!" I replied in German, with a laugh. In fact, we had agreed that we would give our guards the slip that very night and, if at all possible, take the road to Gartok, which branched off just here. But the blighters remained wakeful and so prevented our putting the plan into operation.

For the climb up to the Shering pass we had hired fresh horses. But we could have avoided this expense, for, as the road ran first upward and then steeply downward, we had to cover half the journey on foot, since in Tibet it is forbidden to ride horses downhill. As we went we cut the stalks of a vigorously growing plant rather like rhubarb and chewed them. Apart from this the vegetation was scanty. Only wormwood covered the levels and the slopes.

After a difficult climb, leading our horses up the last stretch, we reached the top of the pass (15,000 feet), and had an amazing view in both directions. It was like surveying another planet, so extraordinary was the loess scenery, with its bizarrely shaped mountains and cupolas, its maze of valleys, craters, and ravines. These mountain formations, tinted brown and red, with the grey of the rocks overgrown with rare patches of thorn, stretched away to infinity. On many of the high peaks snow was still glittering. To the left of us the Himalayas towered, quite primeval of aspect, with peaks rising to eighteen and twenty-one thousand feet. But our situation did not allow us to take much pleasure in the view, and we said hardly a word to one another as we continued the journey.

At Maya in the late afternoon the villagers gave us an amazingly friendly welcome. Women handed us fresh flowers, which we had not seen for a long time, and gave us *Chang*, the Tibetan beer. After living so long in the harsh Tibetan countryside it was a feast for the eyes to see once more a peaceable strip of earth, with apricot trees in flower, and the brilliant green of small poplars standing out attractively against the fruit trees' darker foliage. We thoroughly enjoyed our stay amid this gentle spring scenery, and among the



friendly people of the little village, and for a brief while were reconciled to our fate.

We left these paradisaical surroundings only too soon. A little beyond Maya an avalanche of stones almost swept us off the path. Probably owing to melting snow, some rocks began to roll down, sending other, larger boulders before them, until a whole landslide was thundering down the slope only a little way ahead of us. We climbed arduously up the mountainside to get round the dangerous spot. On the way to the next village, Tiak, by order of the village elder women carried our packs as no horses were available for transport. As is the custom in these parts, they bore the whole burden by a girth running round their foreheads, with the weight on their back, but so arranged as to be borne mainly on the back of the neck.

Soon after we began the steep climb up to Shipki. As we were crossing a mountain stream Aufschnaiter lost his wrist-watch. He noticed the loss at once, and as the casing was waterproof there was some hope that if the expensive article were found it would be undamaged. But at first the search about the stony bottom of the river was fruitless. He greatly treasured the watch, which had already accompanied him on expeditions to Nanga Parbat and on other Himalayan journeys, and when a bearer offered to enter the cold water he promised him ten rupees, which was a considerable payment for us. The man was successful; after searching for a few minutes in the icy water he fished out the watch. He accepted the ten rupees joyfully, and the lucky owner was just as pleased, for the watch was still ticking steadily and seemed quite undamaged by its bath.

Shipki is very beautifully situated in a green valley. Here we enjoyed a rest of four days. I saw and was greeted by many familiar faces. As we were to go on without an escort, I took advantage of the soldiers still being with us and commissioned Shonton to obtain an ass for Harrer and myself. He was successful in his negotiations, and although this cost us eighty rupees we did at least have a tough and serviceable riding- and pack-animal at our disposition.

Shonton and his men left us during our third day in Shipki. There was no reason why they should stay any longer, for there were only two ways out of this place: back along the road we had come, or forward to India. We began the descent to India, entering an increasingly mild zone as we travelled. Instead of rocks and scree slopes we now more often saw pastures and the green of juniper

bushes. Everywhere great flocks of sheep were grazing completely without supervision ; they would remain on the slopes and high uplands until their owners came back with the documents needed to grant them entry into India.

Far below us rushed the Sutlej River. Travelling along a very narrow mountain road, after a steep climb we came to the Indian village of Namgya. We were refused lodging at the rest-house at first, but we larded palms and so obtained a room. The old caretaker, and the village elder also, both recognized me at once. I did not put such a bold face on things as I had the previous year, for the business with the missionary habits had obviously not been beneficial to my reputation.

#### 4

Now it was high time to decide what we were going to do next. Harrer and I were in favour of pushing back into Tibet, but Treipel had decided to return to Rampur. Aufschnaiter said he would accompany his friend as far as the suspension bridge by the village of Phu, then he, too, would try his luck again in Tibet. Harrer and I had a dangerous descent down to the Sutlej, to cross it right below Namgya and so avoid the road back over the pass ; we had to take this new route if we intended to cross the Spiti by the great bridge. We had sufficient provisions for three months ; and we hoped that our ass would be able to carry some at least of our property.

We set off again in good spirits. But we were to have little joy of the ass. Even during that first descent he gave us much trouble ; he fell down and we had to take off the leather bags and carry them ourselves. On the farther side of the Sutlej the path, very narrow, wide enough for only one person at a time, ran up to Trashigang, a cliff monastery. We slowly toiled upward, leading the animal by the rein. But he was a bitter disappointment ; he revealed no trace of that sure-footed instinct which usually distinguishes his race on that kind of breakneck path. About halfway up he took a false step and rolled, together with our pack, some thirty yards into the depths. He would have carried on right down to the Sutlej if a clump of juniper bushes on the steep slope had not caught him and saved us from the loss of all our possessions. He hung helplessly over the abyss, and we had to go to his rescue at the risk of our lives.

We climbed down very carefully, freed the unfortunate beast

from his unpleasant predicament, and got him to stand on a small jutting spit. As the scree gave way underfoot we had to be extremely careful how we tackled the task. First we drew our sacks back up to the path with ropes. Then we had the more difficult job of hauling our donkey, which was still trembling all over, right up the steep slope. We tied long stretches of goathair rope together, expertly fastened one end round the ass, and after two hours of really hard labour, one of us pulling, the other pushing, we succeeded in zig-zagging him back to the path.

Fuming, and at the end of our strength, after this annoying interlude we reached the monastery as twilight was falling. It clung to the side of the cliff like a swallow's nest. After our exertions we felt no desire whatever to look at the building, so we pitched our tent at once beside a small pond. From here we had a magnificent view across the river to the Gangotri peaks, below which Badrinath lay ; the Shri Kailas peak also thrust itself up ; on my first escape I had not had a sight of it because I had followed the river valley. The villagers proved to be very friendly and brought us firewood. We did not ask for food, as we had enough of our own.

Confident that we were not threatened with pursuit, we passed a peaceful night. The moon was high in the sky when we lay down to sleep, and the distant mountains looked as though dipped in molten silver. Of course we missed our comrades, with whom we had journeyed so long together ; but we were still in a cheerful mood and spent some time forging new plans.

Next day we continued our journey towards the River Spiti. From now on we had to steer our course by the map, as neither of us knew the way. Even in Nako, Tibetan influence was unmistakable. The *Om mani padme hum* was chiselled in gigantic letters and painted black in the red cliff. We also came across numerous *mani* walls from ten to twenty yards long. These walls are constructed of single stone tablets bearing religious inscriptions, and are embellished with horns, on which ancient sacred texts are engraved. Prosperous travellers and merchants order these tablets from village stone-masons, and lay them on the wall during one of the minor festivals ; thus, as the years pass, the walls grow bigger and bigger. Some of them were up to a hundred yards long. According to an old tradition they must be passed only on the left side. The deeply trodden paths at both ends testify to the fact that this ancient rule is strictly observed ; even the animals are quite used to it. I often tried to ride past on the right side of the wall or to lead my horse that way. But

I never succeeded. The animal resisted, planted his feet firmly together, or attempted to swing round and get to the left side.

Just as in Tibet, here the houses were one-storeyed and with flat roofs. Even the people, who were quite friendly to us, revealed Tibetan influences in their clothing and their human type. High up the mountain stood a large single-storeyed monastery.

An interesting sight in this village was a gigantic *mani*-wheel with a diameter of some six feet and standing fifteen feet high, decorated all over with colourful paintings. A very old man was working this monstrosity, which had a shape reminiscent of an enormous gimlet. Evidently the old fellow considered it his main task to go on turning this wheel monotonously, for he had pitched his camp of Tibetan blankets and a sheepskin right beside it. The villagers provided him with an abundance of food, for he was performing this labour in the public interest, so to speak. The faster and oftener the wheel turns the more prayers rise to heaven on behalf of the inhabitants of the village.

Before we left the Spiti River we passed the spot where one of the most famous of German mountaineers, Ludwig Schmaderer, was murdered. This was in the same valley, close to Davo. Schmaderer and his comrade Paidar broke out of Dehra Dun in 1945 and took the same route as we had as far as Shangsi. They were turned out of Tibet, purchased an ass at Shipki, and returned along the Spiti River. Just outside Davo they separated: Paidar looked for a suitable spot in which to pitch camp, while Schmaderer climbed down into the village, to buy some food. As later legal proceedings revealed, Schmaderer met with a hostile refusal everywhere he tried; so to get the people more into the mood for selling him something he took out a coffee tin in which he had about a thousand rupees in cash, as well as watches and rings. Laden with food, he climbed back up the hill to join Paidar at the camping site. On the way four men stopped him and offered him more food. While three of them held his attention by spreading out their goods, the fourth struck him down from behind. Although wounded, he defended himself energetically; but in the end he succumbed to superior force. They stripped him of everything he had and threw him into the raging river, to conceal all traces of the crime. In their greed they did not notice that they had been observed. By chance a Tibetan was grazing his ass higher up the slope; he witnessed everything, and was able to tell about it later.

His friend's failure to come back disturbed Paidar, who sat up

all night and indicated his whereabouts by frequently yodelling and shouting. He wandered about the district with his ass for three days, having no suspicion that his best friend, Ludwig Schmaderer, was dead. On the third day, when he had given up all hope of finding any trace of his comrade, the Tibetan who had witnessed the despicable crime went to him. This man was distinguished by a tooth which protruded horizontally from his mouth, and he also knew my name, which, of course, he could not pronounce properly: he called me 'Snar Kopp'. From this Tibetan Paidar heard of his friend's terrible end. He was broken by the news, gave up all thought of going on, and went back to the Sutlej Tal. The Tibetan did not want to go with him, but he gave Paidar such an exact description of the murderers that the police were able to recognize them. Unfortunately, three of them got away, but the fourth was hanged. Paidar told me the whole story later on in the punitive camp at Deoli, where we met again; and by his description of the man with the protruding tooth I at once recognized my friend Tortchen, whom I had cured of a wound in the foot, down by the Suarna River. It is a small world after all, even in boundless Tibet!

With the aid of Peter Aufschneider's marked map we passed this place safely, and, after some unpleasant encounters with inimical villagers, we arrived at Kaurik. Here we had to cross an extremely primitive wooden bridge, below which tore a raging mountain stream. Once more that unlucky ass held us up. He planted all his four feet in the ground and, regardless of exhortations and blows, refused to set one foot on the bridge. Unable to break the creature's will, all we could do was unload the packs and carry them ourselves to the other side. Then, with pushes, shoves, and blows, we finally managed to get the obstinate creature across too.

We did not have a very encouraging welcome in Kaurik. The people were unfriendly, they hesitated to sell us food, and turned their dogs loose on us. We fought a furious battle with the animals, and when we had driven them off we pitched camp in a field outside the village. Because of our experience it was impossible to think of sleep. With the packed rucksacks piled at the foot of the tent, we took turn to keep watch. The least rustle made us start up and clutch our knives. Then and afterwards I realized that anyone travelling alone and unarmed through this country has only a small prospect of getting out alive. How right this is was proved not only by Schmaderer's death but also by the still unexplained disappearance of an American who visited the district in 1948.

We left Kaurik next morning, crossed the River Pari, passed several villages and left India behind us, as we travelled in an easterly direction. We thought it a good omen that on the way we fell in with a Sherpa named Sonnem, which means 'luck'. However, it is by no means a rare name, for there are as many 'Sonnems' in that country as there are Mayers and Mullers in Germany.

In the late afternoon we came to Tsurup, a small settlement with a monastery and many flat-roofed buildings, situated in a deep ravine. We found the inhabitants very willing to help us. On the lama's instructions we were sold milk and butter, but they insisted that we must not travel any farther in an easterly direction, but must return to India. To appease them we mentioned that we wished to travel over the Bibi pass to Little Tibet, and the lama had nothing to say against this proposal.

By chance the lama from Trashigang on the Indus was also at the Tsurup monastery; he had come to buy timber for the extension of his own monastery. Because of this activity we had rather a difficult journey from now on. To start with we came across a whole caravan of some two hundred monks in picturesque crimson robes, who were transporting timber on beasts of burden. And beyond Tsumgil we saw an even greater caravan, also carrying timber. To avoid awkward questions and answers we prudently worked round it in a great arc. We had to take to the scrub the following day, too, as once more great trains of Dogpas, the Tibetan nomads, came along the road. They had hired their horses and yaks to the monks for the transport of timber, and were escorted by monasterial novices. Some days previously we had bought some meat from one of these nomads, but it was decidedly bad. As the result Harrer had a bad attack of food poisoning, and complained of pain. But with the aid of a good purgative he quickly recovered, and we were able to continue our journey the very next day.

We slowly climbed to such a height (15,000 feet) that we began to suffer from shortness of breath. As Harrer was still not quite well, we did not succeed in reaching the pass before evening came on, so we pitched our tent in a sheltered corner. The night was bitterly cold, surely the coldest we two had experienced so far. We slept together in a close embrace, but even so we froze miserably. Next morning when we stepped out of the tent we were completely stiff, and our hair was grey with rime. As there was no means of lighting a fire at that height, we packed our tent, which was frozen stiff, on the ass, which was frozen just as stiff, and went on. The

animal had great difficulty in moving along, and in the end we even had to relieve him of our rucksacks, in order to reach the top of the pass some 1800 feet higher. This made the fifth time I had surmounted the Himalayas. It was 22 June, 1944.

## 5

As we climbed down the farther side we could see Dogpas' tents on the level ground below. They vividly reminded me of Arabs' tents, since, like them, they were woven of goat hair. But the Arabs' tents have an open side and a sort of window flap and door made of goat hair while the Tibetans' tents are completely closed. Only a slit is left in the top for smoke to emerge. The material they are made from is about half a finger thick and very heavy, but in this climate it provides complete protection against storms, water, and cold.

From our little camp in a ravine we vainly tried to make contact with the Dogpas. We asked them for milk, but they drove us away by turning their dogs on us. We again had difficulty in freeing ourselves of their attentions, but a well-aimed blow on the nose of one hound saved us from the rest of the pack. Disillusioned with this treatment, we packed our things and went on. Our anger died away when, some two miles farther on, we were given a generous welcome by the inhabitants of a solitary nomad tent.

Although his wife had only just given birth to a child, the man entertained us with milk, cheese, and a leg of fresh meat, which had come from some kind of chamois. Thankful for this unusual hospitality, we presented him with quite a large store of medicines; these were worth a fortune to him, for he would never have been able to buy such remedies. We pitched our tent at the side of his, and spent the night with good neighbours. During the evening the Dogpa had invited us to go hunting with him next day. We gladly accepted, and not only because of the prospect of roast meat; after our wearing days of wandering the change was very welcome.

Our host led the 'hunting party'; he was seated high on a horse, we followed him bravely on foot. We at once had to cross a fast-running river, which the horse waded through with sure step, while we, accustomed to such little obstacles, threw off our clothes and, with them tied in a bundle on our necks, stepped warily across the stream. We found the sun very hot that day. We got across easily

enough, and before the Dogpa's astonished eyes hurriedly slipped into our dry clothes. I don't suppose he had ever seen white people in their birthday suits before. We soon reached the hunting-ground, and our leader dismounted and tied his horse to a rock. Then he took his ancient muzzle-loader and told us to follow him.

And then we saw our game, a herd of *niembos*, graceful creatures with long, strong, highly convoluted horns. The Tibetan adroitly crept towards the grazing animals, while we followed him cautiously. But we must have been thoroughly inexperienced, for the whole herd tore up the slope with thundering hooves and vanished over the top, without our having the least chance of a shot. We felt disgraced, and to have some small profit from our hunting expedition we gathered onions which were growing wild everywhere; they were rather like our spring onions.

During the journey back at midday I had one bad moment. The Tibetan and Harrer had already crossed the river and had passed out of sight on the farther side as I leisurely took off my clothes and climbed down over the scree.

Stepping warily, I began to cross, got a little way, then suddenly slipped on a smooth stone. Oaring desperately with one arm, I tried to regain my balance, but lost my footing and plunged into the ice-cold water. The current caught and carried me away. To my horror I saw my clothes floating in the water, and flung myself after them as they scattered over the stream. I was lucky enough to catch one boot, my trousers, and shirt. Shivering with cold, I pressed these articles against my chest and, half swimming, searched for the other boot, my stockings, and pullover. But I could see nothing but water and foam, so with chattering teeth and swearing horribly I climbed out on the bank. Then I ran backward and forward like a madman, in the hope of discovering the rest of my clothes. When I came to a waterfall I realized that my search was hopeless, slipped into my dripping trousers, and trotted, with the boot and shirt in my hands, back to the camp, furious with myself and all the world.

I must have looked comical in my misery, for Harrer stared at me for a moment in utter bewilderment, then began to laugh outright. But when he learned that I had lost my boot, and realized all the seriousness of my loss, he turned more grave and growled angrily to himself. As he still had a pair of spare boots he lent me one. Scantily covered with dry clothes, I accompanied him to the tent of our Dogpa friend who, despite our unsuccessful hunt, had invited us to a meal.





A typical  
ford



Tibetan women

The 'housewife', who showed not the least sign of having borne a child the previous day, had been very industrious, and she set the best of everything before us. We were touched by the trouble which they both took on our account, and were truly grateful when, next morning, we thanked them and said good-bye to these friendly people. They stood for a long time in front of their tent, gazing after us.

After travelling for two hours in the direction of the Bongru pass we were again held up by a river, which fortunately was not running too high. We put the packs on the ass and drove him in. While we were still taking off our boots he stepped, though with obvious reluctance, into the water and sought out his own path. But in the middle of the stream he followed my example of the day before, slipped, and fell with our things into the water, where he lay in a very undignified position on the stones and made no attempt whatever to get up.

So, just as we were, dressed in a boot and a half, we rushed to help the creature, and to prevent the worst happening to our packs and especially the medicines. Laboriously we hoisted the ass up, then dragged him violently to the farther side, where we hastily emptied the saturated rucksacks and spread out their contents to dry in the warm sun. Once more that stupid animal had played a trick on us, and once more we had to make an enforced halt.

So as not to waste time, we collected some yak dung lying about and started to cook some food. We were just about to fall on it when suddenly two figures appeared on a ridge, then swiftly came towards us. We sprang up and stared tensely at the approaching men, but quickly recognized Aufschnaiter with a bearer. I was highly delighted to see him turn up here in the wilderness; only now did I realize how very much I had missed his serene and considerate nature. Unfortunately, I had my joy all to myself, for Harrer did not seem at all pleased at this meeting and took little trouble to conceal his feelings. When the same evening I proposed that we should all remain together in future he objected vigorously, and a serious argument developed between us. I tried to make him see that in this god-forsaken country we should travel as a group at all costs; but I met with only a frigid refusal.

And so we three climbed up to the pass in a very depressed mood. Aufschnaiter had hired the bearer because he could not buy an ass, and he sent the man back to his village the next day. As we travelled

along this difficult road we had an impressive experience which helped us to forget our gloomy thoughts for a while.

We were just passing a drove of about ten kyangs when we saw a thrilling struggle for the leadership, fought out between an old and a young stallion. While the females went on grazing peacefully or stood around without much sign of interest, the two adversaries went into the attack. They reared, drummed their forehoofs on the other's body, took great bites at the neck and attempted to force each other to the ground. Then the stronger of the two started up suddenly from the one underneath, spun round, and tore bellowing at the enemy. For twenty minutes this duel continued. First the young kyang was beaten back, then the older. Neither would give way. Their savage roars were clearly distinguishable into tones of pain, disappointment, fury, or jubilation. The arena of the fight was deeply ploughed up by the stamping hooves for a circumference of twenty yards. At last the older animal gave it up and trotted away. But, fully conscious of its victory, bellowing loudly, the younger kyang rushed with wildly tossing mane after the vanquished enemy, and the struggle began all over again. Unfortunately we could not wait to see the outcome of it all.

