Volume XIV 1947

THE HIMALAYAN JOURNAL

RECORDS OF THE HIMALAYAN CLUB

Edited by H. W. TOBIN

CONTENTS

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Avalanche sweeping over Mummery's 'second rib'

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H. W. TOBIN

'To encourage and assist Himalayan travel and exploration, and to extend knowledge of the Himalaya and adjoining mountain ranges through science, art, literature, and sport.'

VOLUME XIV

1947

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EDITORIAL

UNLIKE the preface to volume xiii, the presence and matter of this editorial requires no explanation but only apology for the shortcomings of an inexperienced editor. That issue, ably edited by Wilfrid Noyce, worthy successor to Kenneth Mason, was, as he termed it, 'a coming to life' number. And it was in truth a promising rebirth. But, alas, the swift evolution as independent states of India and Pakistan brings in its train the early repatriation of nearly all active members of the Himalayan Club. And the hitherto simple access to the great mountains of India's northern borderlands will be enjoyed only by those who will work in the new states. Consequently, unless, or until, mountaineering is taken up seriously by Hindu, Moslem, Sikh, and others, the very *raison d'être* of the Club will be no more.

Nationalization of the Club or its successor will mean production of its *Journal* by a national editor and a national publication. So it seems that volume xiv is almost certain to be a final issue, which is a tragic thought for all of us members, and perhaps more especially for those who have given so much of their time and their talents to its creation and life. The Committee had hoped and planned that future production should be in the hand of a member with up-to-date experience of mountaineering in and from India, so the now officiating editor was only to 'hold the baby' until someone better qualified became available. Instead of his being able to hand it to another nurse, it seems that the duties of performing the obsequies will fall on the present incumbent.

The appearance of the number has been much delayed by various factors, not the least being the tremendous political changes in India. The Honorary Secretary has, despite all that he has been contending with, rendered, without delay and without a grouse, much indispensable help. Alterations in the executive of the Committee have made his task the harder. The ready co-operation of the *Alpine Journal*, with which there is always reciprocity as to use of material, calls for our gratitude. Our thanks are also due to our Assistant Editor, Mrs. Joan Townend, for her ready help and advice. As for our publishers, all members will wish to place on record their high appreciation of their unfailing co-operation and personal help given by members of the staff to editors past and present.

An index to the first twelve volumes of the *Journal* has been prepared by A. J. Young, and is being edited by Gordon Whittle. It is hoped to distribute it early in 1948. Meanwhile, members will like to express their gratitude to the former for doing a much-needed job and also, in anticipation, to the latter for dotting the i's and crossing the t's.

SASER KANGRI, EASTERN KARAKORAMS, 1946

J. O. M. ROBERTS

SASER KANGRI is an attractive mountain, 25,170 feet high, with three 24,000-foot satellites; it reigns between the river valleys of Nubra and Shyok. Its nearest rival is Soltoro Kangri, 60 miles away to the north-west. It seemed comparatively unexplored from a mountaineering aspect and lay in Ladakh at the end of a long and interesting approach along the Central Asian trade route, far from India. I planned an Expedition for the summer of 1946.

Information about the mountain was confined to a paper by Dr. Longstaff, which appeared in the *Geographical Journal* for June 1910 and described his 1909 Expedition to the Eastern Karakorams. Bad weather prevented him from making a careful examination of the mountain, but from a base at Panamik in the Nubra, he went up the Phukpoche Lungpa, or nala, and reached 18,000 feet on its glaciers. 'The highest peaks, best approached from the south-west, presented some steep faces of exposed rock.' They did.

The Vissers surveyed the area in 1929 as part of a larger exploration and produced a map. But they appeared to have published nothing in English about the mountain itself and time did not permit further research in this direction.

In 1899 Messrs. Neve, Millais, and Tyndale-Biscoe climbed a peak of 20,580 feet to the east of Panamik and Neve's *Picturesque Kashmir* has a photograph of the Saser group taken from the summit. He apparently confused our 23,000-foot 'Plateau' with the highest peak, which is partly hidden. He advises a base at Skyang Poche, below the Saser pass, and thence an approach along one of the 'great ridges running south-east to the highest peak'. A glance at the modern map will show that this is impracticable. I did not see Neve's photo until we got back, but it would have been of little use in our planning.

I budgeted for a party of four experienced Europeans with four Sherpas, and 3½ months away from civilization, giving us two clear months on or around the mountain. Charles Wylie, back from four years in a Japanese prison camp, was my companion in the plot and he laboured at home ordering equipment and trying to recruit other members for our still unborn expedition.

In India I co-opted George Lorimer of my battalion. At that time he was not a mountaineer, but had walked and ski-ed in the hills. I also began a somewhat incoherent correspondence, mainly telegraphic, with various Sherpas in Darjeeling. Owing to the

uncertainty of our leave, and consequently all our planning, we were late in the field and most of the best men had already been engaged. However, Passang, my companion of three former trips to the hills, was ill with malaria. A tin of Mepaquine was dispatched in haste to Darjeeling and Passang was cured and engaged.

We planned to leave in mid-May, and April was a bad month. Charles wrote to say he could not join us and it was now evident that George and I would be the only starters. The arrival of equipment from home was uncertain and so, still, was our leave.

Early May, however, brought a grant of eighty-eight days' leave, and tents and other important items from home. I wired to Passang to bring the best man he could find. The cutting of our Sherpa strength to only two was forced on us mainly by reasons of economy. Sherpas have become an extremely expensive item in the bill of a Himalayan expedition, and it hardly seemed worth while transporting second-rate or inexperienced men across the whole breadth of India and paying them for three months while somewhat similar raw material was available at the base of our mountain.

Sonam, Passang's choice, turned out to be a solid individual of gorilla-like appearance. His technical experience was confined to a visit to Gasherbrum with the French ten years earlier, but as a load carrier and willing hand in camp he was invaluable. I do not think we saw Sonam smile the whole time he was with us, though one sometimes discerned a twinkle in his bloodshot eye. We added a Gurkha rifleman, Purkabahadur. Like most Gurkhas he was extremely agile and at home on rocks and steep hill-sides, but had no experience of snow and ice. However, his services were free and his smile made up for Sonam's lack of one.

My original conception had been of a reconnaissance lasting about three weeks, during which time four small parties of one climber and one porter each would encircle the mountain. Then ten days to establish a base and one month for the attempt. The reduced time at our disposal and the party as finally constituted made such tactics impossible. So we decided to follow in Longstaff's footsteps and approach the mountain direct from Panamik Loping; if that failed, at any rate to have time to look at the Shyok side. Much would also depend on what distant views we might have of the area before reaching Panamik. We now had small hope of making a serious attempt on the summit, but just in case, we took sufficient high-altitude rations, fuel, tents, and other equipment for a siege lasting a month. Also clothing and equipment for three Ladakhi high-camp coolies.

We left Srinagar on 18th May, and crossed the Zoji La with seven baggage ponies two days later. Then along the treaty road

The Saser Kangri Group

Photo. J. O. M. Roberts

Cloud Peak, Saser Kangri, and the Plateau, from the S. Phukpo glacier

to Leh, which we reached on 30th May. We slept in the comfortable government bungalows and lived largely on the country.

We halted one day in Leh to reorganize our baggage into twenty-two light coolie-loads for the 18,000-foot Khardung La. The pass was not yet officially open and ours was the first large party to attempt the crossing.

It was snowing when we camped at the foot of Leh Poilu, but next morning the weather was perfect. We left at about 3 a.m. and were on the top in $3\frac{1}{2}$ hours. Snow lay down to 15,000 feet. The view was cloudless and magnificent, but not as extensive to the north as we had hoped. However, Saser was there on the horizon, 45 miles away, looking rather steep and icy.

Panamik, for so long only a magic name, we reached on 5th June at the end of a 250-mile walk. We camped in a green meadow traversed by a clear stream and shaded by poplar trees. The village was a mass of wild roses and irises grew along the edges of the fields.

We had about five weeks to spare and had already decided to concentrate on the Nubra side. But from the Nubra there are two approaches to the western glaciers of the Saser Kangri group —the Phukpoche Lungpa above Panamik and the Chamshing Lungpa, 12 miles to the south. We had not seen Saser since we left the Khardung and the Vissers' map was still our only guide. Some sort of a reconnaissance was obviously desirable before committing the whole party to either approach, but, on the other hand, time was short and Longstaff had written in not unpromising terms of the Phukpoche. As it was already evident that the success or failure of the expedition was entirely in the lap of the Goddess of Luck, we decided to go bag and baggage up the Phukpoche and hope for the best.

We stayed two pleasant days in Panamik and entered the ravine with twenty coolies and a sheep on 8th June. The route was steep and precipitous, entailing mild rock-climbing on two or three occasions. We slept in the nala bed and next day established camp at about 15,000 feet and sent the coolies back. The site was somewhat low for a base, but sheltered and well supplied with scrub fuel. We could see Saser Kangri IV, 24,330 feet, an attractive snow and ice cone which we came to know as Cloud Peak, but Saser I was hidden by a 20,000-foot mountain which divides the north and south Phukpo glaciers.

Longstaff had recommended the south glacier approach and it was evident from the map that the north glacier drained off a flank of Cloud Peak and did not touch Saser I. We decided to look at this less promising northern approach first and also examine Cloud Peak more closely.

On 10th June George and I reached a height of about 18,000 feet on the north glacier moraine after six hours of abominable boulder-hopping. The long north-west ridge of Saser IV looked not unpromising, but there was obviously no approach to the highest peak from the glacier. A similar excursion the next day up the south glacier was less successful owing to bad weather and insufficient energy.

It was now evident that our present base was too low for an effective reconnaissance of the south glacier, so we decided to move up to a camp between the snouts of the two glaciers, to be known as Junction Camp.

George and I had an off day while the Sherpas made a dump of tents and food on the new site. The plan was to occupy Junction Camp the next day and then establish a camp on the south glacier, the Sherpas returning. However, Purkabahadur, who had not been fit since we left Panamik, now began to run an alarmingly high temperature and complained of pains in his joints. It was distressing to hear him groaning as he lay in the next tent. We could not leave him by himself in this condition and a second day passed slowly, depressedly reading the medical section of *Hints to Travellers*.

On the morning of 14th June he was a little better and we established a camp on the north moraine of the south glacier at about 17,000 feet. It was not as high as we had hoped, but the Sherpas had to get back to our invalid in the lower camp for the night.

Until now the weather had been patchy, but the next morning was excellent and it remained fine for the next four days. We had an interesting day up the glacier and the reconnaissance was successful in a somewhat negative sense. I shall not attempt to describe the topography of this flank of Saser as it is clearly shown in the photograph of the mountain taken from the south glacier. Suffice to say that a direct attack on the west face seemed both dangerous and impossible, and that access to the cols on either side of the highest peak was defended by unstable-looking ice cliffs and hanging glacier. There was a further great lump of bulging ice just below the summit, which might conceivably threaten the whole of the base of this side of the mountain.

The ascent of either col was obviously not a technical impossibility, but I did not think it would be justifiable to employ Sherpas under such circumstances. To be fair I must say that we neither saw nor heard any large-scale ice avalanches coming off this side of Saser, nor were there any obvious signs of avalanche debris or ice blocks at the foot of the mountain. So it may be that the ice, despite appearance, is of a stable character. However, if I personally come

to attempt the ascent of Saser Kangri again it will not be direct from the South Phukpo glacier.

To the right the 'Plateau' was similarly defended. To the left Cloud Peak showed a straightforward upper 2,000 feet of snow and ice. A possible route up the lower 2,500 feet of the mountain is indicated in the description accompanying the photograph. I was sorry later that we did not examine this route more carefully, but in any case I think it would have been beyond the capabilities of our little party.

The day following we went up the tributary glacier to the south of the South Phukpo in an attempt either to find a way up the Plateau, from where access to the south col might be possible, or to outflank its great mass completely. We reached a height of about 19,000 feet and when we halted were about a mile from the head of the glacier and a gap leading over to the Sakang Lungpa glacier above the Chamshing ravine. Over the gap we had our first view of Saser Kangri III, 24,590 feet, a big square-faced mountain with two summits of almost equal height at either upper corner of the square. The odd 3,000 feet that we could see looked climbable enough. This was a long day and we staggered into camp as it was getting dark. The return journey was highly unpleasant over the softened glacier surface, thigh deep, and falling into holes every few yards and cursing all glaciers, moraines, and mountains impotently.

We packed up and went down to Junction Camp where the men had now concentrated all the loads with the help of four Ladakhis who had come up to join us as high-camp coolies. Purkabahadur was better, but never recovered properly until we got down to Panamik. We took an off day and held a conference of war.

Obviously we had shot our bolt in so far as an attempt on Saser I from the Phukpo glacier was concerned. And from what we had seen of the mountain the approach from the Chamshing to the south was equally unpromising, as indeed it later proved to be. The alternative was to turn our attention to the Shyok side, but having a vast quantity of food and equipment collected in Junction Camp we decided first to spend about a week examining Cloud Peak more carefully.

We selected the north-west ridge route. The ridge could be reached from the south glacier by an ice slope, steepening to a bulging wall in its upper section, whence one would land in the gap between the 'Footstool' and the 'Shoulder'. We chose rather to gain the ridge from the north glacier, although this entailed the traverse or the circumvention of the 22,000-foot Footstool.

We started up the north glacier with the Sherpas and two of the Ladakhis on 19th June. Three days later we established a camp at

about 19,000 feet at the bottom of the Footstool col. Some snow fell but on the whole the weather continued fine. Sonam returned to Junction Camp with the Ladakhis to bring up more food.

On the morning of 22nd June Passang, George, and I left camp without loads to climb to the col, and possibly some distance up the Footstool itself. We intended to put a camp on the col next day. The slopes looked deceptively short and easy. It was a gusty, cloudy, day.

At first the going was good. The angle was steepish but the snow firm and we went steadily up, kicking steps. At about 19,500 feet, during a traverse across the slope, we struck hard ice covered with an overlayer of soft snow. This was unpleasant but the section was short and we landed on an inviting-looking rock rib, only to leave it almost immediately in favour of the snow. The rocks were steep and rotten and embedded in ice.

The top now looked quite close and we began to make a staircase track straight up. But progress was becoming more exhausting. We were climbing on ice with an overlayer of some 3 feet of soft snow. Once made and consolidated, the snow steps held fairly well, but in order to make them it was usually necessary to thrust in the ice-axe at chest level and pull up on it with both arms. A boot merely thrust into the snow with the weight of the body on it scratted uselessly down till it reached the step consolidated below. Cutting steps was even worse. The ice was tough and the snow flowed down from above and engulfed the steps. I was beginning to get very tired and, largely as a result of physical weakness, mentally worried about the security of our position. For this latter reason I refused to let Passang take over the lead and gave the word for retreat. George and Passang were nothing loath. They were both very cold and bored with my inefficient flounderings.

We were probably 500 feet from the top when we turned back and had taken five hours from our 19,000-foot camp without a proper rest. I would put the height of the col at 21,000 feet and the Footstool another thousand feet higher, though from the glacier below they appear lower than this. We re-tied the rope at 100-foot intervals and descended one at a time.

That evening in camp the Footstool became the 'Toadstool'. Our vanity had been deeply wounded. However, three-quarters of the route was made and we hoped to finish it off next day. The loads and the camp on the col would have to wait. But it snowed all the next morning and we stayed in bed. In the afternoon we went for a scramble on the rock ridge above camp and saw Sonam and the Ladakhis coming up from Junction Camp, small dots on the glacier below.

We were now well stocked for an attempt on Cloud Peak but I was becoming increasingly doubtful about our chances on the mountain. We had no intention of turning tail as a result of a reverse on the lowest and easiest part of the mountain, but on the other hand progress to date had been painfully slow and the object of the expedition, a route up Saser I, was in danger of being lost sight of. We talked the matter over and settled on a compromise, whereby George and Passang would make another attempt on the col and assess the difficulties of traversing or circumventing the Footstool. Meanwhile Sonam and I would try to reach a point to the north-west from where we could view the ridge end on. In profile it looked steep but climbable so long as the crest was of a reasonable width. And there might be an easy snow slope on the far side. If the result of these reconnaissances was favourable we would have a fortnight in which to knock our heads against the mountain. If not, we would leave Cloud Peak, descend to Panamik, and concentrate on trying to find a route up Saser I from another angle.

Sonam and I reached a height of about 20,500 feet on a peak to the north-west and examined the ridge which loomed from time to time through a window of cloud. Naturally it looked much steeper than when seen in profile. There was no easy snow-field on the far side. In fact it looked narrow and rather menacing. Meanwhile the others had reached the col after five hours' hard work. Passang had led magnificently but was doubtful about getting loads up. They reported the Footstool itself steep and heavily iced. Clean ice would be preferable to the vile conditions prevailing below, but only Passang and I had crampons. After considering the whole problem carefully we decided, I think wisely, to break off the attempt and descended, at last in perfect weather, to Junction Camp.

On the whole I think the slopes to the col were safe during the cloudy, snow-showery weather in which we tackled them. But the fine, hot days that followed may well have cleared off the snow overlayer. The remark about crampons, above, calls for an explanation. On Masherbrum in 1938 we never had occasion to use them, and this, coupled with the fact that the other two had not been on crampons before, led me, stupidly, to bring only two pairs. For any serious work in the Saser Kangri region they are quite essential. And the same can be said of light summer ski for use on the glaciers any time after 9 o'clock in the morning.

We reached Junction Camp on 23rd June and stayed there two days waiting for coolies to come up from the valley. Down in Panamik again, life was very good. Lying on the warm grass under the

poplars and reunited with our remaining bottle, moraines, Lungpas, soft snow, failure, and small tents became things of the past.

After two days we threw off our lethargy and prepared for a return to the heights. George and Sonam crossed the Saser pass with two ponies, descended to the Shyok, left their ponies, and went up the Chamsen Jilga. Passang and I went down the Nubra to Chamshing and then struck up the Lungpa of that name. After two days we established a camp near the snout of the Sakang Lungpa glacier and sent our two coolies back with orders to return in a week's time.

On 4th July we set off up the east moraine with heavy loads. The going was vile. A grassy trough or plain between moraine and mountain, that pleasant feature of the lower reaches of many large Himalayan glaciers, has no place on the western glaciers of Saser Kangri. Once past the snout, the battle of the boulders begins. Mountaineering as a sport suffers from the disadvantages that it offers little scope for letting off bad temper. A golfer can smash his club with grim satisfaction. But kick a rock and it hurts you. Throw your load down an adjacent crevasse and you face a foodless and tentless future.

We camped at about 17,000 feet and the next day climbed a peak of 20,500-odd feet at the end of the long west ridge of Saser Kangri II, 24,650 feet. This was an amusing climb and included over two hours' work on a steep ice slope. It was just cramponable, though in places we cut steps for peace of mind. We belayed with ice-pitons, the last man removing his piton as soon as the leader was fixed.

I called the peak the 'Look-out', and the summit gave a fine view of the terrific rock and ice cirque at the head of the glacier. There are only two breaches in the defences. On the left of the Plateau a gap leads to the south tributary of the South Phukpo glacier. We had seen it from the other side. And between Saser III and II lay another col or gap to the North Shukpa Kunchang glacier. Both Saser II and III are inaccessible by present-day standards from this side, the former a massive castle of red rock.

The top of the highest peak remained obstinately hidden in cloud, but Saser I lies back from the glacier, beyond the Plateau–Saser III ridge, and there is no direct approach to it from the Sakang Lungpa. I decided that our next move must be to cross the gap to the North Shukpa glacier. We descended by an easier route.

On 6th July we moved up the glacier. The going on the moraine was easier to-day, but a thigh-deep struggle across the glacier, purgatory. We camped on the moraine about 2 miles from the foot of our gap. It looked accessible enough, but what lay on the far side remained to be seen, easy slopes or a precipice. During the past

Photo. J. O. M. Roberts

Panorama from the Look Out. Left to right, Saser Kangri I (summit in cloud), Saser III, and Saser II

month the mountain had given away so little that I feared the latter. Saser is a singularly unco-operative mountain.

We reached the gap at 8 a.m. next morning, unroped and on crampons. It was about 19,500 feet high. I was ahead and Passang shouted up to ask what the other side was like. I arrived on the crest in a shambling, breathless run, and sat down. A couple of thousand feet of steep snow and rotten rock overlayed with snow fell away to the North Shukpa Kunchang glacier. And there was a fair amount of avalanche debris at the bottom. The slope was perhaps not quite a precipice but it looked sufficiently unpleasant. Doubtless it can be descended. We had some pitons and about 300 feet of nylon line. But the consequences of failure to re-ascend the slope in the more dangerous afternoon conditions—a four-day walk without food and sleeping equipment—were horrible to contemplate.

We sat in the sun. A whole new face of Saser lay just round the corner. By this time George would be examining one of the Shyok approaches. If only we could descend that slope we would have succeeded in covering the whole mountain.

After about an hour of indecision I decided that we were being very feeble-hearted, and tied on at the end of 100 feet of rope belayed by Passang. On closer acquaintance the ground became a deal steeper and the snow was in a rotten condition after days of hot, fine, weather. I liked it not a bit and retreated, nearly falling off from fright when a nearby portion of the slope avalanched with a loud roar. Saser, uncompromising to the last, was bidding us be gone.

We spent a day exploring the side glacier that comes down south-west from Saser II and then descended to a camp in the nala near the Stundok side stream. Our coolies had not yet arrived and on 10th July we climbed Stundok peak, about 20,000 feet, to the east of Tiggur (19,385 feet). The weather had now begun to deteriorate and Saser and his satellites loomed hostile through mist and cloud as we took our final leave of them on the summit.

Next evening the whole party was reunited in the Nubra. George had been up the Chamshen Jilga with Sonam and taken a lot of photographs of the north face of the mountain. From a subsequent examination of these photographs I would say that here, too, no obvious route exists. The whole face appears extremely steep and well defended. George noted the north ridge as a possible line. It begins easily, but higher up abuts on to an impossible-looking buttress of rock. Possibly one could leave the ridge and traverse on to the east, or North Shukpa Kunchang glacier, face. It was singularly unfortunate that Passang and I failed to reach this glacier and so complete our object of reconnaissance.

Of the approaches to Saser Kangri left unexamined by us, this remains the most promising. The way to the glacier would lie up the Shyok. Route books and maps indicate the route. The summer road has fallen into disuse so the going would be rough. Also all supplies and transport would have to be brought from a considerable distance, a great difference to the luxurious Nubra approach. However, it is worth trying. Mid-June to mid-July is the best time for high mountaineering. The weather we experienced during this period was extraordinarily fine for the Karakorams.

We reached Leh on 15th July and made a leisurely return to Kashmir. In the Indus valley the apricots were ripe. Not least among the attractions of the Eastern Karakorams are the country of Ladakh and its inhabitants. I personally would be willing to return there with no thought of climbing high mountains. But, once in Leh, I feel that the urge for a quick trip up the Shyok to the North Shukpa would be difficult to resist. Even in the Karakorams few mountains are completely inaccessible on all sides.

In conclusion I must apologize for the recurrence of the word 'impossible' in the foregoing narrative. We were very fearful mountaineers. But if I have encouraged someone else to go to Panamik and prove us wrong, so much the better.

A SHORT EXPEDITION TO THE NUN KUN MASSIF LADAKH, MAY–JUNE 1946

CAPT. RALPH JAMES, F.R.G.S.

I ADMIT that a month is a very short time in which to attempt a 23,400-foot peak and such an endeavour could be, and in fact was, adversely criticized. However, when one appreciates that none of the members had had a chance during the war to indulge in an expedition of this nature and Berry and Stobart were due to return to the United Kingdom almost immediately, then I am sure that my readers, particularly climbers, will take a more sympathetic view.

For myself I will say that I have no regrets and will always look back on this, my first attempt on Nun, as one of the better-employed months of my life. When my companions read this account I hope they will realize how much I appreciated their company and above all their efforts in making the attempt both possible and as pleasant as indeed it was.

The origin of the plan was with Major Roy Berry, R.E., of the Engineer-in-Chief's Branch, Delhi, and Major T. S. Stobart, I.A., of the Army Films. These two had done some climbing previously in the Himalayas, England, Switzerland, and Austria, and had decided as a final effort before leaving India to attempt to climb Nun Kun, 23,400 feet, in Ladakh. The area of the Nun Kun Massif is reasonably accessible from Srinagar, capital of Kashmir, and Berry had made a study of the mountain from publications of the Bullock Workmans and of previous attempts on the mountain from the Warwan valley in 1944. But none of us had previously seen the Massif at close quarters before the attempt. All were hoping against hope that two months' leave would be possible this year but unfortunately we were only able to get one month, with the exception of Stobart who had been demobilized.

As everyone knows, an attempt on a peak of this size has to be prepared many months ahead, and so, while the problem of leave hung in the balance, Roy and Tom got on with the good work. The latter was in charge of the feeding, medical, and photographic departments, while the former took the burden of practically everything else upon his own shoulders. Early in the year came the first drawback, for the third member of the party, Charles Bailey, fell sick and was invalided home. Roy immediately appealed through the Himalayan Club for anyone who would like to join. It was at

this juncture that I, sitting up in Waziristan, jumped at the opportunity.

Tom arranged a large quota of films for us all and 2,000 feet of 16 mm. for his cine-camera; this latter included 50 per cent. in colour.

Roy had done sterling work in buying kit from home, and a few days before the start all the items of equipment from the United Kingdom arrived safely in Delhi. He had also made arrangements through the Himalayan Club for the three Sherpa porters who were to accompany us. The three little men included Angtensing, a very experienced porter who had been on three Everest expeditions, secondly Ang Gilung, also fairly experienced and an Everest man, and lastly the youngster of the three, Sarki, aged twenty. He was, though inexperienced compared with the others, an extremely tough and cheerful chap with an everlasting smile.

The beginning of May saw Tom on his way up to Kashmir, but I had met him in Pindi in order to tie up a few points such as transport for the main party, &c. Everything at this stage went perfectly and a week later I met Roy and the three Sherpas, complete in every detail, again in Pindi. The heat on the 10th day of May was appalling, and the Sherpas were not getting any fitter for it, so we loaded up our lorry straight away and left Pindi for Murree at about 18.00 hrs. and next day covered the remaining 120 miles to Srinagar, arriving there at about 15.00 hrs.

May 13th, '46. Next morning, having collected Tom and various outstanding items of kit, we set off for Sonamarg. Again, except for the fact that I had fish-poisoning, everything went well and that evening we broke up our equipment and stores into pony-loads. From this point the already inadequate road took on the form of a track, and we were obliged to use 'Shanks's pony'.

As far as I remember we had about twelve pony-loads. From now on I shall record events much as they are written down in my diary. Before doing so, however, I shall make a few remarks about the present transport situation in Kashmir. To say that this was scandalous would be but a mild criticism. No coolie or pony-man will think of working for the correct rate and if you think that any Lambardar or Tehsildar will help you, then you are in for disillusionment. After endless haggling we managed to persuade the requisite number of pony-men to accompany us for the exorbitant rate of Rs.12 per pony to Dras—three days' march! Worse still, at Dras the Zaildar (headman), realizing that he had us by the short hairs (we being in a hurry), refused to let us have coolies for the crossing of the Umba La at less than Rs.9 for the two days' march; and then to

make matters worse they refused to carry more than 20 seers each. Notice of our coming had been sent ahead some time before but all postmasters and other petty officials denied any knowledge of it.

Once away from the money-grabbing fraternity that seems to infest the normal trade-routes, we found the Ladakhis of Suru valley an extremely willing and obliging crowd.

So much for our transport difficulties—the one unpleasant memory of the trip.

May 14th, '46. The ponies arrived early and a short march up the lovely wooded valley of the Sind river took us to Baltal. We put up at the Dak bungalow and in the afternoon took some exercise and practice with the Sherpas in a snow couloir at the foot of the Zoji La, 11,000 feet. Roy lost his dog on this march. Apparently the unfortunate animal turned out to be a sheep-killer and after receiving chastisement from an ice-axe he hared away into the hills and was never seen again.

May 15th, '46. This was our day for crossing the Zoji pass. With an early start we crossed the top of the pass at 09.30 hrs.; numerous trains of ponies passed us on our way up and Tom did a certain amount of filming.

The weather was perfect and there was little snow for that time of the year. We had our midday snack at Machhoi, and then, leaving the snow, we cracked down the grassy track past hundreds of protesting marmots to Matayaan for tea. Here we stayed the night. No time had been lost so far, and at this rate we should be able to get some ten days on the mountain and at least a week above 17,000 feet.

May 16th, '46. A brisk walk took us to Dras by 13.30 hrs.; the bungalow here is cleaner than most and everything seemed very pleasant—until we began talking about coolies to cross the Umba La, a pass leading over into the Suru Nala. It was here that the coolie trouble began. The Umba La is just under 15,000 feet, and as such does not present a difficult obstacle even in May. However, it is not officially open until June. Eventually we were obliged to pay these Dras coolies nearly double the amount *asked* by the coolies who were later to carry as high as 20,000 feet on Nun! We were more than a little annoyed.

May 17th, '46. The local postmaster at Dras had a very important-looking box in which he kept certain instruments, an aneroid and a thermometer, but even with this help he was an extremely bad weather prophet. As we left for the Umba La he assured us that the

weather was bound to keep fine for the next month—within four hours it was snowing quite hard.

We camped in half a blizzard at 13,500 feet. Everyone and everything was wet and miserable. I am not a sadist but I felt that now our coolies were having to work for their money.

We soon got our tents up and overcrowded them with coolies who announced that they were about to die. It was laughable to see the Sherpas chase them about. By two in the morning there was a foot and a half of new snow, and more coming.

May 18th, '46. If it was difficult to get those wretches to work on the previous day it was wellnigh impossible to get them up this morning. However, the chasings of the Sherpas, and the patient persuasion of Roy, saw Tom and me lead off to break a trail down into the nala and over the Umba La proper. We set off at about 09.00 hrs. and shortly after that brilliant sun replaced the cloud and mist. A mountain 19,000 feet high appeared on our right, magnificent in the morning sun. The snow soon became wet and it was heavy going indeed over the last 2,000 feet of the pass. A very deep snow formation lay at the top of the northern side, which culminated in a cornice and fell steeply down 4,000 feet to Umba village on the southern side; this side was not snow-covered except a little at the top. We camped that night in a delightful little willow plantation below the village.

May 19th, '46. Having at last got rid of the Dras men we took on a cheerful crowd of coolies from Umba who sang as they strode down the road to Sankho, where they arrived at 12.00 hrs. I had gone ahead and arranged for ponies; when the villagers heard our story they poured scorn on the Dras coolies for whom they obviously had no time. With our kit now on ponies (decent, fat, healthy-looking beasts) we moved swiftly up the Suru river to Thamo, where we pitched our camp under some high rocks. The Suru valley at this point is about 4 miles wide, bordered by snow peaks, and shows definite signs of erosion caused by the swiftly flowing river.

May 20th, '46. I have written in my diary: 'To-day we shall have the first glimpse of Nun', and after an early start this was the case. At 08.00 hrs. I rounded a bend in the track and there, 12,000 feet above and some 15 miles away, stood the peak Nun clear and shining white in the morning sun. This was the first view of our objective, and at this point we were viewing it from the opposite side from that of our planned attack. The northern precipices looked appalling in their magnitude and as we neared Suru village Nun gave us an idea of what she had in store for us. When first seen, a small lenticular cloud hung over the peak in the still morning air; this soon blew

away, however, as a south-westerly wind came up and its place was taken by a small plume which then developed into a banner cloud of some considerable size. Within the course of an hour the peak had changed from clear stillness to being a pretty draughty spot.

We arrived at Suru in time for our midday snack and decided to have a day's rest to sort out our stores for the assault.

May 21st and 22nd, '46. We were now in the tracks of the Bullock Workmans in 1906, and more recently of James Waller in 1934. With their writings at our disposal and the knowledge they had imparted to the locals (notably one Qasim Khan who came up to 20,000 feet and who well knows the approach route to the east ridge) we knew quite a lot of what to expect for the first part of the climb.

The Zaildar at Suru was most helpful and hospitable, as was the local schoolmaster, whose infant was among the many that Tom doctored.

Nun was still stormy, and by the 22nd the hills around were white with snow as low as 11,000 feet. On this day we all religiously paraded and took an ounce of Epsom salts.

Things went well in Suru; we all (including the Sherpas) wrote the last letters we should be able to get off for the next three weeks, mended our kit, and cut it down to a maximum of 60 lb. an officer.

The Sherpas were to carry little more than their personal kit as far as the Base Camp, as it was for carrying higher up that they had been especially recruited and we did not want them to expend their strength carrying heavy loads to the Base Camp.

May 23rd, '46. Roy, who suddenly developed toothache, was worried about the day's march. Things looked rather grim for him, and Tom decided at Roy's request to try to pull the tooth out if there were no improvement by the evening.

We set off at 07.00 hrs., and most of the locals turned out to see us off. They were very cheerful and seemed to think that perhaps this time the English sahibs would reach the top of their high mountain.

The bridge over the Suru Nala being down, we were forced to cross by one of the most terrifying contrivances I have ever seen. Rope bridges of this nature are all very well, except when the ropes are of wickerwork! The three of us and old Qasim crossed, and the rest went the long way round to Purketse while we went up over the Purketse La. Nun on a fine day provides an excellent view from the top of the pass, but on this day the weather denied it to us. At Purketse Roy's tooth became unbearable, his face was the size of two, and the worst was decided upon. Tom gave him an injection of morphia and I sand-papered the local instrument (a fearsome rusty pair of nail-pullers). Having boiled them Tom got down to

work and after a brief struggle the tooth gave him best; but the bitter part was that we only allowed poor Roy five minutes for the morphia to take effect, where I now learn that half an hour is required; however, he batted not an eyelid, to his everlasting credit.

May 23rd, '46. We marched from Purketse up the Suru Nala, collecting wild rhubarb *en route*, and crossed the river to the south bank by a natural rock bridge. We finally camped opposite Gulmatongus village in light driving snow. Cuckoos abounded in this area, and I also observed a brilliant yellow wagtail which I placed as m.f. Melanogriseae. In spite of the strong easterly wind we had a very cheerful camp with a roaring fire. Height about 13,000 feet—night temperature fell to 5 degrees of frost.

May 24th, '46. We marched early and after a few hours turned south and passed into the end of the Shafat Nala. Now for the first time we were off any form of track. About a mile up the nala we were stumbling over a huge mass of red debris which is the terminal moraine of the Shafat glacier. We pitched camp on exactly the same site that the Bullock Workmans called their Moraine Camp in 1906. We now met the weather as it was to be every day we spent on the mountain.

I might mention here that in 1906 at exactly the same time of year the American couple spent three months on the massif and no snow fell during that period, whereas in 1946 snow fell every day until at least the middle of June. Briefly, every day dawned clear, but by midday it was clouding up and by 15.00 hrs., if not before, a westerly wind brought a foot or more new snow which daily blotted out our tracks and made the higher moves very tiring.

