

THE  
HIMALAYAN  
JOURNAL

RECORDS OF THE HIMALAYAN CLUB

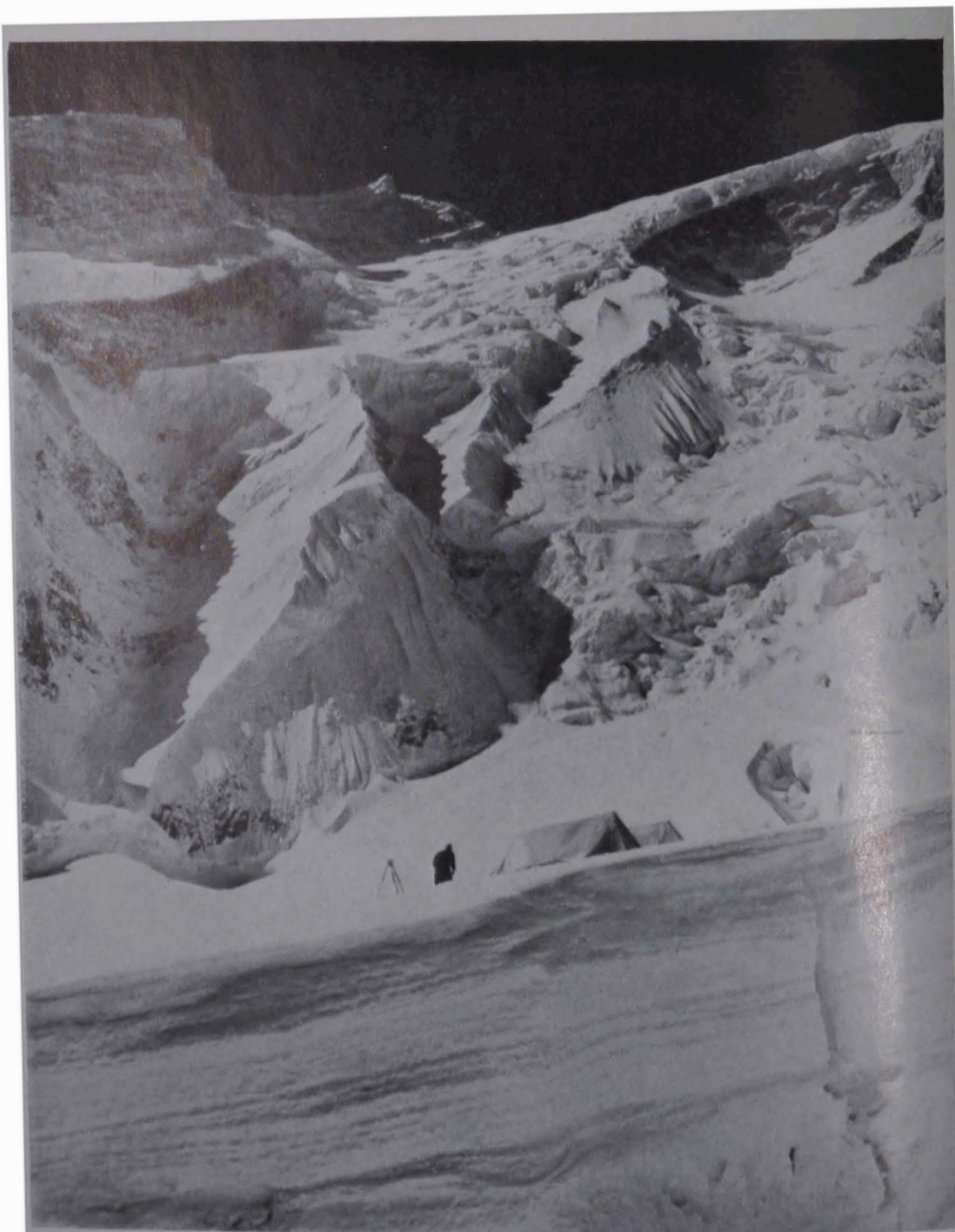
*Edited by* H. W. TOBIN

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*Annapurna. Camp II*

*Above, the rock face of the Faucille (Sickle), below, the summit slopes*

*Photograph by G. Rebuffat*

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H I M A L A Y A N  
J O U R N A L  
RECORDS OF THE HIMALAYAN CLUB

EDITED BY  
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.'*

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## EDITORIAL

THE year 1950 was a record year for mountaineering in High Asia, and no less than four major expeditions have provided material for a volume comparable in robustness with some of its pre-war predecessors. We are deeply grateful to the Club Alpin Français and Fédération Française de la Montagne, the Schweizerische Stiftung für Alpine Forschungen, the Norsk Tinde Klub, and the Scottish Mountaineering Club for having, through the leaders of the expeditions sponsored by them, furnished us with such splendid copy. Thanks are also due to our Honorary Secretary for his article on extreme north-east Sikkim, a region which, though reasonably easy of access from Calcutta, has been somewhat neglected in these pages. Also to our regular and valued contributor, Schomberg, to Professor Graham-Brown, F.R.S., Editor of the *Alpine Journal*, for his ready co-operation, to Leeson for his maps, and to our voluntary stenographers, without whose help the *Journal* would have been considerably delayed. And we thank, personally, René Dittert for his narrative and pictures of the third post-war Swiss Expedition which has added much to our knowledge of Kangchenjunga's western and northern outliers. The facts of the tragedy last December on Nanga Parbat have been briefly told, but the narrative of that expedition must, for political reasons, await publication in vol. xvii where we are also promised an article by Tilman on his recent doings in Nepal (including a visit to Sola Khumbu and the nearest, so far, inspection of the southern approaches to Everest) while either Tissieres or Berrill will write of their success on Abi Gamin. Although some economy has been effected by sharing the cost of illustrations of joint interest with the *Alpine* and *Scottish Mountaineering Journals*, the present and of course the future *Journals* will be more expensive to produce than their predecessors.

In a former editorial a somewhat gloomy view was taken of prospects for coming years, but this was proved wrong in the event. It is, however, only right to say now that for political and other reasons there can be, apart from the French venture in Garhwal, but little doing in High Asia. But for 1952 certain plans are afoot which, if they materialize, should give us some good copy for vol. xvii.