A little distance before we reached the top of the pass a fine snow began to fall. I froze miserably, and sincerely regretted the loss of my pullover, which had floated away downstream. As we climbed higher we heard a faint tinkle of bells, which was probably coming from a caravan climbing the pass ahead of us. A little farther on we saw several Tibetans slowly travelling along the path. They had five asses. Encouraged by the friendly reception the Dogpas had given us, we hastened to overtake the nomads. When we drew level with them I recognized their leader as my old friend Tortchen, of the Suarna River in India. We were delighted to see each other again. The old man's grin extended right across his face, revealing his extraordinarily prominent tooth, which stuck out almost horizontally from his upper jaw. He willingly transferred Aufschnaiter's pack to his own animals, and even relieved our own poor ass of a good part of its burden. Our beast was already at the end of his strength. Even during the short journey remaining before we camped for the night it fell again and again, and each time we had hard work getting it back on to its legs.

We soon reached the top of the pass, where an *obo* stood with a *mani*-banner fluttering in the wind. As at the top of other passes, we had a remarkably clear view. On the right a mountain hove up

sheerly to a height which Aufschnaiter estimated as 19,000 feet. Our two mountaineers, Aufschnaiter and Harrer, would have thought nothing of climbing such a giant ; but, of course, we could not stop for such experiments. We had to keep moving now we had decided on our destination, and we needed to spare our strength. The downward climb was a torture for us and the ass, since the slope was completely iced up. We slipped and fell again and again, and when we did reach the valley Tortchen had long since pitched camp. So the fires were burning merrily as we wearily arrived. We were invited to share their meal, and were regaled on nettle salad as a special delicacy. It is made only from the shoots of the plants, and tasted rather bitter ; but we had gone so long without fresh vegetables that we enjoyed it, with the *tsampa* and meat, as if it were really delicious.

Tortchen had his brother with him ; they had one wife between them, and lived together in polyandry. This form of married life is very common in Tibet, and is due to the great shortage of women. When the eldest brother gets married all his younger brothers enter upon the same rights as he, and this of course ensures that the family possessions are kept undivided. Often it is impossible to say who is the father of any particular child ; the one who has concluded the marriage is in any case always regarded as the lawful father. To avoid conflict among the men in the wife's presence, the brother who happens to be with her hangs his hat outside the tent to indicate that he is in possession.

I noticed that Tortchen was still limping slightly, so after tea I invited him to show me his wound. It was healed excellently, but the glass must have cut a tendon, for the three middle toes were fixed. Next morning I gave him some medicine, and received some meat and *tsampa* in exchange.

We journeyed together with his little caravan into the undulating countryside for half a day ; but about noon they had to turn off, and we parted with warm handshakes.

Now our road ran steeply down to the Indus valley. In a narrow ravine we came across large herds of goats, guarded by only one goatherd and one dog. We stopped in astonishment, for we could not see how one dog could manage to supervise such a great number. But after watching for some time we realized that the man guided the whole herd simply by cracking his short stockwhip in various ways ; the animals moved up or down the slope or to either side according to the sound of the crack.

Farther down the valley we had another friendly welcome from

nomads lodging there in tents. We went down to them, exchanged some medicine for milk, and remained overnight.

At noon next day we reached the Indus valley, which at this point was about a mile and a half wide. Now at last the exhausting mountain track with its endless ascents and descents was behind us, and we travelled along the valley in the direction of Trashigang.

The scenery was beautiful; the valley was green, and the Indus flowing through it was a bluish green. On the northern side we saw a large ruined monastery. The mountains that way were brick-red and grey, and in the south the Himalayas with their mighty glaciers and shimmering peaks seemed only a hand-span away. We could already see our goal, the monastery of Trashigang, in the distant haze.

As we approached the place we passed a number of huge *chorten*, larger than we had ever seen before; then we came to the red and white monastery building, which was surrounded by a strong wall and a moat. The houses of the village were clustered round it, with a large number of the typical yak tents among them, and yak and horse droves bustling about.

We pitched tent in a meadow. I vainly kept a lookout for Aufschnaiter, since we had parted from him again. I could see nothing of him in the distance.

When we had stowed away our packs and tethered the ass we made our way to the monastery. During our journey, wherever we had the opportunity we learned a few Tibetan words and phrases to add to our vocabulary; and now we tried to make use of our knowledge. We had the *Little Bell*, an English-Tibetan grammar, and it proved extremely useful in our difficulties.

We explained to the Tibetans standing about that we wished to see the lama, and were conducted across a large rectangular fore-court and through a second door into an inner yard, which was surrounded by several buildings. We had already met the lama of Trashigang at Tsurup, where he was purchasing timber. At first he flatly refused to see us, but informed us through his assistants that he could not give us permission to travel any farther in an easterly direction. In addition, to make our stay as difficult as possible he had forbidden the sale of food to us.

We went back disappointed. As we left the yard we noticed that the soldiers and merchants standing around in very picturesque garb were looking decidedly hostile. No one dared to let us have anything, not even from the stores of yak dung, or the brushwood piled up in

abundance on every roof. We returned angrily to our tent, and swore that despite all obstacles we would go to Gartok, where we hoped to discover the authority who had power to give us a *lamiak* to Lhasa the forbidden city.

Meanwhile, Aufschnaiter turned up again, and pitched his tent next to ours. Harrer and I were feeling thoroughly depressed; we told Aufschnaiter of our lack of success, and he strengthened us in our determination not to be turned aside from our plans whatever happened. He gave no indication of his own further intentions.

Darkness had fallen when we heard a loud murmur of voices outside our tent. Judging by the noise a large crowd had gathered. We were prepared for anything, so we were very pleasantly surprised to find in the dusk not enemies, but emissaries from the monastery, bringing us butter and milk in the name of the lama. At the same time they informed us that their superior forbade us to move on in an easterly direction. Presumably he had suffered some twinges of conscience for leaving us standing outside and then sending us away empty-handed. Buddhism prescribes that he who asks for aid must be given aid; we had not come as enemies, so he could hardly deny us the requested assistance without doing wrong.

About midnight we crept on tiptoe to an Indian trader whose cotton tent we had passed on our way back from the monastery. Because of the lama's order he had not been willing to sell us anything then; but as we left him he quietly whispered that we were to call on him late in the evening. He sold us some raw sugar and flour, charging a high price.

When we left Trashigang in the grey morning light Aufschnaiter remained behind. To make sure we were not being followed, we turned off the main road and went with our decidedly underfed ass up the Indus. Beyond the settlement of Langmar we again fell in with friendly Dogpas, who provided us with meat in exchange for medicines. From them we also learned that many Tibetans from Lhasa were staying in this district. After the lama's ban we had little desire to come into contact with them and we continued along the river valley, which grew narrower and narrower. Moreover our progress began to be impeded by innumerable bramble-bushes. We still did not feel secure, and so we did not pitch tent, and we hid the ass behind bushes and undergrowth. We tried to catch a few of the innumerable fish which we could see not far out from the river bank, but had no success. So we contented ourselves with chewing

some of the onions we had collected during our hunting expedition, and thoroughly enjoyed them.

The emaciated ass caused us a great deal of anxiety, for he lay down more and more often, and was hardly to be got on to his legs again: in fact he was more hindrance than help. Whenever he dropped we had to thrust a bamboo stick under his belly and heave up the heavy beast from both sides at once. He made the way really hard going for us; but we persevered, for we wished to reach Gartok before soldiers from Trashigang could prevent our entry. If we failed in this we would have had all our exertions and privations for nothing.

The valley grew so narrow that we no longer had any possibility of evasion if we were pursued, and next day we were forced to go through Gargunsa, the winter residence of the Okokon, the highest official in Western Tibet. The place was swarming with Dogpas and people from Lhasa. These were mainly big merchants, as we learned later; here Harrer offered his watch in exchange for a *lamiak* to Lhasa. At this stage we had no suspicion how difficult it would prove to obtain this, and what value such a hand-written travel permit possessed.

That evening a big merchant from Lhasa invited us to a meal, and, as we were interested in making contact with other people beside simple villagers, we agreed. We had a good meal, the *chang* flowed in streams, and everybody was in high spirits. There was talking and laughter, and soon everybody was sitting comfortably on carpets and playing cards. I was amazed to see how passionately these people played, and the unusual skill with which they varied the game with knuckle-bones and small sticks. It was not long before Harrer and I were drawn into the game, and to our host's astonishment we played very well. Harrer sat at one end of the small chest that served as table, and on which food was set, while I was opposite him. As the Tibetans could not understand our speech it was easy for us to exchange information and cards during the game, with the result that our winnings steadily mounted. To the general delight I showed these masters of card-play a few tricks; farther on in our travels I caused delighted astonishment again and again with my tricks. Out of boredom, while in the internment camp I had taken lessons in magic from a comrade highly skilled in the art, and now my aptitude as a pupil served me well. My reputation increased with every trick I performed, and I had the laugh on my side. Cards and games of chance are among the chief occupations of these traders



between India and Tibet, and they spend every free minute in these pastimes.

During the conversation our hosts attempted to discover the object of our journey ; and as we did not wish to spoil the party we said we wished to go to Ladakh-Leh, and were thinking of calling on the Gar Pen at Gartok. Then we would return to India by way of Kashmir.

Unfortunately, Aufschnaiter had not yet turned up. I was now feeling rather anxious and worried about him, but we could not wait any longer. Shortly before we left a young Tibetan called on us ; he must have guessed our real plans, for he offered quite unasked to obtain the *lamiak* to Lhasa, in exchange for a watch. He also showed us a written document ; but as neither of us could read the Tibetan script we resisted the temptation, and courteously regretted that we could not avail ourselves of his friendly offer, as we were travelling to India. Once more we greatly missed Aufschnaiter with his knowledge of the language and its script.

We had not gone very far next morning when suddenly we heard the rapidly approaching tinkle of bells. To avoid meeting Tibetans we turned the ass and plunged hurriedly into the bush ; but the cover was poor, and before we could do anything more we were surrounded by soldiers who were acting as escort to a caravan. They ordered us in a hectoring tone to go to Ladakh at once. But we refused to be intimidated, acted as though we were quite unconcerned, and, untroubled by the noisy torrent of words, started to light a fire. At first the hubbub increased ; but as we took no notice of them whatever they appeared to think better of their harangue, for they went on westward with their caravan, and took no further action against us.

Hardly had they vanished when we hauled our ass by its halter on to the track and hurriedly decamped. But first we piled a large quantity of inflammable material on the fire, so that from a distance it would appear as if we were still encamped at the spot. Now a broad, green plateau opened out before us ; large herds of yaks, horses, asses, sheep, and goats were grazing peacefully among the brambles. We hastened our steps, for there were tents everywhere ; if we wished to arrive at Gartok unhindered we must get a move on. We reached our objective in the late afternoon.

BEFORE us lay Gartok, the 'highest city in the world'; in reality it consisted of a settlement of some twenty-five filthy huts, though it is at a height of some 14,000 feet. Nowhere in Tibet are there towns and villages in our sense of the words. Even when a settlement is called a town or a village, it consists of only a few huts or clay erections, with some nomad tents pitched around them. The Gar Pen, ruler of four provinces, and the Okokon, his councillor, had their summer residence here. We crossed the river, which was swarming with fish, but turned back again when innumerable children and adults began to gather around us and stare. Finally we pitched our tent on a small island. There was still no sign of Aufschnaiter.

From the month of July till the end of September there is a constant lively commerce in Gartok, for it is the largest trading centre in Western Tibet. I heard that formerly the English commercial agent visited the town every year, with a caravan of forty to fifty yaks, coming across to Tibet by way of the Niti pass. He remained for about a month, then returned via Little Tibet, Ladakh-Leh, and Kashmir to Delhi in India. To keep up his prestige his journey was marked by a display of pomp and generosity; and with our ragged clothes and a half-starved ass, of course we showed up badly by comparison.

Our arrival coincided exactly with the great concourse of merchants from the four Western Tibet provinces of Rongshung, Nari, Purang, and Gyabna. Everywhere were traders' yak and cotton tents, with great piles of ash and dung between them. The main Tibetan commodity at these markets was wool in bales, though it was also available in the form of flocks of sheep. The prospective buyers walk among the flock, feel the thickness and quality of the wool, and specify the number of sheep they wish to buy. When the transaction is completed the sheep are fleeced on the spot and the flock is driven back home again.

Other articles on sale here included salt, hides, and yak tails, which when bleached are worn by a certain British cavalry regiment and are also used as fly-whisks in Indian temples. I also saw gold-bearing quartz, and muskdeer glands, which the Tibetans cleverly extract from the animal. Each gland yields sufficient concentrate for

the production of a hundred litres of perfume. Then there were lapis lazuli and stones like corals. From India are imported cotton and other materials, watches, cigarettes, soap, swords, knives, potatoes, raisins, sugar, *gur*, lead, and the very important item of gunpowder. Cheap bangles and arm-bands of metal and glass are much sought after. Sugar, mostly in the form of moulded balls, is readily made use of as a means of exchange. But one of the articles most in demand is the dried stalk of the tobacco plant, which is ground very fine between two stones. The powder thus obtained is put in boxes, mainly made of wood, but also of gold or silver, two-finger thicknesses deep; they are richly ornamented, and a layer of very fine gauze covers the top beneath the lid. When a man wishes to take a pinch of this snuff he taps the closed box firmly on the palm or the thigh; this brings sufficient of the tobacco powder through the gauze into the lid for him to shovel it out with the thumb of the right hand. He takes a vigorous sniff, and the powder is so fine that most of it passes right through the nasal canal and leaves the mouth as a cloud of smoke as the man breathes out. To conclude this solemn ritual, which is carried through with great dexterity, the man brings his 'handkerchief' into service. In Tibet this consists of two rectangular cotton pads sewn together on one broad and one long side, thus forming a horn. This has almost unlimited uses. Only when they can do nothing more at all with this dainty little handkerchief do they hand it to women of the lowest caste to wash. I once happened to come upon an old woman vigorously smoking as she performed this repulsive task, and I decided that the so-called 'one or two-finger method' is to be regarded as incomparably more hygienic and cultivated!

It is a very long-standing custom that Tibetan or Indian merchants arriving with their goods at the settlement send the Okokon a gift. If they did not do this they would not be granted any stand at which to exhibit their commodities. If they wish to obtain a comparatively favourable stand they are well advised to give on a generous scale; but in return they keep their place for all the time of their stay.

The price of goods imported from India is greatly increased because of the long and difficult transport across the Himalaya passes; this puts up the price by two hundred to eight hundred per cent. Thus, when we wished to satisfy our craving for vegetables we had to pay a full twenty marks, or a pound, for four pounds of onions. As we had not eaten any greenstuff since Tortchen's nettles,

we succumbed to the temptation and paid this idiotic price, though we felt rather mad about it.

After pitching our tent on the island and stowing away our packs we set to work to have a thorough wash and brush-up—something that the people of Tibet seldom indulge in—for we attached great importance to making a good impression when we called on the Okokon. But all our labours were wasted, for we were informed that the governor of the province would not grant us an audience; we could only try our luck with the Okoyok. This Okoyok, an official of rather lower rank, had gone on a pilgrimage, so we had to content ourselves with being received by his deputy.

We were surrounded by a dense crowd of inquisitive Tibetans when we set off to call on him. Once more we passed through a fore-court, in the midst of which was a great pyramid of yak dung to serve as fuel during the winter months; once more we passed ill-tempered watchdogs which had to be held back by servants. We went through several passageways, until at last we stood in a kind of small court, one side of which was closed by a coloured curtain. This was the entrance to the official's room.

A servant raised the heavy material and allowed us to enter. The large room was hung with coloured inscription cloths, numerous mirrors, and, as I saw to my astonishment, with advertisement posters from all over the world. The floor was covered with colourful and costly carpets.

We found the official sitting in a somewhat elevated position on gaily coloured silk cushions; but as we approached he stood up and held out his hand to us both. To look at him we all but dislocated our necks, for he towered high above us with his full six feet and the crown of his head seemed almost to touch the ceiling. His hair was carefully parted and plaited into a pigtail at the back; at the end of the tail dangled a red tassel. His very long legs were encased in velvet boots decorated with gold embroidery, and from his left ear hung the familiar turquoise ring, its weight supported by a silk ribbon, as usual with these officials.

He asked us to sit down, so we dropped to the carpet. Then the chest-table arrived, and a little later the tea and sweetmeats, of which we ate plentifully. Now came the usual conversation, beginning, as always, with questions. This time we announced ourselves as German doctors, which very obviously won us the man's great respect. In fact he was quite delighted at our arrival, for he himself, his brother, and their wife were all suffering or about to suffer from some ailment.

We took the hint at once and began an examination on the spot ; but we said that in order to make an exact diagnosis we must go and get our instruments, which were still packed. This conversation lasted more than three hours, and he had given us a pretty thorough grilling. But as we were very anxious to make a good first impression we told him very little, and that only vaguely, of our plans.

He dismissed us graciously ; we had hardly got back to our tent when three of his servants arrived, bringing us gifts he had sent us, in the form of meat, butter, cheese, dried apricots, twenty-five pounds of flour, a pound of tea, and *tsampa*. It was a truly princely gift, and naturally we regarded it as a good omen for the success of our plans.

At last the long-missing Aufschnaiter arrived. He had experienced considerable difficulties, and had had great trouble in getting hold of the most vital necessities. The excessive prices he had been forced to pay had practically exhausted his resources, and in his dire need he decided, though with heavy heart, to sell Harrer the only valuable he had left—his precious watch. Even so, Harrer gave him not more than thirty-five rupees for it.

Next day we all went together to call on the Okoyok's deputy. I considered that Aufschnaiter with his ability to speak Tibetan would greatly advance our affairs, and I was glad in every way to have him with us again. We handed the official a gift of medicines, and were invited to another sumptuous meal. But in the course of conversation it came out that we wanted to continue our journey in an easterly direction, and our request met with a downright and chilly refusal. Worst of all, there seemed to be a considerable decline from the amazing friendliness of the previous day ; this may have been because the servants who had brought us his gifts had reported that we were really very poor wretches. We attempted to ease the difficult situation by demonstrating the powers of our burning-glass, and it certainly caused a great sensation. All the spectators thought this simple way of making fire was magic, and we had to repeat the experiment again and again, until one over-inquisitive fellow burned his hand and they had had enough of the wonder-workers.

We spent the next day or two in making a thorough inspection of the settlement and the great tented encampment around it. On the fourth day of our stay the Okoyok and his family returned from the pilgrimage, which had taken them as far as Kailas. All the inhabitants of Gartok and all the multitude of merchants gathered outside the monastery entrance to pay their respects to the high

official. As the magnificent caravan arrived they made deep obeisances. The wife and daughter rode on thoroughbred horses which were decorated with coloured ribbons and bells ; the women's attire was very well tended and clean, but I was amazed at their remarkably dirty faces. Only later did I find out that when travelling the Tibetan women anoint their faces with a paste made from nettles, to protect them against the inclement wind and strong sunlight. To make this paste nettles are cooked with very little water for hours on end, and the result is stored in clay pots, and carried around with them as a means of guarding their complexions. Of course, on a woman's face this thick paste looks decidedly funny, but it provides sure protection and would appear to be a perfect substitute for the much more expensive Western types of complexion creams.

The entire caravan with its richly decorated horses and mules rode into the monastery, where a 'thanksgiving service' was at once held for the safe accomplishment of the pilgrimage. We three also watched their entry, and then went back to our tent to decide what we were to do next. Finally we agreed to send the mighty potentate a handwritten letter, as this seemed the most effective way of getting an audience with him and gaining his favour.

Our 'scribe' Aufschnaiter set to work on this task with great enthusiasm and painstaking labour. Evidently he made a good job of it, for quite a short time after the letter had been handed in we received the command to present ourselves at the Okoyok's house. We did not keep him waiting, and were received with great dignity, yet in a friendly manner. The Okoyok was only of middle height, so he made only half the awe-inspiring impression that his long-shanked deputy had had on us. An amulet was braided in his hair, which he wore combed back to the crown ; the inevitable ring dangled from his ear, but in his case it had the further ornament of a pearl.

Food consisting of Tibetan tea, English biscuits, and noodle soup was brought immediately. Unfortunately, we were provided with chopsticks, and we twiddled about helplessly with them, trying to fish up the titbits, but did not get one mouthful safely to our lips. Our host, his wife, and son sat in a half-circle around us, and gave a gentle smirk again and again as they watched our clumsy performance with the sticks. But they were amiable enough to have spoons brought for our use after we had made several vain attempts to eat. Not a word was said during the meal, and the profound silence was maintained all through the dessert, the sweetmeats, dates, and

apricots. Only after we had taken our first draws at cigarettes, a pleasure we had long missed, did they begin to ask the usual questions.

Now for the first time we met a Tibetan who genuinely had some idea of what was going on in the world, and had even heard about the war. The Tibetans generally, living on the 'roof of the world', behind the great mountain ramparts, take no part or interest whatever in world affairs. The only radio station in the country is at Lhasa, and hardly any foreign news penetrates to other parts. The right to maintain correspondence with the outside world and to obtain news from the travelling merchants is reserved to only a few high officials. The great mass of the people live in a dull stupor, completely absorbed in the daily care for food and clothing, or fully occupied with the performance of religious duties.