May 25th, '46. Our next halt was to be the Bullock Workmans' Base Camp at about 15,000 feet; as we left the Moraine Camp the noise of avalanches reached us and after a short time we passed below the first glacier junction to the north and had a grand view of avalanches thundering off the peak above. The coolies kept to the main north moraine while Tom and I took a look at the centre of the glacier. This is in my opinion the easiest way up to the Workmans' Base Camp. We found their site to be well chosen, clear of snow, and fed by a spring. The remains of their stone shelters still stood, and Roy spent considerable time making them habitable for the coolies.

May 26th, '46. After some discussion earlier in the journey we had planned to put our own Base Camp at about 17,000 feet, and having reconnoitred a route by glasses the previous evening we set off at about 07.00 hrs. Peak Z. 1 to our left, a magnificent snow and ice peak, commenced showering down a succession of decent-sized

avalanches. We could now see our objective only a matter of 5 miles away, looking very close in the clear morning air. It was quite a sweat up to our selected site which was beneath a high rocky outcrop, and we all felt that we should have to spend one or two of our precious days there for reconnaissance purposes and acclimatization. The altitude was beginning to take its toll and we found that whilst in bed we awakened suddenly, fighting for breath.

We reached our Base Camp site in good time; it was an ideal spot under a huge outcrop of rock. The site is well sheltered and safe. Here we pitched our Base Camp at an altitude of approximately 17,000 feet. It was a very good place as it was possible to construct a cave of considerable size under the rock by making a wall of snow blocks. This made a useful cookhouse store and coolie shelter. I might say though, at this juncture, that if I were to go to Nun again I should use the Bullock Workmans' Base Camp for my base (if I had plenty of time) as this has the advantage of a supply of running water.

May 27th, '46. To-day we had decided that if we felt fit enough we would reconnoitre the ground above our rock. However, the weather was against us, and it was impossible to see more than a few yards, so we sat tight for most of the day. Roy did go a little way ahead with Sarki but had to turn back for bad visibility. In the afternoon I tried a little ski-ing by the camp on the short 'Schuster' mountain ski which we had borrowed from the Himalayan Club. This was our first experience of this particular type of ski and I found them delightfully easy to control. The temperature that night fell to 16 degrees of frost.

May 28th, '46. The weather was still bad, a gale blew from the west, and snow swirled around our camp in great clouds drifting against the cookhouse door. We could do nothing as the visibility during the day was nil. We again sat tight and hoped that to-morrow would give us a chance to go higher.

May 29th, '46. Two precious days had been lost. They had not been entirely wasted as we had acclimatized to a certain extent, but we could not afford to spend a day on a separate reconnaissance. We decided, therefore, that Camp I must be pitched by hook or by crook at or above 18,500 feet that day. A brief reconnaissance from the snow ridge 100 feet above the Base gave us one line on which to work. Roy and Tom led off and I followed with the baggage for two higher camps a little later. To play safe they took a route that was a long sweep around the upper reaches of the Shafat glacier. The snow was deep and tiring.

This route proved unsatisfactory; it lay over a vast snow-field that

was of a most unsafe character; in fact, from time to time the violent noises made by settling crevasse snow sent our hearts to our mouths; more, the final wall up to the plateau on which we placed Camp I was no picnic with the midday sun beating full on its south slopes. Up at last, Angtensing and I remained in Camp I with the two coolies we had taken, while Tom and Roy returned to Base Camp with the other two Sherpas by a different route. As usual a fairly violent storm came up from the west in the evening leaving a foot or so of snow behind. Anyhow we had fixed Camp I and at approximately 18,500 feet. We had actually done better than we had expected.

May 30th, '46. I awoke to find the minimum/maximum thermometer standing at 10 degrees F. The plan to-day included the establishment of a Camp II at 20,000 feet by Angtensing and myself (we were then to return to Base Camp). Roy and Tom were to ascend from the Base Camp to Camp I with the loads for Camp III. Things went according to plan, and by 13.00 hrs. I was testing the snow around a sheltered spot on what is the northern portion of the Fariabad ridge at a point where it becomes the ridge leading up to the col between the White Needle and Nun. Now our intended route was clear: up this ridge to the foot of the White Needle, traverse to the col between White Needle and Nun, and thence assault Nun via its east ridge. To attain a camp on the Fariabad ridge we did not go straight up the Shafat glacier but climbed from Camp I in a rising traverse, establishing our Camp II at approximately 20,000 feet at a point half-way between the Fariabad col and the col between Nun and the White Needle. This is not the best of camp sites, but is sheltered and safe from all but the very minor avalanches.

We pitched one tent and then went up a few feet and had a look over the edge of the ridge, which fell sheer 5,000 feet to the Fariabad glacier. The route to Camp III would be airy.

It took us about half an hour to descend to Camp I; here Roy and Tom had arrived by a new, direct, and safe route. They fed us on cocoa and we pushed on down to the Base Camp in forty-five minutes, in time to miss the evening snow.

May 31st, '46. This day Angtensing and I set off back for Camp I and as we climbed we could see Roy and Tom pushing on to Camp II. This time I went up on ski and made Camp I in an easy two hours. Roy and Tom made Camp II in good time and the other two Sherpas came down to us for the night. By now Angten and I were definitely a pair. In the evening it stormed on us as usual.

June 1st, '46. I have a note 'glorious', and it was a pretty satisfactory day from our point of view (Angten and myself); we pushed on and

arrived in Camp II in good time. I again found that the short ski made climbing 50 per cent. less tiring. I reached the camp forty minutes before Angten. I feel that on deep-snow climbs of this nature, where the gradient is not very steep, snow-shoes of the 'Trugger' pattern would be a great help. In Camp II, however, all was not fun and games. We found that Tom was finding the height a bit trying, so instead of going on to Camp III as intended, they were staying in Camp II again to acclimatize.

Roy had made a reconnaissance to see if it were possible to pass up parallel to the ridge, but inside it; this he had found impossible as the southern wall of the White Needle is heavily crevassed and ends in a great ice wall. So it had to be the ridge. Angten and I decided to try to find a route up along the ridge in the afternoon. This presented one main problem—a steep, narrow ice slope of about 60 degrees and only 2 yards wide; in the worst bit it was some 70 feet high with a 5,000-foot drop to the left and a great open crevasse 200 feet below to the right. The whole of this difficult bit is some 200 feet in height.

I hacked away for two hours before this was passed. Angten sat patiently at the bottom of my rope, a silent study being showered with ice. After I had finished he led up and shouted down that the way was now clear for upward progress. Our work completed we thankfully turned in, having left a line over this tricky bit, fixed with pitons.

June 2nd, '46. Snow had again fallen and filled the steps we had cut. Anyhow we packed up and set off to establish Camp III. I led up on to the ridge and broke a trail in the deep snow. Once the ridge proper was gained it took a safer form; it was about 5 yards wide and then slanted off to the west at about 40 degrees. It then fell sheer—to the east it falls dead sheer. We were forced on to the last crest that would give us the view we had not yet seen, the whole east ridge of Nun at close quarters, the connexion between the east ridge of Nun with the White Needle peak. As these points came into view I felt that with our time limit we had not a chance. The photograph showing the 'difficult bit' was taken from approximately 20,500 feet, and the clearly defined col is some 500 yards distant. The whole of the east ridge of Nun is approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ mile long and the first $\frac{1}{4}$ mile is what we have called the 'difficult bit'. We agreed that this would not be an easy thing to overcome, and it would possibly necessitate a further Camp V on the ridge beyond the difficult portion. We estimated that another seven to ten days would be required even to attempt this last lap. As we looked in silence at our objective, clouds rushed across the mountain and

hurriedly we pitched our tents at about 21,000 feet to settle down to a night of snow and wind. The temperature fell to 40 degrees of frost.

June 4th, '46. The weather did not look too promising, but Roy and I decided to have a crack at the White Needle. We had to turn back at approximately 21,200 feet on the approach of worse weather. A plan of campaign was then jointly resolved. The Needle under so much new snow was getting ready to avalanche. We all decided to retreat to Camp II at once and for myself I should have to continue on down as my leave was drawing to a close.

We packed up our camp and set off down the ridge. This was in much worse condition than before—the new snow lay deep and we sank in above the knees. The whole surface showed signs of slipping over the edge.

I led down, breaking a trail. The whole scene was in cloud and visibility was very restricted; I pushed up my glasses to enable me to see better, and later regretted this. We reached the fixed rope and tried to clear the steps; they were heavily covered. The rope itself took a good deal of freeing in the wind-packed snow.

I made the descent and soon Roy joined me; Tom appeared over the ridge, a huge figure in the mist encumbered with his film gear and a good deal of other kit (we all carried loads of about 100 lb.). Suddenly he slipped and the precious camera fell out of his rucksack and rocketed down the ice slope, jumped into the air, and landed nearly at our feet on the edge of the most forbidding crevasse. A shout from above and Roy laboriously climbed back to help, and after twenty minutes' tricky work Tom and the Sherpas were down and Camp II was reoccupied. For myself I had no alternative but to go on down; as it was, I was bound to be a few days late. After a short rest I strapped on my ski and set off—we had planted thin black twigs in the snow at about 10-yard intervals to mark the route for just such an occasion as this and although visibility was otherwise nil, these twigs stood out so well that I only had to regard them as flags of a slalom to make a safe descent.

This run from 20,000 to 17,000 feet was one of the most exhilarating I have ever experienced, and although only a mediocre performer I had made Base Camp in twenty minutes with very few falls.

I stayed overnight in the Base Camp and found that I was snow-blind as a result of descending without glasses in the mist.

However, in the morning I could see about five yards, just enough to see the twigs, and made a run of sorts down to about 16,000 feet where it is ice. Here I left the ski, and with Angten

leading me like a dog, I stumbled over the moraine, forded the river, and camped at Gulmatongus on the second evening from Camp II. I was in Suru next day and in Srinagar three days after that via a shorter route through the Warwan valley.

Now about my companions. Roy was due to return to the United Kingdom in the near future and being so near the goal he was reluctant indeed to turn back. He and Tom therefore stayed on in Camp II, but unfortunately the altitude prevented Tom from going higher again.

However, the same toughness and spirit that had kept Roy going in spite of his toothache now drove him at the mountain again. Fate was indeed cruel—the two primuses that we had used for higher up packed up irreparably. They could cook on compo fuel for only one day.

Even then Roy decided to go back and set out on the day after the retreat to Camp II accompanied by his Sherpa Gilung and reached the summit of the White Needle by 12.00 hrs., good going: 20,000 to 22,000 feet in four hours. He had hoped to be able to photograph the east ridge of Nun, but apart from infrequent glimpses through the cloud which hung over Nun itself, he saw little on the east side.

The other side to the north and east of the White Needle was perfectly clear and he took some really good photos from the summit of the White Needle showing Kun, 23,000 feet, the snow plateau, &c.

But what he saw of the east ridge led him to write: 'I can assure you, however, that from what I saw of the Ridge, I certainly did not like it, and I feel quite certain that the West Ridge is simpler.—It is, I admit, steeper but has not the outstanding difficulties of the East.'

After this commendable effort, he returned as far as the Bullock Workmans' Base Camp at 15,000 feet on the same day—a creditable performance as it was done on foot in company with all kit, Sherpas, and coolies. He arrived in the Base Camp exhausted and half snow-blind. They returned to Srinagar by the short route over the 17,000-foot Lonvilan pass, as I did myself.

General Information

Tom was our film-man, doctor, and dietician, and was the most experienced on snow and ice. His advice was constantly sought and nearly always proved correct. He had great patience and sympathy for the local people, whom he did all in his power to help and cure. His cooking was admirable. It was a pity that he insisted on lugging his cameras around, as there is nothing more tiring than going that bit faster than the main body in order to film them and

then catch them up. I am sure that it was this that made him the more vulnerable to the height.

A few notes that may be of help to anyone attempting this route:

1. From Suru coolies were paid 2*s*. 8*d*. per day—they made their base at Gulmatongus whither they retired after delivering their loads at our Base Camp. Qasim and one or two others were kept at the Base Camp for a day or so to help carry higher.

2. Satisfactory stages from Suru are Purketse—cross the river by a rock or snow bridge as near to Gulmatongus as possible and camp opposite the Gulmatongus—turn up the Shafat Nala and make the Workmans' 'Moraine Camp', thence to the Workmans' Base Camp. This I advocate as a pukka Base Camp if there is plenty of time. Our Base Camp would be an excellent Camp I. After that I believe our route to be the best and I feel that Camp II could still go down on the same site. It may also be possible to place Camp III on the main White Needle col and a Camp IV on the final ridge instead of a Camp V.

3. Local produce. In the Suru Nala generally milk and eggs can always be obtained, also the odd chicken and skinny goat. But no vegetables of any description.

4. Ski. I strongly advocate their use on this route, and incidentally it affords a very fine ski-run down. If soft snow be encountered, as with us, then Truger snow-shoes for Sherpas would be invaluable.

In 1906 Nieve Penitente gave a firm surface up to 20,000 feet.

5. Avalanches. Waller wrote us that he considers the Needle liable to avalanche. With all the new snow followed by hot sun that occurred during our visit it did not do so, but Peak Z. 1 and numerous other peaks kept up a steady roar.

6. Firewood ends at the terminal moraine, but could be coolied up to the Base Camp.

Equipment

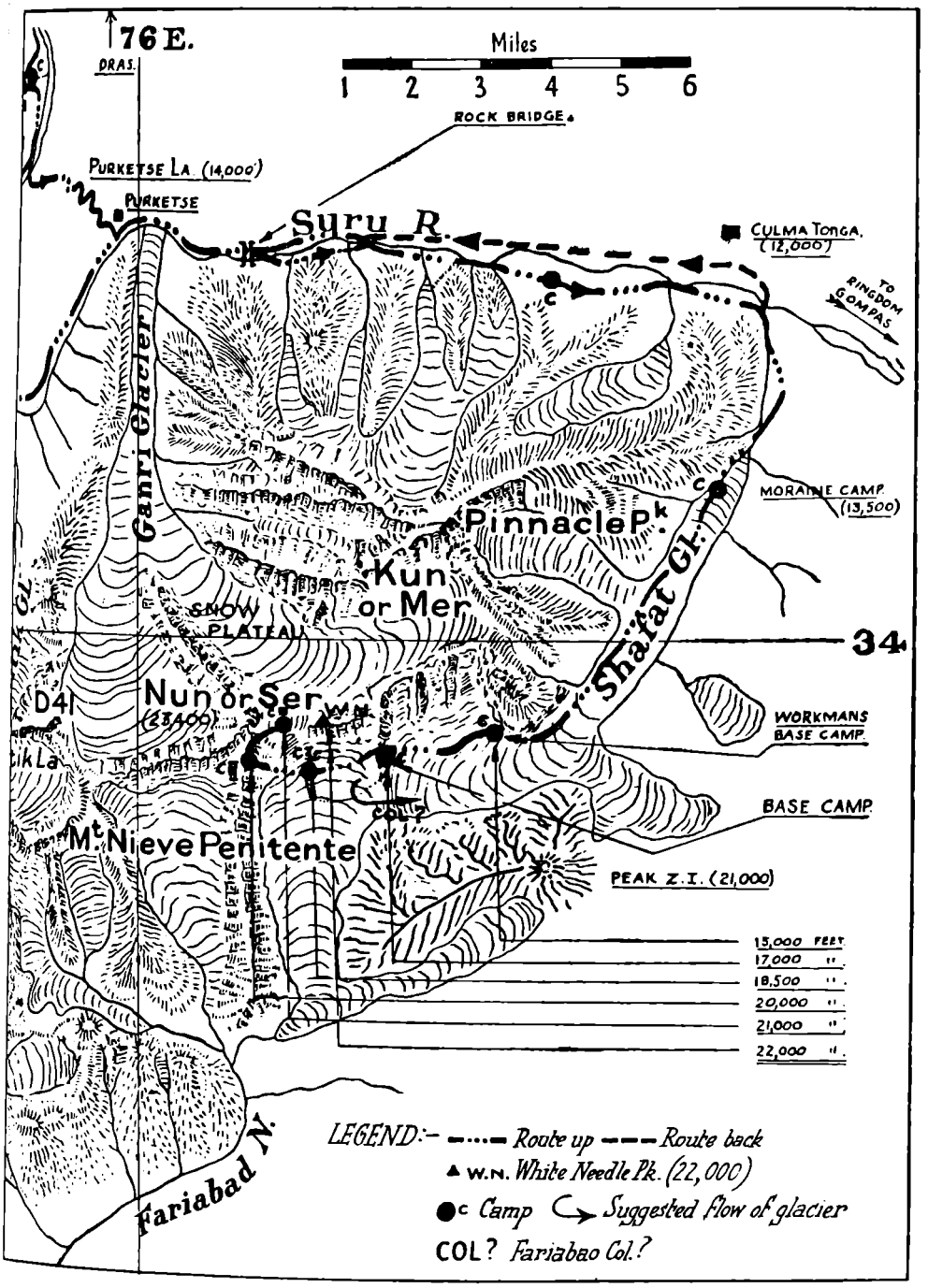
Other than to say we were well equipped there are few points. We used double sleeping-bags and sponge-rubber mats. The latter, although inclined to disintegrate in the plains, are strong in the cold. I had a 1-inch leather hem sewn around mine and it was entirely satisfactory.

The overlap of tent doors should be capable of closing both ways in event of changing wind. A Himalayan Club tent with a zip was excellent.

In conclusion

There is little else to be said. The Bullock Workmans considered the Peak Nun inaccessible, and although they climbed the 22,000-

foot pinnacle peak nearby, they left Nun alone. Nun remained unvisited until Dr. Neve visited the area in 1910 and Professor Mason reported on the Nun Kun Massif in 1920. James Waller



made an attempt in 1934 and also made the first ascent of White Needle. He returned in 1937 but was frustrated by toothache when approaching the west ridge. Exactly forty years after the area was first visited the attempt recorded above was made. Nun is a worthy

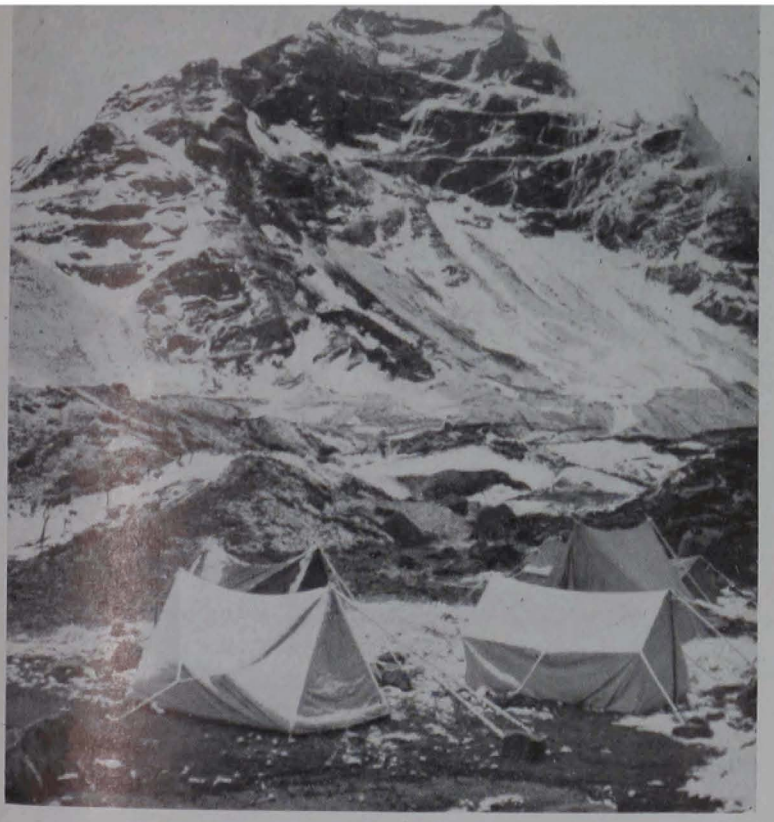
opponent, her great sheer sides, falling 6,000 feet from the south and nearly as much from the north, deny access except by the east and west ridges. That either of these is possible has yet to be proved.

Nun still stands inviolate—her summit will not be easily won.

Notes on the Topography of the South Side of Nun as shown in the Accompanying Sketch

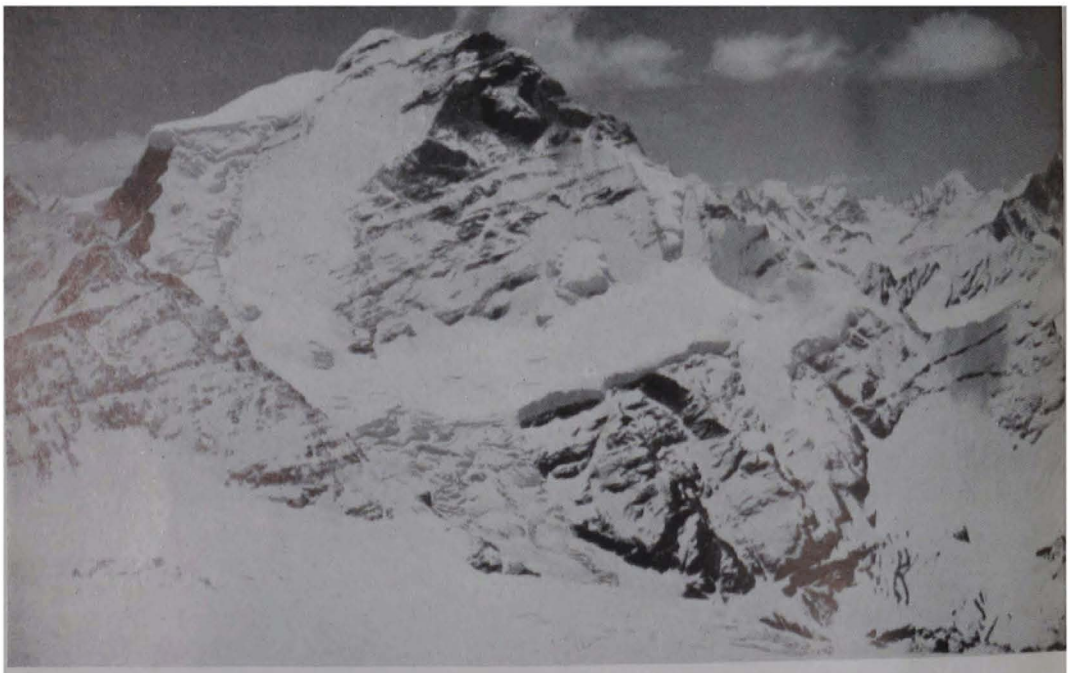
The sketch-map that I have used to illustrate this report is nothing more than an enlargement of the Survey of India recordings. It was in fact made by Professor Mason to illustrate a note correcting the direction of flow of the Barmal and the Bhot Khol glaciers. The remainder of the sketch is based on the Bullock Workmans' recordings of 1906. Professor Mason has shown once already that the readings of the Bullock Workmans were far from accurate even, as they do, recording a whole ridge where there is in fact only an ice-fall. I would like to express my view on the south side of Nun. On this map a large ridge is shown running due south from Nun of equal height on both sides, and is shown as running up to the summit of Nun. To the east of it a large glacier is shown running down to the Fariabad Nala. The snowfield to the south of Nun is shown divided by the next ridge due east of the one mentioned above, half running down the Shafat and the other half to Fariabad. I contend that this is not the case; firstly, the ridge to the south does not join Nun at the summit but just below and to the west of the White Needle (see photo 'The Difficult Bit') taken from the Fariabad ridge. A clear view is obtained to Mt. Nieve Penitente and there is no other ridge to the south side of Nun. Secondly, it is not of equal height by a long way; for instance, the ridge falls to the level of the Fariabad Nala on the west and only some few hundred feet to the east—a difference of several thousand feet. In a photo of the Bullock Workmans' from Mt. Nieve Penitente this ridge clearly appears and it can be seen that no snow falls over the western side. This is as it appeared to me, only that to the southern extremity an ice-fall comes over the ridge and joins the glacier from Z. 1, thus forming the Fariabad glacier proper. The main mass of glacier formed on the south side of Nun swirls around the so-called Fariabad col and becomes the Shafat glacier. We had our Base Camp on the ridge of the Fariabad col and our first route to Camp I showed quite clearly that this is the case (incidentally it is also apparent in a photo of the Bullock Workmans' from the shoulder of Z. 1).

In fact, to illustrate our route properly, it would be necessary to shift the whole of the southern ridge as shown just a bit less than half an inch to the right and cancel the southern extremity of it altogether. Had we more time we could have surveyed this and have been in a position to put in a report with some authority.



Moraine Camp—looking down on terminal moraine of Shafat glacier

A *shows position of our Base Camp from Bullock Workmans' Base Camp. Nun in distance—White Needle is the needle point sticking up to right*



Peak Z.1 (21,000 ft.) from Camp II on Nun at 20,000 ft.

Showing: A. *Summit of Nun, 23,400 ft.* B. *'Difficult' bit of east ridge.* C. *Slopes of west side of White Needle Peak*

THIRD CHOICE

ADVENTURES IN THE PADAR REGION

FRITZ KOLB

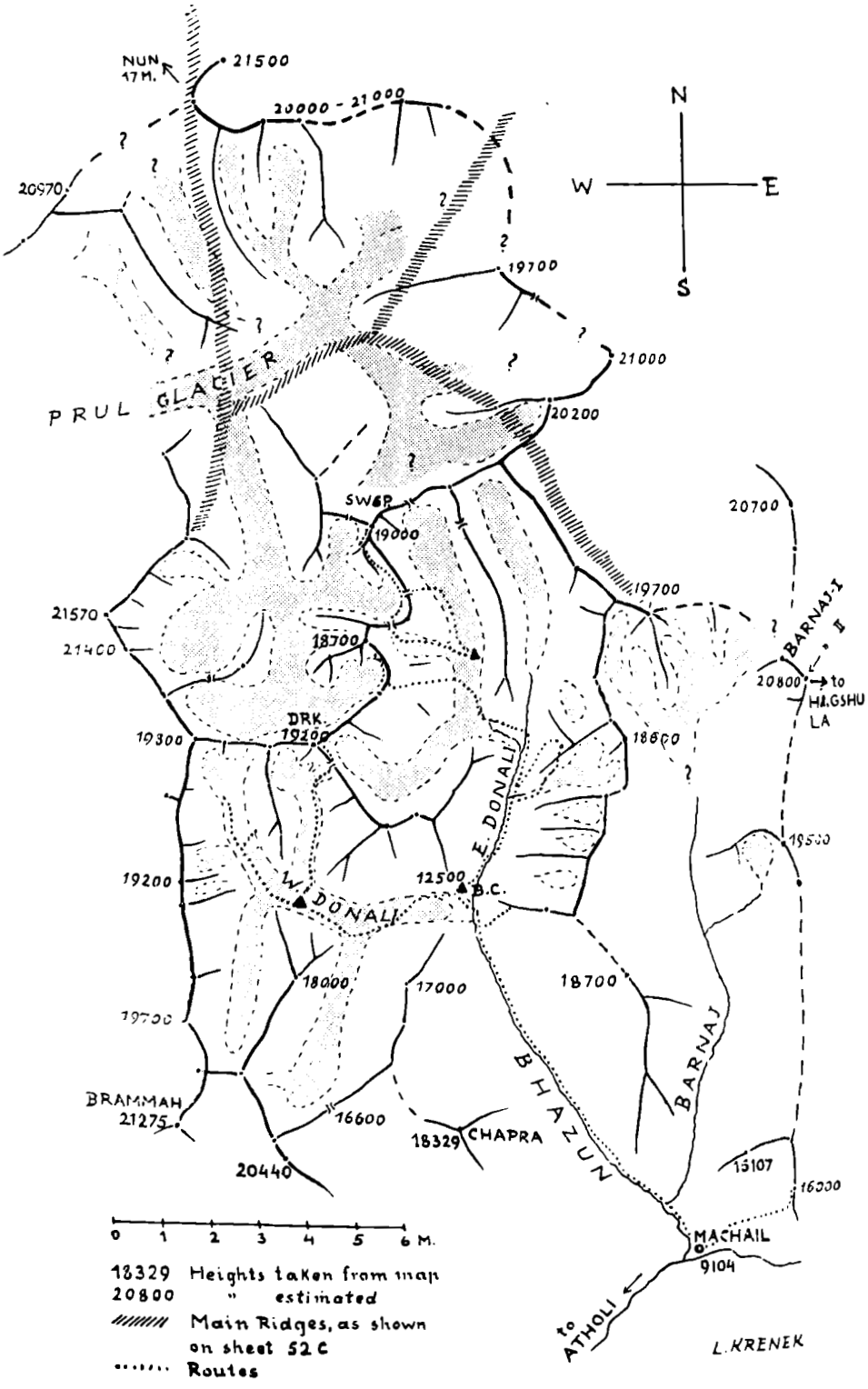
WHEN Ludwig Krenek and I planned a Himalayan trip for 1946 we thought of the Padar region only as our third choice—if permits were not forthcoming for our more ambitious plans. They were not, and it so happened that we found ourselves one day in Machail, with Fabian Geduldig for a third man. Machail is the uppermost village in the densely populated Bhut valley, which branches off at Atholi from the Chenab valley. The surrounding country is known as Padar and forms part of Kishtwar.

With a youngish fellow, Gangaram, for a porter, we started off for a climb up the slopes of Agyásol, 20,141 feet (Raul on Sheet 52 c), within a few hours of our arrival. The purpose was to see our mountains and to make plans accordingly. We slept in a deserted shepherd's hut, amidst beautiful trees. There were two rooms. We took the better one and, as it was small, told Gangaram to sleep in the other. But he shook his head and established himself alongside ourselves. We were a bit puzzled but let him have his way. During the night, we all woke up with a jerk because of a terrific thud: the roof had collapsed in the other room!

The 30th May was a fine day. We climbed as high as the truly Himalayan defences of Agyásol on this side would permit. And we saw enough to feel well satisfied with our 'third choice'. In fact, such mountains as Brammah (21,275 feet), P. 20,440, Shivji ka Pahar, and several others, called for a much stronger team than ours was. Our main objective, P. 21,570, king between Nun Kun and the peaks of Spiti, turned out to be a magnificent twin peak, adorned by huge sickles of ice. It received the tentative name 'Mondsichelberg'.[1] As expected, the Bhazun Nadi seemed the most natural approach to it, although we were unable to disentangle its upper reaches. (They were supposed to originate directly under the great peak.) A great fork in the valley suggested itself as the most suitable site for a base.

It was an ideal site for a base. A level meadow, covered with blue lilies; a clear spring; firewood not far below; overhanging rocks to provide quarters for Gangaram and Shivdyal, our two servants; and Agyásol filling the valley. There was no end to the effects

[1] The peak apparently has no native name as it is so remote from all villages. The names which we gave to some of the mountains in a casual way should not be mistaken for serious suggestions.



Sketch-map of the mountains NW. of Machail.

Glaciated area shaded.

the light of sun and moon produced on the ridges and in the vales of that majestic mountain. Every week our meadow was covered with different flowers. The blue of the lilies gave way to pink, the pink to white, the white to a golden yellow.

By splitting up into two parties we were able to gather a lot of information between the 4th June and the 10th June. But the more we knew, the more we were puzzled. Where was our great mountain? We simply could not find it any more, and it could not all be blamed on the clouds that occasionally obscured parts of a panorama. With such bearings as we had taken from various points we sat in the tent by candle-light and tried to piece a map together, but we found we had not enough material yet. Sheet 52 C really seemed to be mere guesswork. Where was our peak?

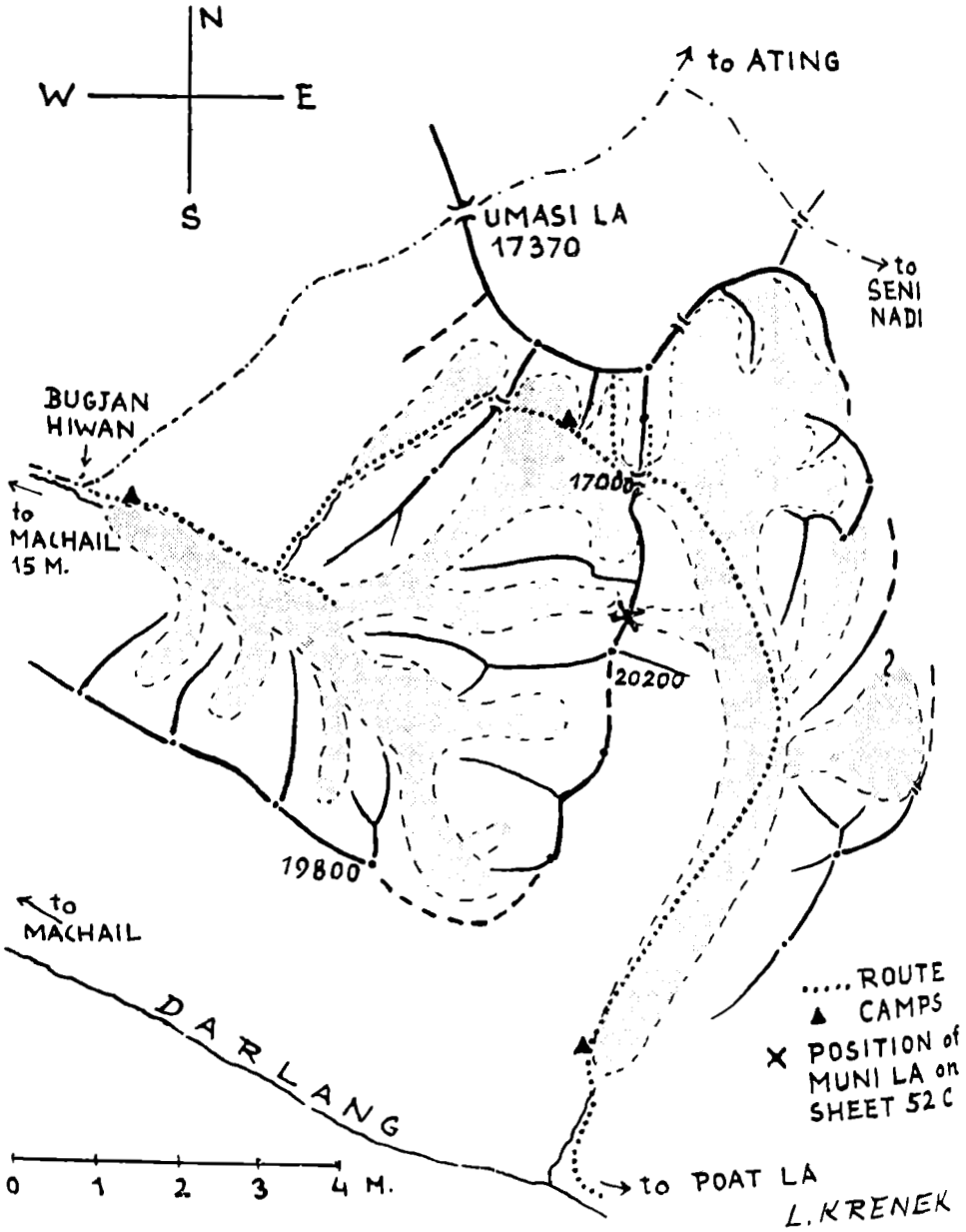
Geduldig's holiday drew to an end and we had not yet climbed a mountain to the top. And from a high mountain we should have been able to see the way to P. 21,570, which so far we had failed to find. Therefore we pitched a tent on the west Donali glacier (the gaddis call the Bhazun Nadi Donali). From there, in two days, we climbed what we called Dreikant, or Fabian's Peak (P. 19,200 on our map). It was a climb nobody need be ashamed of—very steep snow throughout, and near the summit truly dangerous because of colossal cornices.