## ANNAPURNA MAURICE HERZOG

*We are most grateful to the Club Alpin Français and the Fédération Française de la Montagne for permitting us to make use of this story in the Himalayan Journal. The copyright of the narrative with its illustrations is the property of the F.F.M. and its reproduction is not permitted.*

*France as a nation is still young in Himalayan experience, having launched only one expedition prior to 1950. This was the Karakoram venture of 1936 under M. Henry de Segogne. The C.A.F. and the F.F.M., both under the Presidency of M. Lucien Devies, agreed that this must be remedied and decided to organize an expedition for 1950, with the object of conquering, for the first time in history, an 8,000-metre peak. A strong Himalayan Committee was formed, including of course de Segogne, and a team was picked from the cream of French mountaineers. Practically the whole inception had been that of Devies, and he would seem to be the obvious choice as leader, but he had, apparently, determined from the beginning that he would be in a stronger position to obtain all that was required and generally be able to further the interests of the expedition if he delegated the executive command to another. He picked the right man in Maurice Herzog.*

*During the three months of preparation careful study was made of the methods employed by thirty expeditions in High Asia. A most important conclusion arrived at was that, generally, too much time had been spent on the mountain itself, so they decided that the high camps must be pitched, the attempt made, and the evacuation completed with the least possible delay. They hoped in this way to minimize the adverse effect of foul weather and that the physical and moral deterioration inseparable from waiting at high altitudes could be avoided. Under Herzog this plan was carried out with true French élan. The actual time taken over probably the most rapid attack ever made on a mountain of comparable height was only six days. The only shadow cast on this splendid achievement is that so heavy a price was paid by the two who reached the summit: Herzog has lost all his fingers and toes, and Lachenal all his toes.*

*The Himalayan Club has already sent congratulations to them on being created Chevaliers of the Legion of Honour. We now desire to congratulate M. Lucien Devies, Dr. Oudot, and M. Marcel Ichac, the Karakoram veteran, on the same well-deserved honour.—ED.*

**T**HE Himalayas: the highest and loveliest mountains in the world! To us they were a dream—unattainable—and therefore always to remain a dream—and then an expedition was agreed on and equipped and we were asked to take part in it.