The Okoyok was a widely travelled man: he had visited India and the Golden Temple of the Sikhs in Amritsar; and he proved astonishingly receptive to strangers. Above all, he seemed to be amazed at the circumstance that Aufschnaiter spoke Tibetan fluently, while even Harrer and I could sustain a conversation in the language. I at once sought to make myself of some use by offering to regulate the clocks that were about the house, and to put in order any weapons, binoculars, and revolvers that might be brought to me. We achieved a remarkable harmony and understanding, and he gave us some valuable presents. But, none the less, we failed to obtain the necessary permit to travel farther to the east. However, all things considered, we could at least hope to get it.

The following day, too, we were the Okoyok's guests. We had another generous meal, and there was *chang* into the bargain. We felt pretty good, and our only sorrow was that we still did not succeed in gaining the real object of our visit. With the idea of approaching our objective from a different aspect, we suggested that we might be given a written pass to journey to Nepal. And in this request we were successful.

After negotiations that continued for several hours our host said he would be willing to give us a *lamiak* to travel as far as Gyabnak Jong, the most easterly station in his province. From there we were to go on to Nepal. In addition he promised to let us have a guide, and pack-animals, as far as the frontier. He also allowed us to acquire ample supplies of provisions, so that we could stock up with meat, flour, butter, and *tsampa* for the whole journey. Just as valuable as our actual stores was his written order instructing that

we were everywhere to be sold food, and that our weary animals were to be exchanged for fresh ones at each settlement.

We were deeply touched by his spirit of accommodation, and gave our oaths to keep to the route he prescribed. We had already said good-bye and were about to withdraw when he amiably called us back, put his thumb, index, and middle fingers together, raised his hand and, pointing to the united fingers, said in so many words, "You are three Germans and you must be one." His deeply sensitive mind had picked up some idea of the secret tension and difficulties that existed among us, and he thought it desirable to warn us against dissensions on our journey. We felt almost ashamed as we left his house.

Early next morning our escort, a Tibetan soldier named Norbu, arrived with two yaks, which we loaded with our possessions. Now our ass could go with us without a pack on his back for a change; that was good, for he was a miserable sight with his protruding bones. Our departure from Gartok was the object of the people's friendly interest. As our permit was so written as to cover all three of us we had to journey together in any case, and I was really glad of this.

We reached the first relay station some three hours later, and halted to exchange the pack-animals. We had a lengthy wait, but our yaks came at last, and we continued as far as Samsarga. Here we spent the night and rested in preparation for the ascent of the Chargot La pass (16,000 feet) the following day. We were already 12,000 feet up and there was not a great difference in height and atmosphere, so we hardly noticed the climb.

At Menze we fell in with a great caravan which was travelling to the large gold and precious-stone areas in the northern province of Rongshung. They were escorted by a force of soldiers armed with machine-pistols; this guard was considered necessary because the district around the Manasarowa Lake was infested with robbers.

Although our ass had no pack to carry, he still gave us a good deal of trouble. We got tired of being bothered with him, so we exchanged him for a yak, the difference in price being adjusted by our paying cash. This transaction gave us a strong animal, which we at once gave the name of Arnim. We could hope that he would be of more service than his predecessor. Meanwhile Norbu, our valiant escort, had heard the news of the robber bands in the district through which we had to travel, and he began to get the wind up. But I managed to allay his fears by showing him my pistol.



Our route took us past Tirthapuri Gompa, where there is a small monastery, then across a marshy plain to Parkha. Here four high-roads converge, running from Lhasa, from Shangtang (the high Tibetan plateau), from Ladakh, and from India. From this spot we could also see the settlement of Tarcham at the foot of Kailas, a mountain which the Buddhists and Hindoos of Trans-Himalaya regard as sacred. Its summit was covered with snow and ice, and it glistened majestically in the sunlight.

The official starting-point for the pilgrimage to the sacred mountain is Tarcham. People travel for hundreds and thousands of miles to see this holiest of all holy places at least once in their lives. The Buddhists regard the mountain as the residence of innumerable Buddhas; to the Hindoos it is the home of their gods Siva and Parvati (Durga). The innumerable visitors to the holy spot are moved by such intense religious exaltation that they cover the prescribed route crawling on the ground. They lie down and stretch out their arms in front of them, dig a small hole with their fingertips, and haul themselves along until their feet are in line with the marks. They wear leather aprons, and a kind of leather glove on their hands, to protect them against the roughness of the road.

Parkha was nothing more than an enormous collection of tents, the majority being the white cotton tents of Indians. There were only a few filthy huts, one of which belonged to the *tasam* official. Forty of the tents belonged to Dogpas, and they contributed their share to the incredible mountains of filth and refuse which rose everywhere.

The place was alive with innumerable dogs, ferreting bones out of the refuse heaps, and living chiefly on such remnants plus the excrement of the human beings living there. Whenever a Tibetan came out of his residence to perform certain functions he would be followed by as many as ten dogs. The unsuspecting onlooker would have thought they were well trained, and that the man was going hunting. But when a little way off he squatted down and flung his cloak out behind him an increasing number of hounds gathered round him expectantly, their noses pointed, their tails wagging. In these places the use of toilet paper or even gravel is unknown.

While we pitched our tents on a filthy meadow Norbu went off to the *tasam*, to obtain yaks or horses for the next part of our journey. Harrer and Aufschnaiter also went to call on the *tasam* official, to ask permission to travel to Kailas. I remained by the

tents and waited for them to return. My feelings were rather mixed, for I was by no means pleased with their new plan.

They had not been gone long when I heard a sudden uproar and loud shouting coming from the *tasam* building. I was afraid something serious had happened, and as I dashed out of the tent I saw my two comrades running back towards me, Aufschneider in front, Harrer behind. They were pursued by a horde of Tibetans, who were aiming at Harrer with sticks. He tried to defend himself, but they were far too many for him to tackle alone.

In a trice I was inside our tent ; I snatched up my revolver and ran out to his aid. Luckily, as they came closer Harrer was able to outdistance his pursuers.

They told me what had happened. As I had foreseen, after a by no means friendly conversation they had been refused permission to make the pilgrimage around the sacred mountain. As he came out of the house Harrer picked up some yak dung lying piled by the door, and this infuriated the people.

This incident had some unpleasant consequences. After the fight Norbu, who was terribly afraid of robbers, was even less inclined to go on with us, and he would have been delighted to go back home at once. We had to resort to friendly admonitions and references to the magic pistol in order to persuade him to remain with us. It was fortunate that we had the permit to travel to Gyabnak Jong, for this was the way through Nepal to India.

As Nepal was not yet at war with Germany, we calculated that the worst we would suffer there was a light form of internment which would leave us free to work.

The next section of our journey ran past Lake Manasarowa. We pitched our tents on a caravan camping-site. Here we were given the opportunity to admire the way Norbu lit a fire despite the keen wind. He had neither matches nor burning-glass, and all he used was a small box ; this box, which is part of every Tibetan's equipment, looks like a small money-box, and contains scorched cotton. Norbu took a small quantity of the cotton and held it between the thumb and forefinger. At the bottom of the box a small piece of iron is fixed. He span the box, and then struck the bottom hard on a stone, sending a spark across the cotton. He blew on it, and in an instant the cotton was transformed into a glowing mass of fire. He scattered dry dung over this, shielding the little fire with his hands in such a manner that the wind blew in from one side and out at the other. When the dung was properly alight he built up a fire some eight



Dancers in ecstasy  
drive needles through  
their cheeks without  
feeling pain



Devil dancers

inches high with yak dung, and planted the pot on top. As the dung slowly burned through from the bottom the pot sank deeper and deeper ; by the time it reached the ground the food in it was cooked.

There are several large monasteries around Lake Manasarowa. We saw it and the surrounding scenery by the light of a remarkable sunset. Although the 25,000-foot-high Gurla Mandhata lies many miles to the south, the gleaming mountain with its glaciers and ridges seemed to be rising straight out of the lake. Over the eastern half of the water delicate pink and yellow tints dissolved into silver, while in the west it burned with crimson, orange, gold, and violet. These hues were reflected from the sky, and they seemed to continue to glow there while they faded over the water and the extraordinary blue of the lake slowly turned to a dark green. Then night fell ; and only when the moon rose did the nearer mountain peaks shine out again.

Norbu with our animals and possessions went on to Thokchen, while we turned aside to the lake. On the northern strand the keen wind was driving up spray six inches high. This biting wind, which regularly starts to blow in the afternoon, transformed the previously peaceful and delightful lake into a raging flood, and one might well have been standing on the edge of the sea. As we wandered along its shore we saw hundreds of dead fish ; we heard that these are collected, dried, and pulverized to be used as medicine.

By bathing in this lake one is cleansed of all one's misdeeds ; and for Indian holy men, as indeed for pilgrims generally, this is the crown of their dangerous and very exhausting journey.

Remembering Yadhung, I, too, thought it would be a good idea to have a bathe ; so I plunged into the water, which at that time of year was unusually cold. I had swum not more than a hundred yards from the bank when I found myself in such a bitterly cold current that I hurriedly turned back and climbed out. So we went on till we came to a river which flowed into the lake, barring our progress. Now Harrer, too, felt an urge to bathe in the sacred lake, but he got into a spot of bother in doing so. As he waded in he stepped into some quicksands, and managed to escape only thanks to his powerful legs. We did not notice the danger he was in until he called for help ; but in any case it was impossible for us to do anything.

This gave us a nasty turn ; when we had recovered we swam across the quite deep river, dressed again on the farther side, and, as we were frozen to the bone, we ran at a sharp pace into a valley where we had arranged to meet Norbu.

We found him already waiting for us at Thokchen. We swiftly pitched our tents, crawled inside, and put ourselves right again with hot tea. Norbu reported that a Jong Pen who had come from Lhasa and was on his way to relieve the Jong Pen of Rudok was staying at the *tasam*. As we could not tell where we might be flung by fate, and since it was important to make as many acquaintances as possible, we went to pay our humble respects to this high official.

He gave us an audience, tea and sweetmeats were set before us, and, as I could not take much part in the conversation, I amused myself by counting the cups of tea he drank during our conversation. They numbered at least fourteen. He was expensively attired, wore the usual ear-ring, and proved very generous. When we left the *tasam* he presented us with a block of tea as large as a builder's brick. This was a valuable addition to our store. As we still had ample provisions we were rather niggardly with our counter-present. We gave him some aspirin tablets, together with exact instructions for their use.

## 7

NEXT day our road took us to the Tag pass. With the Himalayas on our right, the Trans-Himalayas on our left, we travelled along a wide valley. Many willows were growing in it, and small rivers and enormous beds of scree made the journey difficult. Not long before we reached the pass we overtook ten Dogpas who were about to strike their tents and collect their animals, preparatory to travelling over the pass to Shamtsang. They told us a robber band had come along that same morning and had tried to steal two horses. As the result of this incident a Tibetan armed with an antediluvian muzzle-loader was standing guard at the top.

At this Norbu got very nervous, and he was delighted when we decided to travel across the pass in the Dogpas' company. Now we had left the lotus district, which had acquired its name from the proximity of the two mountains, Kailas and Gurla Mandhata. The devout Hindus say that when these two mountains are reflected in the lake one can see an open lotus blossom in the water.

On the farther side of the pass we had an extensive view of a spacious valley, and saw a large Dogpa encampment in it. Now the Himalayas lay far to the south, while on our left was a hilly country

with herds of kyang grazing. We could see white and coloured flags fluttering gaily on the ropes of the Dogpa tents, and as we approached we saw that they had magic signs, pictures, and prayers painted on them. These are intended to protect the cattle from sickness and danger. The tents were large, up to eighteen feet long, and supported in the middle by a pole higher than a man. We pitched our tents quite close to theirs, and not far from the source of the Brahmaputra, which in Tibet is called the Tsang Po. Although it is one of the largest rivers of India, here it was so small that we could jump across it.

The robbers and their outrages were the main subject of talk among these people. We were told about them in every tent we visited, and guards were posted at night.

When we woke up next morning we saw that snow had fallen, and all the countryside lay under a white pall.

We spent three days among the Dogpas, and I took the opportunity to learn a little about their life.

The main care of these nomad people is devoted to their most valuable possession, cattle. When the herds return from the mountain pastures of an evening, men, women, and children go out to round them up. I saw children barely five years old who were so proficient with a lasso that they could have challenged any cowboy in the art. As each animal was caught it was led up to the stockline, which is stretched between two strong pegs. A series of short ropes, each with a clapper at one end, was fastened along this stockline; the clapper was passed through the goat or sheep's collar in such a manner that the animals were ranged in two rows, head to head. When they were all tethered, the women set to work on the milking. Humming to themselves, armed with wooden milk-pails they went up to the two rows, squatted down behind the animals, and milked them through the hind legs, singing quietly as they worked.

A large churn some eight inches in diameter and three feet high was set up in a tent, and the fresh milk was poured into it. Butter was made by vigorously agitating the milk with movements of a perforated pestle; when made it was packed in goat bellies or, when set, into hides.

Poorer Dogpas, who did not own a butter-churn, hung a whole hide, with the legs sewn up, in the middle of their tent and poured the milk into it through the neck opening. Then the opening was tied up, and the skin shaken backward and forward until the butter was ready. The Dogpas' diet is not varied, but it is very nourishing. In

addition to butter, cheese, and milk every day, they eat *tsampa* and wild roots.

As is usual in Tibet, in this camp the men were in the majority, and they had the few women in common. I did not see many children. Infants are wrapped in lambskin clothes a few days after birth, and are provided with an amulet as protection against illness. The mothers carry them in front of themselves, among the voluminous folds of their skin garments above the leather girdle, and there they lie warm and safe. But as soon as the children can run about they are left unprotected from the harsh Tibetan climate, and in consequence many of them die of lung and allied ailments. Only the strongest, and those chiefly boys, survive. They are soon drawn into performing all kinds of tasks, such as shepherding, or gathering dung and roots. When there are several boys in one family every second or third son is almost always sent to a monastery.

The women attach great importance to their outward appearance. On the shoulders they wear coloured ornaments rather like epaulettes, hung with coins and amulets. Their girdles and necklaces also are decorated with ornaments artistically fashioned of silver; these are mostly an oblong shape, and are set with turquoises. The hair is plaited into numerous small braids, and it, too, is decorated with amulets. In Tibet the sacred number is 108, and the Tibetan rosary consists of 108 beads, so the women try to braid their hair in 108 plaits if it is at all possible.

At whatever hour we visited them, their tents always looked the same and always had the same smell of smoke, dung, rancid butter, and milk. The centre of the tent is always occupied by the hearth, which usually is made of clay and is fuelled with dry dung. The flame is blown up with a goatskin bellows. Provisions packed in skin bags, and the sum total of the domestic property, such as saddles, copper pots, shawls, pans, and ropes, are piled around the tent walls, and somewhere among these items the squalling babies are ensconced. On one occasion I almost sat down on one infant which was lying among the bags; I was saved from this crime at the last moment by a woman's shrill outcry.

In every tent there was a domestic altar erected right opposite the entrance; it included a picture of the Dalai Lama, and prayer-books. An everlasting lamp burned behind a small glass window, and its reservoir was replenished with melted butter every day.

In this Dogpa encampment we once more posed as doctors. As before, so here, the most common ailment was rheumatism. I



massaged the aching limbs with my well-trying mixture of butter and a red tablet of Prontosil, to which I added concentrated sal-ammoniac to give it an extra good smell. A box which had had Johnson's children's powders in it served as my container.

I also examined eyes, felt pulses, and administered professional taps and listened in order to determine what my patients needed. And meanwhile I took plentiful sips of hot Tibetan tea, which is very wholesome. Its preparation is a very detailed and tedious task. This tea does not come from India, but is brought by yak caravan thousands of miles overland from China. It has little in common with the China tea which we Westerners know. It consists of whole green leaves, of which the larger are packed in brick form, the smaller in the shape of an extra large onion. The Tibetans break off a piece of this tea and cook it for a good hour. Then the perfectly black brew is poured into a funnel-shaped container some two feet high and three and a half inches in diameter; in Western Tibet it is usually made of bamboo. Its size depends on the size and the wealth of the family. The housewife carries through the entire task of making the tea, and her first step is to put a piece of butter into the brew. This butter is almost always rancid, as it has been kept in a goatskin or piece of hide for months on end. Then some salt and a little soda are added, and the mixture is stirred thoroughly with a long stick with a perforated pestle attached to one end. When the drink is ready it looks like *café au lait*. Finally it is poured into a large clay mug and kept warm on the yak-dung fire. I would venture to say that the Tibetans drink up to a hundred and fifty cups a day; I myself never got farther than thirty-five. Custom demands that your cup shall be refilled as soon as you empty it. The cups are without handles and are called *porpa*; if the family is wealthy they are made of the finest porcelain; otherwise they are made of wood.

Our yak Arnim had unfortunately only shown the worst side of his nature during the journey; he had grown more and more lazy and fat, and finally could not be persuaded to move at all. So we inquired for a suitable animal in exchange, and were offered a young yak that had never been broken in. It had not even been fitted with a nose-ring by which it could be led, so the gruesome procedure of providing it with one was gone through while we looked on. Quietly humming to himself in order to soothe the animal, a Tibetan cautiously went up to it, and seized the woven goat-hair collar which it was wearing. He pulled the collar very tight, thus half choking it.

While it desperately flung up its nose and gasped for air, another set to work to fetter it. He tied all four legs together with two stout, double-twist ropes of goat-hair, and ran the two ends back between the hind legs. Now three Tibetans who were standing ready grasped these two ends and pulled on them until the yak's fore and hind legs were drawn together and it fell over. Then yet another man went up to it, plucked three hairs out of the long tail, rather like a horse's, and, murmuring "*Om mani padme hum*" as he worked, threaded them through a packing-needle, which really looked more like a blunt nail.

He went to the yak's nose, while the first man was still throttling it by the collar, knotted the hairs at their ends, and thrust the needle through the cartilage of the nostrils, while the animal desperately resisted. Next he took a small knife from his robe, drew the hair-threads till the knot was pressing hard against the bone, and cut a hole nearly an inch in diameter all round the knot. Then a fifteen-yard goat-hair rope the thickness of a finger was drawn through the profusely bleeding wound and fastened with a double knot. Later this rope was replaced by an iron ring or an osier switch with its two ends twisted together. The animal must have suffered fearfully ; it groaned horribly, and rolled its eyes.

While all this was going on the people steadily murmured "*Om mani padme hum*," presumably to atone for their wicked deed. Now the yak was released from its fetters. It rose, shook itself violently and spun round in a circle, half mad with pain. The end of the halter rope was handed to us, but with one jerk the yak broke loose and tore away ; we had no chance whatever to hold it in. If we hadn't let go of the rope we might have slipped in the slippery snow and been dragged to death. Now to our horror we saw our new Arnim disappear in the distance.

The Tibetans noticed our alarm, and smiled perceptibly. Next morning the Dogpas told us that the yak had attached itself to a herd belonging to a neighbouring camp, and by midday someone had brought it back to us.

Because of our long stay in this place Norbu had grown very fidgety, so we decided to continue our journey eastward. We crossed several small mountain streams and, not far from Parang, attached ourselves to a great caravan of more than seventy yaks, which had come from Leh, the chief town of Little Tibet, and was travelling to Lhasa. The main commodities transported were dried apricots and *gur* in large quantities ; each animal was carrying up to two

hundredweight. The entire train had only five armed escorts, mounted on yaks. As soon as an animal broke away from the caravan the escorts resorted to their slings, and each time they brought the wanderer back with a well-directed stone.

We moved very slowly, but after some hours we came to the open plain, where we camped with Dogpas. The animals took the pitching of tents as the sign that now, free from their burdens, they could go in search of fodder. Three yaks hurried down to the Tsang Po River and attempted to swim across it. I was planning to do some fishing, so I followed the Tibetan who set off after them, and had occasion to observe the amazing accuracy of his aim. He swiftly took a stone out of his cloak and slung it at the leading animal, which turned round at once in mid-stream and swam back. The moment they were hit the second and third animal followed its example.

Later, while sitting round the camp-fire, we took the opportunity to inquire the way over the Changtang plateau to Lhasa, and were given some very valuable information. As a group of Dogpas and Tibetans travelling from Changtang crossed our path we visited them, too, to get even more precise details. They were friendly and gave us helpful answers, offered us air-dried yakflesh, and told us they were taking wool and salt on their sheep and yak herds to Gartok.