Clouds were sailing slowly between the mighty pillars of the great Himalaya: their shadows wandered silently over vast stretches of greenish ice in the valleys deep below us. The horizon showed mountains, clouds, and mountains again.

It was past one o'clock, and with every minute the danger of avalanches became greater. We had to look round quickly. The Mondsichelberg had not disappeared in a crevasse since we had spotted it from the slopes of Agyásol. It was in the same ridge with our mountain, though separated from it by four mighty peaks. The clouds prevented us from seeing how we could reach its foot from the western valley, where we had our tent. On its eastern side we saw a very big glacier flowing north. Krenek held that this was the top part of the east Donali glacier. He had conceived this idea on a lone climb towards P. 18,700 of our map. Thus, by following the east Donali glacier along its huge semicircle around that mountain, we should be able to approach our objective. I had no confidence in his theory but was quite willing to give it a trial.

While Geduldig on his way home was crossing the Pir Panjal range from Atholi to Bhadarwar, we two were beating the snow from our tent on the west Donali glacier every half-hour, night and day. Luckily we were not carried away by one of the numerous avalanches. It was like mid-winter when the storm had gone on the 15th June, and

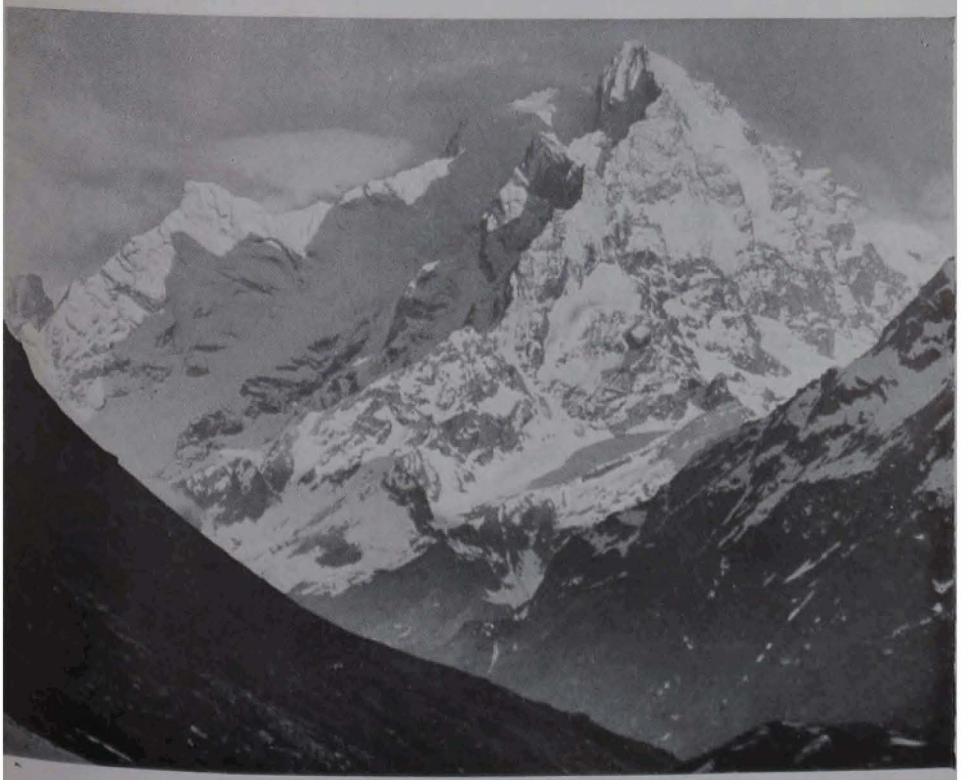
the sun rose with a determination to bring back the spring into its own. Seldom had I felt so helpless in the mountains as on that day. Long before sunrise, without breakfast, we trailed up the valley,



Sketch-map of the region between Umasi La and Darlang valleys.
Glaciated area shaded.

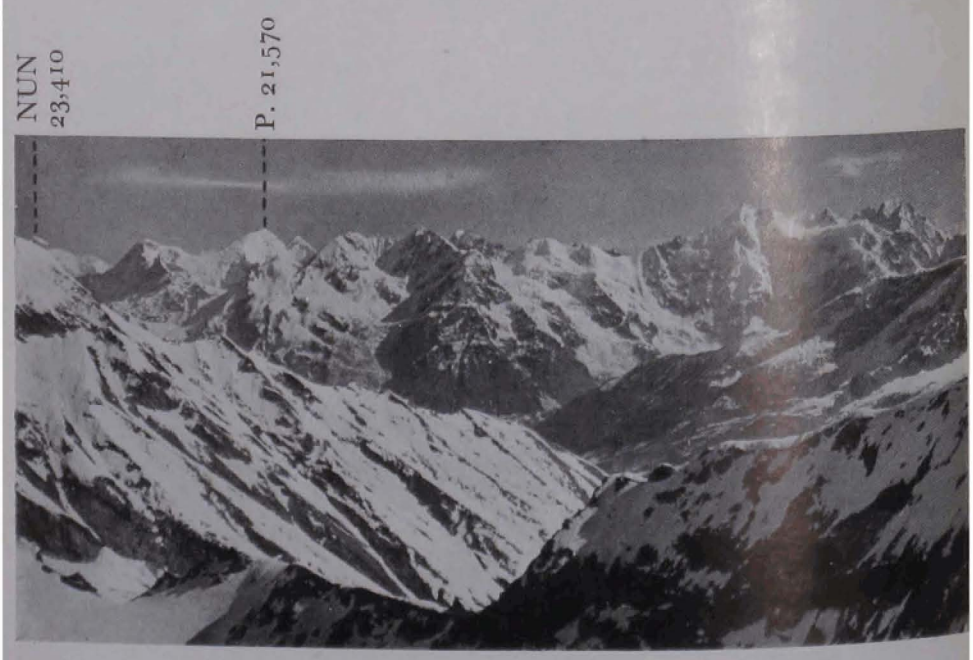
but were still miles from its end when the sun began to tell on the snow and made any further progress impossible. We sank in to our hips with every step. We sat down for breakfast, not knowing what to do. There, in front of us, emerging from behind a buttress on the left side, was visible the ice-cake of a steep tributary glacier which

Mountains at the head of the East Donali glacier. Centre Peak 19,700 ft.



Agyásol (20,141 ft.) from Base Camp. (Telephoto.)

P. 20,440 and Brammah (21,275 ft.) from saddle south-east of 'Dreikant'



Mountains north of the Prul glacier. Photo taken from south ridge of 'Sonwendspitz', approx. 18,300 ft.

might lead us to our goal through a gorge or over a gap; or if it were a gap, it might be impassable. The bottomless snow prevented us from lifting the secret of that glacier. Without that knowledge, everything we could do was a gamble. If we waited till the snow had settled, and this proved an impassable gap, we lost our chance of an attack from the east Donali for lack of time; if we evacuated our camp here and had no success in the other valley, we would always think that we threw away our chances. In this predicament, the hard trail of a recent avalanche came to our assistance. With an effort worth extra rations we struggled to its lower end, leaving a veritable trench for a track; then we climbed up on the hardened surface in the hope that we would be able to see what was beyond the buttress which was much farther inside the valley, on the opposite side. We discovered what we wanted. We saw where the little glacier originated: in an unclimbable wall of granite rocks.

Donali west is Karakoram on a smaller scale; Donali east is more open. We had our tent not far from the big bend which, in Krenek's belief, should lead us to the big glacier at the foot of the elusive mountain. An hour's walk in the twilight of a dismal morning exploded that theory. The glacier ended abruptly, and in an uninviting rock wall at that. It was disheartening, but at last we began to understand that thrilling geographical discoveries in most cases exclude sustained attacks on certain high mountains. Those must be left to the next group which will be able to build on your experiences. It was sufficiently clear now that the map of the region must be completely redrawn, and we concentrated on that task during the next few days.

On the 19th June we discovered that there was an easy pass into the basin east of P. 21,570, just above our camp. Once more our hopes began to flicker. We tried to see more by traversing to another pass and climbing up the mountain next to it, but bad conditions and oncoming clouds put a premature end to that. After a day of rest, however, we climbed that mountain in the grand Swiss style: start at three in the morning, *Frühstück* high up on the mountain, rest on the top (19,000 feet) from 10.25 to 12.00. The relative height was 4,000 feet, and there was plenty of opportunity to employ almost every kind of technique of ice- and rock-climbing. The descent (four hours), rather dangerous because of avalanche snow, even contained an uninterrupted glissade of eight minutes, from the pass to the big glacier.

The panorama from the Sonnwendspitze (Midsummer Peak, after the date of ascent) is one of the finest imaginable. Nun and Kun in the distance—then an array of unexplored rugged mountains

coming towards us; the overwhelming beauty of the Barnaj Peaks; and our magnificent peak of 12th June (P. 19,200) with its neighbours. But what of the Mondsichelberg? Well, we had studied that mighty castle already during the ascent. No one would try it from the east side as long as there was hope that any other side would be easier. To reach those other sides, however, one would have to move down the long glacier and up another of its branches—a thing for which we could never get porters here; and we had not time enough to relay the stuff ourselves.

A Himalayan trip with, and one without, Sherpa porters are two very different things. We did not have the money to employ some for our trip. Gangaram and Shivdyal could only with great difficulty be induced to go as far as one stage beyond the base; all further carrying we had to do ourselves.

The geographical position was now clear: the area drained by the Prul glacier is about 70 square miles larger than shown on Sheet 52 c. No direct connexion exists between the highest mountain of the group (P. 21,570) and the main divide in the north.

The council of war that evening had difficult decisions to make. The only high mountain which we could have tried from the present camp was P. 21,000, about 7 miles to the north-east. Krenek said he did not feel attracted by it. I had two alternatives to suggest. Try Agyásol, or explore the 'Old Deserted Road' to Zaskar, returning by the Hagshu La. It would not be possible, I said, to risk the delays involved in an attempt to recruit coolies for the latter enterprise. We would have to carry the loads ourselves. 'That is impossible', was my friend's comment, and we left it at that, pulling out of the Bhazun Nadi as fast as we could.

In the evening of 24th June, the two of us met in our fly-infested tent in Machail. Krenek had been 16,000 feet up on a ridge just above the village. He brought home valuable photographs for our future map, and a story of how he saw a bear chasing a sheep. I came home from a reconnaissance trip through the lovely lower reaches of the Darlang Nadi and up its northern slopes, to find a line of ascent on Agyásol. My report was that it was possible to attack the peak all over ice, a long, steep, and dangerous climb. Krenek answered that he had thought over my Zaskar suggestion and had changed his opinion. It might be possible without porters. We found ourselves willing to embark on either of the two adventures but agreed that an ice slope on Agyásol is not much different from an ice slope on Mönch or Scerscen or Hochtenn or any other of dozens we had climbed before, while Zaskar would be an experience entirely new to us.

We spent half the next day in sorting out our things: food for a week, a Welzenbach tent but no mattresses, and the very minimum of clothing. We took with us only a thin emergency rope, no crampons, but two ice-axes. The primus stove was found too heavy and it was decided that an empty cheese tin together with one pound of solid spirit would do the trick if for any reason we should have to spend a night above the tree line—or scrub line, for that matter. When we started at noon, we had the help of our servants as far as Bujwas. From then onwards we were our own porters.

Our hopes were high when we were faced with a round of splendid mountains shining from the background of our valley. This was going to be a gorgeous gate to Central Asia.

That evening, while I shoved away some dirt to clear a spot for the tent, an ice-axe broke. Krenek was wise enough to take along the stick, while Gangaram, on our return to Machail, found it unpardonable that we had not carried its iron part over all the passes to give to him for a present.

More serious troubles began early next day when we did not know to which pass to turn. There were quite a number of them, as the glaciers fanned out in every direction. The map bore no resemblance to nature. What should we do?

Perhaps I should mention here that information gathered locally had proved unreliable all along, and that the one man who was reputed to know all the passes happened to be away from Bujwas when we passed through that place.

We spent much time and effort to find the true pass, but the main glacier, which ran in a promising direction, had an impassable ice-fall, while a valley to our left looked inviting but went too far north. There was nothing to do but try the latter and hope it would lead to the Muni La. In a sustained climb in which we took the lead alternately, we reached the last steep slope not much before sunset. Our hopes were low. Krenek prophesied that up there we would simply look down into the upper part of the valley we had left a few hours before. He was right. After a dangerous last climb we stood in a narrow, rocky gap looking into a wide snow basin—just above the ice-fall of the valley 'leading in the right direction'. That would not have been so bad if only the pass at its end had inspired more confidence! But it was a flat snow saddle leading into a big north–south valley. The Seni Nadi was to lead *east* into Zaskar. But we were not going to give up so easily. We quickly decided how far we could still venture this day so as to have enough light when pitching the tent; and then we raced over the snow-fields as fast as our tired legs would permit.

We were lucky enough to find a rocky island in the snow with some frozen sand from which to build a platform. The cheese-tin cooking stove worked, and we spent a reasonably restful night.

With boots as hard as bone we hurried over the frozen snow just before sunrise next morning. Since the snow saddle brought us no light, we climbed a hill to the north of it. We had our second great surprise in the Padar region. The surveyor had mistaken a secondary ridge (from Muni La southward) for the main divide, and consequently assigned much too big an area to the Seni valley on the Zaskar side. We were in a huge glacier system, draining to the south—that is, to the Darlang Nadi. Towards the east there were numerous passes and mountains, probably never seen by human eye. Enticing as the new world was, we could not risk a trip through those spaces with our scanty reserves; we were only equipped for two high passes, not for half a dozen of them. We had hardly any food that could be eaten without cooking, and our fuel would not suffice for even a single rice dish. To follow up one of the snow basins to their northern ends was our only hope of getting to Zaskar. These northern passes most likely led into the Bardur system which contains the Umasi La route. It was with a sigh that we decided on that course, for the well-known Umasi La held no attraction for us.

We slid down to the saddle over steep snow in but a few minutes. There I discovered that I had forgotten our camera on the top. I do not curse often but there I did. Krenek began trudging towards the northern pass while I made 'the second ascent'. It took more than an hour now that the snow was soft; and when—after a meal—I turned toward the pass, I broke in with every step in spite of the track made by my luckier companion. When I reached the pass, I was utterly exhausted. Krenek had done all that a good pal of many seasons would do for one in such a case: melt snow in the sun, prepare a dry and sheltered seat, have the food all ready, notably dried fruit and sugar. Only one thing he could not provide—a way down the other side. We were separated from the Bardur glacier by a steep ice wall several hundred feet high with some doubtful snow on it in the lower parts. I thought we could not risk descending here with no proper rope, no crampons, and only one ice-axe. There was nothing to do but descend to the Darlang Nadi and return to Machail. Zaskar faded from our vision.

A relentless descent filled the rest of the day. We hurried down a most picturesque, wild, and seemingly endless glacier, through deep soft snow, slush, hard ice, and boulders, in that order. The granite spires on both sides beat all imagination. We taxed our bodies to the limit in order to reach warmer altitudes before nightfall. When at last the ice became steeper, indicating the end of the glacier, we

found ourselves engaged in a fierce struggle with the countless boulders of the right lateral moraine. Right under the nose of the glacier was a sandy plain, and there we pitched our tent. There was no firewood yet but the temperature was far more acceptable than the night before. We slept as only very tired men do.

One and a half hours' walk brought us next morning to the Darlang Nadi. The ground was covered with tracks of wild animals, notably bears, and a group of birch trees at the mouth of our valley seemed as lovely to us as an oasis must seem to the traveller in the desert.[1] What with the prospect of a roaring fire and a pot of rice on it, of boots and socks drying in the sun, and a wash, we banned all thoughts of the future for the next two hours.

A gaddi with his dog kept us company during this rest. He confirmed that the big valley with its big river was the Darlang Nadi. He had no name for the valley through which we had come.

The time for decision came. One day's walking would have brought us back to Machail—there is a good path. Zaskar we could only reach over the Poat La, a route which we had thought too long ever since we had planned our visit to Zaskar. Could we now undertake it? We were already two days late and not a little battered. We thought we could if we went back by the Umasi La instead of by the Hagshu La, and if we extended our trip by one day.

We began pulling up the wide and bare valley, which held no more trees for our eyes to rest on. Soon we were stopped by a torrent coming down from the north, with the bridge gone. After a long search we found a place where we could ford it, but it was a narrow thing, and we both got wet to the skin. In the late afternoon we passed the last herds of sheep, and when the time came to look for a camping-place we had reached the great northward bend of the valley. Looking at the broken glaciers coming from where the map says Sersank pass, we doubted whether this route could be used at present. And as to Kangla Jot, Krenek's voice carried conviction when he said he would not like to search for it. What a wilderness of ice and stone in that corner! On our side of the valley, however, there was a good path with yaks' footprints on it, so that we could hope that the Poat La *did* exist.

The 29th June was a cloudy morning, and before the day was over we had seen plenty of rain and snow falling. Since the path was so good, we hoped to be on the dry Tibetan side pretty soon. But alas, the path led us to the banks of a river which we simply could not ford. The yaks had done it but we could not. With the loss of at least two

[1] This spot would be a good base for further exploration of the northern side of the Darlang Nadi. See 'Notes'.

hours we managed to negotiate the obstacle by way of a natural bridge far down the valley. From beyond the ford, the path still went on for a while but eventually led to the glacier. The weather became worse and worse. How should we find the pass with clouds all around us? We were both rather depressed when something quite unexpected happened. Out of the mist appeared a group of eight Zaskaris, moving down the glacier toward us. Two of these picturesque people knew Hindustani. From them we learned that the *jot* was not at the head of the valley but right here in its eastern side wall; and that there were, in fact, two *jots* close together, both of which we had to cross. They had crossed the pass to-day and were on their way to the gaddis of the Darlang Nadi, to get wool.

It was with a new determination that we climbed a steep slope of scree in order to reach a tributary glacier from which the pass was to be gained. And yet, we began to feel that we had not had a rest for nine days in succession. Every step called for much will-power. When we reached the glacier we could not find the track of the Zaskaris anywhere in the snow. The most trying search began. I climbed high up on the bank to an old moraine: no trace. Snow began to fall heavily. We waded up the glacier through deep snow, Krenek breaking the track. No trace. We split up, Krenek crossing the glacier to the left, I to the right. Nothing. Perhaps they had used the middle moraine? I looked for some snow patch which they would have to pass if they did use that moraine. I found such a patch, and there were no footprints on it. That seemed conclusive. We must have misunderstood them—we were in the wrong valley. I called Krenek, and we wearily decided to descend to the main glacier for the night. But then at last our luck changed for the better. We came to a sandy part of the moraine and, sure enough, there were the imprints of felt shoes. We decided to spend the night on the spot, no matter how uncomfortable it would be. We were veterans of many a cold night, so the sufferings we had to endure on that one did not impress us unduly. Its main feature was that one had to revolve all night long so that no one part of the body was exposed too long to the inexhaustible cold coming from the stones on which we lay.

The weather was bad in the morning, and we spent an anxious time till at last we discovered a dim line in the snow, the Zaskaris' track of yesterday. The pass lay in the steep, rocky, side wall of the little glacier and was marked by well-built cairns. The map gives its height as 18,752 feet; Krenek doubts whether it is that high. I do not, considering how puffed I was when we arrived there. There was a last crescendo of uncertainty when we did not at first understand the purpose of following the ridge to the other saddle, also

with cairns on it. Were we to descend to the left? There was wind and cold and mist and the compass would not work because of excessive moisture. But we made the right guess that the other saddle was merely an easier way of gaining the ridge from the Zaskar side, and after a few hours of struggle with soft snow we found remnants of straw sandals on the bare ice, which dispersed our last doubts as to whether we really were on our way to Zaskar. We made an all-out effort to reach the Tsarap valley before darkness, and succeeded. No effort was spared to have it soft and warm in our tent that night, to have a sustaining meal, and plenty of hot tea. You have to miss the ordinary comforts of life in order to appreciate them.

Although the trip through Zaskar is one of our most precious experiences, I am not going to describe it. The reader may turn to more competent writers on Tibet. For Zaskar was our Tibet—such Tibet as was attainable to us. It is a thousand pities we had so little time. We covered the distance from Chemochekore to Sumchum Gompa—some 35 miles—in one day, and tackled the Umasi La to Suniasuru the next.

Notes

Best approach from Jammu. By bus to Batote or Bhadarwar. To Batote there are direct buses from Lahore. Bhadarwar has extensive Bazaars. Mule transport to Kishtwar in both places available (three to four stages). Kishtwar to Machail with horses or coolies (four to five stages).

Authorities: Wazir of Udampur, Teshildar, and Inspector of Police at Kishtwar, Zaildar at Atholi (Arthal on Sheet 52 c), Sub-inspector of Police at Machail. For tours around Machail, notably Hagshu La and Darlang Nadi, it might be better to secure prior permission from the Sapphire Mining Company, Srinagar. No such permit is needed for Umasi La.

The greatest enterprise would be to explore the enormous basin of the Prul glacier. Approach from Kishtwar directly. P. 21,570 may be attacked on such an occasion, and the Brammah glacier subjected to a first inspection. From Machail, the peaks of the Barnaj Nadi, a 21,000-foot peak east of Hagshu La, Shivji ka Pahar, and Agyásol (20,141 feet), may be tried. They all look very difficult. From where we met the Darlang Nadi (about 16 miles from its mouth), the unknown basins of two big rivers joining the Darlang from the north could be explored. The main Himalayan ridge must lie much farther north than one would expect from looking at Sheet 52 c. The one valley which we saw already means a gain of 30 square miles for the Darlang at the expense of the Seni. Muni La, as a direct road to Zaskar, does not exist. It is, however, likely that the Umasi La–Huttra–Seni route, as given on Sheet 52 c, is practicable.

NANDA GHUNTI, 1945

P. L. WOOD

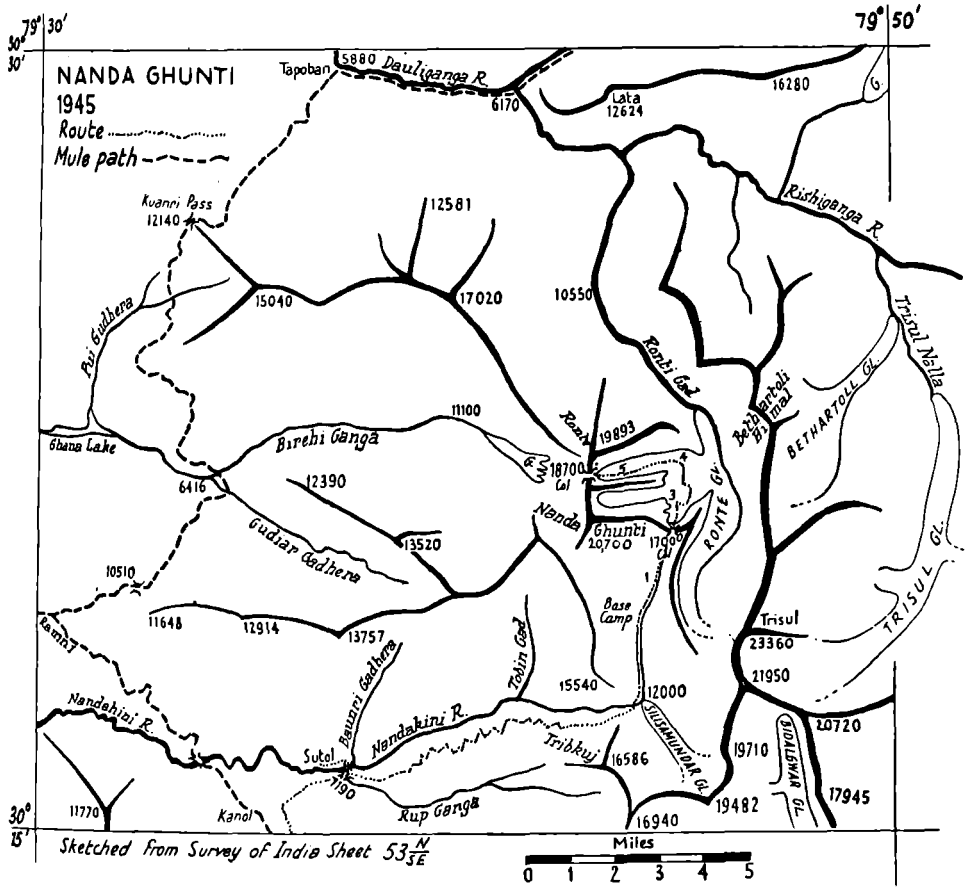
On a clear day you can see Nanda Ghunti from Ranikhet just to the left of Trisul, 52 miles away. It is the most prominent peak on the western rim of the Nanda Devi Trisul group and looks rather like a cathedral with its long ridge running east and west and its 'tower' at the western end. Although only 20,700 feet, it has not been climbed. B. R. Goodfellow and J. Buzzard tried the south face in October 1944 and found it impracticable. They advised us to tackle it from the north, although a month's leave would hardly allow enough time. After gleaning information from other sources we decided on the route shown in the sketch-map.

My job of organizing the party was made easy, thanks to the kindness and invaluable assistance of Mrs. A. E. Brown, Honorary Local Secretary at Ranikhet, who made all arrangements for coolies, lorry, &c., and solved many other problems.

Our party was R. H. Sams, my brother Jeremy, and myself, and we were lucky in having three good Dhotials, Ghunturia, Kalba, and Zudgir, to form the nucleus of our coolies. They had been in Goodfellow's party and also with C. W. F. Noyce. A breach in the main line from Bombay resulted in my brother arriving a day late, and after hectic last-minute shopping and the usual difficulty in obtaining enough kerosene and sugar (strictly rationed) we left Ranikhet on 25th September 1945. The ancient lorry, into which we piled with our thirteen coolies and loads, took us at hair-raising speed to Garur, 60 miles, with only one puncture and a few other stops to fill up the radiator.

The 50 miles to Sutol were covered in five pleasant marches, stopping at Gantoli R.H., Gwaldam R.H., Bagargad R.H., and Wan R.H. The view from Gantoli and Gwaldam is magnificent, Trisul being the dominating feature. After Gwaldam you drop down to the Pindar river, here 4,200 feet, and cross by a suspension bridge. This route involves much toiling uphill and down, heavy work for the coolies carrying 80-lb. loads, but the views from the ridges are grand. After Wan we pushed on ahead of the coolies in order to arrive early at Sutol where supplies of ata and more coolies had been arranged. At Kanol we followed what appeared to be the main path which took us down through dense jungle and petered out in a deserted village on the Nandakini river 2 miles downstream of Sutol. After scrambling about for three hours in very prickly jungle we retraced our steps and sweated up the 2,000 feet to Kanol, found

the right path, and arrived at Sutol at dusk. The coolies had a good laugh and we relieved our feelings by broaching a bottle of rum. Subedar Umrao Singh, the village headman, was fetched and assured us that the seven maunds of ata and extra coolies, asked for by letter, would be ready the next day. The Subedar is an engaging old fellow and likes rum.



The following morning we set off with our thirteen Dhotials, nine Sutol coolies, two small boys we had picked up at Wan, and Prem Singh, the Subedar's brother, who has piloted various parties up the Nandakini gorge. Loads were reduced to 40 lb. and the going was unpleasant, thick bamboo jungle, rain most of the time, and up and down the whole way. Prem Singh did valiant work with a machete where the bamboo was particularly thick. We camped at Lat Kopri, a small grazing-ground in the jungle, where Kalba (Dhotial) distinguished himself by producing a sheep a few minutes after we arrived. He said he had found the animal with its neck jambed between two rocks and that it must have strangled itself. It was still warm and had obviously been killed by Kalba. We gave him full marks for this sly piece of work as we had been unable

to obtain any meat at the villages *en route*, even offering as much as Rs.25 for a sheep. An irate shepherd appeared but was pleased with the Rs.5 we gave him for his dead sheep. The coolies had a good feast that night and we kept the legs for later consumption ourselves.

It was still raining in the morning and the path was no good to us as it plunged down to the Nandakini river leading to grazing-grounds up Tomin Gad, a side valley on the north side of the Nandakini. Prem Singh led us well, keeping about 1,000 feet above the Nandakini, but the going was worse than ever, with a similar series of ups and downs, and everywhere very slippery. We did, however, emerge from the jungle several times, once to cross a large tributary. The rocks here were rich in mica. We finally emerged from the jungle at 11,000 feet, where the gorge became steep and narrow. The rain stopped to give us an occasional glimpse of the precipitous face of Trisul with its upper part shrouded in cloud. It was nice to be out of the jungle and at the threshold of our climbing ground. We camped a quarter of a mile below the snout of the Silisamudar glacier, at a cave which was quickly appropriated by the Dhotials. The Sutol men found a better cave a little farther on. For the first time the Dhotials were in low spirits and crawled into their blankets without cooking a meal.

The next day fortunately dawned fine, the sun reached us at 9.30, loads were dried out, and the coolies ate their fill of chupatis. In fact we had a thoroughly lazy morning before attempting to cross the Nandakini: it was the obvious place to cross, the stream being narrow at this point. A bridge was made with the trunks of two slender silver birches placed on convenient boulders, and hand-rails were formed with a rope pulled tight by two men on each boulder. Loads were got across and no one had a wetting. After making a dump of ata we sent the Sutol men back to Sutol for the rest of the ata, with instructions to follow us up the valley to our Base Camp.

We were now at 12,000 feet and the date was 3rd October. The monsoon in this part of the Himalaya should have been over but there was still no sign of settled weather: disappointing, as we should have soft snow to negotiate. Following the right-angle bend in the stream we headed due north and had our first close-up view of Nanda Ghunti with the 17,000-foot col on the right which was our first objective. Heavy rain started at four o'clock and we decided to call it a day although our late start had resulted in a ridiculously short march of four miles. However, we made up for this the next day, pushed on up the boulder-strewn valley and established Base Camp at 14,000 feet and Camp I at 15,500. The obvious site for Base Camp seemed to be at the bottom of the moraine which formed the begin-

ning of the slope leading to the 17,000-foot col. There was water here and probably none higher up. Also we only had boots for five coolies. We left Chandra Singh in charge of Base Camp and took the five best men with us. A small platform was made for Camp I, on snow.

The following day was spent relaying loads up the slope to Camp II, sited in a hollow by a crevasse, 300 feet below the col. We had hoped to cross the col but the combination of soft snow and glaring sun was exhausting. We soon reached the col the next morning. The view looking over the other side was glorious. The west face of Bethartoli Himal was particularly impressive, falling almost sheer for 5,000 feet to the Ronti glacier. Below us stretched a broad snow basin, its only outlet being the Ronti glacier flowing north which disappeared in a narrow gorge 4 miles from our viewpoint. We could not see the upper part of the Ronti glacier which, according to the map, flows north along a shelf high up on the west face of Trisul, and is shown as gradually descending to the level of the snow basin below us. Beyond Bethartoli Himal to the north, Dunagiri was just visible, and behind us to the right rose the great dome of Trisul.

We were now confronted by a steep snow slope of about 800 feet to the basin below us. This was somewhat of a surprise as according to the map the gradient should have been easy and the slope not more than 300 feet. We roped up, cut a hole in the cornice, and I was lowered 'over the side', followed by my brother. After descending 100 feet the slope eased off and we decided that it was not going to avalanche. We made a platform on to which the coolies and loads could be lowered. My brother proceeded down the slope to test the snow bridge over the bergschrund and to take up a position as 'long stop'. Sams lowered the coolies and loads to my platform where I unroped them and launched them down the slope under their own steam. Catastrophe nearly occurred when the youngest of the coolies took fright, sat down just out of my reach and released his load. It was a light box and rolled down the remaining 700 feet at phenomenal speed, jumping the bergschrund and fortunately landing intact. It contained one of our precious primus cookers!

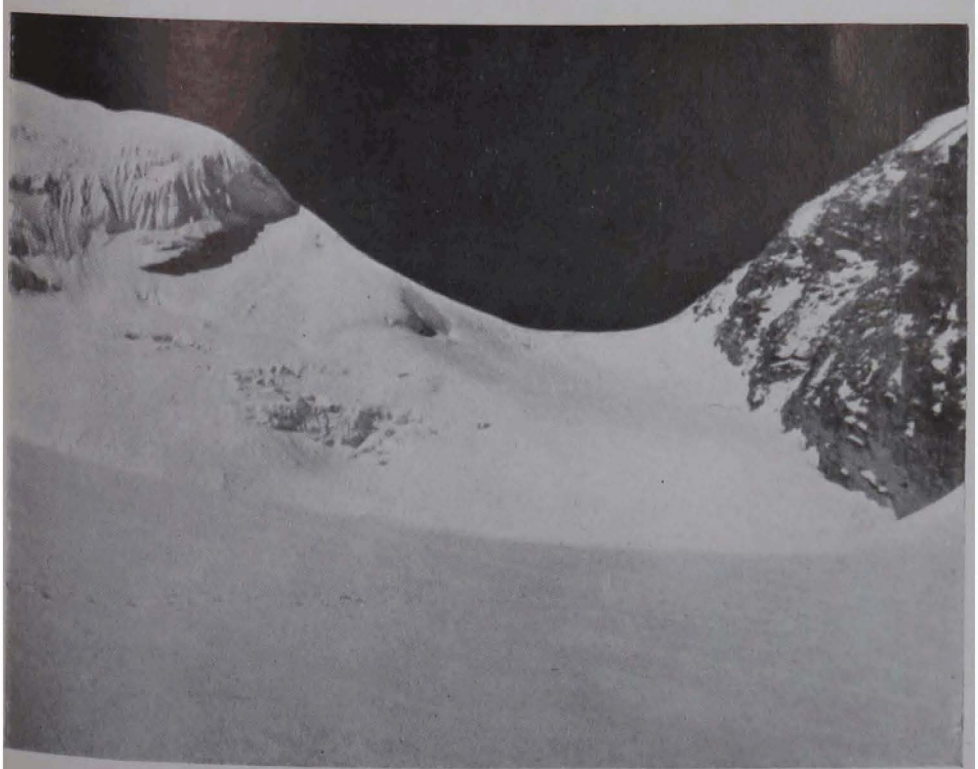
The rest of the loads were relayed from Camp II and time was saved by rolling some of the bulky ones containing bedding to the bottom of the slope where we fielded them. We then headed north across the basin, skirting the foot of the east ridge of Nanda Ghunti and intending to cross the Nanda Ghunti glacier. The ice-fall at this point held us up and we could see an easier way across moraine farther down. It was getting dark so Camp III was pitched.