As our plane took off from Le Bourget my companions and I, in spite of the sadness of leave-taking, felt a sense of relief, for the last-minute preparations had been exciting and harassing. We had only one thought in mind, to sleep and recuperate from the strain of the last few days. Oudot, I remember, slept the whole way from Le Bourget to India. We stopped at Karachi and Cairo, and on arrival

at Delhi were welcomed by M. Daniel Levi, the French Ambassador to India, and his staff.

On Monday, 4th April, our equipment, thanks to the intervention of the Indian Foreign Office and the efforts of the Embassy, was cleared through the Customs and taken to the station at Old Delhi for transportation to the railhead at Nautanwa. This job was handled by Schatz, Lachenal, and Terray, who spent a long tiring day at Old Delhi Station surrounded by a crowd of dirty porters wearing a sort of uniform, once white but now ranging from grey to black, with red turbans.

The rest of the expedition left next day by air for Lucknow. When I saw three tall, proud, bearded Sikhs enter the D.C.3 I could hardly believe that they were the crew, but I soon found that, trained as they were by the R.A.F. with whom they fought during the war, their standard of flying left nothing to be desired. At Lucknow we rejoined our friends and arranged for all our gear to be taken by coolies to the narrow-gauge railway which runs to Nautanwa. On the way I tripped over a snake-charmer, but his 'children' fortunately raised no objection in spite of his mystic incantations. Eventually we reached Nautanwa, terminal of the Indian Railway and only a few miles from the Nepal Frontier. It was here that we first met the stocky little men with the yellow faces and iron muscles, the faithful Sherpas who were to link their fates with ours for several difficult months. Handshakes—smiles—their acquaintance was soon made.

Preparations were made here to cross the Indian-Nepalese Frontier, an imaginary line at the foot of the Siwaliks, first foothills of the Himalayas, and in jeeps and command cars we covered the wild malarial region where no native can live. We were much impressed by the magnitude of the forest fires we saw, and the indifference with which they were treated. In France they would have been national calamities—here they were absolutely nothing! In Butwal, at the foot of the hills, we were taken to an enclosure surrounded by leafy huts especially prepared for us by the Nepal Government. Among the authorities I noticed a man who spoke a few words of English and politely offered his umbrella to the 'Burra Sahib'. He wore a cap with a red band on it, and his shirt outside his shorts according to the custom of the country; his eyes were alive and sparkling with energy, and his face very pleasant. He turned out to be G. B. Rana, the Nepalese officer who was to accompany us there and back; in this country no introductions are made—it was thanks to his umbrella we made his acquaintance!

The equipment was quickly distributed and an inventory taken, and then the long caravan of 160 coolies, 8 Sherpas, 9 Frenchmen, and 6 tons of equipment set off for Tansing. Lachenal and Terray