As we travelled along with our caravan, threatening black clouds began to gather. A strong wind started to blow, and it was obviously bringing bad weather with it. The Dogpa leader, who was with us, looked anxiously up at the sky and stopped from time to time to twist his head slowly from left to right, at the same time breathing violently in the direction of the threatening bank of cloud. Astonished at this extraordinary conduct, I ventured at last to ask him for an explanation. He told me in a matter-of-fact tone that by this method he could blow the threatening storm in another direction. He stopped again and again, muttered "*Om mani padme hum,*" and breathed heavily from left to right.

The light grew more and more eerie, the wind began to howl furiously. We came up to three Dogpa tents, and quickly decided that for the time being we would not go on farther, but would wait for the storm to pass over. We set up our tents hurriedly, for meanwhile it had grown quite dark, and the wind had risen to a hurricane. We tried to light a fire, but could not get it going. Then the storm broke. Hail rattled down from the sky and sprinkled the ground

with lumps of ice as large as pigeons' eggs. In a moment the sandy soil was changed to ankle-deep mud. The tent ropes gave way under the wind's fearful pressure, the tents collapsed, and we desperately clung on to the canvas with our hands. But the hailstones struck our fingers painfully, and we hurriedly gave it up. We rushed to support the dripping canvas on heavy sacks of melted butter, but that, too, didn't work. So we fled from the wreck of the tent and ran across to the Dogpa tents, some ten yards away. That short run through the rattling hail was a fearful experience. The Dogpas had already tightly closed up their heavy tents, and at first our shouts went unheard in the roaring wind. But at last they opened up and let us in. Wet through, we stumbled into the dark interior of the tent and the pungent smoke of yak dung.

To keep out the hail they had closed the smoke vent, and in that drifting fog it was almost impossible to recognize even your neighbour. But the hot tea which they gave us revived us somewhat. The Tibetans continually muttered prayers to themselves, and as we did not wish to seem different from them we, too, contributed to the monotonous murmur. For a full hour we sat waiting for the storm to pass.

I could not resist asking the caravan leader, who certainly had done his best to divert the storm, what had happened to his powers. But he vouchsafed no answer. "Presumably," Harrer drily observed, "someone must have been blowing still harder in the other direction!"

Constantly murmuring "*Om mani padme hum,*" the leader went to the animals and helped the drovers to free the yaks of their loads. The animals were cowering close together, each with its head thrust under its neighbour's belly. They were covered with a thick layer of hail, and under this white pall their bodies resembled a broad expanse of hilly country.

Our eyes were red and inflamed with the pungent smoke, so we treated one another with a diluted solution of silver nitrate, and then went out to join the drovers, who were still hard at work unloading the bales and sacks. All the packs were built up to form a kind of kraal, and in its shelter the Tibetans slept the night through round a camp-fire.

In Natchek, and later in Parang, we heard some sensational news, and it occupied our thoughts for days on end. The caravan leader told us that a white woman with gold teeth was living in Druksum, a village we had to pass through. It can be guessed how

much this mysterious feminine figure disturbed our minds, and how she was the main subject of our conversation day after day. Whom could she be, how had she got there, and why did she remain in such a god-forsaken, savage neighbourhood? As we journeyed each of us gave rein to his imagination, and secretly weighed up his own chances. But we could not regard them as very good, for with our shaggy beards and ragged clothing we could hardly expect to make a favourable impression.

Now we travelled feeling all keyed up, and quite a lot intrigued. The road took us across small rivers, and over marshy land, to Druksum. It was a wretched den, smaller and more poverty-stricken than any place we had visited so far. Only two *tasam* huts and some thirty nomad tents were to be seen. We pitched tent not far from the river, and were surrounded immediately by a throng of inquisitive onlookers. Of course we at once asked after the white woman, whom we wished to see at all costs. And apparently they were only too ready to bring her along.

A moment or two later they brought to us a form swathed in rags, and altogether presenting a pitiful sight. We could tell at once that she was only some very fair-skinned Indian woman, with a complexion very different from the Tibetans' sun- and wind-burnt, brown leather visages. She had two small gold pins in her front teeth. She was stiff with filth and dung, and was fearfully pressing to herself a small aluminium bowl, apparently her only possession. When we asked her how she had arrived at this place, she told us a moving but incredible story. She said she was the widow of an Indian merchant who had died while crossing the Tibetan frontier. We could not find out why she had not gone back to India long since, especially as she seemed quite well off, despite her neglected condition. We presumed that she was the *fille de joie* of some Indian trading caravan, who had been cast off. It transpired later that this was correct.

The Tibetans paid no attention to her, and only occasionally did they give her some scraps, because their religion forbids them to let anyone go hungry.

We gave her *tsampa* and meat, for which she was touchingly grateful, and sent her away. But we were not indifferent to her fate, and when we went to call on the *tasam* official we bought five yards of material from a stall and asked to be shown where she lived. The people pointed in the direction of the second *tasam* hut, from which we concluded that she had been assigned a room there. But

as we entered the *tasam* we were told that the white woman lived behind the house. We went round, and came upon a staggering sight. An untanned, stiff yak hide was arranged as a leanto against the back wall of the house, one end of it being closed with stones and yak dung. On the ground beneath it was stretched a ragged sheepskin, which someone had given her, in all probability. That was all. She was living in filthy conditions worse than those of an animal. As we thrust the material into her hand, for her to make a sari, she burst into tears and through her sobbing implored us to take her as our servant to India. We felt pretty wretched about it, but we had to refuse her request.

Next day our way took us through Gangjola, where we saw a remarkable valley that was like a gently rippling sea. Small white hillocks rose out of the darker ground at regular distances, like foam on the crests of waves. When we drew closer we found they consisted of very fine shifting sand. On a rock in the middle of the spacious plain was a monastery which Aufschnaiter decided to visit, though it was many miles away. We let him go, and continued at a slow pace.

Some way off the track we found a deserted Tibetan cemetery on a hill. Human bones were scattered about within a low stone wall and over the surrounding ground.

When a Tibetan or, in this district, a nomad, dies, he is carried by members of the lowest caste to a burial ground and there hewn into pieces. The actual disposal of the body is undertaken by the vultures, which are already perched waiting on the wall and in the fields. As soon as the men have finished their task and departed the birds fall voraciously on the neatly dismembered carcass.

Our road now ran over loose sandhills and our feet were continually slipping or sinking in the sand, so progress was very slow. Towards evening Aufschnaiter caught up with us, and had many interesting things to tell about his visit to the monastery. We camped in a small valley for the night and, dead tired with our laborious march, crept early into the tent, to sleep deeply and heavily.

We planned to reach Gyabnak Jong next day. That was the last of the stations mentioned on our travel permit. We made this final stage of the march in silence ; each was occupied with his thoughts, and yet no doubt we were all thinking the same : what next ?

From a high ridge we looked down on a broad valley sprinkled with lakes and meadows. In this paradisaal region gazelles and great herds of kyang were grazing peacefully side by side. Comical little

hamsters ran around fussily, nibbling at the roots of the marsh plants, which they gather and store in their burrows for food during the long winter months. The Tibetans regard these stored roots as an especial delicacy ; they taste like potatoes when cooked and, like the potato, are eaten with salt and butter. The men, women, and children go out equipped with twisted gazelle horns some twenty-four inches long, with which they break into the hamsters' runs and rob the tiny creatures of their stores.

The swampy pools of this district are inhabited by great numbers of geese ; in May their nests are rifled by the children, who bring the eggs home. These are put in clay pots, which are filled with ash ; in this way the eggs are kept fresh for months.

Still journeying along beside the Tsang Po River, in the afternoon we came to Gyabnak Jong. This place consisted of a small monastery, the *tasam* building, and a few Dogpa tents. But though it was so insignificant, for us it had come to acquire the importance of a rendezvous with destiny. Here, as we had promised, we must turn aside to travel down to Nepal.

"Go in peace to Nepal," the Okoyok had said at parting, "for if you first enter a Nepalese district and then come back to Tibet, that is none of my business, and you will no longer be bound by your oath." That at least was the conclusion to be drawn from his words. Presumably he had noticed the disappointment which had marked our acceptance of his *lamiak* to Gyabnak Jong, where his province ended, and wished to give us a hint what to do next. It was this hint which had decided us to exchange the lazy and sluggish yak for Arnim II, for we knew that from Gyabnak Jong onward we would not be provided with pack-animals.

Glad that his mission was ended, our escort, the 'good soldier' Norbu, shook our hands and said good-bye. We encamped on a green meadow close to the *tasam*, and discreetly inquired of the Tibetans as to the possibility of crossing the Tsang Po, which here was very broad. We learned that loads and human beings were taken across the river on yak skins filled with air, but pack-animals got across by half swimming through a shallow place downstream. But as the monastery lama knew that we must go on to Nepal from here, and as it was desirable to gain time, we explained that we thought this method too dangerous. In the evening we went down to the river to clear our minds as to our position. The oath we had taken was a heavy burden on us, for it completely upset our plans ; but for good or ill we had to keep it. In any case, we had the way out

of making only a very brief visit to Nepal, and then re-entering Tibetan territory farther east.

The sun sank blood-red beyond the Tsang Po, whose waters shone like gold. In the distance the range of the towering Himalayas extended for miles and miles; the mountains nearer to us emerged in silver and grey, while the rocky cliffs were of a black and violet hue, passing into a pale brick-red. The snowy peaks went on glowing long after the valley had been sunk in shadow. The yaks and sheep were driven down from the mountain slopes, and once more we heard the tinkle of bells and the melodious singing of the herdsmen. This sunset was indescribably beautiful, but our exaltation was tinged with melancholy. It looked as though we must say farewell for ever to Tibet. Depressed and thoughtful, still undecided what to do, we went back to the tent.

To divert our thoughts a little and to pass the time, next day we went hunting after the great flights of geese, or rather, after the young goslings which were not yet able to fly. Over a dune, from which we could see the broad plain with its innumerable pools, we crept into the hunting-grounds. We were fortunate, for we managed to catch two half-fledged goslings; one of them went straight into the pot, and the second we kept in reserve.

We had just thrown away the bones and wiped our mouths when someone called to us from outside the tent. By the voice Auf-schnaiter and I at once recognized the monk from Nelang, whom we had dodged on the way back from our 'shopping' at Yadhung. He brought us exciting news. We were to go at once to Tradom, for two high government officials had put up there during a journey, and they wished to see us. We packed our things faster than we had ever done before. We had learnt the art of loading packs by now; they were made fast with two long goat-hair ropes to the two sides of a wooden saddle, and were kept cleverly in balance with each other by means of special slings. I often saw animals with small wooden chests fastened to both sides of the saddle; these chests contained little children, who in this way could travel long distances protected from the wind and cold. As we could not make the journey to Tradom in a single day, we pitched camp for the night at Dunjo. We were in very cheerful mood, and nursed the hope that we would be given further assistance. As yet we could not think what sort of assistance, but we were sanguine enough to think that this mysterious wish to see us held out bright prospects. All our remarks both on the journey and in camp began with "If . . ."



WE AWOKE early, before daybreak, and could hardly wait for the moment when we could set off. We left the Tsang Po far to the right of us, crossed several small rivers, and came to the River Tsa, which was abundantly stocked with fish. From a rise we saw the monastery in the distance, looking like a magic castle with gilded pinnacles and turrets. We had to surmount one more small hill before we saw Tradom lying below us. Unlike the settlements we had passed through before, it looked quite important. Some thirty flat-roofed buildings were surrounded by the tents of nomads and merchants; to the right was the monastery, and to the left on a small rise a domed edifice with an arched entrance gate. We learned later that it stood above a spring from which the place drew fresh water. As usual, hordes of wild dogs were scouring around, making their contribution to the general cleanliness.

Our escort had reached Tradom before us, so as we descended the hill we had to pass through a thick hedge of inquisitive Tibetans who had turned out to stare at the strangers. People were gazing down at us even from the roofs. Our quarters had already been prepared. Through a wooden door we entered a small yard surrounded by a wall. It was bounded by a kind of verandah, across which we passed through two doors into a room completely without windows. The floor was made of clay, and a pillar supported the solidly sooted ceiling, which had two openings. There was nothing else.

We had hardly laid down our burdens and handed the yak over to the Tibetans' care when messengers arrived to conduct us to the government officials; we were left no time to get ready. Through a yard crammed with wares, between soldiers and servants who stared at us inquisitively, we went up several steps and entered a square room. Right opposite the door the two officials were already seated. They introduced themselves to us as a financial secretary and his counsellor. Their greeting was confined to a barely perceptible nod. With dignified mien, giving no indication of his true feelings, our host only pointed to the left, where there was a small stool, such as horsemen use to help them to dismount. We dropped on to a low clay bench covered with coloured cushions, and looked about us expectantly. Silence was still strictly maintained.

After a moment servants brought the usual sweetmeats, tea, and noodle soup ; then we were offered cigarettes. The official and his assistant sat as immovable as idols, and studied us keenly with their slanting eyes. But we had long since grown used to such quizzing, and were not to be distracted from our food. As we were now getting plenty to eat many of the plates went back only half empty ; and besides, we were anxious to get the meal over, for we were curious to learn the exciting news we could reasonably expect during this visit.

While we silently smoked our cigarettes we had time enough in which to study these two officials. The financial secretary's face was adorned with a thin moustache neatly drawn down over the corners of the mouth, though it consisted of only a few hairs. As Tibetans have hardly any growth of beard, the good fellow regarded his miserable stubble as a luxuriant growth. From time to time he fondly twirled the additional splendour of three long hairs springing from a large wart on his cheek. He was dressed in costly silk attire, and wore boots with velvet legs and leather soles, elaborately decorated with golden seams.

At last, after what seemed to be an eternity, he deemed it time to open his mouth, and we heard the usual questions : "Who are you ? Where have you come from ? How did you get to Tibet ? Where are you going ? What do you want here ? Were you in the army ? Have you any weapons ? Are you carrying transmitting apparatus ?" and much else. Aufschnaiter's replies in fluent Tibetan astonished him. When he had recovered a little he asked our professions. Aufschnaiter said he was a trained agriculturist, Harrer was a doctor, and I a technician, which in my case happened to be true. And as an interested glance was turned on me I added that I was particularly skilled in regard to diesel engines, motors, and electricity. This line of conversation continued for a while, then we discreetly put forward our request to be allowed to travel to Lhasa. Our wish was neither granted nor rejected. When the official remarked that in any case we would have to go on to Nepal, we commented that we were already on our way there when he sent for us. But we had gladly fallen in with his wishes and come to Tradom. Finally he ordered us to follow him into the yard, where we found our packs, now very neatly arranged. The servants had brought them from our quarters. We had to open them and let him inspect our possessions. He was exceptionally interested in the medicines ; but then he came to my tightly closed pot and demanded to see what was inside. I hesitated,

but he insisted ; so I raised the lid, to reveal our plucked and trussed gosling to the astonished Tibetan. But he passed on with impassive face and asked me straight out whether I possessed any weapon. It would have been stupid to lie, for he was obviously well informed about us. So without hesitating I said "Yes."

He ordered me to show him the weapon. I took him a little to one side, into a corner of the yard, where the soldiers could not see my revolver. The crowd courteously drew back to let him pass, but by no means so courteously for me. Then I drew the revolver out of my trouser pocket and showed him the empty magazine. For a moment or two he lost his fixed expression, then he began to laugh heartily. Presumably he had heard some utterly nonsensical stories concerning the powers of my 'dangerous' weapon.

After the kit inspection we went back to the reception-room, where the game of questions and answers was renewed. After three hours of conversation equally fruitless for both sides, *chang* was set before us. Then we left our host, expressing our courteous thanks to him. Servants accompanied us back to the room we had already been shown into and carried our packs. An aged and not at all attractive Tibetan woman was waiting for us there ; henceforth she was to be our servant.

So far all had gone well. Happy and reassured, we were busily unpacking our things when the door opened and the district administrator of Tradom arrived to pay us an official visit, for which we thanked him politely and with deep obeisances. He was followed by servants who handed each of us a sack containing thirty-five pounds of rice, and a sack of *tsampa*. In addition we were promised four live sheep. When we asked inquisitively who was our generous benefactor, he told us that all these things had been sent by the two high officials. That was indeed a good sign, and it quite looked as though we would not be sent packing too quickly. We three had a long talk about the uncertain future and the possibilities that maybe were opening for us through these new connections. These pleasurable prospects outweighed our cares, and so at last, happy to have a roof over our heads, we dropped into a peaceful sleep.

Next morning we were awakened by our servant, who bustled to and fro, lit the fire, brought us water, and took over all the fretting little tasks which we had previously had to do ourselves. A little later we were again invited to call on the two officials. They set beer before us, and seemed decidedly less reserved than the previous day. After the preliminary drink we were served the

standard noodle soup, on this occasion enriched with dry cheese. The conversation opened with precisely the same questions they had already asked us, and we gave the same answers.

Evidently they were quite satisfied with what we told them, for to our joy and astonishment we were invited to write our request to be admitted to Lhasa, which, so they told us, we could confidently formulate in English. Peter Aufschneider, who was the most familiar with this sort of question, at once set to work. The official read the written application, found it satisfactory and in order, and told us all to sign it. The letter was then sealed in our presence, together with a covering letter from the financial secretary. At the close of this important talk they promised to send the document to Lhasa immediately, by special messenger. Until the reply arrived we could remain as guests in Tradom. Highly delighted, with many bows we left the room. As the answer might be delayed for weeks the permission to remain in Tradom was a valuable concession.

Next day the two government officials continued their westward journey. We watched the departure of the magnificent caravan, which was escorted by eight soldiers with machine-pistols. Round the horses' necks were broad leather belts, with bells on them, ranging downward from small to large. The mules wore only a broad red band decorated with tassels, with only one large bell dangling from it. As the animals went along there was a real concert of large and small bells, and the sound could be heard fading away over a long distance. By the sound of the bells one can always tell the size of an approaching caravan, and even the number of animals in it.

It might be a good two months before a reply came from Lhasa. For all that time we had to stay put in Tradom. It was important that we should find some kind of occupation during this waiting period, for it would be painfully boring simply to spend our days in the tent or on walks. We moved around freely, and undertook extensive excursions about the district; but we always came back of an evening, for we had been told not to be away from the place for more than a day.

We were soon on friendly terms with the people, and day after day we went to the district authority, who showed great interest in us and in news from the outside world. Now I had the opportunity to get a detailed idea of the life of a Tibetan household. Enormous mounds of dung were piled in the outer yard. At the end was what I thought at first to be a small wash-house, but I soon found it was the household toilet. To reach it you climbed up ten steps; and as

soon as any part of your body appeared above the surrounding yard wall the dogs lurking below started up, dashed through an opening in the wall and gazed up expectantly and with wagging tails through the hole in the footboard.

In the middle of the yard was a round stone wall, on which were *mani*-flags stuck in clay bases. There were *mani*-flags also on all the four corners of the house. The house itself was of one storey, and flat-roofed, like all those in Western Tibet. The neighbouring buildings were crowded so close that it was quite easy to step from one roof to another. Only a slight elevation marked the bound between one house and the next. Small and large yak and niembo horns were scattered around the *mani*-flags, for the purpose of averting evil. The chimney flue was built right up and was similar to our chimneys. A wooden door, which could be locked with heavy padlocks, opened into an entrance hall which led to the family chamber, which was quite spacious. In this room the family lived, cooked, ate, and slept; and in it the district authority also held his official receptions.

He sat on an elevated clay dais opposite the door, with a second, lower dais beside him provided with a small chest-table for guests. A number of tightly stuffed, coloured cushions were scattered about. Along another wall were the family 'beds', in other words, the rolled-up quilts, which serve as sleeping-bags. For further covering at night the Tibetans use woollen blankets, which are usually black or dark grey, but often have brilliant red stripes running through them.

This family room and audience chamber also contained a fireplace, which was built of clay; the fire was kept alight by a servant stationed beside it with a goatskin bellows. On the fire stood the mugs with the inevitable butter-tea. Cooking was done in heavily sooted, clay pots, burnt hard.

The servant ran to and from the yard and the room continually, bringing yak dung in a cloth. She had her household utensils piled on the floor round the hearth, and only the *porpas*—the cups without handles—and the wooden spoons were kept in a small cupboard. A pillar supported the grimy beam ceiling. There were window openings, truly, but they were closed as a rule by stout wooden shutters, and the room was pervaded with an everlasting twilight; it seemed all the more gloomy because of the blackened walls and ceiling. Next to the living-room was a huge store-chamber, in which the nomads' gifts of butter were piled. The butter was sewn in skin bags ranging in size from a fist to twice a man's head. It was left

lying in the store-room till the end of the year ; then it was unpacked, trampled with the feet into large yak skins, and transported to Lhasa. By then it certainly had the flavour necessary for the sumptuous Tibetan butter-tea. However, a large part of it went to feed the oil-lamps, especially in the monasteries.