One of the Dhotials, Atit, showed signs of collapsing and was no

better in the morning: a pity, as he had carried well. A council of war was held and we decided that I should take Atit back to Base Camp and bring up reinforcements which we badly needed, and also another 20 lb. of ata. Sams and my brother were to push on and establish Camp IV, lightening loads as far as possible by making a dump at Camp III. It was slow work getting Atit up the slope to the 17,000-foot col and I did not reach Base Camp till nearly 2.30 p.m. I organized a party to return with me consisting of Prem Singh and Bhajan Singh, both Sutol men, and Nagmal Dhotial, scrounging a spare pair of my brother's boots for Bhajan Singh, whose feet were enormous. Atit's boots did for Nagmal, and Prem Singh preferred to wear his own contraptions of sacking and plaited grass. We got under way at 3.0 p.m. and made good progress up to the 17,000-foot col with light loads including a tent and 20 lb. of ata. The col was reached at 6.15 p.m. and we tried to attract the attention of Camp IV by waving and shouting. It was a lovely still evening and our voices echoed for five seconds at each bellow. I knew approximately where Camp IV would be but could see no answering signal. We slid down the slope, reached the dump at Camp III at dusk, raided it for food, clothing, and rum, and followed the other party's tracks. Our progress across the Nanda Ghunti glacier was comic to say the least of it, and we flopped about all over the place among the snow-covered boulders and in the holes between them. In due course we got on to dry moraine and could no longer see the tracks as the snow was patchy. The air was so still that even a candle was used groping about for tracks. We were on the point of making a night of it in our one small tent and no bedding when a faint shout was heard. We answered lustily and pushed on to be greeted ten minutes later by Sams with a hurricane batti. By this time we were in excellent form, the effect of only a small quantity of rum. In less than an hour's stumbling up moraine we reached Camp IV at 9 p.m., and swallowed gallons of hot tea which my brother had ready. The funny thing was that Sams and my brother had seen our four figures appearing on the skyline at 6.15 p.m. but had not observed our signals. They had watched our progress and only when seeing us pass the site of Camp III did it dawn on them that we were not stopping. Failing to attract our attention Sams set off to meet us.

The following morning was glorious and we hoped to make the col between Nanda Ghunti and Ronti. A reconnaissance the previous evening by Sams and my brother had shown the glacier to be smooth and uncrevassed. But we failed to start early enough and the hot sun soon softened the snow. Sinking up to our knees at every step, our progress was painfully slow and the glare from the sun was

Nanda Ghunti from 4 miles south



18,700-ft. col between Nanda Ghunti and Ronti. North ridge of Nanda Ghunti leading off to the left

Ronti (19,890 ft.) from near 18,700-ft. col

Crossing the Nanda Ghunti glacier to the basin; 17,000-ft. col in centre background

strong enough to cause our faces and hands to swell up. It was a bad case of glacier lassitude and in two hours we only made one mile with the coolies lagging behind. Sams, going strongly and making the trail most of the way, followed by my brother, reached a point about three-quarters of the way up the glacier and there waited. The coolies and I arrived two hours later, both Sutol men suffering from mountain sickness, probably owing to their effort the previous day. The fit coolies returned to Camp IV to fetch the remaining loads and we pitched Camp V where we were at about 17,000 feet. Sams's hard work in the morning, followed by a long wait and a rapid drop in temperature in the afternoon, brought on a severe attack of shivering. For the next two days he was feeling far from well and had to remain in camp. This was wretched luck as our time was desperately short. My brother was suffering from cracked lips which had become horribly raw and he could only eat with difficulty.

Next morning, 9th October, my brother and I decided to try Ronti and to leave the attempt on Nanda Ghunti for the following day when Sams might be fit again. Taking Zudgir with us my brother led up the remaining half-mile of glacier and up the slope to the col (18,700 feet) which was reached without difficulty. I say without difficulty but we were certainly very out of breath. The view looking east was magnificent, and we could see the top of Nanda Devi behind Bethartoli Himal. Looking west it was quite a different story. A sea of cloud was rolling up towards us and all we could see, peering down the precipitous face, was part of a broken glacier 3,000 feet below us. We put the rope on and proceeded north up the ridge which consisted of shale slabs and large chunks of unstable rock. After an hour we had only climbed about 300 feet and the weather looked threatening. While negotiating an awkward place, belayed by my brother, the rock on which I was balancing moved several inches. This was rather alarming as the rock must have weighed many tons. My brother was keen to go on but the ridge beyond was narrower and looked even looser. It was starting to snow so we reluctantly gave up and returned to camp.

We had seen that the north ridge of Nanda Ghunti was a series of snow arêtes, precipitous on the west side and gently sloping on the east. We only saw the summit once through the clouds, but the ridge did not look difficult, once over the first bump.

If Sams had been fit, our obvious plan of action would have been to establish a camp on the col and have a shot at the summit from there. It would have been a 2,000-foot climb over a horizontal distance of one mile.

It blew hard in the night and the squalls threatened to uproot

our tents; however, we managed to get some sleep and it was clear again in the morning. Several inches of snow had fallen since the previous afternoon. My brother and I set out for the col, this time taking Kalba. Unfortunately my brother was too exhausted to climb the slope so I went on with Kalba, reaching the col at 11 o'clock. The clouds were already rolling up from all directions and it started to snow almost immediately. We shared a tin of sardines and waited hopefully for an hour, by which time it was snowing heavily. Sadly we retraced our steps to camp, where a council of war was held. As it was we had barely enough time to return to Ranikhet and our respective jobs. We anticipated difficulty in getting loads back over the 17,000-foot col in the fresh snow and the two Sutol men had already been sent back to Base Camp to muster more coolies to help over the col.

There seemed nothing for it but to beat a retreat. Camp was struck and we plodded down the glacier in driving snow. At dusk we found a sheltered spot half a mile beyond the site of Camp IV. It was exasperating to wake up to a perfect morning, clear and still. I consoled myself by taking photographs as we crossed the basin. The Dhotials had heavy work in the deep snow as all loads had been brought from Camp V in one carry. Prem Singh had brought reinforcements up to the col as arranged, in spite of the fact that the only available footwear was gym shoes and a few socks.

Prem Singh and I controlled operations from the col, lowering the unfortunate coolies down the slope whether they liked it or not. Sams and my brother organized things at the bottom and by 5.30 p.m. all loads were up. It snowed during the last half-hour and Prem Singh presented a comic spectacle clad in snow-caked blankets and hauling on the icy rope. He stuck to his chilly job with fortitude.

As the line of coolies descended to the Base Camp the snow stopped and the rays of the setting sun lit up the stormy sky of scudding clouds. It was a glorious mixture of pink and iron grey. Quickly it faded until the last ray died on the lofty heights of Trisul. It was a thrilling sight, impossible to describe to those who do not come to the hills.

Reaching Base Camp after dusk we found poor old Atit in a bad way, having eaten nothing for several days. However, he quickly acquired a taste for the hot milk and rum which we administered. He was quite unable to walk and had to be carried for the next three days. The next day was dreary, thick snow lay all the way down the stony valley to 'Cave' Camp, and more snow was falling. The coolies took turns at carrying Atit, some bare-footed. Edelweiss seemed to thrive in the snow and we picked some. All went well

crossing the silver-birch bridge at 'Cave' Camp until Sams's turn came. The two men on the far side pulled the rope handrails so crooked that Sams was pulled off his balance and pitched into the stream. Fortunately he was grabbed before being swept away, but sudden submersion in icy water is not much fun. After changing into dry clothes he was well dosed with rum.

Atit was left at Sutol in the care of Subedar Umrao Singh. It was difficult to diagnose his case: his temperature was normal and he was not frost-bitten. He coughed a lot and a doctor later suggested that it may have been bronchitis. We bade farewell to the Sutol men. They were a hardy lot and had carried well. We were particularly sorry to part with Prem Singh who had proved an excellent head man with plenty of initiative.

The marches back to Garur were thoroughly enjoyable, fine weather most of the way and our enormous appetites were satisfied by many sumptuous meals cooked by Sams who had from the start been chief cook. The Dhotials were in good spirits although several had cracked heels and two who had carried on snow were suffering from frost-bitten toes. This, I am glad to say, was very slight. They never complained and I dressed their feet every evening. Those who had worn Australian ammunition boots were quite all right. It was the Indian-made ammunition boots that had caused the damage, letting in water and losing their shape after a few days on snow.

We reached Garur on the 18th October, camped in a field, and dined magnificently on tinned plum pudding, brandy butter, and genuine liqueur brandy, produced out of a flask by my brother. He had kept quiet about it all this time!

The bus turned up as arranged and took us to Ranikhet in the morning. As guests of Mr. and Mrs. R. E. Harding we were treated to the luxury of hot baths and lashings of beer. Many hours were spent lazing in the garden of their delightful bungalow.

So ended our visit to Garhwal, and although we had failed to climb our peak, we had the satisfaction of breaking fresh ground.

Notes

1. All names and heights are taken from the new ½-inch map, sheet 53 N/SE.

2. There was some difficulty in obtaining ata on the march to Sutol, but this could be avoided by sending a man on ahead.

3. Eggs were practically unobtainable. We got a few from a sweeper at Garu. A good supply should be taken from Ranikhet.

4. At least two weeks should be allowed for a letter to reach Subedar Umrao Singh, who supplies ata and vegetables and arranges coolies. Address:

Subedar Umrao Singh Negi,
Village Sutol,
Patti Nandak,
c/o Experimental P.O. A 582 Ramni,
District Garhwal.

5. Sutol men use shoulder-straps (pieces of string) for their loads. Porters' rucksacks for them would be an advantage.

6. The Dhotials and Sutol men who carried above Base Camp ate tinned sardines and herrings with much relish. They realized the disadvantages of chupati-making on a primus in a small tent, and half the ata carried above Base Camp was carried down again. In a few more days I think religious prejudices would have been overcome, with the exception of bully beef.

7. The Nandakini route to the basin at the centre of the Ronti glacier system has certain disadvantages. Sutol at 7,190 feet is the top village on the Nandakini river. Loads have to be reduced to 40 lb. for the next two marches through the bamboo jungle, and these two marches are unpleasant. Another two days are necessary, I think even for a well-organized party, to cross the 17,000-foot col and descend to the basin (we took four days).

8. The longer route via the Kuari pass, Tapoban, Dhauliganga river, Rishi Ganga, and Ronti Gad appears attractive and I should be most interested to know if good coolies and supplies of ata can be obtained from the villages near the junction of the Rishi Ganga and Dhauliganga, 6,170 feet. If the Ronti Gad is less afflicted with bamboo jungle than the Nandakini, this route would I think be easier, drier, and pleasanter. A base camp could be placed at about 15,500 feet in the basin, or at the site of our Camp IV at 16,600 feet, which is a good position for morning and evening sun. The obvious advantage of the Ronti Gad route is that there is no 17,000-foot col between the Ronti glacier basin and the top village.

NANGA PARBAT RECONNAISSANCE, 1939

L. CHICKEN

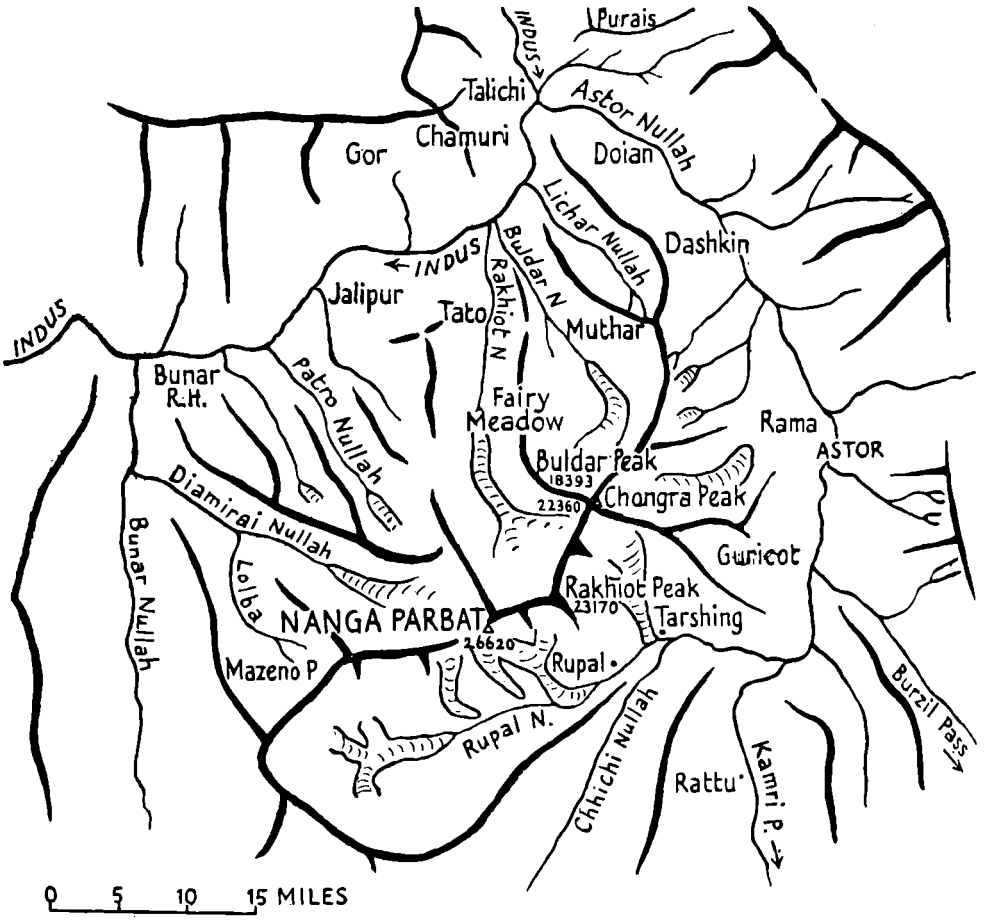
(This article, which had long been awaited, arrived only a very few days before going to press. Fortunately the author's English is good and needed but little correction. He has also taken the trouble to put heights in feet instead of in metres. The promised map not having materialized, one of those in Bechtold's Nanga Parbat Adventure *has been reproduced with slight amendments. But it is hoped that Paul Bauer will be able to send the expedition map and also their photographs.*

Peter Aufschnaiter also has an article under dispatch, but it is long overdue. He has been handicapped by not having his kit with him in Lhasa. He arrived there in January 1946, after almost unbearable hardships, together with Harrer, the only other survivor out of the four who escaped from Dehra Dun six months previously. Aufschnaiter is working on an electric power station for the Regency Government in Lhasa, while Harrer is doing reasonably well as a trader. Both are apparently quite content to remain where they are for the present.—Ed.)

THE steep north-west flank of Nanga Parbat which rises from the Diamir valley was attempted in 1891 by A. F. Mummery. He was the first to try to conquer this peak, one of the highest summits in the world, 26,650 feet, and he did not return from the terrific task that he had set himself. Most probably the audacious pioneer and his two porters were killed by an avalanche while he was exploring the Diamir glacier for a possible route to the Rakhiot valley. In 1932 Nanga Parbat was approached again by an expedition under the leadership of Willi Merkl. This time the route chosen started from the Rakhiot valley leading through the north-east flank, and it was by this route that all subsequent expeditions endeavoured to find an ascent to the summit. Although this route was first considered to be the best and only practicable one, the experiences of later expeditions gave reason to doubt whether the long ascent (about 9 miles from Camp I), necessitating nine camps to reach the summit, was not too serious a handicap. Moreover, avalanches and bad weather conditions seem to be rather frequent at this side of the mountain where they had been encountered by both the expeditions of 1934 and 1938. These difficulties induced P. Bauer, the leader of the 1938 Expedition, to look for the possibilities of more practicable routes. Advised by him, Dr. Luft, who was to lead an eventual attempt on the summit in 1940, investigated the north-west face from the Diamir valley. He took many valuable photographs of the flank from the valley and from the expedition aeroplane. Taking into consideration that the line from the bottom of the Diamir valley to the top of Nanga Parbat is only about 3 miles long, although the

route would be a very steep one, it was decided further to reconnoitre the north-west flank of the mountain for a possible ascent route, and this task was to be carried out by the German Himalayan Expedition of 1939.

The leadership of the expedition was conferred on Peter Aufschnaiter, an experienced Himalayan mountaineer who had been



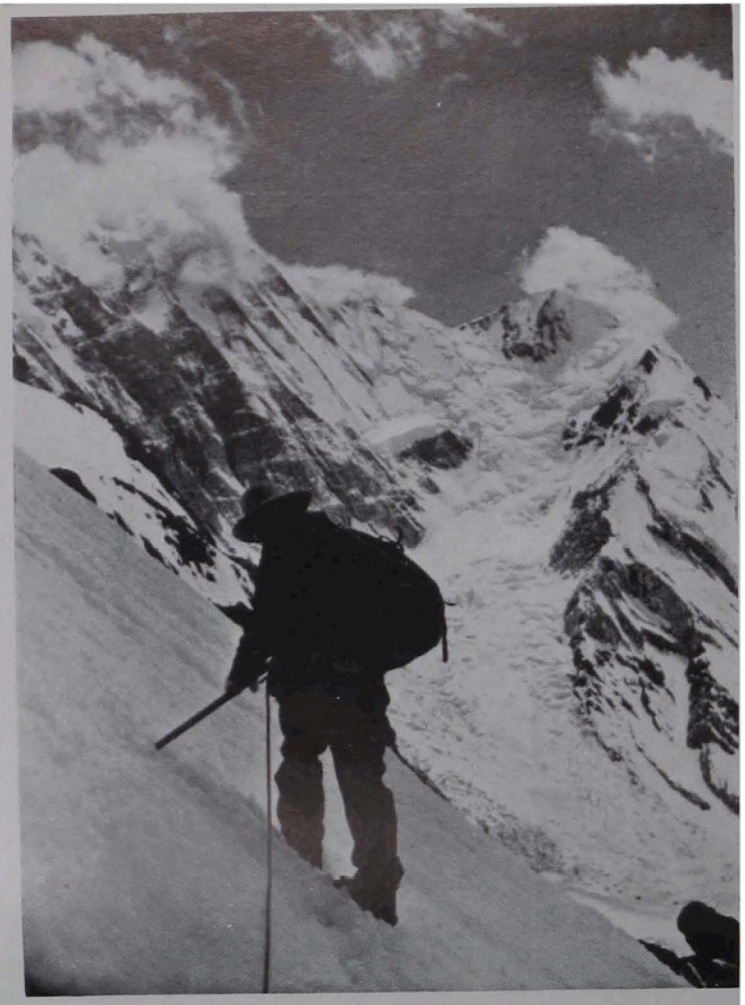
with P. Bauer at Kangchenjunga in 1929 and 1931. The other members were Heinrich Harrer, who had been with the party that made the first ascent through the Eiger north face in 1938, Hans Lobenhoffer, and Lutz Chicken, a medical student.

The party left Rawalpindi on the 11th May via the Kaghan valley and the Babusar pass, and reached the Indus valley near Chilas on the 22nd May. Entering the Bunar valley to the south of the Indus and proceeding through the narrow gorge of the lower Diamir valley, we reached the moraine of the Diamir glacier. The Base Camp was established on the 1st June, on the north bank of the glacier at 12,600 feet, below the rocky western slopes of the Ganalo ridge. Opposite this ridge, to the west of the valley, the dark mass of the

Nanga Parbat from the Diamirai glacier; Mummery's supposed route marked -----; × indicates spot where wood was found, 1939; ° indicates point reached in 1939

The Mazeno ridge

Couloirs on lower part of North Peak



Ascent towards North Peak. Mazeno ridge to right

precipitous Mazeno ridge, corniced with hanging glaciers, rises, while to the south-east the rocky summit of Nanga Parbat towers above the glaciated north-west face, the ice cover being interrupted only by the three ribs climbed by Mummery. At first sight this appeared to be the most fascinating route to the top. Farther east, not visible from the Base Camp, the Diamir flank is more rocky, several ribs leading to the north peak of Nanga, which is separated from the summit by a glaciated saddle, the Bazin pass.

The first week was spent on reconnaissance from the south slope of the Ganalo ridge, just opposite the Diamir flank. An ascent starting from the Diamir valley towards the north peak and crossing the upper Diama glacier was taken into consideration. However, the snout of the glacier, about 400 feet above a steep rock wall, and the fact that the approach to the ascent along the lower Diama glacier is exposed to avalanches coming down the Diamir couloirs, made the route appear very difficult. An attempt to reach the north peak by this route was therefore abandoned.

Our attention was now attracted by the few rocky ribs pointing to the north peak, and later we chose one of the middle ribs as probably most practicable.

On the 13th June Lobenhoffer and I climbed the historic Mummery route to the top of the second rib, where, extraordinarily enough, we found a piece of wood about 10 inches long. Was it a vestige of Mummery? Above the third rib the spacious Bazin glacier breaks off precipitously above the rock walls of the rib, endangering the route. We returned to Camp II, below the ice-fall of Diama glacier, the same day. A few days later we saw an enormous avalanche starting from the snout of Bazin glacier. This avalanche covered the whole amphitheatre of the Diamir glacier, sweeping also over the top of Rib II, where we had at first intended to bivouac. So this route was also abandoned. During the next weeks we saw several avalanches coming down near the Mummery ribs, though none of the size previously observed. Our hopes now turned to the middle rib from the north peak. From the Ganalo flank, Aufschnaiter and Harrer had examined the various ribs, and selected this one which apparently offered the best chance for an ascent.

On the 15th June Aufschnaiter and Harrer established Camp III at 18,000 feet on the right bank of the lower Diama glacier, above the ice-fall and opposite the ascent to the middle rib. The route to Camp III seemed fairly safe below the rocky spurs of the Diama flank, though the snow couloirs between the ribs showed avalanche fans. From this camp we tried an ascent and climbed up to approximately 20,000 feet. Through a system of couloirs we reached a broad ice slope covered in its lower part by hard frozen snow, which

facilitated the climbing, but higher up there was bare ice. This slope was exceedingly steep and in its uppermost part we had to cross the rib, to the right of the slope. There the rock was covered with loose stones and broken slabs. We had to start very early in the morning as from noon onwards there is stone-fall of increasing intensity along this route. Farther up, from our highest point, the rib ends below an ice rampart. In July Harrer and Lobenhoffer reached this point at about 20,300 feet (Camp IV). The route would have to lead from this camp to a small platform above the ice wall from where, over snow slopes, the north peak could probably be ascended. We never saw avalanches on these slopes and, in Aufschnaiter's opinion, in this upper part of the flank a practicable route could be found. The lower part of the route is the steepest until the platform mentioned. On the last day in Camp III we discovered that the track between this camp and Camp II was also considerably endangered by avalanches, as one big avalanche crashed down during the night, covering our tents, pitched at a distance of about half a mile from the slope, with snow. Still another came down from one of the couloirs reaching the route, just when we were on the way down to Camp II.

For the last ten days of June the Base Camp looked like a hospital. Lobenhoffer, from a neglected angina, got a septic fever with temperature up to 104° F.—a dangerous condition, especially at the height of 13,000 feet above sea-level. Fortunately our dispensary was very well equipped and Prontosil had a good therapeutic effect while Sympatol prevented circulatory failure. One of our Bhotia porters had broncho-pneumonia. Both recovered slowly and at last could be transported to lower altitudes where their convalescence made more rapid progress. While I had enough medical work in the Base Camp, Harrer and Aufschnaiter made some smaller excursions. Before leaving we climbed the Diamirai peak, 18,270 feet, from where we had an excellent view, especially into the higher parts of the flank.

It had been the original plan to proceed after the reconnaissance of the Diamir flank to Gilgit and explore Rakaposhi for practicable ascents. However, on the 8th July we received information from Gilgit that the permission to approach Rakaposhi could not be granted and Aufschnaiter decided to start for another exploration of the Diamir flank. So we returned to the Base Camp where we arrived on the 13th July. The climbing conditions of the flank had deteriorated considerably in all respects. The layer of frozen snow which had covered the ice in June had melted away and we had to scramble up the steep slopes over bare ice. Now, more than ever, the crampons with twelve spikes were extremely useful. Harrer and Lobenhoffer reached the top of the middle rib by an ascent which

Chilasi porter

Nanga Parbat and North Peak from Diamirai Pass

they considered as difficult as one of the hardest climbs in the Alps. The danger of falling stones was permanent, and not as in June limited to the hours of the afternoon only. On the other hand, there were less avalanches in July.

This second attempt gave us the experience that this route, and most probably every other ascent through the flank, would hardly be practicable in July, while in June a team of good mountaineers with excellent porters could possibly accomplish the task. The porters ought to be of the best quality, as the extreme steepness of the slope and the changing conditions of the 'ice cover' demand from these men considerable courage and alpinistic skill.

The weather had been perfect from the beginning and the sky, although at times clouded in the afternoon, always cleared up overnight. Only occasionally we had slight snowfall or rain at the Base Camp until on the 25th July the weather conditions changed for the worse, but it was almost time for us to leave the Diamir flank.

On the 23rd July Aufschnaiter and I climbed the western peak of the Ganalo ridge, point 22,370, where we had a most fascinating glimpse through clouds down to the sunny Indus valley, 18,000 feet below. The ridge connecting our unnamed peak to the Ganalo peak did not offer any possibilities for a route to reach this rock and ice pinnacle.

None of us had been with previous Nanga Parbat expeditions and all were lacking the direct Rakhiot side experience. To gain a final opinion over the Diamir flank it was obviously necessary to see the Rakhiot side of Nanga, where so many German mountaineers had lost their lives in the struggle to conquer one of the great heights of the world, a struggle which on Nanga Parbat had become the dutiful task to carry on the effort of the dead.

On the 26th July the expedition party left the Diamir glacier—Harrer and Lobenhoffer with the bulk of the transport down to Bunar Rest House in the Indus valley, from whence they proceeded to Rakhiot bridge, Aufschnaiter and I up to the Kachal Gali from where via Patro and Jiliper pass we entered the Rakhiot valley. It was the most imposing view I have ever had, when after the descent through fog and moisture we rounded a corner and suddenly the gigantic amphitheatre of the Nanga with her satellites to the east, towering above the Rakhiot glacier and its tributaries, opened before our eyes. Overcome by this magnificent scenery, we walked down the grassy slope to the left bank of the Ganalo glacier. The Diamir valley, compared with these wide spaces, appears narrow, and there one feels deep down, as in a crevasse, between walls rising 10,000–12,000 feet above the valley bottom, only 2 miles broad. The Diamir scenery leaves a grave, if not sad, impression, while this Rakhiot side gives a sense of enthusiastic joy.

To arrive at a conclusion about the results of our expedition, it can be said that although the old ascent over the Rakhiot slope appears to be technically easier than any route through the Diamir flank, the latter presents many favourable features, and it would have been for the leader of the 1940 expedition to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of both alternatives and to decide which route would have to be taken for the next attempt on the summit.

While Harrer and Lobenhoffer proceeded from Rakhiot to Astor via Bunji, arriving at Srinagar on the 19th August, Aufschnaiter and I went to Gilgit where we paid a visit to the Political Agent at Naltar. At Gilgit we were treated very kindly by the small British colony which rendered every possible help. We owe special gratitude to Lt. Strover, Assistant Political Agent in Chilas, whose guests we had the honour to be on several occasions, for his kind assistance rendered in many ways.

On the 22nd August the expedition assembled at Srinigar to leave on the 24th for Karachi. We had left Germany during the political crisis of spring 1939, in the firm belief that peace would be maintained. In the Himalayas newspapers and other means of information about the political situation were obviously very scarce, and it was only on our return to the civilized world that we realized the imminent danger of war. We came to Karachi to embark for home, but fate had decided otherwise. We were interned and were not to climb mountains for years.

SKI-ING IN GARHWAL

R. V. VERNEDE

ONE could presumably find somewhere to ski almost anywhere in the Himalayas, if prepared to go and find the place, but this does not mean that one could recommend it as a winter-sports resort. Garhwal in particular is difficult and inaccessible. The mountain sides are steep and rocky, the valleys deep and narrow. I have written this note, not because I claim to have discovered another Gulmarg, but because in a district I happen to know well, I have found one place where terrain, scenery, and apparently suitable snow conditions are associated together in a reasonably accessible area and which, there is every hope, will become more accessible within the next two years, in case anyone is interested.

In September 1945, while on tour as Deputy Commissioner, I walked from the Kuari pass to Joshimath along the ridge instead of by one of the two usual routes via Tapoban or Tungasi. It is one of the finest walks in the district. I noted some slopes, particularly at Garson and Auli bugials (grazing-grounds), which looked as if they would be ideal for ski-ing and I registered a vow to visit them in winter.

I have now visited them twice in winter—for three days, 18th–20th February, in 1946 and one week, 20th–26th February, in 1947. On the first occasion it snowed for two days out of three, so ski-ing was out of the question. The scenery was so magnificent and local opinion so insistent that 1946 was an abnormal year, that I determined to try again. In 1947 I was luckier and enjoyed what the locals said was typical weather and snow conditions, and being on leave and travelling entirely at my own expense, I obtained a more useful idea of the difficulties and expenses. Some readers of the *Journal* may be interested in a note on the conditions found and expenses involved. I have added some photographs, but I find they do not do justice to the snow-fields. I was interested in a place called Ali before, near Wan, two marches from Gwaldam, but this is incomparably more promising.

The Journey

The railhead is Kotdwara on the E.I.R. From there it is one day by lorry to Pauri (68 miles) or to Srinagar (87 miles) and a second day on to roadhead at Karanprayag (61 miles from Pauri). There is one-way traffic; the road has only recently been made, and is not for the squeamish. From Karanprayag it is five marches by ordinary

stages to Joshimath. With good coolies and light loads one could cut this to three days. It takes another day to get up to the ski-ing slopes above Joshimath. There are good if small P.W.D. Inspection Houses at all halts, but if doing double marches, one night would have to be spent in a dharmsala at Garurganga, half-way between Chamoli and Joshimath. As there are stone huts at Garson and Auli, in this way one can avoid taking tents altogether.

When the motor road is completed up to Chamoli in two years' time, it will be possible to reach there by lorry in two days and Garson in five days in all. If the motor road is extended to Pipalkoti as proposed, the time could be cut to four days. The climb from Joshimath is very steep ($3\frac{1}{2}$ miles) and a better route would be from Helang chatti on the pilgrim route via Palkhundi village to arrive at Garson from the south-west by a longer path but easier gradient, with less snow for the coolies.

The Ski-ing Slopes

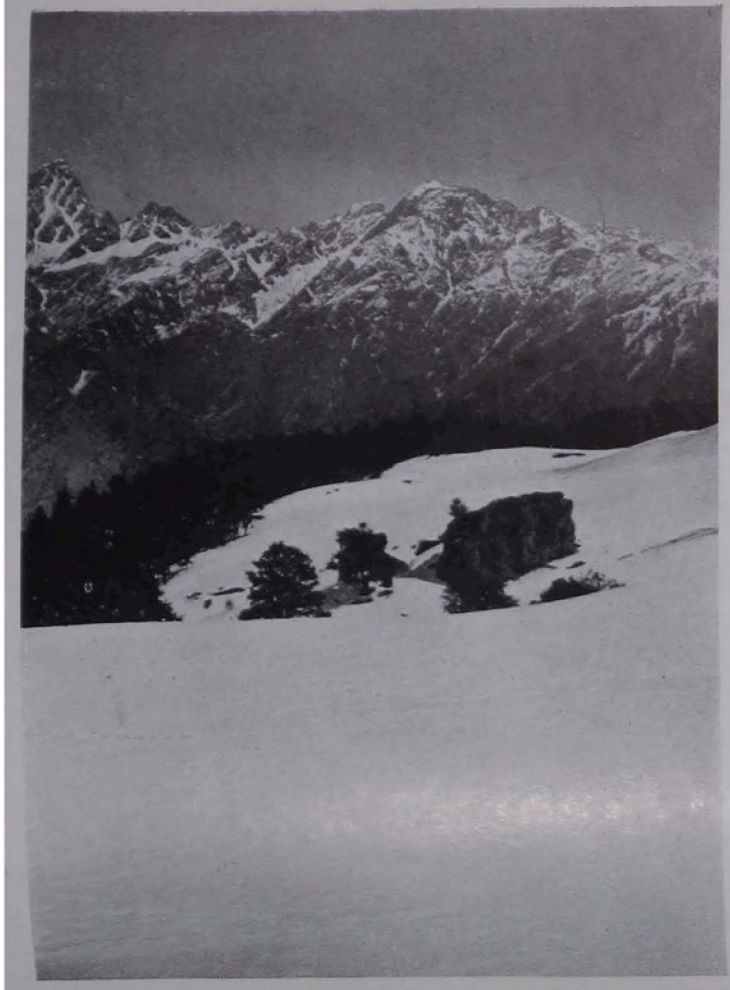
The ski-ing-grounds which I visited are over the Garson and Auli bugials, lying directly above Joshimath, on the north-facing slopes of the ridge which runs from west of the Kuari pass into the angle formed by the junction of the Dhauli and Alaknanda rivers ($\frac{1}{2}$-inch Survey of India, Sheet 53 N/SE, 1st edit.). The highest point is 12,458 feet (Sq. A 1). From the north and north-north-west shoulders of this summit, good slopes run down to the tree-line at 10,500 feet at the foot of the Garson bugial. There is a short run following the path through conifer woods and then from *c.* 10,000 feet over open slopes again and following a fairly well-defined broad ridge to the limit of good snow near the foot of Auli bugial, *c.* 8,500 feet (in a good snow year), by a small temple. Apart from this, the longest continuous run, of about $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles, there are numerous features suitable for practice and nursery slopes and there are some attractive slopes in the middle of the woods, a belt of which runs between Garson and Auli and in continuation of Auli to the east.

Although I could not test my assumption, I am pretty certain one could traverse on skis from west of the Kuari pass to Auli with runs across the slopes of Kuari and again from point 12,458 down to Auli, a total distance of approximately 8 miles with runs over 4 miles of the distance.

One should be able to start from point 15,050 (Pangarchula) (Sq. B 1) or at least from a small subsidiary peak on the north-north-west ridge from Pangarchula, height approximately 14,000 feet, and run north-north-west over the northern slopes of the Kuari pass to the point where the ridge narrows again to a true backbone ridge just above the Khulara camping-ground, where the height is shown

Auli Bugial above Joshimath Garhwal

Garson, ski-ing above Joshimath Garhwal



Garson ski-ing slopes above Joshimath Garhwal

Nilgiri Parbat and the Valley of Flowers from Auli

as 11,950 feet (Sq. A 1). From this point one would have to traverse, climbing slightly at places still on the northern side and passing below point 12,631 (Chitarkana) to the north shoulder of point 12,458. From the map and to the eye there are even more attractive slopes to the north-east of point 15,050 near Dialisera, between 13,000 and 11,000 feet, but I have not been over these even in summer.

Owing to the height and distances involved and the absence of natural or artificial transport, this stretch of ski-ing country calls for at least three huts—one at Auli at 9,000 feet, one at Garson at 10,500 feet, and one at Khulara at 11,000 feet. The location and scenery are superb. Fringed by snow-festooned pine and oak trees and hanging over the blue depths of the Dhauli and Alaknanda valleys 5,000 feet below, the snow slopes are outlined against a wall of snowy peaks rising from the main Himalayan range from Chaukhamba round to Dunagiri and including Nilkanta, Mana, Kamet, Nilgiri, Gauri and Hathi Parbats, the Niti, and other peaks of the Zaskar range. From point 12,458 the view is extended to the south-east to include the Lata aiguilles, Nanda Ghunti, and Trisul.