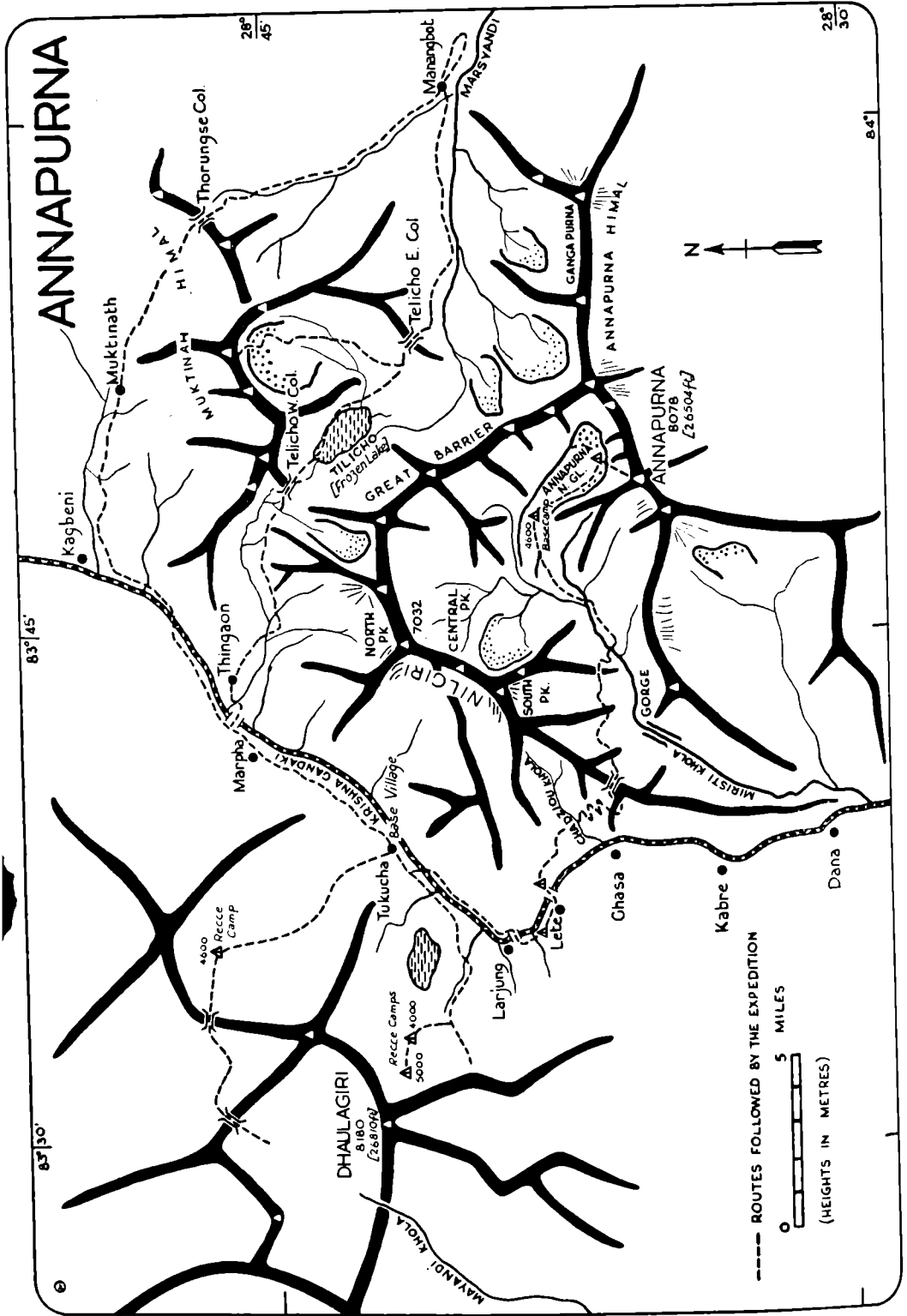
had set off ahead of us on two very sorry horses, but a few hours later we saw their Rosinantes furiously galloping back to their stables—their riders informed me flippantly that being mountaineers they preferred to walk. Behind me was the picturesque convoy belonging to G. B. Rana, who was on a spirited little horse, his violin and umbrella-carrier, his stable boy, his sergeant, his orderly, and finally his cook. When he felt so inclined he would take the precious instrument from its case, and while the unfortunate boy ran alongside his horse with the umbrella to protect him from the glare, he would play us popular Gurkha tunes with a quick rhythm, the charm of which we can remember still.