Enormous wooden vats containing fermenting *chang* filled the room with a distinctive sweetish scent. A fruit brought from Nepal, looking like a small walnut, is added to the grain and water to accelerate the process of fermentation. From time to time the *chang* is poured into another vessel, to clarify it ; the end product is put in wooden flasks, which also come from Nepal, and are rather like a belly-shaped vase. As a rule the beer is a greenish-grey, muddy colour ; the master of the house sets his finest *chang* only before high government officials who are passing through the place, or specially welcome guests. Then it is really clear, and completely free of sediment.

In the yard there were further store-chambers, piled high with sackfuls of chili pods, ploughs, woven materials of every kind, and great yak-leather coffers.

Before long I was on such good terms with the master that I could go in and out of his house as I wished. I entered the living-room without knocking, and after a silent greeting took my place to the left of the dais. From this vantage point I was often able to watch him performing his official functions. His wife always gave instructions to keep me supplied with butter-tea, but otherwise she did not let my presence disturb her from her cooking and other activities. And yet she took an animated part in all that went on in the room. She may not have had the last word, but hardly a discussion or negotiation took place without her candidly giving her opinion.

Here as everywhere else in Tibet I had the impression that the men are under the women's heel, that the women wear the trousers. The mistress got up quite early in the morning, chased the servants around, and allocated the daily tasks. In any dispute between her husband and inferiors she made a point of joining in, and was not slow in expressing her opinion. She was solely responsible for the education of the children. The girls and boys were taught in the house, by a man who had been educated in a monastery and could read and write. It was a touching sight to see them all squatting on the floor and laboriously painting their complicated script on wooden tablets.

If a Dogpa or other inferior wished to obtain an audience the official's wife always first inquired what he wanted. If it was something important the visitor brought a *khata*, the white cotton or silk scarf, together with a money gift, or laid out the famous sheep bones in the requisite position, so that the official could tell what animal he was being promised. The petitioner entered the room very respectfully, took off his head-covering, made an obeisance with his hat pressed between the two hands, and approached with his tongue stuck out as far as possible. Murmuring obsequiously, in devout tones, he laid his present and his accompanying petition on the dais. In less important cases the petitioner presented his case orally. Then he stepped back three paces; if he was of a low caste he stood waiting with his body bowed. If he was of more exalted rank he could venture to stand erect. But in either case he stood waiting, with hat in hand, for the mighty potentate's decision. And the mighty potentate sat deep in thought, neatly spitting to left or right occasionally, and then, eyeing the present or the bones, began to ask his questions. His wife always joined in, and only when she had given her opinion did he utter the decisive words.

There was much variety in Tradom, for great caravans journeyed there from Lhasa and Western Tibet or Ladakh, while enormous yak- and sheep-flocks travelled laden with salt from the high Tibetan plateau. Here the loads were set down, an animated barter took place, transactions were concluded. Then the caravans continued their journey.

The government caravans were accommodated in the *tasam*, otherwise trade and barter went on in the yards of acquaintances and agents. I was present at many an audience given by my friend to traders who had come from afar; for the leader of every caravan, except the government's, had to pay the official a small tribute. This was no burden to the merchants, for their margin of profit was high enough to cover supplementary charges of this kind.

From Nepal hand-made paper of high quality was imported. It was exchanged mainly for rice, grain, and salt, of which there is a shortage in Nepal. This salt is obtained from the banks of the lakes and pools on the Changtang plateau, and is packed in sacks weighing about 10 lb. each. Two sacks are loaded on to each sheep. This region is short of fodder, so the smaller animals are the best for transport. We frequently saw them in flocks of up to three hundred, accompanied by shepherds who wore very different clothing from the Tibetans we had known so far. They came from the high plateau,

and wore long, white fur cloaks and thick felt caps rising to a point ; the nape flap reached far down into the cloak.

When being transferred from one owner to another, the salt was emptied out of the sacks on to a large heap ; then it was not weighed out, but calculated by a very complicated method, entirely in accordance with Tibetan existence, which is not concerned with time or hurry. The merchant sat down beside the heap of salt, shovelled it into a wooden box about eight inches square, and in a monotonous voice chanted the number of times he had filled the box up to that moment. When it was full to the brim he poured out the salt on his left side, while he sang the number for the last time, letting his voice drop. Then he again leaned over to his right, and filled the box to the brim, singing the new number to himself as he did so. Thus singing and shovelling, he went on until the whole pile had been transferred from the right- to the left-hand side, which of course took ages. Meanwhile the shepherd who was taking over the salt sat in perfect composure on the other side of the pile, and checked the number of boxes, keeping tally by means of small stones dropped one after another into his pocket.

The beasts of burden, yaks, horses, or mules, often develop great sores under their pack-saddles and girths, and the drovers deal with these as soon as they set up camp. With hot butter they mix soot scraped off pots, and boil this elixir over a fire. Then one animal after another is driven into the *tasam* yard, tethered in the manner already described, and thrown to the ground. The hot mixture is poured into the open wound with a ladle. Though this seemed a horrible method and the animals suffered terribly, in fact the wounds did quickly heal.

Despite the princely presents we had received from the two government officials, we had to buy our daily requirements of tea, butter, and milk, and after a month meat had to be added to the list. These purchases presented no problem to Harrer, who was still well off. But they affected me much more, while Aufschneider's means were very small. One evening friends of Harrer invited us out. Tibetan merchants were also staying in the house, and they at once pestered us to find out whether we had anything to sell. They were mainly interested in weapons and field-glasses. As neither I nor Aufschneider possessed anything, Harrer offered for eighty rupees the watch he had bought from Aufschneider in Gartok for thirty-five rupees. To convince the merchants of its quality he called for a *porpa* full of water and plunged the watch in it. The deal was



concluded at once. Unfortunately, he completely ignored Auf-schnaiter, who had found it hard enough to part from his precious watch; and this increased the tension which had existed between them from the start. When, a few days later, we had to dispose of our yak too, serious ill-feeling arose between me and Harrer. Our life together was growing more and more difficult, yet we had no idea how long we would be forced to go on living with one another in this confined space. The district authority had assured us that the answer would arrive from Lhasa in four or five weeks at the most; but that time had passed long since, and with my knowledge of Asiatic mentality I had increasing doubts whether we would have a speedy and favourable decision.

Our accommodation also caused us much anxiety. Of the three rooms in the house only one was habitable, for the other two were packed with dried yak dung. The smell tortured us day and night. When the heavy rains set in in October, the water came through every possible and impossible chink. Life was very uncomfortable, our dissensions grew, and it was only natural that each of us wondered how he could put the speediest and most satisfactory end to this situation.

One thing followed another. My boots were rapidly disintegrating into their component parts, and they gave me much trouble. Right in front of the entrance to our house was a small puddle in which the local people soaked their yak pelts intended for shoe soles, to make them supple. My friend the district authority allowed me to fish a pelt out of the puddle and cut a hefty piece from it. I divided it into two, put one boot on each piece, and simply stitched the pelts, hair outside, to them. Of course the result looked frightful, but at least my old boots held together again.

I slowly reached the conclusion that it was time I exploited my medical knowledge and made proper use of our well-furnished medicine chest. I felt under obligation to give treatment to our friend the official, who complained repeatedly of trouble with his left eye. I promised him I would call in the morning with my equipment, to give him a thorough examination. To see the better, when I called I asked him out into the courtyard and closely examined his eye through my spyglass. I saw at once that all the trouble was due simply to a long eyelash which was growing straight up from the lower lid, so cutting his field of vision in two by a dark line and affecting what otherwise was perfectly good sight.

He appeared to have complete trust in me, and told me to cure

him at once. He must have heard from others that I was a good doctor, for my old and well-tried successful butterfat massages had been talked about in Tradom. He readily did as I asked him. I laid my instruments out on a clean linen cloth on an open verandah at the end of the entrance hall. Then I asked him to take his seat on a raised platform. Incessantly murmuring the *Om mani padme hum*, he raised his face expectantly to me. I squirted a few drops of Agyrol into his eye until a brownish film spread over it, then I swiftly cut away the troublesome lash. I laid a neat dressing over the eye, ordered strict rest and told him to be careful, and promised to attend him again next day.

I called the very next morning, took him into the yard, and removed his dressing in the bright sunshine. The patient realized with astonishment that his anxieties about his eye were ended. In her gratitude his wife gave me a plentiful quantity of butter, *tsampa*, and goose eggs. By way of conclusion to this successful 'operation' he took me with him into the devotional room, which I had not previously been allowed to visit, to thank the gods.

We passed into this room from a different door leading off the verandah. The Buddha sat dignifiedly with crossed legs on a decorated table, in the mysterious, flickering light of thirty small bronze lamps, which were daily refilled with butter fat. Behind him hung a portrait of the Dalai Lama. The devotional room served as treasury; it contained large leather sacks filled with small bags of gold and precious stones. I also noticed table utensils and modern weapons. So from now on I was among the master's trusted confidants.

One day a well-known merchant called on us in a state of utter distress, to tell us he had lost his amulet box among the sand dunes while crossing the plain. He stammered that from now on he would be plagued with evil, and he gratefully accepted Harrer's offer to help him search for it. A 'shambox' such as his would be made of pure silver, and about half the size of a small cigar box. Poorer people have shamboxes made of copper, while the wealthy possess them often made even of gold. They are always artistically ornamented, and decorated with inlaid stones or corals. The merchant's box contained a picture of the Dalai Lama behind glass, a small Buddha, strips of paper with prayers written on them, and twenty-six *kotrang*s in old coins. All these articles had been blessed by a lama. Unfortunately, Harrer's search was in vain. The box was not found, and so the poor fellow had to remain exposed to the influences of the evil spirits. Such was the general superstitious belief.

AT THE end of October we managed to obtain an invitation from the monastery to be present at a butter-feast, which one may compare with our own harvest festival. Although the local monastery was only a small one, containing eight monks, on this day it was just as much a place of pilgrimage for all believers as any of the other, larger monasteries throughout the country. Everybody took enthusiastic part in the ceremonies; both young and old had their share from morning till night in the celebrations and the final merry-making. For days the nomads in the vicinity had been coming in on pilgrimage, with sacks and packs, and in a trice Tradom was transformed into an extensive tented town.

Now for the first time I saw a very distinctive feminine head-dress, which no doubt was peculiar to another province. In Tibet one can determine fairly closely the home district from which a woman comes by the shape of this ornament, just as we can by our costumes in Germany. A brow band woven from goat hair held a crossbow-shaped wooden frame on the head; above the frame a wooden crown extended from one side to the other. It was painted red, and was lavishly studded with turquoises and lapis lazuli sometimes as big as almonds; corals were also used frequently. If the woman's family was wealthy these jewels would even be set in gold. The hair was woven in and out of the frame, with the pigtailed hanging down at the back. Many other women wore a similar head-dress with a frame in the shape of a triangle, set on the head almost horizontally. At the ends of their pigtailed the women of Eastern Tibet had a band embroidered with precious stones and old coins; it was the breadth of a hand in width, and some sixteen inches long. It was so heavy that it drew the woman's head right back.

I can still today hear the braying of the trumpets which awakened us on the morning of the festival. And I can still see those strangely shaped, copper instruments. They are up to six and a half yards long, but the bell is only some eight inches in diameter. At the point where the mouthpiece joins the main part of the instrument it is decorated with brass rings; the wooden frames which carry the enormous weight of the trumpet are also richly decorated with figures and ornamentation. The pitch of the note depends on the length of the tube, and it calls for very powerful lungs to produce

the deep, hollow tones which sounded from the monastery roof and thundered over Tradom that morning.

We took particular care over our toilet in preparation for the visit to the monastery; we washed very thoroughly and trimmed one another's tangled hair. Then we mingled with the Tibetans and entered the monastery yard, where we passed with the crowd round the many *chortens* erected there. Some of the believers laid small gifts, mostly consisting of oval clay medallions bearing images of gods done in relief, in the openings. The *chortens* were already so full of these articles that it was impossible to put any more inside, and they littered the ground below.

Along an open verandah we came to the monastery proper. One of the monks hurried to welcome us, and conducted us into the large open courtyard, where the festival was to be celebrated. In the great throng it was not easy to find a free place. Of course, we caused a great sensation. Everybody stared at us, for most of the people present had never seen a white man before. There was an excited whispering, and obviously our presence was not exactly conducive to a devotional mood. Our hair caused the greatest astonishment, for again and again we heard the murmur, "Grey, black, red." By comparison with the monotonous black of the Tibetans' hair we three certainly presented a riot of colour. But we did not allow ourselves to be diverted by their excitement, and concentrated on what was about to take place.

The lama of the monastery sat elevated on his dais, half concealed by a tin folding-screen which protected him from the great heat of the fire burning on the ground before him. From time to time he used a long-handled ladle to put yak dung on the fire or to pour melted butter in the flames. The monks sat to right and left of him behind long benches, on which all kinds of food, such as rice, *tsampa*, cheese, and grain, were set out in pans. The lama murmured his prayers, and each time he poured melted butter on to the fire one monk on his right, or on his left, took turns to stand up and throw a plate of food on the fire. During this ceremony other monks beat drums, blew trumpets, and muttered prayers. The crowd of onlookers worked up to an increasing excitement, and the festival reached its culmination with the appearance of a monk carrying a high, pointed, black silk hat on a tray. The hat was decorated with several gold brocade rings, growing smaller and smaller up to the point. It was said that this hat had been passed down from the founder and first lama of the monastery, and evidently very special



A Tibetan  
prayer book



An encampment of Tibetan nomads

magical powers were vested in it, for the crowd bowed down reverently when it arrived. The monk began to walk round the crowd, holding the tray before any person he considered worthy of the blessing, in such a manner that it rested for a moment on the recipient's brow. As he walked rather swiftly in order to get round the many hundreds of people in the crowd, this blessing did not fall lightly on the forehead. But the painful contact with the venerated object did not diminish the believers' devotion. The women acted with particular fanaticism, raising their children high in the air and then carrying them back.

When the contents of the last pan had been added to the fire and the prayer-book had been read through to the end, the people moved on to the sacred altar room at the back of the monastery, and we followed. In this room a pyramid of butter-lamps was flickering before a Buddha throned and in sumptuous silken vestments. A peculiar odour, such as one finds in a museum, hung about the room, in which all kinds of other articles were stored. On the walls we saw trumpets carved from the thigh-bones of dead people and covered with leather.

When we returned to the monastery yard groups of women had already gathered in the open air to dance. They stamped round in a ring, taking short steps; they withdrew to right and left, advanced and retreated, gently swinging their legs, and accompanying themselves with their melodious tunes sung in a high head register. In their coloured aprons, picturesque dresses, and glittering head-dresses they formed a magnificent picture.

Meanwhile the men were taking part in field athletics, the chief attraction being the stone-throwing contest. We went to watch them, and were at once invited to take part. As I was the strongest of the three, I was the first to be led up to an oval-shaped stone lying on the ground, and weighing possibly a hundredweight. The trick consisted in raising it high and throwing it back over the shoulder. Then it had to be lifted again and thrown forward with both hands. I spat on my hands and threw the stone; the astonishment on the Tibetans' faces indicated that I had achieved the farthest cast of all.

After these sports some Tibetan acquaintances of ours invited us to a drinking party. The carousal was accompanied by the highest of good spirits. The onlookers sat on the ground while a soldier in his fine costume did a kind of step-dance on a square wooden board, accompanying himself with song. Then another Tibetan played the guitar. And then we were invited to perform the

dances of our own country. This rather embarrassed us, for it was a long time since we had last shaken our legs in a dance. But, as there was no reason to fear criticism, Harrer and I did a tango. However, it was a sad mess, for we both wanted to take the lead. We also provided our own music, in other words, we sang. For, although I had a harmonica with me, I could hardly play more than something on the lines of 'Three Blind Mice'. After this fiasco Harrer felt that he simply must do a Bavarian *Schuhplattler* dance, to which I had to whistle. He was deadly serious about it and slapped away so zealously at his thighs and feet that I could not whistle for laughing. But the Tibetans showed little appreciation of this artistic display.

There was one group which concentrated on card-playing, but they sent for me and asked me to do some card tricks. We sat down with this merry company, I did my best, caused great astonishment, and won their applause. The butter-festival did not end till late in the night.

One day, some two hundred yards away from the monastery I came across a flat-roofed building, with enormous long upper windows. It looked rather mysterious, and I got quite inquisitive about it. Next morning I went out early to investigate. As I drew myself up to the window, which had only a poor covering of boards, I was met by a horrible smell of putrefaction. Finally I managed to peer through a chink into the darkened room; but I did not trust my eyes, so repulsive was the sight. Ranged in tidy rows, like soldiers, leaning one against another, were the fore- and hind-quarters of yaks, drying out here in the monastery pantry.

When I went back to the village I found my Tibetan official busily packing. He was about to set off on another tour to extract overdue payments of tax.

A caravan with servants and provisions was painstakingly assembled. Then the official went to his devotional room, to offer up prayers for a last time before he departed; he hung his shambox around him and thrust his sword, in its magnificent leather, silver-mounted sheath, almost horizontally through his girdle. Every man in Tibet owns a sword, and by its quality one can tell whether the owner is of nobler or humbler origin.

After he had assured himself that the two monks appointed for the purpose had taken their place on the verandah, he said good-bye and rode off in confidence. The two monks sat before the sacred room, unbrokenly muttering prayers, twisting their prayer-wheels



or reading from the holy book, which really consists only of loose leaves held together by a string between two wooden boards. They made frequent use of their rosaries, each of which has one hundred and eight beads made from human cranial bones.

But evidently the monks' prayers were offered up in vain, for the official returned home seriously ill, suffering from terrible pains and griping of the stomach, probably caused by meat poisoning. After I had taken that glance into the stinking store-room I was not surprised by his condition. I set to work to treat him, though at first I was not very hopeful. His sufferings increased, but in the end, making use of a special remedy which Harrer supplied from his medicine chest, I managed to cure him.

To introduce some change into our monotonous menu, but also to reduce our expenses a little, we decided to go fishing. We walked out to the Tsa Chu River, which forms a delta close to Tradom. Its waters were swarming with fish of all sizes ; we caught one on the hook every time we baited it with a piece of *tsampa*. So we took back only the larger specimens. All the small fish we threw to a dog which had come running up, and it consumed them on the spot.

An excursion to a mountain just outside Tradom, which we made in order to pass the time, has also remained in my memory. While we were sitting at the summit, from which we had a magnificent view of the distant Himalayas and the caravans passing far below us, a great bearded vulture flew close, and began to circle over us as we unpacked our food. It dropped lower and lower, until with its wings beating powerfully it swept right over our heads. It was a splendid specimen with a wing span of at least three yards.

On my birthday I invited our friendly official and some Tibetan acquaintances to our house. By way of celebration I had cut out crescents, ovals, and circles from dough with the aid of a cigarette-box, and had fried them in deep melted butter. They looked very appetizing, but my guests tested my culinary skill very gingerly, just as warily as I tackled their air-dried yak meat.

Thus the days passed in various ways. But still no news came from Lhasa, and gradually we began to despair of ever receiving an answer. Our patience was exhausted, our position was intolerable ; so Aufschnaiter began to make arrangements for a last breakthrough to the north, into the interior, before our pockets were completely empty. I for my part decided to accept the invitation of

some Nepalese merchants who had held out prospects of work in Nepal. Harrer gave no indication of what he proposed to do. Aufschnaiter secretly began to take his things out of Tradom, and we helped him. We also assisted him in buying five sheep, which left him completely penniless. He was absolutely determined to carry out his plan, and I was amazed at his tenacity and pluck. We all knew he would have to face fearful difficulties on the Changtang plateau, where winter had already set in. To contribute something at least towards his dangerous project I gave him a hundred rupees, as I had no need of the money for my journey to Nepal. But I, too, had to think of the question of equipment. My clothes were in a really dreadful state, so I had a costume made from the thick woollen cloth which the nomads weave. After a long search I found a Tibetan who said he could use a needle. With a packing-needle and woollen thread he set to work in our house. We were rather stumped by the problem of cutting out the garment, for neither he nor I had any idea of the task, and of course the Tibetans have not the least conception of how to cut out a European costume. He measured me with thread, and, after he had cut out the various pieces according to my instructions, he set to work. After some days of laborious stitching the remarkable suit was ready. Dressed in this costume and my pelt boots, unshaven, and with tangled beard, I looked a cross between a tramp and Robinson Crusoe.

Meanwhile Aufschnaiter had completed his preparations; and one early morning of dense mist and hoar frost he left Tradom. At an agreed spot half a day's march distant we met once more and assembled the sheep he had bought. Then with a few words of heartfelt good wishes we parted, and went our ways.