Conditions

I reached Auli on the 20th February. The coolies were most reluctant to carry any farther, and it was certainly heavy going for them in 5 feet of snow, so I stayed in a cowshed on Auli at approximately 9,700 feet. If I had had longer I would have moved up to a similar hut at Garson at 10,500 feet where I had stayed the year before.

The cowshed was free of all insects and cosy enough with a charcoal stove, but of course very smoky. I took a Garhwali boy to cook for me and two local men who volunteered to come. Narain Singh was very knowledgeable about the terrain and snow conditions, and had a remarkable knowledge of the local wild animal life. He wore snow-shoes, provided by me, and found them useful, except of course when the snow was wet and sticky. He generally accompanied me most of the way when I was climbing on skins. The other man was the Patwari's orderly—an ex-soldier—who arranged for milk and charcoal.

I had four days reasonably good ski-ing. The best snow was above 10,500 feet. After 2.30 p.m. below 10,500 feet the slightly thawed snow rapidly froze into harsh ice-crust. I was never above 10,500 feet after 2.30 p.m., but I presume the same thing happened. On the 23rd it snowed lightly and finely from 12 noon to just after midnight, resulting in about 5 inches of new snow, which was wet and sticky, and seemed to make the old snow below also wet. The 24th and

25th had to be written off for ski-ing. On the 26th—my last day—the snow was all right again, and being acclimatized I had my best day.

I encountered some wind-slab but it could generally be avoided, some wet cake in small patches, and wind-furrowed snow, but the latter was all right. I was struck by the variety of snow met with in one morning's expedition over a small area.

As I was alone I avoided very steep slopes all the more. These were mostly short, consisting of the sides of short lateral ridges running north-north-west from point 12,458 and separated by deep gullies, which are not continuous. Both Garson and Auli, I should say, are free of snow avalanches. The locals said they had never known them there.

This winter it snowed there on the 28th–29th November 1946 (lightly), 28th–29th December 1946 (heavily), 4th–5th and 22nd–23rd January 1947 (heavily), 6th February (lightly), 15th February (fairly heavily), and 23rd February (very lightly). All the locals and in particular Narain Singh, whose opinion I valued, maintained that February was the best month for weather and snow. It is freest from wind—the greatest enemy. There seems to be little chance though of getting more than ten consecutive days clear weather in February.

I found warm underclothes and a grey army flannel shirt worn with gaberdine ski-trousers just right for climbing and added a windproof jacket and gauntlets for running down. I wore what I call a woollen scrum-cap to protect my ears, and personally I wore a jungle hat in the sun, having a tender scalp and exiguous hair thereon, but most people I am sure would have done without. Snow-goggles and face cream were of course essential. Plenty of dubbin had to be applied to boots and all leather daily as they got very wet. I only waxed my skis once.

It was a strenuous but enjoyable holiday and would have been improved by a ski-ing companion.

A PRE-SWISS ATTEMPT ON NILKANTA

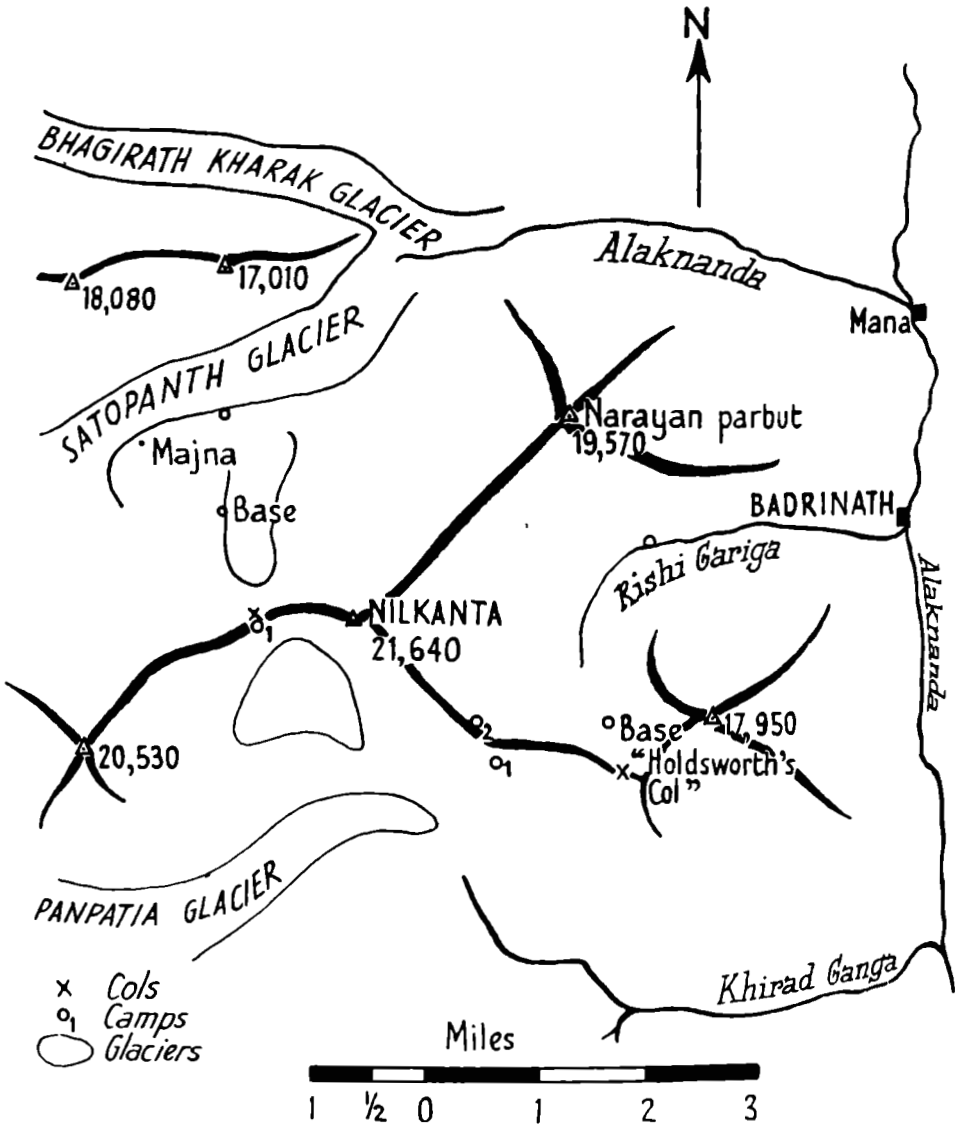
C. G. WYLIE

ACCORDING to the programme announced in the *Swiss Alpine Club Journal*, André Roch's Swiss Himalayan Expedition was scheduled to make an attempt on Nilkanta in August 1947. At the time of writing we have not heard how they have fared. Whether they succeed or fail it may not be out of place to record an attempt in May 1947 by our modest party and the impressions gained by us of this most attractive and difficult peak.

Nilkanta has been described by Frank Smythe as the Queen of Garhwal and second in beauty only to Siniolchu in all the Himalaya. It was largely his descriptions, and his beautiful photographs, which inspired us to choose it as our objective. His view by moonlight from Badrinath in *Kamet Conquered*, and his telephoto from the Kuari pass recently published in *Snow on the Hills*, will be familiar to many. It stands alone, directly above Badrinath, rising in a single sweep, serene and awe-inspiring, to a beautifully shaped snow cone summit, its nearest rival being Chaukhamba, 8 miles to the west. More mundane considerations clinched the choice; our leave was short and Nilkanta was quickly approached: its height, 21,640 feet, seemed within the capabilities of the party. The difficulty of the climbing remained the doubtful factor. We knew its formidable appearance must have been the reason for only one previous attempt having been made—by Frank Smythe and the late Lt.-Col. Peter Oliver in 1937. Though they had met with hard climbing they were turned back by monsoon weather and not by technical difficulties. R. L. Holdsworth was the only other person we knew of who had been at close quarters with the mountain; he had crossed the col at the foot of the south-east ridge, and wrote saying he thought that ridge would go, though he had not seen it closely owing to mist.

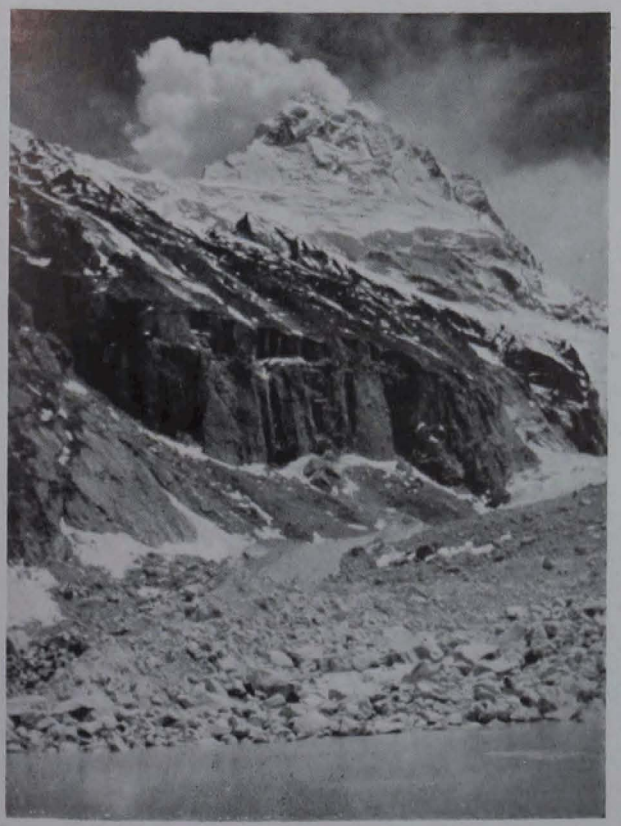
We were six to start with: Peter Munden, a gunner Auster pilot from the Air O.P. Squadron in Peshawar; the Sherpas, Dawa Thondup and Gyalgen Myckje; an ex-paratrooping Gurkha, Rifleman Purkabahadur Pun, from my Battalion, the 2/1st Gurkhas, who had been to 20,000 feet with Jimmy Roberts on Saser Kangri in 1946; and Lance-Naick Netasing Chawan kindly sent with us by his C.O., Lt.-Col. Oliver of the 1st Bn. Royal Garhwal Rifles, to help us with his local knowledge of the approaches to the mountain. It was a well-balanced party, and it would have been hard to imagine a happier one. We paired off naturally—Peter and I, the Sherpas, the soldiers. Any fears that the difference in caste between the

Gurkha and the Garhwali might prove difficult were quickly dispelled, for they soon became inseparable, Purkabahadur taking upon himself the roles of interpreter and chief lecturer in mountaineering for Netasing. He would explain to him at great length, and in the most atrocious Urdu (of which he was secretly very proud),



any proceedings which went on in Gurkhali, and deliver orations (by virtue of having been on one previous expedition) on the higher strategy of mountaineering. Unfortunately Netasing had to return to his home after carrying to Camp I, owing to defective boots. The Sherpas were, of course, the *sine qua non* of the party—invaluable in every way, though in making up loads and pitching and striking camp they must have few equals anywhere. Gyalgen naturally became Cook and Q, and dealt firmly and efficiently with talkative,

The pilgrim's first view of his goal—Badrinath



Nilkanta; the north face from the source of the Alaknanda

Nilkanta; a much-foreshortened view of the north face

Nilkanta; a much-foreshortened view of the south-east ridge. Peak 20,580 to the right

scrounging coolies. Dawa, veteran of fifteen major expeditions, who had carried to Camp V on Everest and held the German Red Cross medal—complete with citation from Adolf Hitler—for good work after the Nanga Parbat disaster, was quite incredibly self-effacing; easily the nimblest and safest climber of the party, he cheerfully played second fiddle in camp and quietly got through three times as much work as anyone else. Purkabahadur, in addition to being guide, philosopher, and friend to Netasing, soon found his *métier* as 'joker' and *raconteur* of the party. If anything started to go wrong Purkabahadur would be sure to fall over a guy-rope or produce some absurd remark that set us all laughing again. And in the evenings round the camp fire, while the rum circulated, he would hold the Sherpas spellbound with tales of how he (Errol Flynn like) had recaptured Burma single-handed (sometimes there was a chap called Roberts who had helped).

Through the sponsorship of Brigadier Daunt, R.A., we were lent a considerable amount of experimental army high-altitude equipment, on condition we reported on its serviceability. With the exception of kapok sleeping-bags, which were not warm enough, we found all items good, especially 'carriers, man-pack' for coolies and porters, string vests, wind-proof and sleeping-bag outer covers. Jimmy Roberts also kindly lent us much of his equipment.

After a hectic month's preparation, fascinatingly enhanced by a sense of adventure to come, our plan, necessarily somewhat D-Day-like in its intricacy, was set in motion.

I took a flying start, dumped half the kit at Lahore, and went up to Dharmsala with Purkabahadur to collect Jimmy Roberts's equipment. We were to meet Peter and Netasing with the rest of the kit in Lahore again; the timings only allowed a bare half-hour to transfer ourselves and all the kit to the Calcutta train. We had forty-odd packages; some in the left luggage office, some on the Pathankot train, some on the Frontier Mail. We knew it would be a near thing, but as luck would have it, Peter's train was late and there followed the most frenzied ten minutes of the whole trip. While Peter wrestled with some misguided official who refused to allow the kit off the Frontier Mail, the rest of us marshalled bands of coolies and ploughed frantically to and fro through the sea of humanity brandishing ice-axes and hurling oaths. In the midst of this pandemonium, I spotted two Sherpas sitting forlornly on a small pile of kit. A greeting, and their faces lit.

'Going climbing?'

'Ji, Hazur.'

'Where?'

'Garhwal.'

'That's funny, so are we—what peak?'

'Nilkanta.'

Then it dawned on me. 'Then you're Dawa and Gyalgen?'

'Ji, Hazur,' they beamed.

'But I sent you the most detailed instructions to meet us in Garhwal.'

Their grins broadened; they looked like unrepentant schoolboys. We all burst out laughing. Hurriedly I pressed them into the good work of transferring the kit. I did not hear the full story until the train pulled out, with us and the kit miraculously on board. They had turned up in Peshawar, grinning and penniless, but fortunately no later than D—1. They had never seen Peshawar, and the Sahibs had sent them enough money to get there. Their plot was so naïve and their glee so disarming it was impossible to scold them. Anyway we were much too pleased to see them and be all together at last. It was a good start.

The time-factor dictated an approach by the Pilgrim Route rather than the more pleasant but longer march from Ranikhet over the Kuari pass. We spent a day at Kotdwara, the railhead, buying food (as there was a famine in Garhwal we took in everything for ourselves and the coolies for the march in and back), hiring a bus and making up loads. We were fortunate to meet a fellow mountaineer, Ken Walsh, in charge of the Garhwali Rest Camp there, who helped and entertained us nobly. We bussed in two days to Karnaprayag and a third day took us by bus to Nandaprayag and on foot to Chamoli. At Nandaprayag, the beginning of the march, we were lucky to be able to engage some incredibly jungly coolies, who were returning to their homes near Niti. Owing to the famine the Government was employing all coolies in carrying grain, and neither the D.C. nor the local Tehsildar had been able to find any for us. Eight coolies, four mules, and a cow (produced by one of the coolies to carry his load) finally completed our baggage train.

From now on we walked alongside the pilgrims. One could not help admiring the faith that kept the weak and sick and aged alike steadily plodding towards their goal—Badrinath. But it was hard to appreciate their attitude to the hills; theirs and ours were about as different as could be. While we revelled in every moment of the superb scenery, and were uplifted by the glimpse of snows, so they seemed determined to make this pilgrimage in the most abject misery, and appeared cowed and awed by the unfamiliar mountains. Sunk in their own dejection, they would look at our white faces and unusual equipment with obviously unseeing, listless eyes. Occasionally a brighter one would notice us. One such, airing his English, opened, 'Where is your native land?'

'England,' I answered.

'Ah! But *which* England?'

I replied that as far as I knew there was only one England.

'But no. Also there is Poland.'

I went on my way ruminating that maybe he'd got something there. Having since stayed in London, I can think of a few more 'Englands' to add to his list.

Four easy marches brought us on the 10th May to Badrinath, where we had our first breath-taking view of Nilkanta, only 5 miles away and 11,000 feet above us. We paid off our Niti coolies and next day, while waiting for the Mana coolies who were to carry to Base Camp, we watched the official opening of the temple after the winter, and the ceremonial arrival of the Rawal from Joshimath. Somehow, at this, the holiest of Hindu Temples, set so appropriately amidst some of the finest scenery in the Himalaya in the pure clear air of the hills, one had not expected to find the same filth and squalor, disease, misery, and apathy so familiar in the plains. But it was so at Badrinath, and we were thankful to get away towards Base Camp as soon as the Mana men arrived.

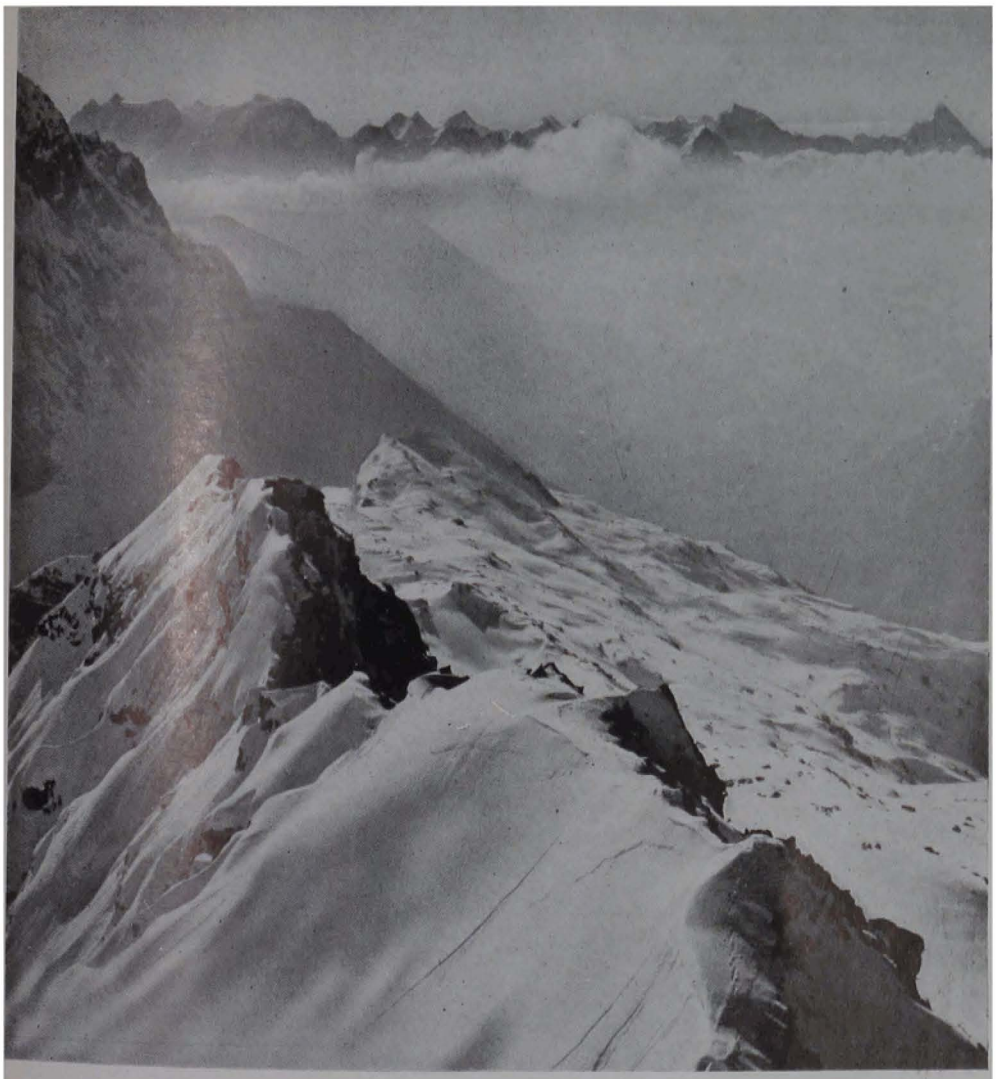
Nilkanta is buttressed by three well-defined ridges which may be called the south-east, west, and north-east, and the faces they enclose the south, north, and east. From Badrinath we could see the east face, and north-east and south-east ridges. The face was quite out of the question. It rose some 8,000 feet as nearly precipitously as made no odds; and was, at that time, continually streaming with avalanches of melting winter snow. The same applied to the slopes of the north-east ridge. This ridge, which connects Nilkanta with Narayan Parbat, is never much lower than 18,000 feet and even if it could have been reached, was completely blocked about 1,000 feet below the summit by an ice wall slightly overhanging, running right round from the east face to (as we saw later) the north face. The south-east ridge, as Holdsworth had said, looked possible with an average angle about equal to that of the Hörnli ridge of the Matterhorn, and we knew it was possible to get on to the ridge, as Holdsworth had crossed the col at its foot. Incidentally, Dawa Thondup had been with him then.

After an idyllic camp amid carpets of iris in the Rishi Ganga Nala, we pitched Base Camp at about 15,000 feet near Holdsworth's col. We found that the col had a long flat approach, almost parallel to the south-east ridge, so we pitched the camp at the nearer end of this approach whence the slopes directly up to the ridge looked easy. The Mana men were not equipped to camp above the snow-line, so they returned from here.

Now doing our own porterage, it took us two carries to establish

Camp I, which I wanted to make into an advanced Base for the difficult climbing to follow. Our route gained the south-east ridge directly above Base Camp about a mile from, and 1,000 feet above, Holdsworth's col. We followed the ridge for about half an hour until we came to what the Swiss guide-books would call an *Aufschwung*, which we turned on the south side. This led us to a small level snow-field which made a suitable site for Camp I, out of the way of avalanches, at about 16,500 feet. The second day, while the Sherpas were fetching the remaining loads from Base Camp, Peter and I climbed back up to the ridge above the *Aufschwung* and followed its crest to the foot of the first of a series of large rock gendarmes, which were obviously the crux of the climb. So far the climbing had been easy; now it looked doubtful if laden porters could be expected to go farther. We found a site for Camp II on the crest of the ridge, and decided that Gyalgen and I should sleep there next night and reconnoitre the gendarmes unladen before getting the whole party up to Camp II. Dawa Thondup and Purkabahadur helped to establish this light camp and returned to Camp I.

On the 18th May Gyalgen and I set out in perfect weather on our climb. The rock was steep and rather loose, but went fairly easily at first. As we were not carrying loads, the climbing was most exhilarating and we enjoyed superb views over the morning mists below to Nanda Devi, Dunagiri, Hathi and Gauri Parbat, and Kamet. The climbing grew more difficult and I began to get the feeling that this was all wrong—that one was not supposed to climb rocks as hard as these in the Himalaya. After about 700 feet we came to a steep, ice-covered slab, which Gyalgen said he would not like to cross unless it was quite necessary. It was time to make up our minds whether we could reach the top by this ridge, and the answer was obviously No. We were still some 3,000 feet from the top and had only just started on the difficulties; from where we were the next gendarme but one looked unclimbable and unturnable, and beyond that were more we could not see, and then the final rock ridge below the summit cone, which looked much worse on close acquaintance than it had from Badrinath. We should have to make at least two more camps, and that meant carrying over rocks which were too difficult for porters with heavy loads. From Badrinath we had only seen that part of the ridge above the gendarmes, and it may well have been that they were also hidden from Holdsworth in the mist when he had crossed the col. With its wealth of gendarmes, and in its height, length, and steepness the ridge resembles the Pétéret ridge, though the section we climbed is not more severe than the Viereselgrat on the Dent Blanche. We had proved to our satisfaction



From Nilkanta south-east ridge showing Gauri and Hathi Parbat, Dunagiri (centre)

that it was beyond the capabilities of any party not prepared to adopt siege tactics; and so we returned.

Dawa Thondup and Purkabahadur were waiting at Camp II, and with their help the camp was evacuated. With mountainous loads (Gyalgen's weighed 115 lb.) all but two loads from Camp I were evacuated to Base in one carry. Thence Purkabahadur and I went on down to Badrinath to fetch Mana coolies, returning with them on the 20th to evacuate Base. We camped just above Badrinath, amid iris and anemones on a grassy sward through which flowed a crystal-clear brook. Here we spent a delightful off day, bathing and sun-bathing, sleeping, and eating by turns.

We still had sufficient time in hand to reconnoitre the west ridge, so on the 22nd we moved round through Mana and past the source of the Alaknanda (one of the sources of the Ganges) to the Satopanth glacier; and camped about a mile short of the grazing-ground shown on the ½-inch map as Majna, between the moraine and the mountain.

On the way we passed someone who was to become an old friend for we saw him many times again. He was an enraged god. He was the god of a village farther down the Pilgrim Route, and he was enraged, so the people of his village were taking him on tour to placate him—up the Pilgrim Route to Badrinath, and beyond to Vasudhara and back again. He was given a little curtained dandi and two bearers, and a band complete with conches and horns and cymbals, and followers to wave yaks' tails over him to keep the evil gods away. But whenever we saw him, he continued to be enraged; he would try to upset his dandi and get a fearful list to starboard, while the poor bearers struggled to keep him upright and the cymbals clashed and the horns blew the louder; then he would try to catch them on the wrong foot and heel over suddenly to port. Sometimes he would go suddenly into reverse, scattering band and followers mercilessly; or sometimes just sulk and jiggle up and down in the middle of the path.

The view of the north face was most impressive; a series of ice cliffs and slopes of fearsome steepness. Even to reach the north-east ridge at its lowest part would be most difficult, if not impossible. However, the west ridge, though steep and rocky, was promising, and the col at its foot looked comparatively easy. So next day we moved camp on to the small glacier at the foot of this col, and examined the west ridge carefully through binoculars. It looked much easier than the south-east ridge, largely because it was shorter, both in length and height (as the col at its foot was some 3,000 feet higher than Holdsworth's col) and because the gendarmes were smaller and looked as if they could be turned. We were so enthused

that we decided to turn our reconnaissance into an attempt on the summit. This meant more food and, if possible, more leave, so we sent the Sherpas back to Badrinath to bring more food, and with wires to our respective units asking for extensions of leave. It had snowed quite heavily the day before, and climbing was out of the question until this snow had melted or avalanched away. After one idle day at this camp on the glacier, which we now called Base, conditions were good enough to climb to the col. We reached it after seven hours' most gruelling slogging through soft snow. Peter and I occupied Camp I on the col (18,000 feet) and Purkabahadur returned to Base.

The following morning Peter and I set out without loads up the west ridge. The first problem was the first of twin gendarmes, which we called Tweedledum and Tweedledee, which started straight from our tent door. We tried two routes unsuccessfully and only climbed the first pitch rather in desperation by an awkward step, vowing to fix a rope when the porters were to climb it. The summit of Tweedledum was easily turned on the south; then followed a descent down a narrow couloir to regain the ridge between Tweedledee and the next trio of gendarmes—the Ugly Sisters. From here three or four pitches on the ridge crest—one of them distinctly difficult—led to an unclimbable wall, the turning of which on either side looked most severe. Perhaps it looked worse because at that moment it started to snow; at any rate we had to return to camp. We had been out three hours and had not got beyond 19,000 feet, but we had seen enough to convince us that the west ridge is the easiest and best route to the top. We had also seen that the final rock *Aufschwung* of about 700 feet—which we called the Red Tower—could be turned on the south by a snow couloir which led on to the summit ridge. Also each difficulty, as we came to it, appeared to be the last, and easier ground seemed to lie ahead; whereas on the south-east ridge there was always a mass of gendarmes ahead, looking more formidable as one approached.

Back at Base Camp the Sherpas had arrived from Badrinath with more food, but the snow continued all day and most of the night. The morning dawned threatening worse to follow; even if the weather cleared there could be no rock-climbing for several days. If no extra leave were granted, we should be late back; so we packed up again and returned to our Satopanth camp—where, miraculously, owing to a mistaken date, we found our Mana coolies waiting for us—and so next day to Badrinath.

Before we left Badrinath we passed the word around the bazaar and held an auction of our remaining food stores. The banniahs were much too shrewd to pay good prices; or perhaps it was my

auctioneering. I fear this is not my *métier*. I remember holding aloft a bag of tsampa the Sherpas had brought with them.

'First-class tsampa,' I announced. 'The real thing. All the way from Darjeeling.'

'Must be b—— old,' came a voice from the rear, and there was no bidding.

And so back to the stifling plains. But not before we had enjoyed the kind hospitality of the D.C., Mr. Stubbs, at Pauri, where we had real hot baths, and shaves and clean clothes and good company.

In conclusion, the only part of the mountain we had not seen was the south face. Even of this we had seen the upper slopes and those slopes near the west and south-east ridges, and they looked unclimbable. It is just possible that there is a rib up the lower central part of the south face from which one might gain the west or south-east ridges above their difficult portions. It is much more likely that this face, like the others, is impracticable. It seemed clear to us that the ridges are the only safe way to the top, and of these the west ridge is the easiest and shortest. The col at its foot provides a good camp site, and could probably be reached from the south side, from the Khirao valley. From the col, the attractive 20,580-foot peak along the ridge to the south-west could be climbed in a day. This would give an enjoyable airy ridge climb, and from the top one would get an excellent view of the west ridge of Nilkanta, which might save mistakes in route-finding later. Probably two further camps would be needed above the col. The climbers in the party should be prepared either (and preferably) to carry for themselves to these two camps, in case the porters found the rock-climbing too difficult, or to fix sufficient ropes to get porters over the hard pitches. The best time of year would be the immediate pre-monsoon period; we were too early, there was still too much snow about. Smythe's attempt showed that Nilkanta is too near the southern edge of the Himalayan chain to be climbed during the monsoon without a lucky break of weather. Mana coolies would carry to the col and perhaps above if equipped with boots, socks, gloves, blankets, and a tent.

For any mountain-lover, the Himalaya must be the greatest of all adventure-grounds; operation 'Quit India' must not be taken as ruling out small Himalayan expeditions for British climbers. There are always ways and means; as I write two London business men are spending their five weeks' holiday in Garhwal, having flown to India. Certainly our leave was so incomparably the best we had ever spent that we intend to return, whatever the difficulties.

EXPEDITIONS

THE BAGROT VALLEY, GILGIT

THE Bagrot valley in the Gilgit Agency is at once one of the most attractive and little-known places in that area, although it is easy of access from Gilgit town. Starting from that place, the way leads over the suspension bridge across the Gilgit river, then down the left of that river for about 4 miles, until just short of its left confluence with the Hunza river, which is crossed by a very clumsy ferry-boat to the important settlement of Dainyor, as the map calls it, but which is more usually known as Dyor. There is very considerable cultivation in the doab formed by the junction of the two rivers, and many of the supplies of Gilgit come from this place.

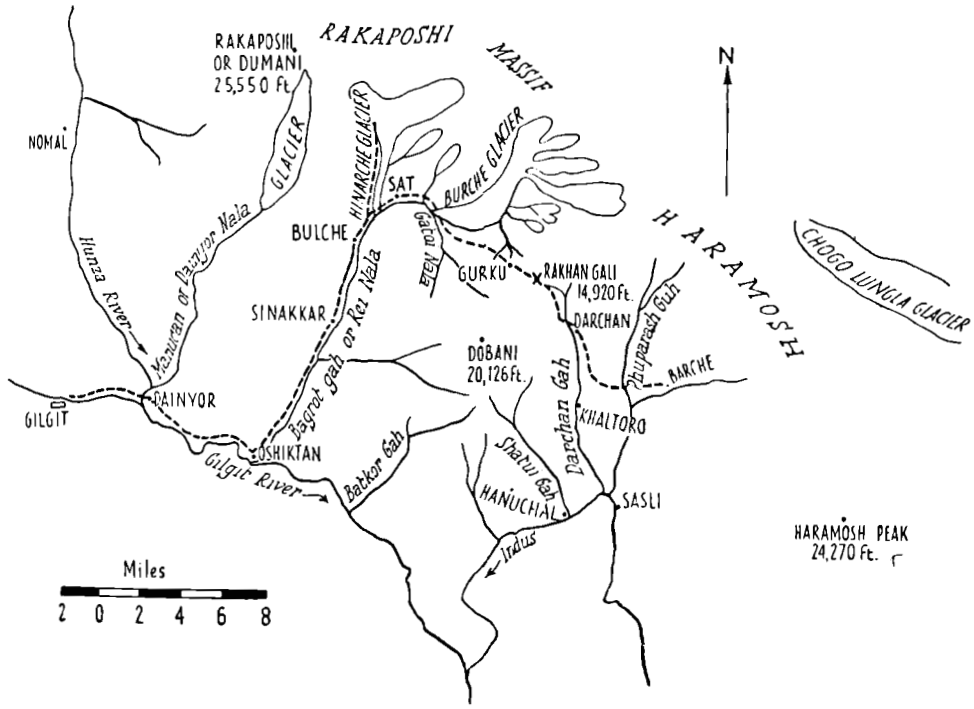
From Dyor a rather dreary and decidedly hot track leads down the left of the Gilgit river to the mouth of the Bagrot Nala, a most uninteresting spot too; but as so often happens in this country, one which entirely belies the true character of the nala. No one looking up the stony and dismal opening of this valley would ever believe that it contained so many hidden charms.

Immediately at the mouth of the Bagrot Nala is the Hunza 'colony' of Oshiktan, where the barren plain has been irrigated, ploughed for crops, and planted with fruit-trees, thanks to the industry of the settlers. There are few desert places that can resist the skill, tenacity, and perseverance of the men from Hunza, and the local food situation would show marked improvement if these splendid agriculturalists had been encouraged.

The path now left the main Gilgit valley, and turned up the Bagrot or Rei Nala, and at first was very rough and stony, as it wound up the steep ascent on the left. Although it was early September, the heat was intense. As a matter of fact this is nearly always a hot month, as on the weather depends the ripening of the second series of crops of the country. Indian corn in particular depends largely on the sun of September. We were black with sweat as we plodded along, and devoutly wished that we had made an earlier start. After passing a small hamlet we reached the village of Sinakkar, with fine cultivation which was the more remarkable as the land was irrigated from a spring, and a villager only had his share of water once in nine days. The grapes were ripe, and were a great consolation.

After Sinakkar, the valley opened up, and rapidly improved, and revealed its true alpine character. Next day we camped at Bulche, where the cultivation was considerable and very luxuriant, as well it might be, with the abundance of good water for irrigation.

Here the valley divided. The right arm, which descended due north, was occupied entirely by the Hinarche glacier. The left arm, which came down at first in a south-west direction, and then turned due west, held the Burche glacier. Both these ice-rivers flowed from the eastern part of the Rakaposhi or Dumani massif, of which the main peak, height 25,550 feet, was not visible as it was hidden by the minor right affluent of the Hinarche glacier.



From Bulche we ascended the latter glacier but with rather disappointing results. One of the objects of this climb was to examine the approach to the main peak, but we found that the actual distance by this route was too great, and devoid of any corresponding advantages. Another objection was that the climb itself to the summit would be stiffer and over worse rock than from the Dyor Nala, which certainly is the easiest line of attack. A local expert said that the only time for the climb to the top of Rakaposhi was the first fortnight in August. I am sure that this is too late. The reason he gave was that the wind was then almost negligible, and that the surface of the snow was just right. He had never been up, of course, and was merely giving his opinion as a result of living near the mountain and noting the conditions. I should say that his views were sound, on the whole.