According to the Survey maps it is possible to see the Himalayas from the hill above Tansing, so we climbed it in all haste for our first glimpse of the peaks before the clouds covered them. We had heard so much about the Himalayas—our compatriots with the 1936 expedition had described the grandeur and beauty of these extraordinary mountains—and we had learnt a lot from Himalayan writers, with detailed and accurate descriptions. But they far surpassed all we had imagined; far away, emerging from the mists, was this magnificent wall of sparkling, glittering, icy peaks, and the unique sight thrilled us and sped us on our way.

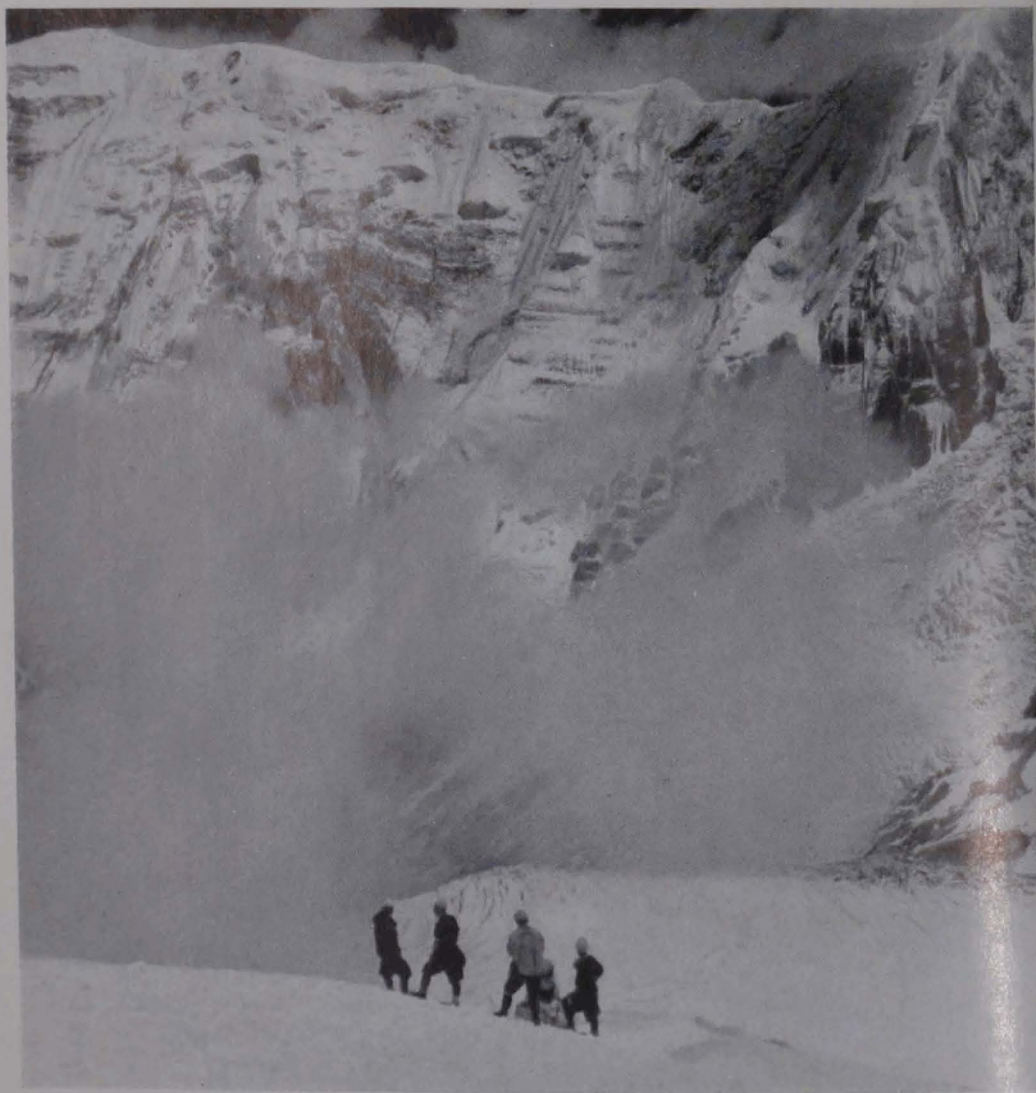
For two days our caravan wended its undulating way towards Tukucha. One day we came upon a Nepalese wedding; while the friends of the groom pretend to carry the bride away in a litter covered with rich red and green brocade, the bridegroom dances a few yards away to the wild, rhythmic clamour of the local band—he dances for hours, until the spectators leave or he falls to the ground, tired out!