But I was troubled with a strange uneasiness, and so the very next day I set out to see if I could find him and his sheep. I came upon him in a most wretched state. Only one of his five sheep was left alive; the bloodstained pelts of the other four were strewn over the ground. He was completely broken up, and told me of the 'Bartholomew Night' he had survived. During that night his little flock, which he had tethered outside his tent, had been attacked by wolves. In their mortal terror the sheep had tugged desperately at the tent-ropes and had brought it down. Quite helpless, and himself in danger of being attacked, their owner could do nothing to stop the massacre. He remained very still, listening to the gnawing, groaning, and savage growls, while the miserable bleats died away. Next morning he found only the one completely terrified sheep; in

all probability it had escaped simply because the wolves had had enough. Terribly depressed, we dragged back to Tradom.

Unfortunately, this attempt at flight became known to the Tibetans, and now they kept a sharp watch on us. When my friend the official had recovered from his disillusionment with us I asked him to let me go to Nepal. But he energetically refused. He had grown very distrustful, and when Harrer and Aufschnaiter asked for permission to climb the Annapurna and Dhaulagiri mountains he refused that too. If they wished to go they would have to take me with them; and then all three of us must cross the Tibetan frontier into Nepal. But as this suggestion did not fit in with their own plans, they preferred to wait for the reply from Lhasa.

However, I would not give up hope, and I made it clear to the official that nothing could divert me from my intention to go to Nepal. As I had grown genuinely fond of him I wanted if at all possible to avoid using force or taking to flight, though I had secretly already arranged for horses. My persistence was rewarded. In the end he agreed to my departure and even promised to put riding- and pack-animals and an escort at my disposal. In addition, he said he would give me letters to the rajah at Mustang. I had won.



## PART THREE



# I

I LEFT Tradom on 22 November, 1944, after a meal which several Tibetan friends gave for me. I was glad that there were many who were sad because I was leaving. It was a painful parting for me, and most painful of all to leave my comrades. How would they get on? What would happen to them? They walked along beside my horse, and then stood waving as long as I was in their sight. I gave Harrer my revolver, for now he would have more use for it than I. At our parting he said, "Hanne, forget the bad, remember the good." Aufschnaiter, taciturn as always, only gave me a strong grip of the hand.

I journeyed on horseback to Nepal, with my escort, Tsung-ru, and a pack-animal. After the long, tormenting wait I had had I was excited at the thought of a new adventure. My first halt was at Likche, where I had to cross the Tsang Po, which at this time of year was already bringing down ice-floes. Local inhabitants acquainted with the ford undertook to ride the horse and yak through the river. But the water was too high, and the driving ice must have thoroughly bewildered the animals, for they were carried away and my pack had yet another thorough soaking. I, too, got across only with difficulty and risk; but on the farther side the Tibetans gave us a warm welcome and even put a dry sleeping-sack at my disposal. Despite the big fire in the tent, my things were still damp next morning; but I would not stop, and set off early, for we wished to reach the Nepal frontier in three days.

At a spot on the hillside where all the great bowl of the valley lay extended below us, I called a halt in the hot sunshine. And now I was witness of one of Nature's most impressive performances. Over the valley violent wind-driven clouds whirled and swirled continually, a fantastic sight; they steadily grew larger and larger until all the land was veiled with black cloud. Then glaring lightnings flamed through the darkness, and the tempest travelled with rolling peals of thunder from one side of the valley to the other and back again. Finally it blew itself out, the sun broke through, and lit up the rain-freshened carpet of grass with brilliant rays.

As the season was far advanced, a keen wind was blowing. I pitched the storm-tent, which Harrer had been good enough to lend

me for my journey as far as the Nepalese frontier. When I invited my escort to creep into the tent with me he proudly refused. He had grown up in wind and weather, and he preferred to creep into his sleeping-sack in the shelter of the yak and the horse.

It was the first night I had spent alone for months, and I lay long awake. I thought over the past days, and wondered rather anxiously how the two who had remained behind would get on together. If Harrer, who still possessed adequate financial resources, worked closely with the experienced Aufschnaiter, as I had impressed on him to do, all would be well. At last my thoughts were stilled, and I dropped off to sleep. The bitter cold drove me out very early the next morning. The yak-dung fire was swiftly lighted, and warmed us a little; we thawed out the frozen meat, drank our tea, with *tsampa* mixed in it. But at this height, 13,000 feet, the fire was of little use. Even as we bent over it our backs were as cold as ice. The tent was frozen so stiff with rime that we could not fold it, and had to pack it open on our yak, hoping the sun would be strong enough to thaw it out. The drover soon finished feeding the animals, took hold of the yak's nose-rope and followed me, while with the other hand he slowly twisted his *mani*-wheel and unbrokenly murmured the *Om mani padme hum*.

To get away from his monotonous droning, I spurred up my horse and rode off to look at two great glaciers which drove their sharp edges deep into the land. I had to cross many frozen streams. Before one rather broader stream my horse suddenly stopped, plunged, and dug in its hoofs, and I simply could not get it to step on to the icy surface. I patted its neck, talked to it reassuringly, and then attempted to force it forward. But it was no use; I had to dismount and lead it by the bridle. After a few paces I bitterly rued my under-estimation of the animal's instinct. For the treacherous surface broke with a loud crack, and I went through into the icy river-water. If I hadn't clung to my horse's bridle I should have been lost, but it slowly dragged me back out of my dangerous predicament. I rode off to my escort as fast as I could, thoroughly shaken by the incident, and caught up with him after an hour. I was frozen stiff in the saddle, so for the last mile or more I ran, to get my blood circulating again. The man stared at me in horror and without saying a word began to light a fire, while I threw off my clothes, which were frozen board-stiff, and crept into the only dry article I had left: my sleeping-sack.

Now the animals were unloaded and turned to graze in the



vicinity, and over a roasting fire a line was stretched, with my wet clothes hanging from it to dry. They seemed to be rather drier by evening, and the sun had contributed its share to the process. But after a horrible night during which I did not stop shivering, we had to warm my clothes over the flames next morning. In fact they only dried out gradually while I wore them. Of course, in such conditions it was impossible for me to ride; I ran vigorously beside my horse to keep warm.

We marched along the Kali River through a deeply channelled gorge with astonishing greyish lilac stone, and reached the Kore pass (14,000 feet) without much of a climb.

As I stood beneath the fluttering *mani*-flag of the *obo* and took one last look back at Tibet it occurred to me that Sven Hedin, who also had come from Tradom, must have reached this spot. Yet I was the first foreigner to enter the valley which lay before me—so I was assured at Katmandu, later. And now I was crossing the Himalayas for the sixth time.

My view of Nepal was a very different picture. The road wound down in sharp hairpin bends to the Kali River, beside which I could discern three small villages with a few flat-roofed buildings painted brick-red, and trees resembling poplars. I turned off at the cross-roads for Mustang. But the place which from a distance had looked so charming turned out to be a settlement with a few poverty-stricken huts, clinging to the grey surrounding wall. I passed through a great wooden gateway, reminiscent of the entrance to a mediaeval citadel. The rajah's house, a square, box-like edifice painted in dirty black and white and the usual brick-red, made a wretched impression.

Here, as in Tibet, a crowd of inquisitive inhabitants gathered round me, to stare in astonishment at the white-skin. I learned that a Tibetan trader I knew happened to be staying in the village, and asked to be taken to him. After living for months on end in the pure, clear mountain air I was revolted by the stink of the narrow, damp, and filthy lanes between the small, two-storeyed houses. I went across a yard, climbed a wooden staircase, and found my friend playing cards. In his astonishment he almost let the cards fall; he sprang to his feet, we greeted each other warmly, and I began to tell him of my plans. He, too, considered that as a technical expert I could rightly have looked for a favourable answer from Lhasa; but he added that specialists were also in demand in Nepal. When my eyes had grown accustomed to the dim light of the room I looked

about me. The walls and ceilings were black with soot. The players were sitting on a dais in front of the rolled-up beds, butter-fat tea was standing ready in a clay pot on the fire ; in a word, the atmosphere was decidedly Tibetan. Meanwhile my arrival had been noised abroad, and the room was crowded with inquisitive people, and so full that I grew afraid for the floorboard joists.

A little later a servant arrived from the rajah, to invite me to a midday meal next day. I spent the night among the people in that stifling room, while my escort slept in the stall with the yak and the horse. As his mission was now ended, next morning he went back to Tibet, taking the animals and Harrer's tent with him.

Unfortunately, in this place I was not able to obtain suitable clothing ; everything that was brought for me to try on proved too small. So I had to call on the rajah just as I was, wearing my remarkable costume. I took the letter from the Tradom official and followed the servant who came punctually to lead me through the foully smelling lanes. Hordes of dogs were hanging about everywhere.

A side door was opened, we went in, and passing through passages and up stairs we came to the audience-chamber, on the third floor. The rajah, a Nepalese married to a Tibetan woman, as I heard afterwards, might have been about thirty-five years of age. He was dressed in expensive Tibetan-style clothes and wore the earring. I bowed slightly, gave him a greeting in Tibetan, and dropped down on the spot assigned to me.

While I was eating the first course and the noodle soup he studied me keenly. When the meal was finished I gave him the letter, and asked permission to reside in Nepal. Although my technical training and knowledge made a strong impression on him and he would gladly have retained me in his area, he could not decide off his own bat. He expressed his regret and informed me that he must first obtain a report from Katmandu. But he felt quite certain that Nepal would extend the right of asylum to me.

While we were having this conversation, in Tibetan, an old, blind man was led into the room and introduced to me as the rajah's father. He took his place on my right, and listened to his son's description of me. No doubt, because of my fantastic get-up, my beard, and uncut hair, he must have got quite the wrong idea of a German. All the time the son was talking the old man muttered "*Om mani padme hum*" and twisted his prayer-wheel, which he later handed to me, groping for my hand. As I did not wish to seem rude, I also began to say the prayer in a monotonous tone, and dexterously

twirled the wheel. Then, with his wrinkled, hoary hand he groped over me very carefully, and a satisfied smile lit up his weatherbeaten features. During this procedure he arrived at my arm muscles, which I deliberately flexed, and he spoke quite excitedly to his son about them. But I felt rather uncomfortable. Meanwhile eight tiny, comical Pekinese dogs were scuffling on the floor, and I was watching their play when the rajah, who must have been told of my 'medical knowledge' by someone or other, asked me to undertake an examination of his father.

With the aid of a spy-glass I established that both the old man's eyes were covered with a white, filmy skin. I could do nothing for him. I informed them regretfully that the father was suffering from an incurable disease of age, which had to be endured with fortitude.

The rajah provided me with a horse and a Nepalese who spoke Tibetan for my journey farther into the country. As I did not understand Nepalese I was very grateful for this thoughtful gesture. I must have made a good impression on him, for as I was saying good-bye he magnanimously presented me with a small Pekinese. I tucked it into the front of my jacket. The horse was loaded with part of my still quite large stock of provisions, the Nepalese took the rest, and we went on in a southerly direction. The dog sat happy and warm in my jacket, and I was glad to have this little life to care for. But, unfortunately, my pleasure did not last long. I soon felt a suspicious warmth at the breast, my shirt turned wet, and I had a first presentiment of what might lay before me. When this act was repeated, I gave away the little criminal at a tavern, regardless of his royal lineage; and, after my shirt had been washed, rode away with a lighter heart.

The vegetation grew more and more luxuriant. To right and left of the road blue and white primulas were blooming on the slopes. We spent the night at Kagbeni. Like all the settlements in this district, it made a pleasant impression. Timber is plentiful, so everywhere one noticed wooden decorations and carvings, especially on the doors and windows. I even saw two-storeyed houses. It was interesting to note that frequently the main and side streets were paved with the same kind of slates that covered the roofs. There were *mani*-wheels in plenty along the road. As I went past I gave each one a gentle push, to set them turning, and thus hundreds of prayers rose to heaven on my behalf. In many of the villages a brook brought fresh water down from the mountains, and on one bridge I saw a

very ingeniously constructed *mani*-wheel with wooden notched wheels, which the water turned day and night.

One village elder offered me a newly erected house to stay in. I was presented with a greeting-cup of rice wine in a bronze basin shaped like a soup plate. What *chang* made from barley is to the Tibetans, so their national drink *raksi* made from rice is to the Nepalese. I was beginning to be in need of money, so I played the doctor yet again. With Agyrol and highly diluted silver nitrate I could help the many people who suffered from eye trouble. I asked each one to bring only what he could afford, and on the average I received two rupees per treatment.

Late in the evening I was visited by a wealthy paper merchant, who invited me to go with him to his house and examine his daughter. When the girl appeared I must admit I was enchanted with her beauty and her glorious figure. Encouraged by her father, she bashfully and hesitantly came to me. He explained that his daughter was suffering from 'Semo', in other words, venereal disease. The word had stuck in my memory because in Tibet it is used as a term of address for a young lady of noble birth. Perforce I had to examine the girl, but I did so very discreetly. I soon saw that there was nothing I could do for her; like her father, she was eaten up with the loathsome disease. I was offered a beautifully prepared supper, but I was shaken with nausea, and got out of the place as quickly as I could. As in Tibet, so here this disease was horribly widespread. The unpleasant impression remained with me until I left the village next day.

Now stone buildings were beginning to be more common, and slate roofs, too; as in all mountain countries, enormous blocks of stone lay on them to hold them down. I continued southward, for I wished to see the great place of pilgrimage, Muktinath, which during the summer months is visited by thousands of pilgrims. On the way I fell in with herds of goats and yak caravans, which were carrying bales of hand-made paper to Tibet, where it is bartered mainly for salt. It is also traded for maize, spices, and cloths.

Coming down from the north my road passed at first through a wild, rocky region; but soon the scenery grew less forbidding, and Muktinath itself, which is famous for its abundance of water, stood in the midst of majestic meadows and great fir forests.

The temple stands in a stone-paved yard over the sacred spring, which here pours its water over a wall. It is then conducted along a hundred stone gutters lying side by side, which end in weirdly shaped

animals' heads with gaping mouths. When an Indian pilgrim has drunk from all these waters he is entitled to call himself One Hundred and Eight *Shri*, or Lord.

I also visited the Buddhist temple, but at first I could not observe anything extraordinary about it. Then I was shown three holes in the stone floor; my Tibetan approached them reverently, and as I looked down I saw a bluish light shimmering in the depths. The spring gushing out of the centre hole was lit up by a flame, and it looked as though the water was on fire.

After seeing all the sights I went on southward, entering a more and more gentle and picturesque country. The Dhaulagiri mountain, 25,000 feet high, dominates the land for far around, and its height is so imposing, its ridges and gleaming snowy peaks are so unbelievably beautiful that, although I was not a professional mountaineer, I could fully understand why a man succumbs to the mighty enchantment of the mountains, or, like my friend Peter Aufschnaiter, devotes all his life to conquering such giants.

Soon we came to Dukche, a larger village on the Kali River; it consisted of one- and two-storeyed houses and was surrounded by a low stone wall. On entering the village I had once more to pass a *mani*-wall, with rows of prayer-wheels in wood and metal set up on it, each with a prayer engraved or carved in its surface.

I was taken to the Nepalese merchant who had visited us at Tradom and had promised me work in Nepal. He was friendly, and offered me a clean room, but made no secret of his astonishment that I had arrived alone, without my comrades. I referred to his offer and asked what was really the situation in regard to work. He said I would undoubtedly find a job, but that it was absolutely necessary to ask the authorities in Katmandu. He advised me to get there as quickly as possible, for then I would have no difficulty in assuring my immediate future. He invited me to supper; various women from the village were present at the meal and took animated part in the conversation. The numerous gold rings, ear-rings, and all the other jewellery these women were wearing, revealed how lucrative the trade with Tibet was. In the north of Nepal, Tibetan costumes had greatly predominated; but the women here in the south had mostly dark brown blouses and cloths of woollen material, worn like coats. Around the waist hung several yards of cloth of a single colour. The married woman wears a band which, beginning at the forehead, is intertwined in the hair and hangs far down the back, being studded with flat turquoises.

The male costume also changed as I travelled southward. In the north the men mainly wore their hair long or plaited in pigtails ; but here a shorter cut was preferred, with a tail sticking out over the crown. By this tail 'they can be drawn into heaven by God after their death'. The main lower garment was jodhpurs, trousers drawn tight at the ankle, but very wide at the thighs. They are held up by a cord at the waist. The majority of the men wore a long shirt hanging loose over the trousers, and a small waistcoat. For headgear they had a funnel-shaped cap without brim, rather like a fez. Amulets were frequently worn ; in the men's case they were chiefly black stones, interlaced with several dead-white rings ; the women's were usually chains, studded with silver coins or green and white stones. Often a small amulet case of heavy silver was carried as well.

Hardly had the news spread through the village that the German doctor from Tibet had arrived when numerous patients called to ask for treatment. The majority were suffering from eye trouble, and these I assisted in the manner already mentioned.

On this occasion a paper merchant asked me to examine his wife, whose body was swollen fearfully. It was already late midday, so I told him to send for me in an hour. Through small, paved lanes my escort conducted me to the merchant's house. Men, women, and children gathered all along the route to stare at the first white man they had ever seen. We passed through a clean forecourt, went up a short staircase to the first floor, and found many people waiting to welcome me. The sick woman's brother stepped slowly up to me, bowed until his right hand was lying on my boot, drew himself erect, and retired, murmuring some Nepalese words which I did not understand.

I had a good tea on the verandah with the merchant and his brother-in-law, then I was taken to the sick woman's room. She certainly looked in a pretty bad way ; I was quite repelled by the unusual size of her belly. The patient stood shyly by the wall and then, led by her husband, came into the middle of the room, where at my request she lay flat on a couch. I was handed a brass plate with some coins and rice strewn over it, doubtless intended to stimulate me to my greatest efforts. The husband and brother sat in the background together with three other members of the family, all of whom remained in the room while I made the examination, and closely watched every movement I made. I sounded the woman, tapped her 'professionally', and soon decided that she was not pregnant, as I had thought at first, but was suffering from dropsy. Naturally, I

could do little to relieve that. But I did promise to call again next morning with some medicine, and forbade her all food for the time being. Next day I called punctually at the time arranged, gave her a strong dose of Epsom salts, and before I left the village I was glad to see that the effect was satisfactory beyond my expectations. When I mentioned that I had to go on farther the same day the woman grew terribly agitated and wanted to go with me, whatever happened. But that was out of the question. I gave her a prescription to be filled by the chemist at Katmandu ; it read in sober, everyday language, 'Give her Epsom salts'. My work for her had its reward, and not only for her : when I left I was given a young sheep and large supplies of butter, flour, and rice. So I travelled on well provisioned.

My route now lay through Dana to Beni. There I found a perfectly white-skinned child, with fair hair and blue eyes. I presumed that she was the child of a missionary family, and asked the village elder about her parents. This man had formerly served in the British Army, and he told me in quite good English that the 'father' had been stationed at a military town in India. His Nepalese wife visited him there, and after her return she gave birth to this white child. As the girl was obviously not an albino, but the fruit of adultery, the loving husband cut off the nose of his faithless spouse, that being the custom of the country. I had no opportunity to verify the truth of this statement, for I did not see the mother.

The road climbed over many mountain crests, and travel was very laborious. Lofty and majestic forests extended on both sides, often turning into really wild jungle. An expert on exotic birdlife would have enjoyed himself enormously. Everywhere I saw birds in incredibly gaudy plumage. I had never seen such a variety before.

On my way I had to go over a mountain consisting of soft, brick-red rock. Almost everyone who passed took a piece of the rock away with him, either to give to someone else or to use in his own household. After it had been thoroughly steeped in a wooden tub or bucket it was used as a dye. In the morning, so I was told, the housewife's first task is to wash down the thoroughly tidied hearth, the floorboards, and the wall to a height of some three feet, with this dye, thus giving them a red tone.

There was an unusual traffic along the road. I frequently passed a carrier or messenger with a bell-stick, trotting bravely over long distances. They work in relays, from station to station. At night they carry lanterns, and the light is visible dancing along from afar. It

was no quicker or more expedient to forward messages by mounted courier, for owing to the hilly nature of the road pedestrian travelling is much faster and more reliable.

From time to time, besides meeting single porters, I fell in with large columns of carriers numbering up to fifty men. These columns are the Nepalese equivalent of our transport undertakings. They are in charge of a leader, and carry their loads as far as Pokhra and beyond. Small inns, roofed with foliage and frequently built of clay, serve as their lodgings. To right and left of the road, usually under shady trees, there are stone walls with a kind of footstool before them; the carriers make use of these when depositing or picking up their heavy burdens, and also as seats. Goods are usually carried in conically plaited baskets held by two shoulder straps; but, as in Tibet, the main load is borne by the neck, for the basket depends from a broad forehead band. Each of these carriers has a small stick, with which he knocks twice on the bottom of his basket when he has taken up his load again.

I often saw women acting as carriers. One would have said they were quite beautiful, with their almost white skin, slender figures, and erect carriage; but the sight of their broad feet and muscular calves always ruined the impression.