The lower parts of the Hinarche glacier were wooded, and the cultivation extended a good way up, as there was abundant water from a minor glacier on the left.

From Bulche we intended to cross out of the Bagrot valley into the Darchan Gah, one of main nalas of Haramosh. The track from the village led up the right of the upper Bagrot valley, crossed the snout of the Hinarche, and came to the hamlet of Sat, where the coolies were changed.

From this, the last settlement, the path led over an old moraine with a good growth of juniper, and with fine pines near at hand on both sides. We then crossed the moraine of the Burche glacier. It was, on the whole, an easy march over a well-marked track; and turning south we arrived at a wide level plain, with forest on either side, and in every respect a delightful place. This was the summer grazing steading of Gargoi or Gurku—the exact name seemed to be unobtainable, and the map was silent. Here there were huts, and a large quantity of animals' droppings. Shortly after the tents were pitched heavy rain fell, with a good deal of thunder.

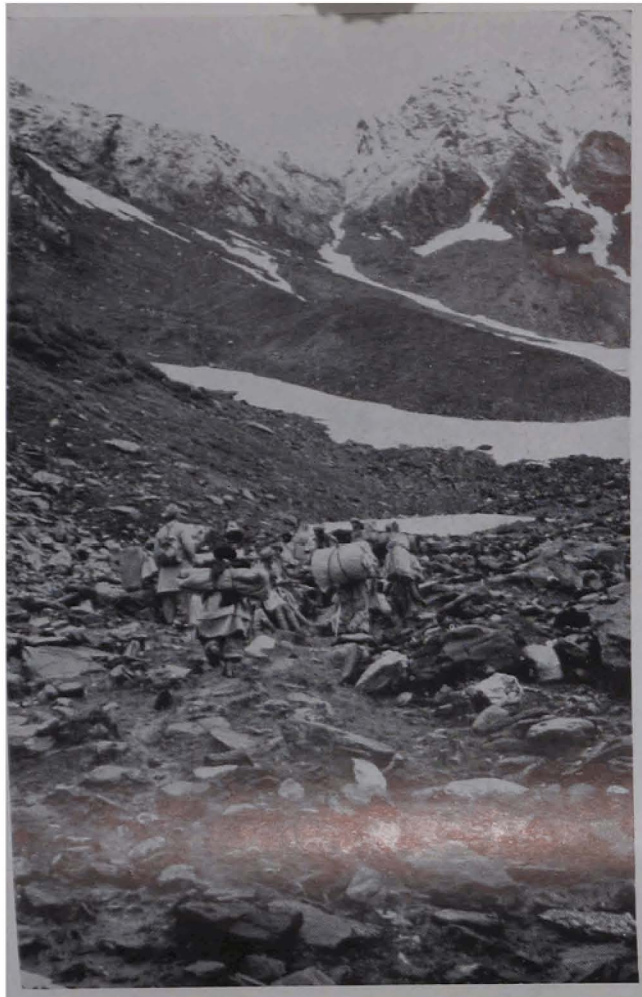
The entire day following, the weather was unsettled, and it was impossible to move. Fortunately the ground drained well, and the coolies were comfortably housed in the huts; but of course it was a sheer waste of time.

One of the main features of the Bagrot valley, and one which is to be seen from Gilgit, is the upstanding rocky summit of Dobani, with its twin peaks. It is true that the height is no more than 20,126 feet, which is nothing in these regions where a height of 25,000 feet is a common average for the greater mountains. That may be so, but mere height is not everything, even in the Karakoram, and Dobani is a lovely mountain, especially lovely as its pinnacles seem able to catch the rosy hues of dawn and dusk more adroitly than do its bigger neighbours.

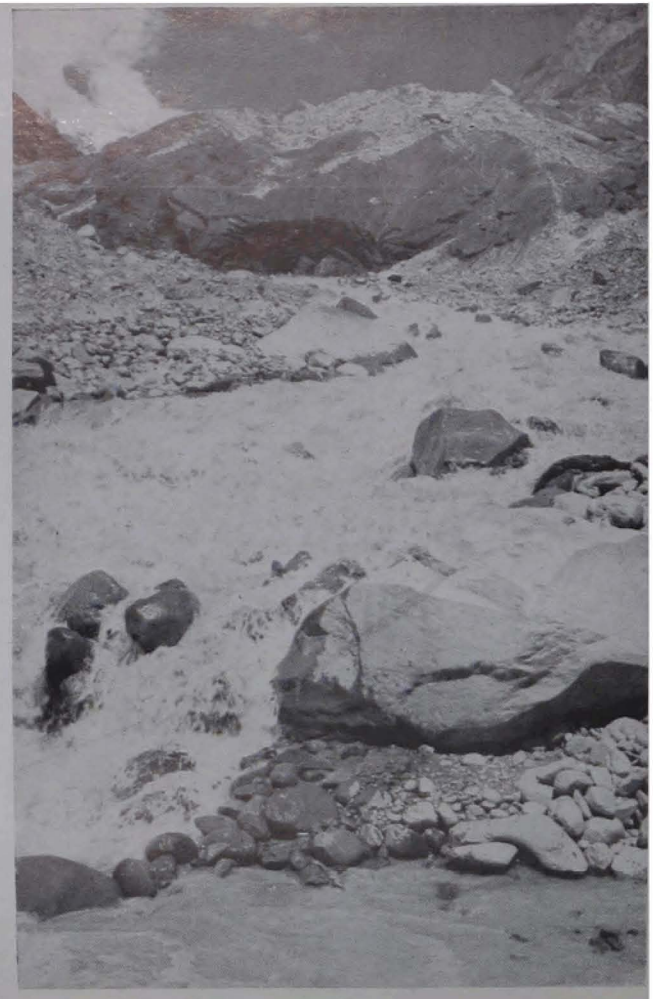
From Gurku, we ascended the right of the nala of the same name. At first for a mile, it was easy over grassy moraine, but it then became difficult and tiring over rock and scree. The weather too was poor, mist lay on the high hills, and the views suffered. There was some rain, as well as sleet, and there were snow scurries on the top, by no means normal weather for the 18th September. It took five hours to reach the summit of the pass, the Rakhan Gali, height 14,920 feet. The coolies were lightly laden, and went well, but the weather and the track were alike unfavourable, and delay was inevitable.

The descent was extremely steep on the far or Haramosh side of the pass, and in the reverse direction the climb would be very stiff. We went down and down, and it really seemed as though we should never stop. Immediately below us was the head of the Darchan Gah, a valley which flows directly into the Indus, a little above Sasli. The scenery was delightful. The stream flowed tranquilly through a grassy plain, while dense forests of pine clothed the mountains,

Looking up to Bagrot valley



Ascent to Rakhan Gali (pass) from the Bagrot side



Snout of the Hinarche glacier and torrent

and the contrast with the aridity and bleakness of the usual Karakoram scene was startling. We continued down this charming sylvan valley until we reached Darchan, the summer quarters of the people, whose village is Khaltoro, some six miles farther down. Here, 3½ hours after leaving the top of the pass, we camped by the stream where abundant fuel made us very comfortable. We found that there was little or no traffic over the pass, as the people prefer to go down the valley to the main road, and so to Gilgit.

R. F. C. SCHOMBERG.

(A note by the same author, on the Afdigar pass in Hunza, appeared in vol. xiii of the *Himalayan Journal.—Ed.*)

BANDARPUNCH II

(White Peak, 20,720 ft.)

Maps: No. 53 J, 53 J/NE, 53 J/SE.

A PARTY consisting of Sgt.-Major F. Hepburn, R.A.M.C., Warrant Officer H. Sergent, R.A., and Pte. R. D. Leakey, 2nd Bn. The Duke of Wellington's Regt., made, I think, the eighth recorded attempt to climb Bandarpunch mountain in Tehri Garhwal State. They left Chakrata on the 19th April 1946, and reached Nisani village, about 1,000 feet above the junction of the Jumna and the Hanuman Ganga or Bin-Gad, on the 23rd April.

The objective was to form a Base Camp on the tree-line at the upper reaches of the Bin-Gad with the purpose of climbing Bandarpunch II (White Peak), 20,720 feet, by the south-east ridge. There are three vague paths to this point from the Jumna. One is from Kharsali village going east across a ridge of hills, down to the source of the Bin-Gad, and on over the Bamser pass or Bam-Saru-Kal to the Bhagirathi ridge at Harsil. Another is from Nisani village along the 13,000-foot ridge separating the Bin-Gad valley from Dodi-Tal; and the third is directly up the Bin-Gad valley from Nisani village.

Owing to snow on the higher ground, the party were obliged to choose the route along the Bin-Gad. Rain and a conspiracy by the local guides resulted in the journey to the Base Camp taking 2½ days instead of the one day it should have taken. Good camping-places are on either side of some terrace gardens about 2 miles above Nisani village through a patch of forest. Beyond these gardens an inconspicuous path follows the Bin-Gad about 1,000 feet, up on the left bank, comes down to within a few hundred feet of the river after crossing a land-slide tributary bed, then climbs steadily, goes over a second tributary, and then up a steep gully in a high precipitous spur that crosses the valley at right angles. From here the path drops steadily down to the Bin-Gad at a point where there is (or was) a

tree-trunk bridge, and just across a convenient rock shelter or 'Gupta'. The track then closely follows the right bank through rhododendron and silver-birch scrub, coming out after some 4 miles in an open grassy valley at a place called Beebe.

A deserted shepherd's hut at the limit of the tree-line served as a Base Camp for the party's coolies, and Camp I was established on the snow-line on the left bank of the valley leading from the snow-fields south of Bandarpunch. Bad weather from then on caused very slow progress; and it was not until the 5th May that Camp V was established on the ridge on top of a piece of conspicuous glacier just before the ridge turns sharply upwards.

The next day, a gale from the north prevented climbing; and the last of the food and fuel was finished. On the 7th May the party started early for an attempt on the top. Progress up the ridge was easy enough, and snow conditions good. But at 14.30 hrs. there still appeared to be about 700 feet to go, and as there was a patch of step-cutting to be done, it was decided to abandon the attempt for fear of a night out on empty stomachs. The tent at Camp V was reached at dusk.

The accident

On the 8th, the party started down. Soon after leaving the ridge, a slope of ice thinly covered with snow had to be traversed diagonally downwards. It looked impossible for a slip by one of the party to be held by the others, and just below there were projecting rocks which were far enough down to be disastrous if a roped party fell and the rope got snagged. Someone recalled having heard of another climber having fallen without injury in this locality, and it was decided to proceed unroped in the hope that if a fall did occur, the victim would reach the snow gullies below without hitting a rock.

H. Sergent, the novice of the party, on his first climb, did fall. He shot off into space, disappeared from sight, and was next detected coming to rest in a snow gully about a thousand feet down.

One of the party managed to glissade to him in a matter of minutes. He was alive, but bleeding from sundry cuts and bruises, had a sprained back which prevented walking, and was suffering from slight concussion and shock. Conveniently near, however, was a flat rock on which a tent could be pitched, so he was put to bed.

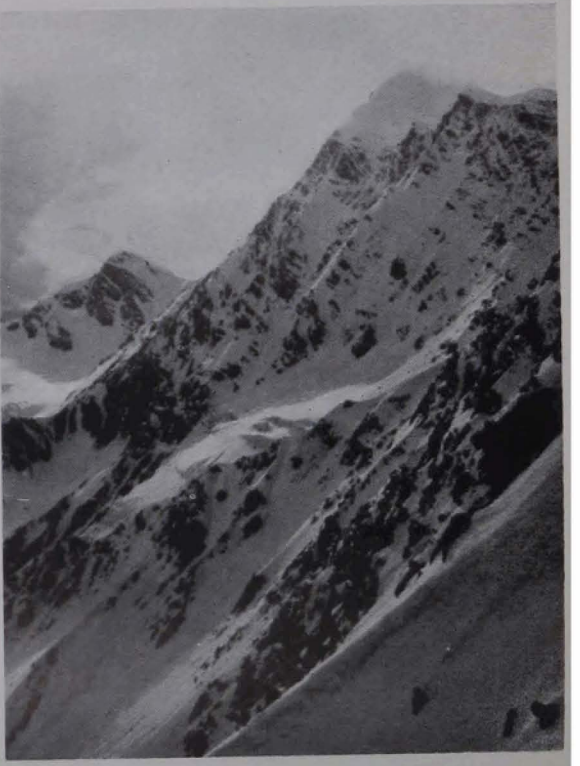
The coolies, in the meantime, had evacuated with all kit and food to Nisani village because (as they said later) they had run out of food and thought the climbers dead because they had overstayed their planned time on the mountain by some four days. The accident happened at about 12.30 hrs. on the 8th, but due to hail

Bandarpunch I (20,954 ft.) 'Black Peak' from Camp V with 10,930-ft. Peak right centre

South-east ridge of Bandarpunch II. The arrow marks site of Camp V on ridge. The two crosses mark the extent of H. Sergent's fall

Camp V and ridge up to Bandarpunch II (White Peak) (20,720 ft.). The limit of the 1946 climb is where marked 'X'

Bandarpunch III (20,020 ft.) from south-east ridge of Bp. II showing south spurs



Southern slopes of Bandarpunch III (20,020 ft.) taken from south-east ridge of Bandarpunch II

and sleet the member of the party who went for help did not get to Beebe until about 15.30 hrs. Finding no coolies he proceeded at once down the valley on a night march through the forest, and got to Nisani at dawn. He sent one party of coolies back at once, and followed himself with others at 11.30 hrs., reaching Beebe alone at 23.30 hrs. Then, after four hours' sleep, he climbed to the others, reaching them at 13.00 hrs. on the 10th, with their first food for four days—all this he did with frost-bitten toes.

The casualty was wrapped in a sleeping-bag and tent, and slid off the mountain; then carried back to Chakrata on a stretcher. He recovered with no ill effects. For the benefit of other climbers, there should now be quite a respectable track from Nisani to Beebe after all the energy that was spent cutting a way through the jungle for the stretcher; and a fit party might now reach Beebe from Chakrata in six days. It is not, however, advisable to take mules, because local coolies are expensive and not very co-operative, and the path is not muleable except on the Pilgrim Route up the Jumna, which is often blocked by land-slides.

As regards weather, on the way there and back it rained and hailed most afternoons, but usually cleared up at dusk (the 1946 monsoons arrived early?). On one occasion it snowed right down to about 10,000 feet, with nearly 3 inches at Beebe, but it all melted by midday. On occasions also, the mountains had fine weather when it appeared to be raining in the valleys and foot-hills. No avalanches were seen, and snow steps could be kicked in all but a few of the steeper south-facing patches.

The climb failed chiefly because of bad weather, the fact that the only food available was in heavy tins, and because the final camp should have been pitched higher, where there is a good place at about 19,700 feet. R. D. LEAKEY.

(A previous attempt by this member, in November 1946, appears in vol. xiii of the *Himalayan Journal*.—*Ed.*)

CHOMO YUMMO SEBU LA CHOMBU

IN October 1946, useful additions to previous knowledge of north-east Sikkim were made by an expedition led by T. H. Braham, who with J. H. Fleming and W. N. Phillips examined some of the outliers of Chomo Yummo. Leaving Thangu rest-house on the 16th October, and moving up the Tashuphu valley, with a view to trying Chumnakang, they ascended on the 17th to some 19,000 feet. Further progress was checked by difficult ice-falls, and next day heavy snow forced a retreat to the rest-house, where they were weather-bound for three days. On the 22nd October the party went up the Jha Chu

valley to the club hut in good weather. From here they reconnoitred the ridge running south from Kangchenjau to the Sebu La, but thigh-deep snow again made progress very difficult. On 25th October they traversed below the southern and western cliffs of Kangchenjau, a fairly easy route, and joined the Kangra La track near Lungma. On the 26th, an attempt on peak 20,320, north of Chomo Yummo, and locally known as Chumo Yapche Yapchung, was begun. After working up to a big snow-field at about 19,000 feet, the leader's badly worn boots forced a descent to camp. Next day Fleming and Phillips again attacked the peak and got to about 20,100 (within 300 feet of the summit), when waist-deep snow stopped them, and on the 28th the return journey from Thangu began. The party had the services of four Sherpas and were able to get supplies at reasonable prices as far as Thangu. There and at Donkung, mutton and also yaks' liver were procurable. The whole trip took four weeks from Calcutta.

Abridged from an account by T. H. BRAHAM.

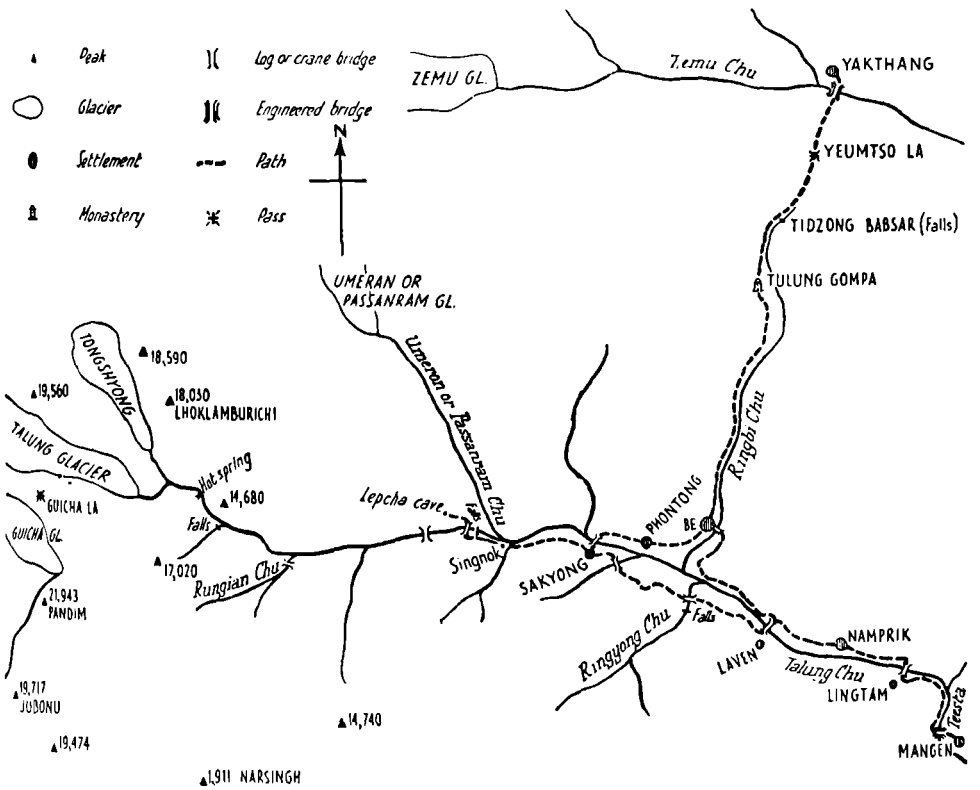
THE TALUNG VALLEY

THE material from which this account has been compiled comes from two sources, viz.: an excellent description by Sergeant J. R. Ewer of an expedition led by him in March–April 1945, and the writer's notes of his own experiences in 1920 and 1929.

Sergeant Ewer's party set out from the little bazaar at Mangen (on the Gangtok–Thangu bungalow route) where a path drops sharply to the wooden suspension bridge spanning the Teesta. A furlong beyond this bridge the path divides, the left fork leading up to Lingtam being steep and rocky. The right fork, well defined and fairly level, follows the right bank of the Teesta as far as its junction with the Talung where it turns up the latter to a cane bridge directly below Lingtam. Crossing to the left bank of the Talung and traversing the hill-side well above the river, the hamlet of Namprik is reached. This is convenient for a bivouac or shelter in a Lepcha hut, but an active party can well reach Be the same day. Just before entering Be the Ringbi Chu, coming down from Lama Anden, is crossed by a good cane bridge. From the hamlet, where a little foodstuff is sometimes obtainable, the Talung route climbs steeply to Phontong and then down to a rather shaky cane bridge across the Talung. Another stiff climb from the south side brings one to the charming little alp of Sakyong, where shelter can be had, and perhaps milk and eggs. The few inhabitants are shy but friendly. About three miles farther west is a little clearing known as Singnok, a pleasant camp site. From Singnok the going is very rough with

Kangchenjau from Jha Chu valley

steep ascents and descents as well as galleries and ladders. Several fine waterfalls delight the eye, and at one point the wild Talung foams through what is literally a slit between sheer precipices of some 500 feet. Throughout this march and the two successive marches, the dense rhododendron jungle imposes continuous and strenuous cutting with kukri, dah, and axe. Ewer's party crossed the Talung about six hours above Singnok by a low-level log bridge, to bivouac



at Lepcha Cave, recrossing to the right bank next day about three-quarters of a mile higher up. Numerous side torrents had to be negotiated on the way to the Rungian Chu. This, at all seasons a serious obstacle, rushes down to the Talung from the Pandim Jubonu snows, but there is plenty of timber for bridging. Ewer's party had to turn back, short of food, two, or perhaps three, marches below the Guicha La.

The same route in reverse had been taken by the late Harold Raeburn and the writer, in August 1920, when they attempted a reconnaissance of the Zemu gap. Ascending from Yoksam to the Guicha La by a high-level route via Aluktang (by-passing the normal Dzongri route), they dropped down to Tongshyongpertam. This was formerly a grazing-ground for upland sheep and was also visited by the Yoksam lamas. It is just far enough from the Talung saddle

for the frequent ice avalanches to miss it. But for lack of fuel, it is a good camp site. Half a mile down is the snout of the Talung glacier, and hard by, the confluence of the Tongshyong, descending from Zemu gap. From the Tongshyong, the route followed was through dense rhododendron above the right bank—very stiff going. We took five days from the Guicha La to Sakyong and two days on to Dikchu.

A most interesting alternative, or diversion, is from Be, up the Ringbi Chu to the Tulung Gompa, Yeumtso La (more often called the Keshung La), and the Zemu. The writer returned by this route from Paul Bauer's base camp in 1929 and found the track in very fair condition. These uplands are much used by sheep and yak herds. At the remote Tulung monastery, the Sikkim crown jewels were formerly kept in times of danger to the State. The 'Abbot' is also responsible for keeping up the bridges in his 'diocese'. A little north of the Tulung Gompa, the Ringbi Chu, fed by the snows of Lama Anden and Siniolchu, plunges over a 400-foot cliff in an unspeakably beautiful waterfall. Its Lepcha name is Tidzong Babsar. From Yakthang on the Zemu, by the Yeumtso and Be to Dikchu took me four days.

A claim has been made that by the Talung route less time is taken to reach the 'more accessible part of the Narsing Jubonu–Pandim cirque' than by the normal Dzongri route, but the difficulties of getting loaded porters through the tangled rhododendron jungle seem to have been ignored. The Talung has also been suggested as a quick 'get-away' from the Simvu–Siniolchu massif.

Well—in 1931, two members of Paul Bauer's second expedition, Allwein and Pircher, tried it and only just got through, and in September 1936 it took Karl Wien, one of Bauer's best men, with three Sherpas, sixteen days to get from the Simvu saddle down to Mangen.

A final caution about this interesting valley: its name, Talung, signifies in the Lepcha tongue 'Rock avalanche'. *Verb. sap.*

The precarious-looking cane bridges might well be marked, as in the Tyrol, *Nur für die Schwindelfrei.* EDITOR.

SEBU LA

T. ELIOT WEIL of the American Embassy, New Delhi, sends an account of a trek made over the Sebu La in September 1946, and two photos reproduced here show Kangchenjau and Chombu with the club hut on the Jha Chu in the foreground. He reports the hut in good order, and warmly thanks the Himalayan Club, His High-

ness of Sikkim, and his Durbar for their assistance and hospitality. The following extract from his letter may be useful to intending visitors to north-east Sikkim:

'Having been told that landslides on the route to Sebu La would make it impossible to take pack animals, we set out on the 18th with twelve porters (including two to carry the coolies' rations), a sirdar-cook and his assistant, and a syce. Two trekkers who really wished to travel light and depend largely on local supplies of eggs, fruit, vegetables, and mutton, could manage the trip with half the number of coolies, but we had a considerable quantity of bulky stores such as tinned fruit and vegetables. While some supplies are available in Gangtok, it is advisable to bring along most of one's stores and gear, including waterproof sheets to cover the coolies' packs.'

IN MEMORIAM

MRS. A. E. BROWNE

I CANNOT claim to have known Mrs. Browne for long, or to be in any way qualified to write an obituary notice of her. But I take willingly this opportunity of recalling her friendship to my own mind, and of giving expression to the sorrow that many mountaineers will feel on hearing of her death.

The Himalayan Club has lost, without doubt, one of its very staunchest supports. She was its perfect local representative. The first time that I arrived in Ranikhet, hot and worried in the summer of 1943, it was pure joy and relief to be greeted by her untroubled smile, to be assured that the coolies were ready, and that the bus would turn up on time. She had done the same service for many others. For them, too, she had arranged stores and suggested routes; to them, too, it had been a pleasure always to be remembered, when they arrived travel-dusty before her bungalow, to talk for an hour over tea and 'bikkies' of the climbs done and the old days of Smythe and Shipton, Kamet and Nanda Devi.

Mrs. Browne did very much more than help us, as it behoved a local secretary to do; and more even than take a close personal interest in our deeds and difficulties. She was, in her own province, foremost in the fight to protect the Dhotials; for she was one of those who could not endure that the 'corruption' of the plains should pervert the simple and lovable hill peoples too. She did not want the Dhotials' pay to be increased. No, but neither would she have a part of it go to the coolie contractor who, she said, sat in the market-place and did nothing but eat the money. Through her interest in the welfare of the Dhotials and her work among the inhabitants of Ranikhet she was a most real benefactress. She worked hard and she worked her durzi working-parties hard. And they were glad of her. I think that she would have stood out like a rock above the confusion to which India may be doomed. But it must have pained her.

I am sadly aware of the inadequacy of this notice. Its only excuse is that it had to be written at speed, for a Journal about to go to press. Its only merit will lie in the expression of affection for 'Brownie' which is very deep in the hearts of a number of us. She stood in some sense as the symbol of comfort, when we lifted our eyes from the weary plain up to the hills.

C. W. F. N.

SIR CHARLES STEVENSON-MOORE, who was killed while mountaineering alone near Montreux at the age of 81, had a long and distinguished career in Bengal, where he served for the full period of thirty-five years admissible to a member of the Indian Civil Service. Known throughout the services in Bengal as 'Stuffy' Moore, the nickname was merely a convenient and affectionate abbreviation, for there was nothing in the least bit 'stuffy' about him. Invariably calm and dignified he was yet accessible to all. A keen and competent sportsman, mountaineering was his joy, and it is fitting that his life should be brought to a close among the surroundings he loved so well. He will long be remembered by the older generation of government servants in Bengal. In addition to being a member of the Alpine and Alpine Ski Clubs, he was a keen supporter of the late Mountain Club of India and the Himalayan Club in their earlier days.

WILLIAM ERNEST BUCHANAN, who died in October 1946, was a founder member of the Club. He was for thirty years water and drainage engineer to the Simla Municipality. He was a hill-walker of outstanding endurance, and a water-colour artist of great ability.

THE late Brigadier-General Theodore Roosevelt was recommended by General Eisenhower for promotion to the rank of Major-General, but died before he received his new command.

In 1925 he was a member of the Roosevelt–Simpson Expedition in Central Asia. In this expedition he was accompanied by Kermit Roosevelt, George Cherry, and myself. He left Kashmir for Turkestan via the Leh Karakoram route and proceeded to the Tien Shan mountains, returning via the Russian Pamirs and the Gilgit Hunza route. This expedition was for the Chicago Field Museum and the collection was as follows: bhurrel from Ladakh; gazelle from the Turkestan plains; *Ovis Karelini*, ibex, bear (2 species), and wapiti from the Tien Shan; *Ovis Poli* from the Pamirs.

In 1928–9 General Roosevelt was a member of the Kelly–Roosevelt Expedition with myself. The party left Bhamo in Upper Burma and travelled via Dali Fu, the Muli country, to Tatsienlou, and proceeded to Indo-China. In this expedition sambur and giant panda were collected. The giant panda was the first of this species ever collected up to that time. SNYDON CUTTING.

NOTES

Everest

There seems to be little prospect of obtaining from the Tibetan Government in the near future, and at any rate during the present minority régime, permission to send another expedition to Everest. The young Dalai Lama will not come of age for another five years, and in addition certain 'unlucky years' have to be taken into consideration. This always happens in connexion with important events in the life of every Tibetan, and, of course, still more so in that of the spiritual and temporal head of the State. It must be realized also that it was never easy to get permission in the past, and there is little reason to think that a request through the new Government of India would be favourably considered by the Regency Council. Further, the nature of future relations between Tibet, Bhutan, Hindustan, and Pakistan seems at the moment of writing to be far from definite. This should, however, be clearer before very long. But in the circumstances which at present exist, it might be worth while to try to enlist the good offices of our allies of Nepal. The Nepal Durbar has had for many years friendly and more intimate connexions with Tibet than did the late Government of India; though Nepal would, we think, almost certainly hesitate to urge on the Regency Council the grant to a British, or indeed to any, expedition of access to Everest by the Rongbuk glacier and of local facilities. But now that we no longer control India, the long-standing opposition of Nepal to the passage through the country of Europeans might conceivably be modified, and permission, even facilities, might be given to examine, with a view to eventual use, the little-known southern approaches. Editor.

Note on the Sherpa Porters

Even people who know Darjeeling and the Sherpa porters well sometimes ask how these men, who have played such a large part in Himalayan climbing, first came to be employed on mountaineering expeditions.

In 1939 I set myself to find out. Angtemba, an elderly porter, who had climbed with Dr. Kellas before the First World War, brought an old Tibetan Sirdar, Tenzing Wangdi, to see me, saying that he remembered much about the early days of climbing and exploration in Sikkim and Tibet.

The enormous bundle of 'chits', wrapped in a silk handkerchief,

which Wangdi produced, showed that he had plenty of material to remember.

He was, in 1939, about 70. As a boy his father had brought him on a trading journey from Tibet, to sell musk in Darjeeling. On the return journey they were robbed, so they turned back to Darjeeling, and worked on the Phalut track, which was then being made. They became useful as interpreters, and settled in Darjeeling.

According to Tenzing Wangdi, the first Sherpas came to Darjeeling about 1902 or 1903. They came to trade, and, finding they could earn good wages, they stayed through the summer season. One of them was called Norbhu Jhau, 'The Bearded Man'. This fact would be likely to fix itself in the memory, as it is rare to see anyone of Tibetan blood with a beard. The other man's name was Choktuk.

With their earnings they bought themselves fine clothes and many other things. (I wish I could reproduce Wangdi Norbhu's flowery Hindustani and wealth of gesture, as he told his stories.)

When Norbhu Jhau and Choktuk drew near their home in Sola Khombu in Nepal, the people left their work and ran from their fields to see who these two grandly dressed strangers could be.

Their account of Darjeeling fired several of their fellow countrymen to follow their example. The following year the original two and half a dozen more journeyed to Darjeeling to work as coolies and rickshaw-wallahs, and so it has gone on ever since.

I have not been able to trace with any exactitude when the Sherpas were first used for mountaineering work, but I am fairly well convinced that it was Dr. Kellas, who did so much climbing in Sikkim and other parts of the Himalaya, from 1907 till 1914, who first discovered their excellent qualities as mountain porters.

On page 296 of his book *Himalayan Wanderer* General Bruce says: 'I put down very largely the success of the Sherpa and Bhotia porters whom we used so much on Everest, and who have been used on other expeditions, to the splendid training they had under Dr. Kellas, and the confidence they thus obtained.'

There certainly were at least two Sherpa porters in Darjeeling in 1939 who had climbed a great deal with Dr. Kellas, and it seems probable that some of these men were the nucleus of the Sherpas who were on the Everest Expedition of 1921, on which Dr. Kellas died.

On the 1933 Everest Expedition, Nima Dorji and Sonam Tobgye went through the winter snows to Sola Khombu to fetch porters to Darjeeling. Later, during the march through Tibet, Nima was sent ahead to Sola Khombu to recruit more men for work on the mountain. He brought up forty-six, and this method proved so satisfactory that it has been followed several times since.

Sola Khombu is a district in Nepal. It lies at the head of the Dudh Kosi valley, at an altitude of about 13,000 feet, near the southern slopes of Mount Everest. The Nangpa La, 19,000 feet, leads from the top of the valley on to the Tibetan highlands, and since this is the route by which the Sherpas trade with Tibet, they are accustomed from early youth to carrying loads at great altitude.

The Sherpas came from eastern Tibet and settled in Nepal several generations ago. In appearance and language they are Tibetan, though Tibetans say they speak with a strong Nepali accent.

On the Himalayan Club register there are about an equal number of Sherpas and Bhotias, or true Tibetans. Both nationalities have distinguished themselves on mountaineering expeditions, and it would be impossible to say that one has outdone the other.

JOAN TOWNEND.

NOTE ON THE PRESENT WHEREABOUTS AND OCCUPATION OF SOME OF THE SHERPA AND BHOTIA PORTERS

THE following notes were sent by the Hon. Secretary, Darjeeling, as it was thought that members might be interested to know what some of the porters have done since 1940 and what they are doing now.

Angtharkay. H.C. No. 19. Living in Bhutia Busti, Darjeeling. Working as trek organizer. Very helpful and efficient. Prefers not to go above 18,000 feet now.

Angtsering I. H.C. No. 36. Living in TungSung Busti, working as Sirdar. Can no longer do high climbing owing to the loss of most of his toes on Nanga Parbat.

Angtsering II. H.C. No. 51 (Pansy). Still working. Chiefly employed on treks by Mr. Kydd.

Angbao. H.C. No. 43. Was Mess Cook in the 1/10 Gurkhas. Served in Burma and Singapore.

Lewa. H.C. No. 46. Was working as a house cook in Jalapahar in 1946. No news of him recently.

Manbahadur Sherpa. H.C. No. 132. Address 'Majong Koti', Gangtok. Working as Sirdar. Would be glad of work organizing treks. Served with the 1/2 Gurkhas as a grade I orderly and was with the 8th Army in Greece, North Africa, Italy, &c.

Mingma Thu Thu (Alice). H.C. No. 7. Was in Assam during the war, helping with recruiting. Is still working in Darjeeling.

Pasang Dawa. H.C. No. 139. Working as Sirdar in Darjeeling and glad to have work.

Wangdi Norbhu (Ongdi). H.C. No. 25. Is still working in Darjeeling. Was in Burma during the war doing some civilian job.