On 22nd April we came to the immense alluvial plain of the Kali-Krishna-Gandaki which winds through a positive desert of stones, a parched but picturesque locality. Here we saw, for the first time, the awe-inspiring slopes of Dhaulagiri, a superb pyramid towering above us. Knowing we had come to try to conquer it, I hardly dared look it in the face. We sighted Tukucha from afar, a flat, apparently deserted village—as we approached we could see hundreds of prayer-flags flying. After a rapid tour we decided to pitch camp near the Buddhist Temple.

We now gave ourselves until the 15th May as an outside limit to explore and reconnoitre, and to assess the possible routes in both the Dhaulagiri and Annapurna massifs. We were still overwhelmed by the immense scale of the mountains, as the fantastic and inaccessible 4,500-m. faces of the Nilgiris were towering above us. The smallest reconnaissance would take several days and would almost be an expedition in itself, so we decided to visit the massifs in groups of two







*La Grande Barrière*

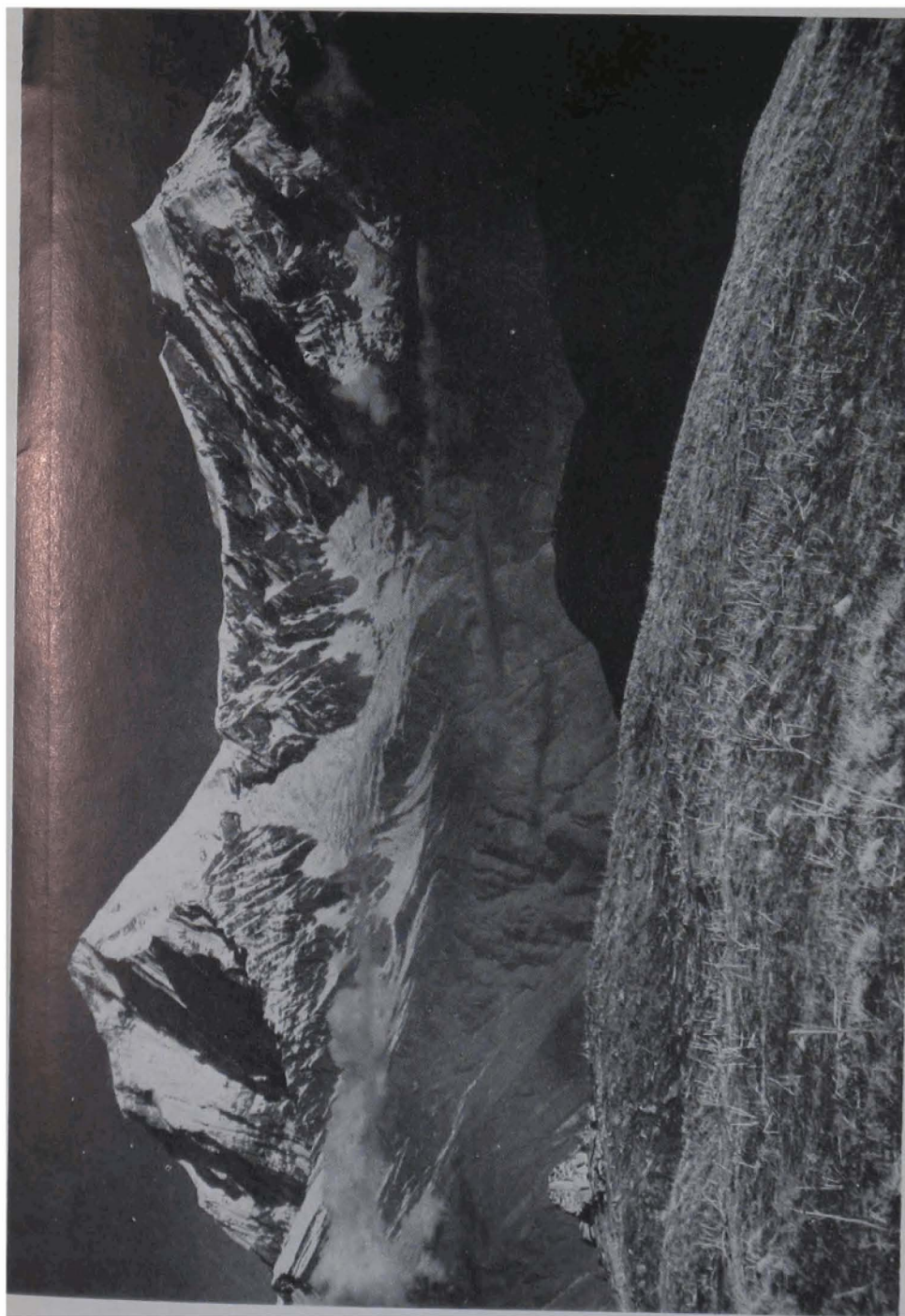
or three, and thus during this first somewhat thankless period, which was nevertheless rich in results, we managed to explore the north and east flanks of Dhaulagiri and the north and east flanks of Annapurna. During the next week we reviewed our discoveries: an unknown valley spread out before us north of Dhaulagiri; the high valley of Miristi-Khola, key to the approaches of Annapurna; the double col of Tilicho, embracing, like Mont Cenis, a 5-km. long lake—in the end we had a fair idea of the district. The topographical information had been very vague and in some cases inaccurate, so we were really exploring new ground. The possibilities, according to my friends, were far from good; as the days passed we were nearing, at what seemed an incredible rate, the fateful day of 5th June, the normal start of the monsoon, which would put an end to all activities.