On this section of my journey I witnessed a dispute between two carriers, who set about each other with their Ghurka knives. There is an unwritten law that the bystanders shall not interfere until one of the duellists is wounded. The struggle was brief but exciting. Though I thought the bigger man was superior in every respect, his opponent shot at him like an arrow, and gashed him with a well-aimed blow in the left calf. The force of the blow was so great that the fellow dropped and, bleeding profusely, gave up the fight. Only then did his comrades do anything for him. I, too, came into action and rendered the sufferer good service with the contents of a hussif. While I was bandaging him the villagers brought me two chickens and some eggs. And a rancee living in the neighbourhood invited me to spend a few days with her. But I was much too impatient to get to Katmandu, in order to learn what my immediate future was to be, so I spent only a day as her guest.

The ladies of her establishment had had a modern education and spoke good English, so I was able to enter a room in their house, where I was received by the rancee with her four very pretty daughters. In this mountain district such a meeting would have been quite impossible in the house of a strict Hindu. The room was quite



bare ; only large photographs of ancestors were hanging on the walls ; they were all in uniform and had played important parts in the history of Nepal. At the time of my visit the rajah was doing military service. I took the evening meal separately from the women, in another room. Before the servant brought it in, he offered me a bronze can with water, soap, and a hand-towel. I was able to wash my hands over a basin standing in one corner.

In Nepal, as in India, the people sit on the floor to eat ; but I was placed at the only table in the room. The first course was a small mountain of rice brought in a round copper dish ; then came brass bowls with vegetables and goatflesh, for the Hindus will not slaughter cattle. All these dishes were strongly spiced, and each had taken on the colour of the spice used in it. The potatoes, presented as a vegetable, were swimming in a reddish broth, which was certainly the hottest chili sauce I had ever tasted. After the meal the servant again appeared with his water-can. I was acquainted with this custom from my days in Arabia and India, so I went once more to the corner to wash my hands and to pick out the fragments of food from my teeth with my index finger.

My couch for the night was made up on the verandah. I slept well and awoke fresh next morning. I was able to watch several men at their morning toilet in the nearby brook. Instead of a toothbrush they used a small wooden stick, which they chewed vigorously until it was frayed out. It looks as though this method is of more effect than our innumerable pastes and powders, for everywhere in India and in Tibet I had to admire the people's healthy, white teeth.

For breakfast I had spiced tea which tasted strongly of cinnamon, milk, bread-cakes, and small fish, pickled in chilis and vinegar. I had to pay for this sumptuous breakfast, for during the long march next day I suffered badly from thirst. I halted at every spring and every brook.

On the journey there was much of interest to see and study. The mountainsides were cultivated to the utmost possible extent. The earth had been laboriously carried up to form terraces, and stone walls protected them from landslides. A well-planned irrigation system led the spring water over the topmost terraces, from which it was brought in a succession of steps down to the lowest.

At the time of rice harvest the harvested grains are poured out in a heap and vigorously threshed with flails consisting of reed plates fastened to long canes. Women and men move backward and forward, winnowing the chaff with large straw shields which

look quite a lot like the shields of knightly times, and the wind carries it away. Of course the rice retains its reddish colour ; polished rice is used only for quite special occasions.

## 2

WE CROSSED a high pass and came to Pokhra, the second largest city in Nepal. Above the town there is a sacred mountain lake much used for bathing ; it is surrounded by very fine upland meadows.

We reached the city itself about midday. The broad bazaar street, with innumerable wooden booths and stalls, caught my eye most of all ; I tried to replace my worn-out pelt footwear by a pair of respectable boots, but I could find none big enough for me. As my frightful boots were attracting rather irritating attention, I bought a pair of new tennis shoes and cut the toes off. But I was wise enough not to part from my pelt boots ; who knows, they might yet come in useful some time or other !

To secure accommodation we went straight to the town mayor with the rajah's letter of introduction, which my Nepalese was carrying. Surrounded by a large crowd, the mayor came out of his house to meet me, and greeted me very affably. Then in Nepalese he gave instructions which, unfortunately, I did not understand, and a friendly officer took us through the dense throng of gaping people to a house standing right opposite a military camp. As I saw the recruits moving rapidly about the field I was painfully reminded of my own camp life, and I didn't feel at all comfortable.

Next morning a Nepalese officer and four soldiers turned up with instructions to escort me to Katmandu, and a horse for me to ride on. This military escort was hardly to my taste. Now for the first time I began to have secret doubts whether I had done right in coming to Nepal. That merchant's invitation was beginning to seem rather like a swindle. But, as hope is always stronger than fear, I kept my chin up.

From Pokhra our road ran eastward through splendid mountain forests to Tanhu. Here I noticed a Tibetan family encamped under a tree right opposite my lodging. They were squatting around something wrapped in a long bundle, and their prayers were so fervent that my curiosity was aroused. I went across to them, taking my Nepalese with me, and greeted them in Tibetan. My speech certainly astonished them, but they only looked up for a moment, and then

paid no more attention to me and were not to be disturbed from their devotions. Finally my escort discovered that the eldest member of the family was dying, and they were praying for the well-being of his soul. I made a reverent obeisance and withdrew quietly.

As we continued our ride next morning, in front of us I saw a man bearing a heavy burden wrapped in woollen cloth. My Nepalese explained that he was the family's oldest son, and was taking his dead father to the River Trisuli, there, after the custom of the country, to wash and then burn him. For two whole days we followed this man as he strode along with the dead body on his back. Finally, outside Makalsing, he turned off the road to climb down to the river bank.

At Makalsing are hot springs which are a favourite resort of older people. At their source a bath-house of stone blocks has been erected, and cold water has been conducted to the spot, so that the requisite temperature can be established in the basins at any moment. I was struck by the arbitrary shapes of the straw-roofed houses in the various villages we passed through. Round, oval, and four-cornered structures were all found standing cheek by jowl.

The road still ran up and down over hills and into deep valleys, for now it was passing over outlying spurs of the Himalayas. This made for very hard going, and rendered our progress difficult: but again and again on reaching the top after a climb the magnificent view of the mountains was recompense for our exertions.

At Makalsing, after our day's labours, we sought sleep in vain. We had hardly closed our eyes when we were disturbed by an ear-splitting rattle of drums. It was late at night, and when I looked out to see what it was all about I saw a group of men carrying torches coming away from the village and climbing a nearby hill. I had already noticed that a green baldachin was erected on this rise. Plagued with curiosity, I quietly attempted to leave our lodging, to be present at what was obviously some cult celebration. But my escort caught me, drew me back, and through my Tibetan-speaking Nepalese excitedly indicated that it would be as much as my life was worth to go there and be discovered. They gave only vague replies to my many questions, and to this day I have never learnt the secret of that night. I could only surmise that it was one of the notorious blood sacrifices of which one heard from time to time.

Next day we reached a region of abundant water. Little streams ran across the road everywhere; springs gushed out of fern-covered slopes or shot over waterfalls. Swarms of gaily coloured birds with

shimmering plumage were playing and flying, or bathing in the crystal brooks.

Below Dhading, on the road to Kaulia, I had my first experience of a cremation. A carrier had been bitten by a cobra which had vanished back into the jungle. As there was nobody capable of giving the man any help he had died after a day of fearful suffering. Now he was being carried down to the river, on a bier woven from boughs. I joined the procession, and learned from the officer, who accompanied me, that now the dead man would be laid down with his feet in the cleansing, holy water, and all the hair of his body, apart from the Hindu tail on his crown, would be shaved off. We went to the pyre and I saw the lofty wooden pile built up and the dead body burnt on it. It was a gruesome sight, for as the flaming logs fell in, the burning body reared up as though it were alive. At this point the eldest of the mourners—it is usually the oldest son—performed the last kindly office to the dead and smashed in the skull. The remains were committed to the river.

The officer confirmed what I myself had already seen in India : that when the family cannot afford to buy sufficient wood the body is usually thrown half burnt into the river ; the birds, and above all the vultures, complete the work of demolition.

We arrived at the chief city of Nepal, Katmandu, late one afternoon in the middle of December. Some little way outside the town we were stopped by a military control which had set up a post with the inscription : 'Headquarters'. My escort officer was questioned in great detail concerning me, and had to present his documents to the commander of the military post. I had had a relay of horses from Pokhra, and the one I was riding, which I had had from Dhading, was taken back by its drover.

Finally we were allowed to enter the city. There was much activity in the streets at this early evening hour. Men were going for a walk, and I saw again and again the strange form of greeting I had already noted in Dukche : the man of lower rank approached his superior with all his body respectfully bowed, and bent till his right hand touched the other's foot : then he took the same number of steps backward, with his hands set together in front of his face, and murmuring his words of greeting.

My weird costume, shaggy hair, and wild growth of beard caused a tremendous sensation. I was soon surrounded by a huge crowd, who sympathetically asked the soldiers where I had come from and what I was travelling for. When they learned that I was German

they even wished to organize a meeting for me ; to which I politely registered my objection. On all sides I was asked in English about various Germans known to the Nepalese, and I reported on them to the best of my ability. Then I had to tell of my flight from India to Tibet. But I had to cut the story very short, or I would never have managed to satisfy all who were anxious to hear it.

As we could hardly keep moving for the throng of people, my escort officer, who was weary of this gathering, brought up a horse-drawn carriage, in which we managed to get away. We reached the palace of the Premier of Nepal, Maharajah Judha Shamsar Jang Bahadur Rana, as dusk was falling. The officer was admitted at once, but we had to wait an hour before he returned with permission for me to enter. My Nepalese had remained with my things at the command post. Though I had no idea where this was, I hoped to find it and my property somewhere in the town.

It was dark when we entered a remarkably large park with extensive lawns, fountains and shady trees, in the midst of which the magnificent, four-storeyed castle stood. The entrance was approached by a broad marble staircase, leading to a columned portico. As it was late the main door was closed, so we were let in by a side door. As we passed I noticed the maharajah's bodyguards in their guard-house. A servant led us along many corridors, then suddenly we found ourselves again in the open air, a courtyard, I think, surrounded by a wall. Although I could not see anyone, I felt that I was being watched from all sides. I grew even more ashamed of my ragged attire, my tennis shoes with the toes cut off, and my matted beard.

The maharajah's third son came into the courtyard to welcome me. The sight of my wretched appearance seemed to startle him for a moment, then he retired with the escort officer to hold a conference. A moment or two later the officer returned and ordered me to follow him. Once more we passed through long corridors to the main entrance, where a car was waiting. I expected to be taken to where my pack had been deposited, especially as I was hungry and desperately tired. But something very different happened : the car took me straight to the building of the British Embassy, as I realized to my horror.

Wearing evening dress that was a grotesque antithesis of my tramp attire, Lieut.-Colonel G. A. Falconer came out of the building, greeted me, and casually asked, "Well, and are you one of the three?" So he knew all about me, and it slowly dawned on me that

I had innocently fallen into a trap. He appointed ten o'clock next morning for a conversation, and bid me a courteous *au revoir*. Then I was driven back to the maharajah's palace, where I was welcomed by one of the older sons. He expressed his surprise that I had been taken to the British Embassy, and apologized for his father, who was absent from the city at the moment and was spending the evening at one of his palaces, six miles from Katmandu. I felt really sorry that I had not met this son when I first arrived, for he appeared to be very frank and showed a gratifying understanding of my position.

As Nepal was not at war with Germany in 1944, I had put all my hopes in the provisions of the Geneva Convention, which we had studied eagerly in the camp. Its terms expressly laid down that a prisoner of war (and we internees also came under that category) must be granted asylum if he succeeded in escaping to a neutral country. The maharajah's son was very well acquainted with this clause, but I quickly realized that he himself could do nothing for me. After a long conversation I left the palace late at night, under heavy guard. Now we drove to the rest-house, which I had still not visited. At the entrance I was introduced to a Nepalese, who told me he was to be the liaison officer between the people generally and myself. I was astonished at this news, but my astonishment turned to dismay when I entered the yellow brick building and found an armed Ghurka at the door. And that was by no means all. I had taken only a few steps when I saw two similar forms to the right and two to the left, peering round the corners. And even in my bedroom, even in the adjacent bathroom, there were more of these soldiers making themselves comfortable on cotton mattresses.

My disappointment at this sudden end to my escape and all my hopes was overwhelming, it even threatened to rob me of my self-control. During the past few months I had tackled and overcome extremely difficult situations, but now I found myself in a position from which I could extract myself only with the utmost difficulty, if I had to rely on my own strength. And all this, simply because I had trusted to my legal rights. I strode backward and forward like a captured animal between those four walls and desperately thought of ways of extricating myself from this situation. Meanwhile my own Nepalese was occupied in switching the electric light on and off, for he had never seen it before. Spluttering with excitement, he told me he had seen a car, a motor-cycle, and many other hitherto unknown things.

But his liveliness and volubility only annoyed me. Now I needed to be alone. I tried to sleep, but my thoughts would not let me rest, and again and again they brought me to my feet. I twisted and turned on my couch and tried to prepare myself for the coming morning. It would certainly bring some important decisions ; but I kept telling myself I had already experienced other bitter disappointments and had got over much more serious troubles.

The Nepalese guards had lit a fire in the hearth, and had lain down beside it. I was in no mood to listen to their chatter, so I politely but firmly asked the liaison officer to send the four men out of my bedroom. But he did not do so. Late in the evening I was brought food which looked very appetizing ; but I was feeling too sick at heart to manage a bite of it. The officer asked me if I wanted anything else, and promised me that as it was now too late for a hot bath he would arrange one for me next morning.

After this intrusion I tried once more to get to sleep ; but in vain. My mind restlessly turned over the events of the past day, the possibilities of the morning and the immediate future. Meanwhile the guards kept up their whispering round the fire. From time to time a minute or two of silence would bring me hope of peace ; but then one of them would again begin to tell some tale, and at last they were talking quite loud. And then . . . one of them struck up in an intolerable sing-song. In my fury I got up and went to the bathroom. I did not put the light on, so I could see the soldiers' figures clearly by the firelight. I was strained beyond endurance ; I seized the bathtub standing ready filled and flung its contents through the open door, sending quite a flood into the room. Cursing and swearing, the soldiers switched on the light and collected their belongings. Of course, my pack was wet through as well, but now I didn't care a damn.

Aroused by the shouting and tumult, the officer, who had taken up quarters on the other side of the corridor, burst into the room. In a torrent of rage I gave him to understand in unmistakable English that I would put the disturbers of the peace outside by violence, if they did not leave the room at once. I must have looked pretty dangerous, for he at once sent his men into the corridor. Although I now had peace at last, my agitation kept me awake for a long time ; only early in the morning did I drop off into a sleep of exhaustion.

After a plentiful breakfast I was attended by a hairdresser who had been sent for, and he assisted me to regain a semi-European

appearance. Punctually at ten o'clock the car drove up and took me off to Lieut.-Colonel Falconer's office in the British Embassy, which was situated to the left of the main building. I had had a bath, but I was still wearing my travelling costume.

As we were standing about outside I was surprised to see that my pack had been brought here. A servant conducted us into the office where Lieut.-Colonel Falconer was waiting for me, seated at a solid writing-desk. Behind him on the wall hung an extremely good and highly detailed map of Nepal and a large part of Tibet. He asked me to sit down, and questioned me about the route I had taken. As I no longer had any reason for concealment I described my exact route from Dehra Dun onward. I did not omit to refer to the neutrality of Nepal, and I asked him whether I would be able to obtain a permit to reside in this country. To which he replied with perfectly correct formality and immobile features, "Here in Nepal are lying many Nepalese soldiers who have fought together with British troops in North Africa and Burma." And then, with a smile, "So your desire for asylum in Nepal might well come up against some difficulties." Evidently he had already been told about the nocturnal souse with water, for he mentioned that the Ghurkas were very brave soldiers and quick on the draw, and advised me in my own interests to be rather more prudent in future. I retorted with composure, "I have fought many another difficulty during my life, and I shall master these also."

He realized that I was not very forthcoming, broke off the conversation for the time being, and went with us into the garden, where my belongings had been taken. He ordered his servant to turn out all the contents of my rucksack and the goathair bag, and to spread them out. The man set to work with obvious repugnance, while Falconer chatted with me and the liaison officer.

Soon the ground was littered with a colourful confusion of pieces of dried yak and goatflesh, a ball of rancid, horribly stinking butter, packed in a goat's stomach: in a word, all the things that only recently had been of such vital importance to me and now had suddenly lost all meaning. I felt pretty sick.

Lieut.-Colonel Falconer investigated my possessions item by item. He showed particular interest in the medicine chest and medicines, and asked me the origin of the far from appetizing-looking pieces of meat. I explained that they constituted an iron ration which dated from my travels in Tibet. When he came to look at my really worthless pelt boots he could not resist a smile. As he



made this inspection it was easy to read his thoughts. When he had finished the servant gathered the stinking articles together again with the tips of his fingers, and the lieutenant-colonel said good-bye to me. But as I turned back to the car he took the liaison officer once more with him into his office. I had to wait quite a time for his reappearance. Then we drove to the maharajah's palace.

There I was delighted to find that the second eldest son, with whom I had had such an intimate talk the previous night, was waiting to receive me. He told me the British were insisting on my expulsion from Nepal. I once more appealed to the Geneva Convention, outlined my situation, and asked for asylum. But even as I spoke I felt only too clearly that the decision had already been cast against me. The real end of this journey to the palace had been simply to arrange for me to have a completely new rig-out of clothes. Cloth was selected, my measure was taken ; next morning I had a fitting, by midday all the clothes were ready, for good or ill. For the first time in months, in this new suit, with clean linen, a decent haircut, and a good shave, I felt again like a human being.

Presumably to amuse me, the liaison officer escorted me to the old town and showed me the Taleyu temple with its four-armed god, which in its lowest hand holds a trident, like those I had seen during the devil dances in the village of Phu. To right and left of the figure stone dragons were crouching.

On the fifth day of my stay in Katmandu I was informed that His Highness the Maharajah and Prime Minister of Nepal would receive me in audience next morning. My officer came to fetch me shortly before eleven o'clock, this time with a Mercedes-Benz. When he observed my astonishment he told me the maharajah possessed five other cars of the same make. At the palace the car stopped not at the main entrance, but by a wall on the right. A small, beautiful hunting lodge was situated behind this wall. As we drove up, everywhere I saw venetian blinds being raised. Women and children pressed inquisitively to the open windows and stared at the newcomer.

A small door opened, I passed into a well-tended garden, and went with my escort to a long stone building adorned with a gable roof and richly decorated beams. The extremely large, long windows were particularly striking ; one saw nothing like them anywhere else in Nepal.

His Highness came to the door to meet me, and gave me a really warm welcome. He was a small, elderly gentleman, dressed in

jodhpurs of gold brocade, with lacquered shoes and a knee-length, tightly buttoned, dark blue jacket with stand-up collar. He wore a blue peaked cap bearing the badge of the Rana family, and grey cotton gloves. Accompanied by two of his sons, he and I passed into the lodge. Here his other sons, who occupied the highest state positions, were waiting, together with ministers and court officials. As we entered they all rose. The large room was very simply furnished; on the right I saw a dais with an artistically carved seat for His Highness; along the walls were some forty to fifty armchairs with cushioned seats.

Over tea and pastries we talked for three-quarters of an hour about my escape and my native country. During the conversation the eldest son asked me how old I reckoned his father to be. To which I honestly replied, "Sixty." A faint smile flickered over the worthy old gentleman's face, and he said quite proudly that he was already seventy-one. He told me frankly how he spent his day. He was accustomed to rise at six in the morning, saying his prayers, then riding for an hour and a half; he had breakfast, and went to his study, where he worked till midday. Punctually at half-past two he was back at work again, going on till four. He spent the afternoon in swimming and light sports, then if necessary he gave up his recreation and devoted himself to important tasks. The evening belonged exclusively to his large family and the care of his extensive possessions. At night he gladly turned to his special hobby, star-watching, in a splendidly equipped laboratory fitted up on the palace roof.

As I was now face to face with the head of the whole country, I made yet another attempt to discuss my burning problems. But he found my request for asylum in Nepal and my inquiry as to the possibility of work very inconvenient and embarrassing. After a painful silence the oldest son, who held the office of foreign minister, explained that unfortunately my request could not be granted, owing to political reasons.

So my last hope was shattered, and my fate was determined. They courteously asked me whether I wished to travel by horse or elephant from Katmandu to Amlekhganj, the nearest railway station, or whether I preferred to be driven there. After a moment's reflection I decided to refuse the offer, and said I would much rather walk. This did at least gain time and enabled me to take advantage of any possibility that might turn up.

At our parting the maharajah magnanimously gave me a water-

proof Swiss wrist-watch and three hundred rupees. He ordered the liaison officer to show me more of the sights of Katmandu, then said good-bye, smiling pleasantly.