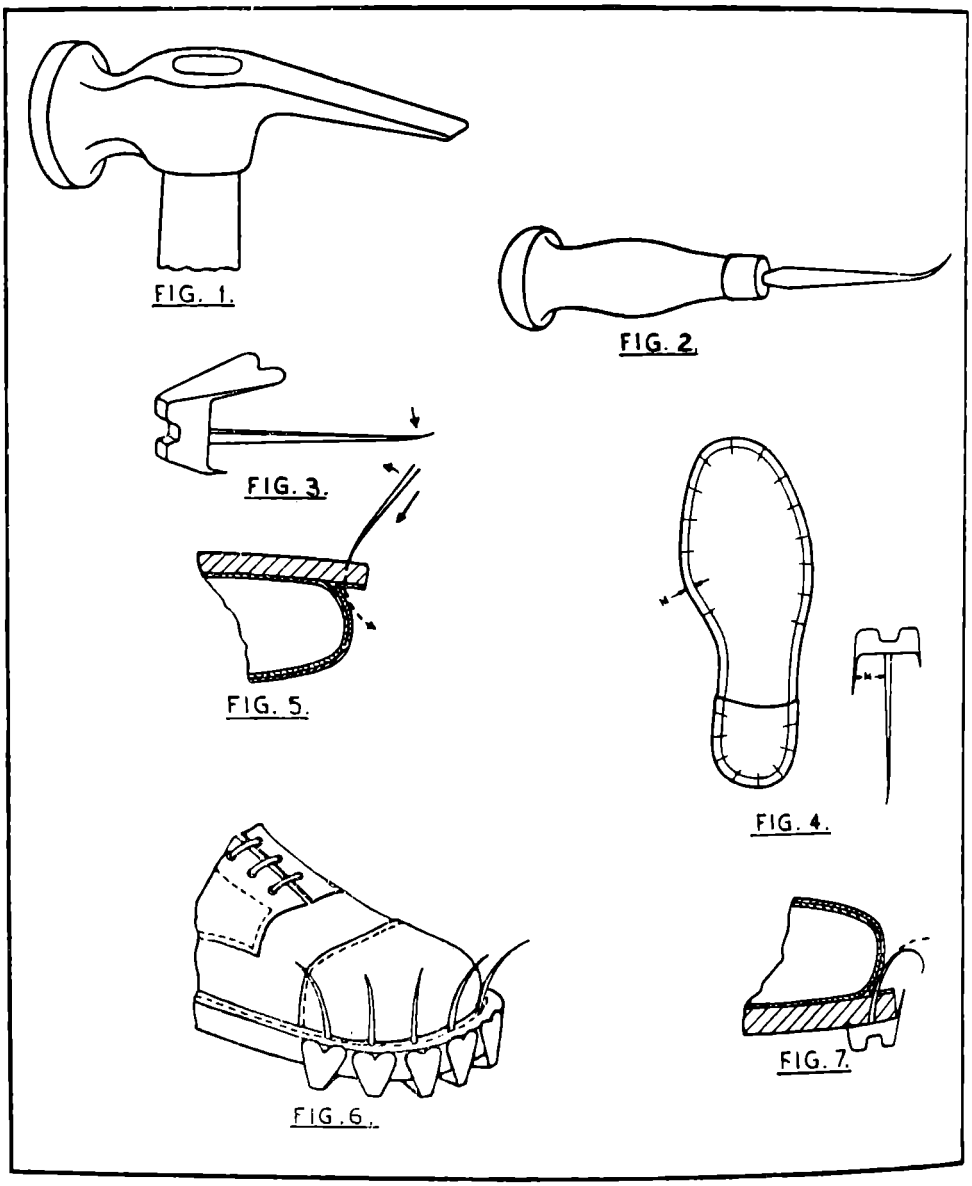
Hints on Nailing and Oiling of Boots

The climber who is planning a visit to the Himalaya is often faced with the necessity for having boots nailed in India by an inexperienced bootmaker or even nailing them himself. Similarly in the Base Camp he may have to rely on his own resources when replacing worn or dislodged nails. The correct nailing of boots is not difficult if tackled in the right way but, if undertaken the wrong way, considerable damage can be done to both a good pair of boots and an expensive set of nails. This applies particularly to nails of the clinker type. The following notes may be of help to those who have to undertake their own nailing.

Tools required: An iron last is practically essential, though with difficulty the head of a piton hammer or an ice-axe can be used. A cobbler's hammer (with a cross-pane, see fig. 1) is desirable, but a piton hammer will serve very well. The only other tools required are a bent auger and a pair of side-cutting nippers. If an auger (fig. 2) is not available, clinkers can be driven in without, but this requires a very practised hand and should not be attempted. Therefore, on an important climb, take to the Base Camp at least an auger; any good cobbler can supply one at a cost of about 8 annas. Nippers are used for removing a nail which is going in crooked, but if necessary the nail can be levered out with the pick end of an ice-axe.

Ring-clinkers: The most important part is the spike which, like the rest of the clinker, must be soft (i.e. not brittle) and quite straight. If any nails are crooked the complete set must be checked and hammered straight. This done each nail must be given a very, very slight bend $\frac{1}{8}$ inch from the tip of the spike (shown by the arrow in fig. 3). This bend must be so slight as to be almost imperceptible (about 10°) and must be towards the outer edge of the boot when held in the position for nailing.

The boot should be placed on the last and marked out for nailing with a pencil, see fig. 4. Lines A.A. should be marked radially to show where the nails are required. Line B should then be drawn round the sole leaving a margin M which must not be less than the corresponding dimension M of the nail. Auger holes should then be made as follows: Hold the auger sloping well outwards so that the tip enters at right angles to the surface of the sole, and push it in firmly so as to make a curved hole by bringing the auger up to the vertical as the tip goes in, see fig. 5. It is not necessary to push the point right through the welt, but this may be advisable for the first hole in order to see that the tip is emerging close to the edge of the upper, as shown by the dotted arrow.



Method of Nailing Boots.

It is of fundamental importance that the spikes of the nails shall come through close to and even *pressing* against the 'upper'. The appearance of a correctly nailed boot before the spikes are turned over should be as shown in fig. 6. Before inserting each nail, see that it is the right way round and test by pressure on the sole that the edge of the last is jammed against the side of the boot and in contact with the portion of the sole where the maximum support is required. Effective support at the right point makes all the difference between a nail which goes in without any difficulty and one which requires repeated hammering. If three blows are not sufficient to drive the nail firmly home, then there is something wrong with the position of the boot on the last. The nails must be held with the bent tip of the spike at right angles to the sole, then, as it goes in, the spike will follow the lead of the tip and come through having followed the curve of the hole.

Having inserted some or all of the clinkers the next job is to bend each spike in under the wings of the clinker so as to hold the welt in a vice-like grip, without leaving a sharp exposed spike. If the spike is too long, it should be cut shorter with the nippers so that it projects the right amount for bending in under the wings, about 1 to 1¼ inches is sufficient.

Then, either with the nippers or with light blows of the hammer, increase the curvature of the spike, see fig. 7. Note that when hammering the nail the head *must* be supported, otherwise it may become loose in the sole. Gently hammer the spike so that the tip digs into the leather on the outer edge of the sole and under the wings of the nail, then hammer the wings flush with the edge of the sole. Finally clinch the nail by reversing the boot, so that the curved spike rests on the edge of the last, and giving the head of the nail a shrewd blow. Properly fixed, a single nail should stand the whole weight of the climber on a ledge without shifting.

When putting clinkers into the heel, it is not necessary, though preferable, to bring the spikes out at the sides, but beware of the spikes getting crumpled up against nails which will have been put in during manufacture of the boot. A preliminary hole made to a depth of ¼ inch with the auger will guide the clinker and disclose obstacles in the leather.

Tricounis, and all other types of nail which fix flat on the sole, are much easier to put in, but the position of the complete set should be marked out beforehand if they are to be used to the best advantage. When fixing these nails it is preferable to drive the spikes and any extra brads straight into the leather without previously making a hole, because this ensures the maximum grip. A hard dry sole can be moistened with water to help the nail in. If there is difficulty in

getting a nail started, small punctures, not more than $\frac{1}{16}$ inch deep, may be made in the surface of the leather at points which can be marked on it by first holding the nail in position and giving it a light blow to show exactly where the punctures are required. Small brads can be put in easily if held in position with the points of the nippers.

Arrangement of nails: There are innumerable ways of nailing a boot, but it is as well to remember when nailing boots that crampons may be fitted later, and to see that there are no awkwardly fitted nails to interfere with the crampons. Crampons should be adjusted to fit by careful hammering to suit the ready-nailed boots and, if necessary, should be altered by a competent blacksmith. The nailed sole of the boot should fit tightly all round inside the crampon and rest evenly on it. The crampon should be no larger than can be fitted on the boot and the spikes must all project parallel and in line with the weight of the climber. No spike should project beyond the edges of the sole, in fact they should all be contained within a line corresponding to the outline of the 'upper'. Thus fitted, crampons do not have to be tightly strapped on, thereby minimizing risks of frost-bite, and they will give a great feeling of security on a slope.

Oiling: It is not advisable to take very old boots on a snow climb because leather which is four or five years old is likely to be spongy and to contain cracks which will cause it to absorb a considerable quantity of water, and requires a lot of oiling which is undesirable. Old leather does not hold oil or grease well, soon absorbs water, and is particularly liable to freeze hard during the night so that it has to be thawed out in the morning before the boots can be put on. Good new leather, lightly greased, is better in this respect and reduces risk of frost-bite.

In oiling boots it is preferable to avoid fluid oils of any kind because they are too penetrating and do not last for any length of time; light greases and fats are better. Boots should not be over-oiled, because thereby the uppers will be made too soft and nails rendered liable to come loose, and what is gained by reduction in wetting is lost by perspiration of the foot. Coco-nut and other cheap oils are capable in time of rotting the stitching. Vaseline and mineral greases are also not recommended. The best grease for general use is natural animal dubbin, obtainable from some bootmakers.

If a journey is expected to be very wet underfoot, the following procedure will be found very effective. Purchase 3 lb. of crude mutton fat, and melt out the fat in a biscuit tin over a slow fire; at the same time warm the boots (the soles of which must be absolutely dry). Then apply with a paint-brush, or a piece of rag tied tightly

round the end of a stick. Allow the leather to go on soaking up the fat, by holding it at intervals near the fire to keep the fat fluid, but do not saturate the leather completely. Apply the same treatment to the welts and sides of the uppers. Three or four coats well soaked in should be ample and will keep the boot reasonably free from water for several days of very wet conditions. Do not expect climbing boots to be completely waterproof for long periods. Climbers often demand, and bootmakers often unwisely offer, boots which are supposed to be waterproof and turn out afterwards to be little better than ordinary good leather boots. There is no such thing as an entirely waterproof climbing-boot, nor would one be desirable.

C. R. Cooke.

Kagan Valley

Browsing through old numbers of the *Himalayan Journal*, I was most interested by J. B. P. Angwin's account of the Kagan valley in 1926, in vol. ii. I did a trip up this valley in June 1942, and it is interesting to note the different impressions given to Angwin and myself by the Safr Maluk Sar (incidentally, I found some diversity of opinion amongst locals as to the name, just as Angwin did, though by 1942 'Safr Maluk Sar' or 'Saif-ul-Maluk Sar' seemed to be fairly widely recognized). The lake seemed to me to be one of striking beauty, with its great length of pure blue water, with snowy peaks rising direct out of the shaded side, while the north side, where I sat, was fresh green pasture rising to snow some hundreds of feet higher. Further, I was treated to no stone-avalanches. The locals assured me that the lake used to be considerably larger, but that part of the mountain had fallen either into or away from the exit (I forget which), and had reduced the size. Did the landslip foretold by Angwin actually occur between 1926 and 1942, and if so, is this the reason that the stone-avalanches have ceased?

I heard also a slightly different version of the story of the fairy: I was told that the fairy was the wife of a demon who kept her on the southern bank of the lake in a cave, whence she used to come down to the water every day to bathe. One day her bath was watched by a mortal, and the demon, discovering this, was so incensed that he banished his wife to the bottom of the lake.

Another tale of the lake I was told was that a very worthy fakir who had stopped for a drink dropped his stick into the water where it immediately sank and was lost. Deeply regretting the loss of a fine stick, his companion of many wanderings, the fakir made his way down towards Abbottabad, and while he was on his way from Kakul to Nawanshahr he stopped for a drink at a spring. While he was drinking, what should come out of the water into his hand but

his stick, doubtless much purified by being filtered through three-quarters of the length of the Hazara District! Impressed by the omen, the fakir started building the mosque that is now such a feature of Nawanshahr.

A. H. DONALD.

MANGAL SINGH, KUMAONI

HE was one of those men who achieve dignity by a quiet competence of which all but they are aware. He came to our hospital with a severe head injury with which he was for long a very sick man. I knew him only when he was very much fitter and itching to use his sturdy body again, and it was then that he would offer to do any of those jobs which have to be done but which no one had time to do. He became a general favourite and a most devoted helper; he would do a succession of odd jobs during the day, and when need arose, as it too often did, sit up with men who were as sick as he had so recently been.

To talk with the Indian sepoy about his home country is the surest way to gain his comradeship, and as Mangal Singh had the broad, open features of the Hillman, I felt on safe ground. He told me he was a Kumaoni, from the land that lies to the west of Nepal and at the feet of Trisul and Nanda Devi. As he spoke, his *paharia* dialect became more pronounced and his years in the Army were forgotten.

Did I know Ranikhet?—Yes, well that was almost British. Almora?—that too. Then he hesitated; he could not expect the likes of me to have gone farther than that. So I carried on: You must know Bageshwar with its ancient temple by the rushing Sarju?—Did he know it! His eyes lit up as he told me of his visits there on the great market days, when wool and borax and carpets from Tibet are bartered for wheat and cloth and trinkets from the plains. And Loharkhet, a day's march thence up the valley? His expression was of one who hears but cannot bring himself to believe.

His own village was but a dozen miles farther on, high above the Sarju, and not far from the glacial Kaphini river. But his local knowledge was not limited to the village and the valley track to Bageshwar. He used to take his father's sheep to pasture and this led him far afield, for he had to choose out the rare patches that were bare of forest, snow, or rock. Sometimes he would cross the great Dhakuri ridge to the valley of the Pindar, and pasture his sheep on the lovely flower-studded alps above Khati. There at night he had to be watchful for the brown Himalayan bear. Sometimes he would take his flock to the head of the valley, where after the monsoon the snows retreat to the foot of the Pindari glacier,

leaving a carpet of surprising green. Here at Martoli—the place of this seasonal habitation—I had once spent a most perfect night in a cave, with the moonlight glistening on Nanda Kot far above.

He told me how by day he would beguile his lonely time by playing on a bamboo flute; and I recalled vividly the joy I had had in hearing the simple rippling melodies, played nearby or afar on an unseen shepherd's pipe. It reminded me how in Bageshwar two of us had tried to buy such a *murli*, to make sorry imitation in the plains of this pure mountain music. No sooner had we made a few inquiries than from a dozen stalls in the bazaar we heard tentative notes on flutes that might satisfy our desire—treble and tenor, descant and bass, flutes single with pure and rippling notes, flutes double with drone and chanter in occasional harmony. These they came and played to us where we sat by one of the stalls; but none was what we wanted, none recaptured the shepherd's trilling. Was it that the dalesman was inexpert, or that the spirit of the place was absent? We left early next morning and at the bridge beyond the town were greeted by a lad with a *murli*, playing merrily a dozen melodies in as many minutes. Place and player did not fail us, and we bought our pipe. This I recalled and envied Mangal Singh his days of idle fluting.

He told us how by night he would build a fire and two or three of them would watch around it. If they were up near the glacier, wood had to be brought from below the tree-line, and one went back to collect the highest-growing wood, which is dwarf rhododendron. I remembered the fire we had made outside our cave, the rum-coffee we had brewed and the yarns before we turned in; and I thought how remote from us now was this slow tempo of life to which he would some time return. All this we had in common—the love of mountains and the silence of high places—and it transcended the horror of war in the Burma jungle.

Next day I brought him some photos I had taken in those parts. If he had seemed incredulous when I had told him names he thought no one could know of, he was now stupefied; overcome even to tears. I suppose it was the first time he had seen a picture of things and places he knew.

I have great affection for Mangal Singh; as I knew him, a stout-hearted soldier, unconscious of his worth; and as he was in his own country, a stout-hearted fellsman who loved the mountains among which he was born and lived. P. E. THOMPSON.

WHEN MEN AND MOUNTAINS MEET. By H. W. TILMAN. *Cambridge University Press.* 15*s.*

Tilman's pre-war mountain past is familiar to every reader of this *Journal*, but many of us encounter Tilman the soldier for the first time in *When Men and Mountains Meet.* In the opening part of the book we find him in his familiar Himalayan setting, in the second half at war. Some readers may differ from the reviewer's opinion that the latter is the more enthralling story, but there will be general agreement that by comparison each story heightens the interest of the other. For most men the war brought complete change, not only in their normal setting but also in their outlook. Tilman passed from peace to war as easily and with as great success as in earlier years he had moved along the kaleidoscopic setting of his living in Africa, Europe, and the Himalaya.

Tilman takes us first to Assam and then to Zemu gap. In 1939 he declined Eric Shipton's invitation for a lengthy Karakoram expedition, feeling himself, as an officer on the Reserve, unjustified in spending so long away from Europe when he believed war to be inevitable. So he went alone to Assam for a briefer visit. He experienced one difficulty in organization—that of scientific work. Scientists, whether armed with photo-theodolites, plane-tables, or glacier-drills, had hitherto been the frequent objects of his dry humour. They had been excellent butts. Now their absence left no alternative but to admit their importance and, in his own words, 'I decided, therefore, to modify my high principles and attempt a modest survey with one of Mummery's abominations, a plane-table.' And but for ill luck—malaria—which largely wrecked the expedition, he would no doubt have returned to India with a map that would have evoked the admiration of the 'theodoliters'. Most men would have had enough for the season, but Tilman is a glutton for mountains, and he set off again, first failing, then finally succeeding, in reaching Zemu gap. Apart from the adventure itself, the most notable product of the journey was, perhaps, an 'Abominable Snowman' in *boots*. *Homo Tilmanensis* surely!

Then came war. One hundred and fifty pages tell a story which one could happily read in three times that length. He dismisses the first phase of the war in Europe in four words, 'After returning from Dunkirk', and carries us quickly to Iraq with some light happy campaigning, a few climbs, and perhaps the happiest reminiscing of past enjoyment that has ever come from his pen.

Then the Western Desert where he notes regretfully 'there are no mountains'. He entered the North African campaign in the black days in front of Mersa Matruh and carried on, almost always in action, until his personal, though not entirely private, victory celebration with coloured Very lights at Zaghouan.

The independent life of a Battery Commander suited Tilman ideally. But good officers find themselves translated to higher places, and if he were to avoid a more senior and less mobile appointment active steps were necessary. He took them and all that had gone before was reduced to the level of a prologue as he parachuted into Albania. No review can give an adequate picture of his experience among the partisans, first in Albania and then in northern Italy, or of the vividness with which he tells the story. Never has his persistent understatement defied its purpose so completely—the modest recounting of arduous exploits carefully planned and executed is more telling than chapters of fine writing could have been. And there is humour too, much of it, though sometimes grim.

One's mind goes back to the pre-war Tilman, who, as some thought, carried light travel beyond all logical bounds. Northern Italy, where the R.A.F. kept him waiting four winter months in hostile territory for his equipment, leaves us feeling how perfectly his pre-war activities had fitted him for this important mission.

In his final chapter Tilman allows himself a brief interlude of seriousness. He writes with sympathy yet detachment of the partisans, praising not only the greatness of their courage but also the greatness of their contribution to the Allied victory. These final pages show other things too. Unconsciously Tilman reveals the extent of his own contribution to the partisan success and the extent to which he was actuated by motives similar to theirs.

We put the book down wishing that it had been considerably longer and wishing also that the publisher's contribution had been of the same standard as the author's. Even present difficulties do not excuse either the poor reproduction of the photographs or the inferior layout. The wrapper too is completely unworthy of the book, being ugly in colour and sticky to the hands.

R. Scott Russell.

MOUNTAIN PROSPECT. By R. Scott Russell, Foreword by Geoffrey Winthrop Young. *London: Chatto & Windus*, 1946. *Pp.* xvi *and* 248; 46 *illustrations and* 7 *sketch-maps.* 18*s.*

Scott Russell was with Eric Shipton's party in the Karakoram when the late war broke out. Despite prompt and continued efforts he was unable to join up till 1941. He was taken prisoner at Singapore and spent three and a half years in captivity. Owing to his botanical

knowledge he was placed in charge of the gardens where prisoners grew vegetables to supplement their scanty rations. He persuaded the Japanese that this supervision required much writing. Retrieving some pads of discarded army forms he wrote this book. A brother officer copied each section as it was completed, so that a second copy could be hidden, in case of search. He had neither his diaries, nor maps, nor other books to refer to. Surely this book must be a literary *tour de force*. Great books have been written in prisons, but to write of complicated travel in four continents in stealth and under such restrictions must be a unique achievement.

The first two parts are concerned with his boyhood and adolescence in the space and sunshine and recurrent storms of the Southern Alps of New Zealand. He early turned to botany to add to his enjoyment of mountain travel; and this thread of botanical interest runs all through the book, adding no less pleasure for the reader. For without descriptions of the trees and plants the mountain scene must ever be incomplete.

At Nelson and Dunedin there was untrodden ground at his doorstep, and over this he wandered. This led on to serious climbing, beginning with N.Z.A.C. camps under the aegis of A. P. Harper. To me, the first two parts of the book together give a more intimate picture of the southern ranges of New Zealand, low and high, than I have met in any other book. The climate on the two sides of the range is explained, together with the consequent contrasts of glaciation and vegetation.

When Scott Russell comes to the 'Old Mountains' of Europe he already knows the allure of unknown ranges, and the payment they demand in hard physical labour. He immediately recognizes and appreciates the humanistic atmosphere of the Alps, and acknowledges the freedom from anxiety and greater mobility arising from easy access, available supplies, and quarters. In New Zealand the author had made first-class expeditions with only one amateur companion. The same followed in the Alps. The author does not emphasize this point. The reviewer does.

In England Scott Russell continued his botanical training at the Imperial College of Science. One of the lecturers, Alexander King, organized a summer expedition to Jan Mayen. There was a very carefully selected scheme of scientific objectives and the author joined as second botanist, though the glaciers of Beerenberg and the exploration of the unknown northern flanks of that great extinct volcano which dominates the island occupy the principal place in the story. It is a good picture of the Arctic, with the daily merging into one of sunset and sunrise at midnight.

In Parts V, VI, and VII we join Eric Shipton's second expedition

to the Karakoram. The main objective was topography and map-making. After a new survey of the Hispar-Biafo complex it was intended to make a winter survey from Shimshal on the northern flank of the main range to connect up with Mason's work on the upper Shaksgam, returning by the Karakoram pass to Leh. But news of the outbreak of war reached them before the first part of their programme was completed and this fascinating second problem remains to be accomplished.

Here I must enter my only *caveat*. On page 155 the author writes of 'old-fashioned cumbersome expeditions'. He should have written 'new-fangled'. The climbers and mountain explorers of the last century and the first decade of this travelled light and with great economy of expenditure compared to the Everest expeditions and international excursions which followed between the two wars. The light expedition of which Shipton and Tilman, with our author, are such strong protagonists, is only a reversion to the earlier and better type. The author had no books of reference to hand, and it appears on page 162 that he thinks Conway was involved in the Workmans' mistake over 'Snow Lake'. Conway neither thought this had no outlet nor that it was a sort of arctic ice cap.

The enormous extent and the vast scale of the individual peaks and glaciers of the Karakoram is well brought out. It is far more evident to a band of explorers than to a party intent on the ascent of one particular peak. Not that they did not do a lot of climbing. The passage of the Nushik La, crossed only twice previously, during Conway's expedition in 1892, is a first-class expedition. Almost on their last day the author rediscovered the traditional Khurdopin pass leading direct from Baltistan to Shimshal. Thus he linked up with the Vissers' map.

To revert to natural history. An uncompromising photograph of a footmark in the snow quite definitely reveals the 'Abominable Snow-man' as a bear. Snowmen are about as authentic as the Alaskan bears round Mt. McKinley, whose near legs are said to be longer than their off legs because they always traverse the slopes clockwise with the sun.

The book is copiously illustrated with good photographs from a number of contributors. The seven sketch-maps are clear and adequate. There is a good index. I can only find a single misprint!—'Svarlbad' for 'Svalbard'.

Mountain Prospect is a good book, true to its title. It is full of mountain feeling and appreciation of the scenes described. To me it has been of absorbing interest.

T. G. LONGSTAFF.

ON SCOTTISH HILLS. By B. H. HUMBLE. *London: Chapman & Hall*, 1946. $9\frac{3}{4} \times 7\frac{1}{4}$ *inches*; 128 *pages*; 75 *photographs by the author; sketch-maps.* 18*s.*

Mr. Humble tells a plain tale of the interesting and varied expeditions undertaken mainly at week-ends from the Glasgow district by his group of friends. It is the sort of story that could be told, with the necessary changes in geography, by many similar groups in the bigger cities of the north, and in that lies much of its appeal. There is a good deal of sound winter mountaineering described as well as summer climbs and bivouacs.

Mr. Humble's photographs are in the main the pleasant casual stuff that we all like to see in our own albums of holiday recollections. They blend with the text particularly well, though I did find the tendency to break into italics whenever an illustration was signalled rather disturbing at first. This was possibly due to an overdose of detective fiction where a similar change in typography often denotes discovery of the body.

In his preface the author says he has produced the book as a mild protest against all picture books on Scotland from Abraham to Poucher being written by Englishmen. A proper sentiment in a Scot and one which could be made effective. His writing goes part of the way. He knows his line of country ('1937 on Ben Nevis was a vintage year') and, if he reaches no great literary heights, it is because he does not attempt to do so, whilst at least he saves himself the descent of any corresponding depths. He has avoided the two main blemishes of English work—the 'mirth feeble and inane' on the subjects of the whisky, the kilt, and the Gaelic—and the tendency to write a comprehensive guide-book to this ancient and unconquered kingdom, or any part of it, after a month's acquaintance. But with a few exceptions (Plates 35, 60, and 66, for instance, would stand in any company) Mr. Humble's photographs, as reproduced, do not in my opinion attain the standard shown in the picture books to which he refers. In photography, as in other affairs, it seems that patriotism is not enough.

C. D. MILNER.

MONT EVEREST. By JOSEPH PEYRÉ. *Paris: Bernard Grasset*, 1942. 304 *pages.* 105 *frs.*

It is unusual to find a novel with so exact a background of reality. In this country, where the story of successive Everest expeditions is something of a national epic, it is difficult to imagine such a subject being chosen for a novel; but in France the book will have performed

a service, for the author is well acquainted with the written records of past expeditions, and at times indeed his narrative is a farrago of gleanings from them. For a writer who has not accompanied an expedition, how could it be else and yet give a true rendering of the atmosphere? For instance, his description, on page 63, of getting the yaks and mules on the move is quite excellently done.

The novel deals with a party of three who set out to climb Everest. The leader is one Jewar Singh, just down from Cambridge; he brings with him young Jos-Mari Tannenwalder, a Swiss guide whom he met and admired on Alpine climbs, and MacPherson, a caricature of a Scotsman who has left the I.C.S. to live in native seclusion at Gwaldam, and a veteran of two Everest expeditions. Their Sirdar is Nima, a Sherpa who has carried to Camp VI, and the Number One porter is Pasang, the 'Old Soldier' who had been with MacPherson in 1933 and who is as ready for his *marwa* in the bazaar as for a fight after it.

We are asked to imagine that the Dalai Lama has granted special but unhesitating permission to Jewar Singh; that the Dzöngpen of Kampa Dzong has returned specially from Lhasa to facilitate the collection of a baggage-train; that the coveted lull between the west wind and the monsoon allows the climbing to go ahead almost undisturbed; and that Wolf, the dog from Zermatt, beats the record of Policey by climbing beyond Camp VI. At the grave of Dr. Kellas, we are reminded of Smythe's *Camp Six*, for an almost identical ceremony is performed there, and the 121st Psalm read by MacPherson in place of E. O. Shebbeare; on the crossing of the Tibetan plateau, the same hill near Kampa is climbed as a test of acclimatization; but we are surprised to find them pitching camp to leeward of the village. At the Rongbuk Monastery the Chief Lama addresses the Sherpas in these words: 'You are accompanying spiritually-minded men, the first to revere and to understand the Sanctuary'—a little hard on the 1922 party, whose leaders were very similarly extolled at Rongbuk. Thus is the story dovetailed into the recorded accounts, from which it is also partly adapted.

The psychological interest lies in the relations of the three climbers, and in the final selection of pairs for the assault, whereby Jos-Mari is to climb with Nima as the support party. On the 17th May 19.., the first pair take Mallory's route along the ridge, are unable to get beyond the second step, descend to the 'yellow band', but are there driven back by oncoming darkness. Jewar Singh had been aiming at spiritual enlightenment, and the study of Hindu writings had led him to believe he would find it on the ridge; MacPherson had sought to conquer the mountain in a spirit of adventure, and had held to his sola topi and his whiskies as far as Camp VI,

which is pitched on the snow patch beyond the 1933 site. The second pair take the route to the couloir, but in increasing wind Nima, proud but a little mystified by his elevation from porter to climber, is smitten with snow-blindness and turns back. Jos-Mari, after a psychological struggle, carries on alone but weakening, and we see him no more. But Nima has been told by an old beggar at Shekar Dzong that Jos-Mari is an incarnation of 'the future Buddha', and believes that as he went on alone towards the top of Everest he was about to achieve the Paradise that had been predicted for him.

P. E. THOMPSON.

MOUNTAINS AND MEN. By WILFRID NOYCE. *London: Geoffrey Bles*, 1947. $9\frac{1}{2} \times 6$ *inches*; 100 *pages*; 17 *photographs and* 3 *maps*. 18*s*.

Wilfrid Noyce, who is in the van of our younger climbers, had already made a fine contribution to mountaineering literature in his able editing of last year's *Himalayan Journal*. So this is not quite his maiden effort. The title of the book seems apt, conveying as it does the author's desire to deal with the individual personalities of the mountaineers concerned, as well as with their performance. As he puts it in a rather diffident preface: 'to cast a spotlight more directly on the person as he lives and moves, and is changed by mountain and by friend.'

His initiation was in Wales on Tryfan, with his cousins Guy and the late Colin Kirkus, and in Cumberland. Later quest for experience and adventure in the Alps brought contacts with distinguished climbers, and his close friendship with Armand Charlet began in 1938. During the period between leaving school and the war, he had had two serious accidents, one on Scafell, the other, a broken leg, on Ben Nevis. The Army bore him to India where, in 1943, he seized the opportunity of visiting Garhwal and the approaches to Trisul, and in the following year made a first ascent of Simsaga. A chapter on 'Airscrew Mountain Centre' is full of interest. Noyce's mountaineering in the Himalaya came to a satisfactory end with success on Pauhunri, a fortnight after leaving Delhi, and he concludes this phase with a very pleasant pen-picture of Angtharkay and his Sherpas. The epilogue which took shape as the author was scrambling across the scree of Great Hell Gates on Great Gable, just before his third serious accident (another broken leg), is typical of the unusual and introspective trend of a most interesting book.

EDITOR.

LE PÈLERINAGE AUX SOURCES. By LANZA DEL VASTO. *Éditions Denoël, 19 rue Amélie, Paris VII°, 1945. 408 pages. 130 frs.*

This book is the account of a journey performed in 1936–7; the writer's purpose in undertaking it is stated on page 41, when he tells some Hindus in a *swadeshi* shop in southern India: 'I had come such a distance with the one desire to see their Master, to seek his teaching and to offer him my service.' He spends indeed several months at Wardha, and perhaps the best parts of the book are his telling of the way in which a professing Christian is welcomed there, and his account of the disinterested concern for the welfare of India that is shown by those of the Wardha community.

But unfortunately Lanza del Vasto has a journalist's mania for rushing into affairs ill equipped, and is over-ready to pronounce opinions before he has earned the right to do so by acquiring the necessary background. For instance, though he has a limited but scholarly knowledge of Sanskrit, his acquaintance with Hindustani is patently insufficient for him to have held the conversations he recounts at length. He has a profound admiration for the teachings of Gandhi, and makes some relevant remarks concerning their application to European conditions, as on page 133, where he deplores the machine on the principle of the sanctity of work, or on page 137, where he says: 'If you find the machine useful, make good use of it; but if you find it necessary, then it is high time you cast it from you or it will surely catch you in its works and enchain you.'

Consequently we are not surprised when he decides after consultation with Gandhi to make the pilgrimage to the source of the Ganges, to find that he sets out wearing a *dhoti* he has woven with his own hands. It is the story of this journey that may interest readers of the *Journal*, though it is an indefinite kind of thing, padded with bowdlerized Oriental philosophy, and we do not learn much about the topography of his travels. He talks about being astride of India and Tibet, yet it is clear that in his journey up the valley of the Ganges he never got beyond the tree-line; on page 256 he says the police turned him back near the borders of Tibet, yet travel along this pilgrims' route has always been unhindered; and on page 245 he tells how bathing in a spring of boiling sulphurous water is bearable because of the low boiling-point of water at high altitudes; though he refrains from giving any location it is clear that the spring was less than 10,000 feet high, where water (pure water, that is) boils at 90° F., which rather spoils the intended effect of his explanation.

Yet there are some fine descriptions of the scenery of the lower

valleys, and the book is worth reading for its account of a European —and a Christian—who took the trouble to assume the humble costume and way of life of the Hindu pilgrim even if he could not assume an equal intellectual humility.

P. E. THOMPSON.

THE DELECTABLE MOUNTAINS. By DOUGLAS BUSK. *London: Hodder & Stoughton.* $8\frac{3}{4} \times 5\frac{3}{4}$ *inches*; xi *and* 274 *pages*; 47 *photographs*; 4 *maps*. 21*s*.

'When the shepherds heard their answers, being pleased with them, they looked very lovingly upon them and said "Welcome to the Delectable Mountains".'

It is from these lines in *The Pilgrim's Progress* that Douglas Busk takes his apt title. And indeed, as he observes, he has had exceptional good fortune in attaining Delectable Mountains in many parts of the world, for he was given opportunities of mountaineering in the Alps, the Pyrenees, the Appalachians, the American and Canadian Rockies, Persia, the Drakensberg, and the Tyrol, and was only kept off Fujiyama at the eleventh hour by the Japanese declarations of war.

By way of introduction he ventures to compare, at some length, the respective merits of mountaineering, and sets down his own conception of the call of the hills. In both of these his trend of thought is illuminating and convincing. The reflection that 'the mountaineer goes on improving to the end of his days' is a comforting one to many of us. At his public school, one of the masters, the late V. Le Neve Foster, aroused his academic interest in mountains, and during the period between Eton and Oxford, his climbing experiences began, first at Zuoz, where he had been sent to learn German at the Lyceum Alpinum, and then in the Pyrenees, where he was by way of studying French. His ski-ing was also begun, in the Engadine, and, close on this came Oxford and the University Mountaineering Club with its summer meets in the Alps. As he says, 'There is for all of us some place in the hills which is our best beloved . . .', and he writes of his own 'Happy Valley', where, from Les Praz de Chamonix, numerous ascents and friendships were made. Fortune again favoured him, when after his three years at Oxford a scholarship to Princeton brought the chance of ski-ing in the Appalachians and climbing in the Rockies, and these experiences are described in the chapters 'The White Mountains', 'The American Rockies', and 'The Ramparts'. (The last-named group is in the Jasper region of Canada—a National Park.) Then came mountaineering and ski-ing in Persia, with one of the earlier ascents of

Demavend and two unsuccessful attempts on the Takht-i-Suleiman. Under the heading 'South of the Line', the author apologizes for a 'skimpy account' of all that South Africa has to offer to the mountaineer, and the penultimate chapter, 'Spring and Summer Ski-ing', deals in enthusiastic fashion with the opening of the mountains by means of ski at all times of the year, and shows how the best can be made of bad seasons.