Although I did not feel at all comfortable about my prospects, I had to make the best of it. I was taken to see the 'zoo', which was housed in the castle courtyard. Four double-horned rhinoceroses, a bull, two cows, and a calf, were wandering about, churning the ground into a miniature Swiss Alps with their horns. Then I was shown His Highness's collection of gifts, which had been assembled in the first storey of the palace and almost formed a small museum in themselves. As we passed through the music-room, which was decorated in rococo style and included two expensive grand pianos, I was invited to play on these rarely used instruments. As I had never played before—one was expected even to know how to play the piano!—I had regretfully to refuse. Then we entered a room which had its walls covered with distorting mirrors, such as we find in our funfairs. As I saw myself extended in both length and breadth, one moment absurdly fat, the next unconscionably thin, I had to laugh even though I was not feeling at all happy. This curious collection had also been presented to the maharajah from some foreign country.

The next room contained some really interesting articles. It included model frigates of every kind and size, hanging or standing, carved from wood. There was a good deal of other wood-carving work, including a highly successful rhinoceros in a dull red colour, which had come from China. Close by were models of buildings, complete layouts, and famous memorials, such as the Taj Mahal. All the gifts were placed on tables specially provided, or under glass-cases; details of their significance and their donors were attached. A fine picture of Mount Everest, a present from the first Everest Expedition, aroused strange feelings in me. It was exactly as I had seen the mountain during my journey from Tibet to Nepal. I stood a long time in thought before this picture, plagued even more with disappointment at the mournful end to my escape. My thoughts roved back to the place where I had spent difficult but happy days in freedom. I could well appreciate the honour done me in being shown all these things, which were not generally accessible to Europeans; but my heart was not in this tour of inspection. I could get no pleasure out of it, and as I made the round of the exhibition I was depressed by the thought of my imminent expulsion from the country.

Perhaps to compensate me somewhat for my loss of freedom, after lunch I was driven out to Patan and the Bhatgaon, the famous temple some seven miles from Katmandu. Katmandu itself has numerous temples, but they were not to be compared with the one I saw that afternoon. At first all I could distinguish was a bewildering confusion of carved wooden façades and overhanging roofs ; and wooden and stone figures of all sizes. But in the middle of these houses and temples stood the great bulk of a five-storeyed temple, with a staircase flanked by many statues. Here were giants, looking like wrestlers ; elephants and bird-headed gods ; horses, rhinoceroses, fantastic monsters and obese human forms. The place was crowded with gods and dragons, and with believers bringing their sacrificial gifts.

As, rather overcome by this multitudinous variety, I returned to my hotel, I saw my rucksack and goat's-hair bag hanging on the line, washed tolerably clean. Now I definitely felt that my hours of freedom were numbered.

Late that afternoon I asked for a last conversation with the maharajah's eldest son ; he gave me a friendly reception. I made one last attempt to get permission to remain. I even offered to set up a technical school and run it without pay, only in return for board and lodging. But it was all wasted effort. I left the palace without achieving my object. But as I went I swore that despite all obstacles I would flee to Tibet yet again within four months at most.

### 3

THE hour for departure arrived next morning ; a car came to fetch me. This time it was not a magnificent Mercedes-Benz, but it was at least a car. It took me and the liaison officer to Thankot, seven miles distant. I was to begin my march on foot from there.

From Thankot we took a paved road in the direction of the mountains. I was offered a kind of Sedan chair, called *dandy*, borne by four carriers, to take me to the top of the pass. But I refused it. Later I was offered a place in a carrier basket hanging from the back of a Nepalese. At first I flatly turned it down, for I was afraid the man would drop as soon as he took up my weight. But the fellow pleaded so hard and so long, knowing that if he did not carry me he would not get paid, that I gave way and tried him as a beast of burden. The little man, who had strong calves, carried me for several

hundred yards ; but I found this kind of conveyance so painful that I climbed out and continued on foot.

From the top of the pass I looked back over the broad valley, with the cars of high government officials and wealthy Nepalese driving along it. As it was a clear day, I had a last, never-to-be-forgotten look at the nearby, snow-covered Himalayas.

Along the Chitlong valley the road ran steeply down over stone blocks lying in confusion ; but we had hardly covered this section when we were climbing up again through rhododendrons and deciduous forests to the Chisagarhi pass and its strongly guarded fort. Not far from here we took a rest in the maharajah's bungalow, where the servant, who had been informed of our coming, had already prepared a bath, food, and lodging for the night.

After an arduous descent next day, we reached Bhimphedi, where we could see in the distance the terminus of the cable railway which, during our journey, we had noticed from time to time running right above us. I learned from my escort that it was put up in the year 1925. It is worked by electricity and stretches for some thirteen miles. All smaller and medium-sized loads are carried by it ; but large loads, such as cars, must be dragged over the pass by intense human exertions. I did see one such transport, and counted a good hundred coolies dragging and pushing a car, and, at steep or dangerous spots, even carrying it on poles.

At Bhimphedi the government's official car was waiting for us. It took us past dried river beds and high mountains, along a road bordered on both sides with small and large temples, to Amlekhganj, the nearest railway station. It was situated in the middle of the jungle. From here we moved slowly by a narrow-gauge railway toward the Indian frontier. During the journey my escort pointed out that we were now passing through His Highness's hunting-grounds, in which all kinds of wild animals, from elephants, panthers, and tigers to wild buffaloes, were found and shot. But malaria is endemic all over this vast region, because of its innumerable swamps.

The activity at the Indian frontier railway station of Raxaul was something to which I had grown quite unaccustomed, and it took my breath away. The Tibetan solitude had made me genuinely shy of human company. I stood quite lost in the crowd, until suddenly a young British captain turned up and took charge of me. He proved to be a true gentleman. He at once asked me my Christian name, and did everything possible to make the journey comfortable for me. My total escort consisted of six Sikhs, big, broad-shouldered soldiers

with beards and looking pretty tough. Their long hair was fastened in a small knot on top of the head, and held with a comb. But I did not discover this till nightfall, when they took off their turbans and put on a moustache-trainer, which effectually gagged them. They were thoroughly friendly fellows. For the most part they remained in their own compartment and left me in peace. By the time we reached Patna station and we went to call on the chief of police I was feeling very queer; during the journey I had started a fever, and now I was shivering with a severe chill. My thoughts grew more and more confused, I hovered between waking and sleeping, and frequently lost consciousness. None the less, we continued to travel towards Dehra Dun, and arrived there two days later. My escort had wanted to put me in hospital halfway down the line, but it was not so far to Dehra Dun, and they hoped to get me into the camp before I fell really ill. I sat in a complete stupor, shaking like a leaf and incapable of coherent thought. I must have caught malaria in Nepal, or else fallen victim to some disease which had been lying dormant since my trials and privations and now had broken out. I was so bad that I even left untouched the flask of whisky which the attentive captain gave me for a 'Christmas' box. It certainly was a very memorable Christmas!

From Dehra Dun station, in a few minutes' drive we reached the camp some five miles away. I re-entered the place on 25 December, 1944, after an absence of eight months. The office was closed for the holiday, but the sergeant in charge undertook to inform the commandant, Colonel Williams. I believe he would have been quite ready to shake my hand, but of course that was impossible in the circumstances.

As I was so well dressed yet looked so wretched and ill he asked jokingly what party I had come home from. I replied, "I'm just back from a trip to Tibet, which took me to Nepal also; and I've got malaria really bad." He could see that for himself, apparently, for he had me taken straight to hospital, where I lay seriously ill for some days. With the aid of injections and good care I was soon on my feet and at least fit for examination, though I felt very weak and miserable.

Meanwhile the news spread like wildfire through the camp: "Hanne's back again!" My friends and comrades proved touchingly solicitous for me and, in order to make the start of my confinement easier, they gathered so much money that I possessed more than I had had in my pocket at my escape.

I was hardly well again when I was taken before the commandant. He questioned me very closely, and I told him all I had been through in Tibet and Nepal. Here, too, I referred to the clauses of the Geneva Convention and insisted at least that I should go free of punishment. The commandant countered that truly Nepal was neutral, but she was maintaining troops in Africa and other theatres of war. And besides, what proof was there that I had come from Tibet? If I referred him to the British Embassy at Katmandu, the inquiry would take a very long time. Did I really believe that Nepal was, strictly legally speaking, a neutral country? I retorted that of course I had believed it. Apparently he had only been waiting for that answer, since he now told me with a smile that in that event the obligatory twenty-eight days' detention did not apply to me, and I could go straight back to the camp. Of course a further investigation would be made, and I would have to face the consequences.

Before I left hospital my pack was returned to me, and I at once went through it. Unfortunately, I found that the eleven very fine turquoises which I had picked up in Nepal, a slate with the words *Om mani padme hum*, and some relics from Tibetan *chorten*, had achieved their 'independence' of me. My diaries, which I had guarded so long and anxiously, had vanished too.

In the camp, invitation followed invitation; everybody wanted to hear about my escape and all my adventures; and, just as after my first return, now, too, many comrades demanded that I should join with them in a new break-out. Needless to say, I offered to help them forward their plans by my advice and assistance. We sat together in the library at night and studied maps, on which I pointed out my route and drew attention to the spots of particular danger. And I started to look around for yet another comrade with whom to make preparations for a third dash to freedom.

I was still in the midst of settling these matters when, one Saturday after the regular inspection, a detachment of British soldiers marched into the camp. Fate drew a black line through my schemes, for now every man who had ever made any attempt to escape had to pay for it. We had to step forward from the ranks, then were separated and taken one by one to a soldier, in whose presence we had to pack on the spot. I was guarded by a sergeant who, because of his false teeth, was nicknamed 'nut-cracker'. He was so zealous about his task that while I was packing he reached across the table for a cake-tin in which I had over four hundred Indian rupees. But I reacted swiftly and explained that the

box belonged to my table neighbour and was nothing to do with me. Nobody dared come near us, talking or calling to others was strictly forbidden. At the gate, which that day was under extra strong guard, were two trucks, on which we had to load our belongings. Our comrades were there too, for, though taken completely by surprise at this action, they had gathered to say good-bye to us. Luckily, in the excitement of the departure I managed to call to my friend to take charge of the cake-tin, and later he was able to return its contents to me.

Need I say that we did not look particularly cheerful? But we were all used to worse things than this, we kept outwardly calm, and were prepared for anything. We were taken straight to the prison building, which each of the escapees knew from the twenty-eight days he had done there. We were unloaded from the trucks, and each man had to step forward with his belongings. When everything had been thoroughly searched a British soldier took us one by one to a barracks on the other side of the street, for a body search. We stood naked while the Tommies felt every stitch, every fold of our clothing, and held it up to the light.

Just as I was counting out my camp money to the officer I saw Schmaderer go past. He looked very agitated, and the tip of his nose was quite white. I felt sure he was wrestling with some very serious problem. Hardly was I outside the barracks again when his turn for the search came. We who had already undergone this trial were sitting separated from the others in the road ditch, under the supervision of the commandant, his adjutant, and various senior officers.

Then something quite unforeseen occurred : the soldier who had been in charge of Schmaderer hurried up to the commandant and reported that just outside the barrack entrance the German had suddenly shot off like an arrow and fled. The soldiers were alerted at once, and in the case of attempts to escape they had orders to shoot ; but before they could think of opening fire Schmaderer had sprung down the bank and was running down to the dried-up bed of the River Ton at a crazy speed. He took such excellent cover in the jungle that the search which was put in hand was fruitless. But that same evening Schmaderer crept up very close to the barbed wire of the camp and made his presence known to his comrade Paidar, in the camp itself, with a whistle. Paidar had been fully expecting his friend to turn up, and he went at once to the wire and threw empty tooth-paste tubes across it. These tubes contained notes



rolled up inside them. Schmaderer made use of them to reply, and they quickly agreed on a time and meeting-place. As meanwhile my trick with the dung-cart had been forgotten, Paidar ventured to ride out of the camp also in the same cart, which this time was loaded with empty corned-beef cans. Everything went like clockwork, and they fled along the same route which I and, later, Aufschnaiter had followed as far as Narkorie.

The excitement which reigned among us Germans and the English after this successful escape can be imagined! The guards were reinforced at once, and not one of us was allowed to touch his pack after that. We did not mind, for now Indian soldiers sweated instead of us as they loaded our things on to a lorry under the murderous sun. We had no idea where they proposed to take us to. The lorry was followed by two omnibuses, which carried us to the railway station at Dehra Dun. While we were being loaded into third-class military wagons we tried to discover our destination from the railway staff. But they would not tell us anything.

There were twenty-one of us, including a German named Schönfeld who had been converted to Buddhism. Before his internment he had wandered about the district, wearing a saffron-coloured habit, doing penance and living a life of austerity. As he knew India and Ceylon well and had also tried to escape, he, of course, came in the category of 'serious criminals'. He had a perfect mastery of the main speech of the country, Hindi, as well as several dialects.

The guard placed over us was extraordinarily strong. To each prisoner there were two armed soldiers, who remained at the end of the carriage to keep us more easily under observation. Some of us had already made ourselves comfortable on the folding beds which were slung from the roof. The windows were wide open, for it was at a time of fearful heat. Schönfeld sat motionless in front of one of the windows and was the continual wonder of the soldiers, who were amazed at his habit and his knowledge of the language. We all knew that when darkness fell he intended to leap out of the train as it was moving, and as though by command each of us found some small coins which somehow had eluded the soldiers' search. We all wanted to contribute to the success of our comrade's audacious plan. Every twenty minutes or so the sergeant arrived to see that all was well and to count the twenty-one innocent sleepers. He was obviously delighted each time to find us all present.

Then came the great moment. Immediately outside the station of

Hatwar, a place of pilgrimage, for a second Schönfeld was prevented by a passing train from jumping out. But the comrades sitting next to him gave him cover by leaning forward, while at the same moment two others got up to go to the toilet. He swiftly gripped the top frame of the window with both hands, adroitly drew himself up with an overhand haul, and let himself drop from the rapidly moving train. Another man would undoubtedly have been dashed to pieces, but Schönfeld had had Yoga training and had complete control of his body, and at this decisive moment it served him well. We followed his leap with bated breath. Now it was up to us to trick the sergeant when he made his next count. One of our comrades, who was lying on the middle double bed, neatly stretched out one foot to the left-hand and the other to the right-hand bed ; and as the sergeant only counted by the legs, he made the correct count of twenty-one. Several counts passed in this way before Schönfeld's absence was noticed ; then one of the soldiers suddenly missed the yellow-habited monk. There was a great to-do, but the escapee had vanished without trace, and we in all innocence shook our heads over this mystery. The emergency brake was applied and the whole carriage searched, but, of course, nothing was found. So now a second bird had flown. Schönfeld was not picked up until three weeks later, at the pilgrimage centre of Badrinath.

By way of Delhi we travelled through the Rajputana province to Kotla, where Indian troops commanded by an English officer were waiting to take us over under strong guard. We had to load our packs on to two trucks and travel in omnibuses to Deoli, forty miles away. Outside this town a regular punitive camp with barbed wire entanglements and guard towers was waiting for us. Two thousand five hundred Japanese with their families, and five hundred Italians, were already held there, when we twenty Germans, now thoroughly down in the mouth, made our entry.

Before we were handed over we were once more searched thoroughly for the umpteenth time. Here we found a very different atmosphere from that of Dehra Dun. The smallest offence against camp regulations was severely punished ; even a pencil-stump left on the window-sill cost the owner twenty-eight days in clink. The diet was extremely frugal and monotonous. We were mainly foddered on goatflesh, which looked fearfully unappetizing when it was brought in on the oxen carts ; its flavour could be made comparatively endurable only when seasoned with large quantities of garlic. The Italians were excellent hands at making their rations tolerable

to eat, but we Germans simply could not get used to this unpleasantly strong meat. Our day was time-tabled down to the last minute, to prevent our having any leisure. Among the daily obligatory occupations was that of catching flies. For a weight of twenty-eight grammes of flies the Command paid a reward of one rupee. To obtain this prize more quickly the Italians thought up a bright idea. They made a contraption consisting of a wire frame covered with mosquito netting which had only one small opening in the bottom, through which the flies, attracted by a blob of jam, crawled into the trap. When sufficient of them were caught the whole lot was drowned in hot water. Then the Italians laid them out on a sheet of newspaper till they were half dry, as they made a greater weight than if dried thoroughly. They handed them over to the authorities, thus easily bringing their daily capture to two pounds.

Another task allotted to the internees was snake-hunting. Reptiles were to be met with everywhere, and most of them were venomous; so it was to everybody's interest to exterminate them. A rupee was given for every snake killed. In this task, too, the Italians displayed particular skill. Excursions were allowed from this camp also into the not very attractive, desolate steppe country surrounding it. During these trips the Italians hunted down every conceivable kind of snake; they even brought back innumerable water-snakes from the ponds and springs, catching them with slings fastened to bamboo rods. They were well paid for their captures.

The days and the weeks slowly passed. There could be no thought of escape from this camp; so we longed for the end of the war. In the Far East the moment of decision was drawing close. But the majority of the Japanese in the camp simply would not believe that Japan could be defeated. They thought it quite impossible that their fatherland and their divine Emperor could be conquered. The camp came dangerously near to a crisis when fanatics even banded together in a 'Black Dragon' organization and persecuted and beat up anyone who seemed susceptible to reason. They went so far as to kill a fellow-countryman who was quite quietly explaining the political situation. Even intelligent Japanese to whom we passed on the newspaper reports were impervious to sound judgment and turned away silent and uncomprehending.

One night we heard heart-rending screams: a further victim of Japanese fanaticism was being beaten up; afterwards he was flung half unconscious on to the barbed wire, from which we released him. He was seriously injured. This incident increased the tension

almost to breaking-point. Through an interpreter the Commandant endeavoured to convince them of the true position of their native country. When this achieved nothing, and the terror grew still worse, troops were brought in and surrounded the entire camp. An ultimatum was issued that at eight o'clock next morning the camp would be occupied and all the internees were to assemble on the square ; and those lying wounded in the barracks were to be brought out too. The Japanese men, women, and children furiously protested at this order.

Next morning, punctually at eight, a force of some sixty men armed with machine-pistols marched in from the sports ground. But, taking no notice of the menacing tanks lined up on the farther side of the wire, all the Japanese internees rushed at the soldiers with knives, sticks, and stones. A warning volley was fired, and then, as the camp itself was threatened, the soldiers had to shoot. When the first victim fell the uproar died away. After this necessary measure the 'Black Dragon' thought better of its intransigence, and soon peace was restored.

The task of emptying the camp began at the end of 1945. First the Japanese, then the Italians were repatriated. We Germans were the last to leave ; we were taken back to Dehra Dun. There, too, everybody was looking forward to the camp's break-up ; every man had his things packed and was waiting anxiously for the moment of departure. We were forbidden to take provisions with us ; but in view of the very uncertain future I could not resist taking advantage of what might be my last opportunity, and acquired a large case full of corned beef. I covered the cans with several books as camouflage, and declared the entire consignment as a book parcel. How useful this 'library' was later on in Germany anybody who lived through the fearful post-war years will realize. Then one day I set sail on a British troop transport, from Bombay to East Africa, and from there through the Mediterranean to Hamburg, where we dropped anchor in January 1946. We were all wearing tropical kit, and we froze pitifully in the winter cold.

I had a special permit to travel in a military train to Berlin, my second homeland. I was completely bowled over by my return to the city which was so horribly destroyed, at my meeting with all the wan and sickly looking people and coming into contact with the bitter need which existed at that time in Germany. I was more than ever plagued with a longing for travel, and took every step possible to get out into the world again.

Strongly though I felt all my kinship with defeated Germany, that bond was not so strong as to keep me confined in the country. In truth, my homeland still remained the world, or, better still, the freedom with which I previously had been able to move about the world. And unexpectedly, just as I was beginning once more to feel that I was in a prison, this, my true, inner homeland, was restored to me. I learned that the Indian Government was needing an overseer for the construction of the second largest dam in the world, at Bhakra, at the foot of the Himalayas, and took the news as a call of fate. Although my prospects of success were slight, I immediately applied for the post. Luck was with me, and in 1948 I travelled back to India on a one-year contract, to work in the proximity of the mountains which through the years I had come to love. The one year lengthened into several; I lived a new life in that glorious country, and while there it occurred to me to write my reminiscences of my daring escapes. I wrote them down in my leisure time. In the summer of 1954 I travelled again along the highway to Tibet, but this time in peace and undisturbed, with no fear of being hunted. And I seized the opportunity to take many shots of the human beings, animals, and scenes I met on my way, with the object of giving an even more picturesque touch to my story.

On my return to Germany I soon succumbed to the allure of new tasks and journeys. For I can breathe freely only when the barriers surrounding me fall away, the frontiers open, and I can step out into the great expanses with their beauty, their secrets, their dangers and wonders.