Douglas Busk has had golden opportunities, and he has made the most of them. EDITOR.

CLUB PROCEEDINGS

WITH the swift political changes in India during the current year have come equally swift changes in our executive. It has not been possible to keep these sufficiently up to date for the purposes of this *Journal*, and all that can be said definitely at the time of going to press is that our Hon. Secretary, Mr. A. Percy Lancaster, is carrying on almost unaided.

Extracts from the Annual Report for 1946–7 are reproduced below, though some of them must inevitably be out of date:

Membership. Fifty-seven new members were elected during the year, and in May the total membership was 572.

Obituary. The death of the following members is mourned:

W. E. Buchanan.
Countess Roberts.
E. H. L. Wigram.
L. C. Shaw.
M. Hermann Etter.
Sir George Barnes.

Expeditions and Treks. Several accounts have been received, and some have been included in this volume. It was not possible to use them all, but thanks are due to those who so nobly responded to the appeal for 'copy'. Apart from those activities, search parties were organized for recovering the bodies of Captain Langton-Smith and his party who were lost on the Zemu glacier in October 1945. One party, led by Major Kirsopp-Reed, found the half-burned body of Mr. Roy, who had died of pneumonia on the way. The body was buried and certain belongings brought back. The body of a porter, Lhkba Nehru, was found lying under a boulder in the middle of a stream half a mile east of Green Lake. Various articles, including five rolls of films, were found in a cave near the junction of Tent Peak glacier with the Zemu. Although much information about the lost party was obtained, Captain Langton-Smith's body was not found. Another search party, led by Captain J. W. Thornley, Gurkha Rifles, during September–October 1946, made further search without success.

The Central Waterways Irrigation and Navigation Commission organized a reconnaissance expedition to carry out in early March a snow survey of certain glaciers in Sikkim and Nepal. Their report has not yet been received.

Of André Roch's Gangotri Expedition there is no detailed news. A very brief report stated that they had ascended Kedarnath and Satopanth, and had done well in the collection of plants and

butterflies. There has been no definite information from Tilman's party, but a report has come in that an attempt upon Rakaposhi has failed.

It has been reported in the Swiss Press that a New Zealander, by name Earl Denman, made a single-handed attempt on Everest early in the year. The affair is still wrapped in mystery.

Himalayan Journal. The *Journal* again came to life under the editorship of C. W. F. Noyce, after a gap of several years. The high standard of production set by Kenneth Mason has been maintained.

Himalayan Dinner. The first post-war dinner was held at the Dorchester Hotel on the 20th November 1946, and was again organized by Lt.-Col. Tobin. The Chair was ably occupied by Dr. Somervell, and over sixty covers were laid. Among those present were Mrs. Townend, Mr. Tilman, and Brig. Glennie. Major Clark, for many years Hon. Secretary, gave a brief review of the work of the Club during the war. The menu was illustrated by 'Bip Pares' (author of *Himalayan Honeymoon*) in her own inimitable style. After dinner Major Waller showed his Masherbrum film, which was greatly admired. It was a most successful evening.

CLUB NOTICES

I. Addresses

All communications for the Hon. Secretary and the Hon. Librarian should be addressed as in the notice printed on page 108.

II. Library

A gift of some hundred volumes on mountaineering has been made to the Club under a bequest from the late Mr. Augustus A. Vlasto of Ralli Brothers. The executors of Mr. Vlasto's name defrayed the expense of dispatching these books from England to Simla in order to save the Himalayan Club all expense in the matter. The Library list of books is being amended accordingly.

III. Equipment

Requests for equipment should be addressed either to A. H. d'A. Willis, Esq., c/o Place Siddons & Gough, 6 Lyons Range, Calcutta, or A. R. Leyden, Esq., c/o Allied Photographics Ltd., 193 Hornby Rd., Bombay.

IV. Journal

Articles and papers for inclusion in the Club *Journal* should be addressed to the Honorary Editor, Himalayan Club, Crosstrees, Lymington, Hants.

V. Appointments

The following changes have taken place among the Club Officers:

Vice-President: A. R. Leyden, vice J. B. Morrison.
Hon. Secretary: A. Percy Lancaster, vice A. F. Clark.
Hon. Treas.: J. S. H. Shattock, vice J. B. Shearer.
Hon. Sec., Eastern Section: A. C. Hartley.
Hon. Editor: H. W. Tobin, vice C. W. F. Noyce.
Hon. Asst. Editor: Mrs. Joan Townend.
Local Sec.: Chumba: J. S. H. Shattock.
Local Sec.: Darjeeling: T. J. Hardingham.

C. R. Cooke, Vice-President, and J. B. Shearer, Honorary Treasurer, who elected to serve in Pakistan, have moved to Karachi.

VI. Change of Address

Will members please notify new addresses to the Honorary Secretary? Responsibility for non-delivery cannot be taken in the case of members who fail to do this.

Our thanks are due to all those members who functioned as Office-bearers during the busy years of the war. In particular we would like to thank Captain Noyce for his Editorship in 1946, and Major Clark for carrying on the onerous duties of Honorary Secretary, which he so ably performed from 1941 to 1946.

Bombay Section: A local section of the Himalayan Club was formed at Bombay on the 2nd July 1946 at a meeting presided over by Mr. A. R. Leyden. The response was encouraging and we hope that the movement will prosper.

Kenya Mountain Club of East Africa: The Honorary Secretary of this Club has drawn our attention to their permanent address, which is P.O. Box 1831, Nairobi, Kenya. The Kenya Mountain Club offers its willing assistance and advice to members of the Himalayan Club.

Crest for Club Note-paper: A crest for use on all official letters of the Club has been designed by Mr. C. R. Cooke. It consists of the letters H.C. superimposed upon an outline of the Chorten seen on the way to the Rongbuk glacier below Mount Everest. Pads of two sizes will shortly be available, on payment, from the Honorary Secretary.

VII. Transfer of Club Headquarters

Minutes of an Emergency General Meeting of the Club held on 21st November 1947.

Present:

M. W. Yeatts, Esq., C.S.I., C.I.E., I.C.S.: *President.*
Sir Alan Lloyd, C.S.I., C.I.E., I.C.S.: *Member.*
Col. G. H. Osmaston, M.C.: *Equipment Officer.*
B. K. Guha, Esq.: *Member.*
F. B. Blomfield, Esq.: *Member.*
A. Percy Lancaster, Esq.: *Hon. Secretary.*

Mr. Yeatts was in the Chair.

1. The meeting discussed the position of the Club in the light of changes due to the transfer of officers from Delhi. It was decided that, subject to the consent of the Eastern Section, the Headquarters of the Club should be transferred to Calcutta in view of the growing paucity of members in Delhi who are able to undertake the duties of office-bearers and members of the Committee.

2. The President expressed his willingness to remain in office pending the election of a President from amongst members resident in Calcutta.

3. The meeting recommended that a further general meeting of the Club be held in Calcutta at an early date to elect a Secretary and Treasurer for the Club as a whole in place of the present incumbents in Delhi.

4. It was decided, again subject to the consent of the Eastern Section, to transfer the Library and records and all but a small nucleus of the equipment to Calcutta. Colonel Osmaston kindly undertook to arrange for the transportation of the books, records, and equipment.

5. In anticipation of point 3 above being agreed to, the meeting authorized the present President at his discretion to instruct the bank as to who shall operate the Accounts of the Club.

6. Colonel Osmaston undertook to hold the position of Honorary Secretary vice Mr. Lancaster until the transfer to Calcutta is effected.

A. P. Lancaster
Honorary Secretary

NEW DELHI
November 1947

NOTICE

Delhi is the natural Headquarters for the Himalayan Club, but one effect of recent events has been to reduce the number of members stationed there below the figure necessary for the various offices of the Club. It has therefore been decided to transfer Headquarters for the present. Equipment will be stored at Bombay and Calcutta. The Library will remain in New Delhi.

The position will be reviewed in the light of future developments.

From the Date of this notice communications to the Club should be as follows (P.O. Box No. 291, New Delhi, will be closed from 1st February 1948):

President:	M. W. Yeats, Esq., C.S.I., C.I.E., I.C.S., 11 York Road, New Delhi.
Librarian:	J. L. Bhatnagar, Esq., c/o Army Headquarters Officers' Library, South Block, New Delhi.
Hon. Secretary:	W. E. Murphy, Esq., United Service Club, Calcutta.
Hon. Treasurer:	F. H. V. Scrimgeour, Esq., c/o Duncan Bros., Calcutta.
Equipment: (in Calcutta)	A. H. d'A. Willis, Esq., c/o Place Siddons & Gough, 6 Lyons Range, Calcutta.
Equipment: (in Bombay)	A. R. Leyden, Esq., c/o Allied Photographics Ltd., 193 Hornby Road, Bombay.

G. H. OSMASTON, *Colonel*,
Honorary Secretary,
Himalayan Club.

NEW DELHI
1st January 1948

Publication: A pamphlet by C. R. Cooke, on the nailing and oiling of boots, has been published by the Club. Copies are available from the Equipment Officer, free to members, 4 annas a copy to the public.

SUPPLEMENT

These two articles by Peter Aufschnaiter describe in his own phrasing, edited here and there, the 1939 reconnaissance of the Diamir face of Nanga Parbat, and also his escape journey with Heinrich Harrer from their prisoner-of-war camp at Dehra Dun. The first copy of these articles, with accompanying maps and panoramas, was dispatched from Tibet by air mail in October 1947, but was lost in transit. As soon as Aufschnaiter heard of this he and Harrer set to and made fresh copies of script, maps, and sketches. The package containing these arrived in January 1948 when the rest of the Himalayan Journal *was actually in the press. Despite the considerable inconvenience caused, our publishers have kindly agreed to include and bind the articles with vol. xiv as a supplement, and we thank them warmly. It is not, of course, possible to prepare blocks for the several maps and panoramas without considerable delay, so only a skeleton of the escape route is included.*

The maps and panoramas have been beautifully drawn, but, in the absence of proper materials are in pencil on flimsy paper. Among the panoramas is a striking fresh view of the Everest group from Menkhap Me, 60 miles to the north. All the above have been entrusted to Professor Mason who is arranging for reproduction, and it is hoped that members will receive copies in due course. The material will also be made available for the Alpine Journal.

In addition to the Nanga Parbat photographs which appear earlier in this issue, a number of excellent pictures were confiscated at the prisoner-of-war camp. The External Relations Department at Delhi have now been persuaded to release the property of the escaped prisoners, but this has only got as far as Yatung on its way to Lhasa, so there will be considerable delay before more photographs of this interesting expedition become available.

With regard to the place-names in both script and maps, it should be noted that all do not tally with those used by the Survey of India, and also that provisional Tibetan names have been given to certain mountains. Aufschnaiter has sent an explanatory note with the above but it is not necessary to reproduce it here.—EDITOR.

DIAMIR SIDE OF NANGA PARBAT, RECONNAISSANCE 1939

PETER AUFSCHNAITER

In the course of four expeditions between 1932 and 1938 it had become apparent that the Rakhiot route, while being comparatively easy, at least up to the final ridge, was dangerous on account of avalanches. Actually only one of the two disasters that had occurred was caused by an avalanche, but on other occasions there had been narrow escapes, even in 1938 when all the movements had been worked out by Paul Bauer with great caution. Bauer, therefore, had sent two members of his 1938 expedition, U. Luft and the late S. Zuck, to the Diamir valley in order to get a near view of that side of the mountain as a possible alternative route. The reports and photographs they brought back, together with photographs taken from an aeroplane, seemed to encourage a more thorough investigation, the more so as Finsterwalder's map showed that such a route was only about one-third the length of that of the Rakhiot side.

The party which was to make this reconnaissance, in the summer of 1939, consisted of H. Harrer (Graz), one of the Eiger north face team, L. Chicken (Bozen), H. Lobenhoffer (Bamberg), and myself (Kitzbuhel). In Bombay Chicken fell ill and had to remain behind for medical treatment, while we others continued our journey to Rawalpindi. There three Darjeeling Bhotias joined us, and after a few days of rearranging our sixty or so loads, we started on 11th May by car. In Balakote our luggage was taken up by local coolies and we followed the road up the Kaghan valley. Above Gittidas Gilgit scouts came to meet us and, after crossing the pass, we reached Babusar, the summer headquarters of Lt. Strover, the Assistant Political Agent, who accompanied us down to Chilas. From there we followed our caravan, which had gone via Thak bridge, to Bunar rest house where we stayed for several days to set apart a number of loads for our proposed excursion to Rakaposhi later on. For the transport of our luggage porters came down from the Bunar district to meet us, and proved somewhat troublesome.

On the way from Bunar rest house to Halala we had our first near view of the main summit of Nanga Parbat, rising a sheer 20,000 feet above our viewpoint. From Halala our route, which had already been reconnoitred by Harrer, crossed the Bunar river, and leaving behind the village of Dimroi we followed a path up the gorge-like valley of the Diamirai river as far as Ser, the last village, beautifully situated on a high shelf. On the next day, after an easy ascent to the

summer pasture of Kachar and past the snout of the Diamir glacier, we reached a suitable place for our Base Camp, at about 4,100 metres, on the right side of the glacier just opposite the Diamir peak (1st June). To make our base comfortable we built a hut as a store-house.

After a few days we started for a first reconnaissance, ascending the slope of the Ganalo ridge to about 5,800 metres, from where we had a fine view of the superb but sombre mountain scenery which Nanga Parbat presents from this side.

The first thing to attract our attention was a glacier coming down the slope of the north peak of Nanga Parbat along the ridge connecting this with the Ganalo peak and forming the uppermost source of the Diamir glacier. This glacier had been recommended to us for closer examination, but apart from its hazardous approach up the narrow trough of the Diamir glacier (in which Mummery disappeared with his two Gurkhas), it is swept crosswise in many places by avalanches from both sides, so we ruled it out at once as a practicable route. Although the incline is somewhat less severe than the rest of the Nanga Parbat wall, it is steep enough for avalanches, and there is no break or suitable place for a camp. Besides, it breaks off with an ice-fall down to the Diamir glacier.

West of this glacier Nanga Parbat presents a wall with little relief, consisting mainly of gullies and very steep snow or ice slopes, while the ridges rise little above the general plane of the wall. As may be expected from such a mountain face, no obvious route presented itself at first sight, but after some time we thought we had found one by piecing it together bit by bit. Its most prominent feature was a rock 'pulpit' as we called it, forming the edge of a snow terrace. Starting from the Diamir glacier the route was to lead up a steep snow slope on to a rock ridge and from there over difficult rock and steep ice to this 'pulpit' and the terrace, which would be suitable for a camp. Behind the terrace there is a snow slope, which at times seemed to be blank ice, over which, on its western side, a rock ridge must be gained leading to a wide snow-field below the Bazin gap[1]—also the goal of Mummery's party. These are only the bare outlines of this hypothetical route as I remember them without any notes at hand.

We returned to the Base Camp and after having completed preparations started once more, this time joined by Chicken, who had arrived from Bombay recovered from his illness. Crossing the Diamir glacier we ascended a moraine ridge on the true left side of the great ice-fall which becomes the Diamir glacier and joins the

[1] The Bazin gap is shown in Bauer's map in the *Himalayan Quest* as in the ridge joining the main and the north peak, height about 25,500 feet.

main glacier. On this ridge we made Camp II, commanding a fine view down the glacier and out to the highest peaks of the Himalaya to the west.

Lobenhoffer did not feel well, and accompanied by Chicken, who, as a medical student, was our doctor, returned to the Base Camp. Harrer and I went farther up the ridge on which Camp II stood until we came to the level of the Diamir glacier proper. We crossed along the foot of the Nanga Parbat wall under the nose of several hanging glaciers whose greenish-white snouts looked down threateningly from their dark rock gullies. Not far from the big snow slope which was to be the beginning of our route we crossed over to the right side of the crevassed Diamir glacier, there being no suitable camping-ground at the foot of the Nanga Parbat wall. The place we chose was a nice one, lying near a scree slope of the dry ground of a lateral moraine. This camp, about 5,250 metres, compares favourably with the Camp II of the Rakhiot side of the same height.

From it Harrer and I started early in the morning, together with two Bhotias. Crossing the Diamir glacier we began the ascent by holding to the western side of the great snow slope below a high rock tower where some rocks jutted out from the ice. We hoped to gain height by climbing in places on these rocks, but they were more difficult than they had seemed from afar. Nevertheless we could ascend fairly speedily along snow gullies between rocks, the snow being favourable, not too hard and not too soft. We were greatly aided by our crampons with twelve spikes, two of them horizontal. Finally we set out on the open slope, and traversing somewhat to its eastern side we climbed upwards, almost in the line of fall. The inclination of the slope was steep and our two porters disliked work of this kind. They complained bitterly, and it was clear that they would never again agree to set out on such a task.

Harrer, who was leading, steered for two small rocky patches which, though not rising much above the surface of the snow, promised a place for safe belaying and resting. Several times during the ascent falling stones came off the ridge and once or twice took the form of small rock avalanches. At the outset we had hoped to reach the rock ridge and therefore had prepared for a light bivouac, but with loaded porters we were a rather cumbersome party, and in view of these falling stones we decided to return. The height reached was about 5,900 metres; in a few hours we had climbed 650 metres. For the descent I followed Harrer's example by using a piton in one hand and an ice-axe in the other, thrusting them alternately into the hard snow while my feet found hold with the front spikes of the crampons. After reaching the base of the slope Harrer returned to

the Base Camp where Lobenhoffer was still lying ill as reported by Chicken, who had come up to join us.

One or two days later I ascended the slope again with Chicken to a point slightly higher than before, and after traversing some blank ice came to the rocks of the ridge, from the crest of which we were separated by only a few ropes' lengths. The rocks themselves were treacherous—wherever touched they broke away. We returned to the camp, but when Harrer and Lobenhoffer arrived next day the latter was still unwell, and, in view of the difficulties of the ascent, I decided to postpone a further attempt. During the night a tremendous avalanche came down from the hanging glacier east of the great slope, and next morning, 20th June, as we were starting from Camp III, another avalanche crashed down from the hanging glacier west of the slope, but both were clear of the route.

When we arrived at Base Camp Lobenhoffer had to lie down at once. Fever, never much below 104° F. for many days, weakened him so alarmingly that we, and he himself, feared for his life. Later on, when he seemed a little better, we others climbed the Diamirai peak, on which Mummery and his party had been. There was a good side-view of the Nanga Parbat wall and the Bazin snow-field, which seemed of tolerable inclination. We suspected that Lobenhoffer's illness was connected with altitude, and planned to carry him down to Ser and, after his recovery, to go to Rakaposhi and give him an opportunity of regaining his old strength *en route*. At this time Lt. Strover came up to visit us in the Base Camp, having covered the distance from Halala in one day. To our great dismay we heard from him that Major Galbraith and his wife had been drowned in the Hunza river. We had received a letter from Major Galbraith in his capacity as Political Officer in Gilgit when he wrote, in friendly terms, that he personally saw no objection to our going to Rakaposhi.

As expected, Lobenhoffer recovered almost at once in Ser, and after a few days we descended to Bunar rest house. It turned out that we could not go to Rakaposhi after all, so we returned to the Diamir valley and to our Camp III, at the side of the Diamir glacier. On the way between Camps II and III lay masses of avalanche snow which had come down after a snowfall during our absence. From Camp III Harrer and Lobenhoffer made a last attempt to reach the rock ridge below the 'pulpit', and they succeeded, although the big snow slope had changed for the worse. At first accompanied by Chicken and myself, they went on alone on the rocks below the rock tower, and traversing blank ice for several ropes' lengths succeeded in overcoming the treacherous rocks of the ridge, the crest of which they reached in the afternoon. They had difficulty in finding a place

on the narrow ridge for their small tent, and were not quite safe from falling stones which passed over their heads, hitting the ridge some distance away. According to Harrer, the rock above them, although difficult, looked feasible as far as they could see. They descended next morning, endangered several times by falling stones. The point they reached was about 6,000 metres.

The Diamir side of Nanga Parbat has the tempting advantage that, assuming its feasibility and the preparations of steps and pitons, it would allow height to be gained considerably more quickly than would the Rakhiot approach. The difficulties of this route are probably akin to some of the more difficult climbs in the Alps. Lobenhoffer compared it to the Sentinel Rouge, which he had climbed shortly before leaving for the Himalaya. A team of mountaineers, skilled and experienced in tackling difficulties of ice and rock of this kind, would probably prefer the Diamir route to that of the Rakhiot side. A team of at least seven climbers would be required, as some of them would probably have to prepare the way in order to leave a reserve for the final assault. The climbers would have to do a lot of load-carrying in addition, as only few porters would be willing and capable of going on such steep exposed rock and ice.

In these last days Chicken and I climbed the western Ganalo peak (approx. 6,400 metres), and had fine views of the Nanga Parbat wall and the upper part of the Diamir glacier, which now had an avalanche track over almost its whole length.

Up to the end of July the weather had been favourable, with only a few spells of really bad weather. But the higher reaches of Nanga Parbat were shrouded in mist almost every afternoon, probably causing snowfalls on the mountain.

When, at the end of July, we left our Base Camp for good, Lobenhoffer and Harrer went with the bulk of the luggage via Bunar rest house to Rakhiot bridge, while Chicken and I made our way to the Rakhiot valley. During these days we had a lot of heavy rain. The Rakhiot side with its wide open spaces of glaciers and pastures impressed us deeply as being in marked contrast to the austere Diamir valley. The glaciers look easier than anything on the Diamir side, but when we climbed from the Base Camp of previous expeditions to the memorial cairn carrying the many names of our dead friends on top of the big moraine near Camp I, the inevitable 'express train', in the form of a huge ice avalanche, crashed down from the wall on to the glacier route to Camp II, throwing up an immense cloud of ice dust—an awe-inspiring but sinister warning, shattering the sunny peace of this unforgettable landscape.

Early August we paid a brief visit to the new summer residence above Nomal of the Political Officer Gilgit, where we discussed plans

with Major Battye for a new expedition to the Diamir side. This, according to a letter received from the German Himalaya Foundation, was planned for 1940. Chicken and I then travelled down the 190 miles to Bandipur as fast as my several attacks of malaria would allow. In Srinagar we met Harrer and Lobenhoffer and together we hurried on to catch our Hansa boat in Karachi, which, however, never arrived. In those anxious days my comrades attempted a rush to Persia, but were caught in Las Bela. At the outbreak of war we were interned and by autumn 1941 eventually came to a camp in Dehra Dun.

ESCAPE TO LHASA, 1944–5

PETER AUFSCHNAITER

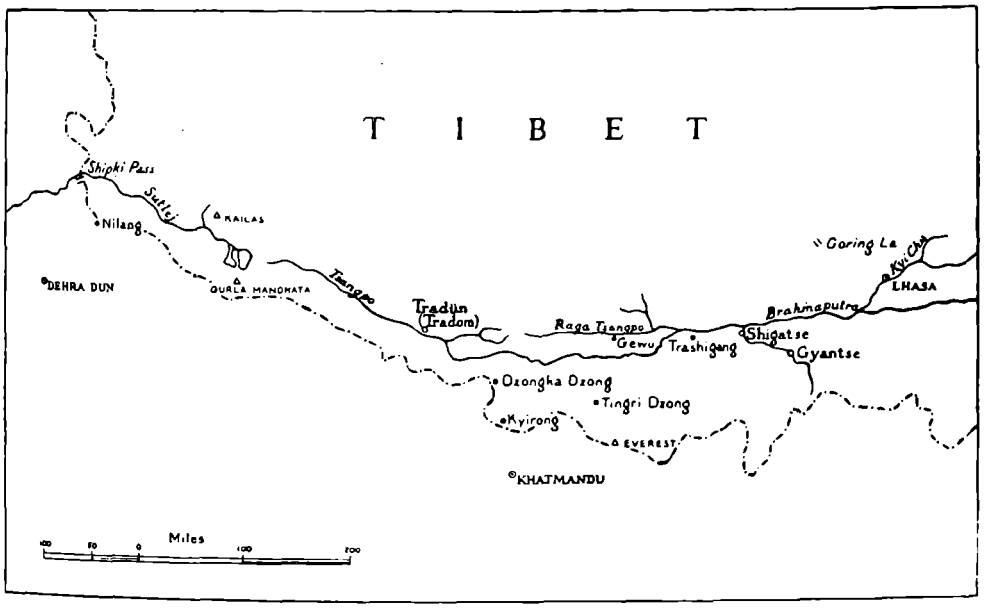
IN April 1944 seven of us escaped from the prisoners-of-war camp at Dehra Dun and two got away by railway, while Harrer, Kopp, Sattler, Treipel, and I made for Tibet via Nelang (11,000 feet). Sattler was affected by the altitude and returned to Dehra Dun. From Nelang, which is about 50 miles west-north-west of Trisul, we set our course north-west for the Sutlej, which we reached at a point about 100 miles south of Hanle.[1] The local Jongpöns were distinctly embarrassed by our presence, but helped us with food, and sent us under escort as far as the Shipki pass. From Shipki, with its 'Simla—200 miles', under the circumstances a reassuring sign, we marched down the beautifully engineered but unfrequented road to the iron suspension-bridge spanning the Sutlej. Here, on 17th June, Treipel turned back to India, Harrer and Kopp went off to investigate the Spiti valley, in which Schmaderer[2] was killed in 1945 after his second escape, and I recrossed the Sutlej by a wooden bridge higher up and turned north over the Budbud La. A few days later I was rejoined by Harrer and Kopp, and we journeyed on together towards the Indus. On the way we met many nomads with thousands of sheep, and the wide plains we traversed were showing the first green and were pasturing herds of *kiang*. Farther north we crossed a range into Ladakh, and came down to the Indus at Trashigong. Here again the officials did not rejoice at our arrival, but they took no effective steps to stop us from going on to Gartok, where negotiations began in a friendly atmosphere. The Garpöns agreed to provide us with a *lamyig* (passport) to the border of the district at Gyabnak, where we were to turn south for Nepal, and also surprised us with welcome presents of dried meat, sampa, and butter. We had to wait eleven days in Gartok before we set off on 14th July accompanied by a servant and three baggage yaks. Between Gartok and Lake Mansarowar were occasional *tazam*[3] houses and many nomad settlements with innumerable yaks. We were not allowed to make the 'sacred journey' around Lake Kailas, but we wandered along the lake shore, where the dominating feature of the scenery was Gurla Mandhata, towering with huge precipices and ice-falls, a sheer 10,000 feet above the turquoise-blue lake. With a party of traders from Garhwal we

[1] Aufschnaiter had managed to prepare a rough sketch-map while in the internment camp. This was chiefly derived from the 1 : 2,500,000 (40 miles to the inch) sheet of Tibet.

[2] See the 'Tent Peak' by Grob, *H.J.* xiii.

[3] *tazam* = stage.

continued our eastern journey. Having crossed several streams which united to become the Tsangpo, already a surprisingly wide river, our party arrived at Gyabnak, the terminal of our *lamyig*, on 8th August. Gyabnak, a single building on the Tsangpo, is the headquarters of the chief local administrative official, styled the Bong Pa Chikyap. After a few days of waiting here a messenger arrived to summon us to Tradün, where two Lhasa officials of high standing were said to be awaiting us.



On 12th August we reached Tradün, and after lengthy discussions with the officials, agreed to send our application for permission to remain in Tibet to their Government; this was asked for on the grounds of Tibet's neutrality. Pending the arrival of a reply the officials arranged for us to remain in Tradün and gave us such generous presents that we were free of worry for many weeks to come. It took over four months to get a *lamyig* for the next part of our journey, and throughout this period we were not allowed to go more than a day's march away. However, there were varied interests in Tradün, which is a cross-roads of trade-routes, used by many caravans. These mostly carry tea from China, and apricots and gur (rough sugar) from Ladakh. Everything is neatly packed in hide containers. From the north herds of up to 500 sheep carry salt to the south, crossing the Tsangpo by ferries at which salt-tax is collected. The chronicles of the golden-spired Gompa say: 'Lying at the centre of a circle of gleaming white snow peaks it has magnificent views towards Nepal and also to the north'—unfortunately all the high mountains were out of bounds, but we never got tired of beholding them, even from afar, those giants, Dhaulagiri, Annapurna, and

Manaslu and, to the north-east, that most beautiful peak Lungpo Kangri, striking in its isolation.

In November, tired of waiting, Harrer and I made an attempt to go eastward, but were frustrated by wolves, who killed and ate two of our pack sheep on our first night out. On our return to Tradün we found Kopp, just on the point of leaving for Nepal, and shortly after he had left us we were visited by a most solemn delegation, headed by the Bong Pa Chikyap. They informed us that Lhasa had at last sent our *lamyig* for Kyirong, and we began this journey on 17th December, with riding horses and servants.

Crossing and recrossing the frozen Tsangpo we reached the important settlement of Dzongka Dzong on Christmas Eve. Dzongka, about 150 miles west-north-west of Tingri Dzong, appears to be on the head-waters of the Trisuli Ganga which flows south to join, eventually, other affluents of the Ganges. Owing to the heavy snowfalls we had to wait here for nearly a month, until the track leading down the valley was trodden hard by *dzo*, and it was 25th January before we arrived at Kyirong. Here the Dzong authorities had expected us to go on to Nepal, but they allowed us to remain with them, so we stayed for ten long months, until November 1945. Kyirong means 'Village of Happiness', and we found this was no misnomer, for topography, climate, and the activities of a healthy people combine to form a landscape of rare beauty and harmony. We thoroughly explored the neighbouring district. In the valley shaped by the action of glaciation there are villages, as lovely as any in the Alps, with their wooden houses and well-cultivated fields, while on the slopes, the forests of oak, pine, and rhododendron are as varied and beautiful as those in Sikkim. Directly above, and on all sides, superb snow peaks raise their heads to great heights. Riwo Pamba, 22,500 feet, stands in the western background like a great altar, and Sherkam Kang, 24,500 feet, and Ganesh, 22,000 feet, form a massive bastion to the south-west. To the south-east rises Dayabhang, 23,750 feet, with its splendid satellites, Leru Kang and Rasuva, both over 22,000 feet. There are about thirty villages in the district, Kyirong being the largest, with a mixed population of about 1,000 Tibetans and Nepalese. There is a lively barter trade of salt against rice, and in the autumn some 1,500 sheep are sent to Nepal for the Dasehra festival. Pilgrim traffic goes on between Kyirong and the Nepalese province of Dzum, on the border of which is Khatmandu. At first we were restricted to within a few miles of Kyirong, and we used to spend much of our time ski-ing on ski made of birch wood by the local carpenter, but in June we were informed that we were to leave by the Ninth Tibetan Month (October) and from then on we were given more latitude. Among other places we visited the district of

Lande, where butter is produced on a large scale in five-foot-high churns, worked in shifts, four men to a churn. Nearly all our explorations were made with the object of planning a route for our projected escape to Lhasa, for we had no intention of trying to go to Nepal. We failed to find a practical route across the ranges to the east, though we had heard of a pass leading directly to the district of Pungrong, which would have enabled us to avoid returning to Dzongpa.

We set out on 8th November, working our way upstream by night, and turning eastward from Dzongpa, which we by-passed, into Pungrong. A lot of snow had fallen and fuel was scarce, but at Trakchen, headquarters of the District, though the officials fought shy of us, we could buy everything we wanted, including a yak. We took the opportunity of sketching the magnificent panorama of the Pungrong Range with Gosainthan and Lapchi Kang in the background. From Trakchen a long march took us to Menkhap Me, and next day we had a glorious view of Mount Everest and Cho Oyu. In the midday light the yellow band and the couloir below the summit of Everest were clearly seen. From Menkhap Me we steered for the north, on a course which we held for about 150 miles, till we reached the Tsangpo once again at Trashigang. We crossed by an iron chain bridge to Riwoche, an important place of pilgrimage with temples and a sixty-foot chorten.

From there we continued north to the Pe La, and at the village of Zang Zang Gewu, on the far side of the pass, made friendly contact with the inhabitants, among them a near relative of the late sirdar Narsang, who died just after Bauer's second expedition to Kanchenjunga.[1] Through his good offices we completed our food reserves and kit, and exchanged our grumpy Pungrong yak for a tall strong animal before setting out into the desolate province of Chungthang. We did not dare to ask him for information about the route to Lhasa, but we had reached the limit of our maps. When we prepared them in the internment camp we never dreamt we would get so far north.

We left Gewu, which is on the *tazam* road, on 2nd December, with our new yak going like a train, and climbed to the Drong La. From there it was to be thirty-four hard days to the Guring La, 80 miles from Lhasa.

The scenery was as bleak and desolate as anything we had ever seen. The wide flat dreary plateau was covered with snow—the fine weather broke, and arctic weather set in with snowfalls and strong north winds. Average day temperatures were less than — 20° Centigrade (36° Fahrenheit below freezing-point), and Harrer developed

[1] Aufschnaiter was also on that expedition.

frost-bite. We were informed that 'to the east, there are many passes, but no Khampas' while 'to the north, there are many Khampas, but no passes' (*Khampa* is the local word for robber), and as we marched north we found this to be true. Being, of course, unarmed, we had some narrow escapes.

The nomad inhabitants who often sheltered us at nights in their tents were friendly and hospitable. Their chief occupation during the winter months seemed to be cooking and eating meat at all hours of the day in every form. For the most part they eat wild animals rather than sheep.

When we asked our way to Lhasa people were still inclined to point us on to China, but prices had been much higher than we had expected, and there was no question of going to China. Even Lhasa was doubtful.

Part of the way we travelled with a yak caravan returning from Kailas, and at a settlement called Trazang we met an official. After laborious perusal of our two-year-old *lamyig* he seemed to be satisfied and arranged a guide for us. We left him next day and went on in snowdrift and strong wind to Nyatshang, where we should have liked to spend New Year, but we ran into a high official travelling with several hundred loads, and he offered to take us on with him and let us use the Government transport for a small fee. From the Dam La we had our first view of the Nyenchhenthanglha Peak, one of the mighty landmarks of the Tibetan uplands, and in Lhölam our gallant yak, who by now was completely exhausted, was stolen from us in the night.

On 4th January, over the high Guring La, where we joined a much-used route from the western gold-fields and descended to the plain on which Lhasa stands, we said farewell to that endless inhospitable land, the Changthang *nyinje mepa*, the 'pitiless' as it is called in Tibetan legend. From it we have brought many memories of unexpected adventure, and the kindness of quiet, stolid people.

The total expenses for the two of us for 21 months had been 2,000 rupees (£150). On 15th January 1946 we arrived in Lhasa, our sheepskin coats in tatters, almost barefoot, with one tola of gold sewn into my rags, one and a half rupees in our pockets, and all our belongings on a donkey.

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