On 14th May we held our council of war, and each man expressed his own personal opinion of the possible routes he had seen. The decision was left to me. Dhaulagiri offered some possibilities of success, but even the Tibetan Lama advised us not to consider it but to try the other side. Responsibility for the lives of the party withheld me from exposing them on the tremendously long and jagged ridges where retreat would be impossible in the case of accident or bad weather. As to Annapurna, we knew the northern slopes were accessible, but apart from that, although we had hopes, we could not be sure that the Expedition could find a way up: we thought there were three possible routes—but in actual fact only the glacier route proved practicable. Anyway, Annapurna seemed to offer a chance of success, so we decided to make that our goal, and, as we did not want to put all our eggs in one basket and send the whole expedition off on what might prove disappointing, we compromised on a well-equipped reconnaissance which could, if necessary, become an actual attempt. The first party, Lachenal, Schatz, and Terray, therefore set off immediately along the Miristi-Khola for Annapurna, to be followed next day by Couzy, Rebuffat, and myself. The third party consisted of Ichac and Oudot with supplies of food and stores, and the fourth party were to leave only upon my orders if we decided to make an actual attempt.

The weather was bad and we marched for four days through cloud and snow over slippery ground, through wild vegetation where the Sherpas had to cut paths for us. We then reached Miristi-Khola where Schatz came to meet us; Lachenal and Terray were trying out the north-western spur of Annapurna. That evening they returned, tired but enthusiastic and encouraged by their day's work, which had reminded them of their successes in the Alps. They were convinced that the spur offered a reasonable chance and proposed to install several camps and attack at once. I calmed down this

enthusiasm a bit and decided the Base Camp should remain where it now was, nevertheless we carried three light tents when the six of us, next morning, set off to make a definite decision. Technical difficulties in the form of acrobatic rock-climbing soon started to worry me—they could, of course, be roped so that the loaded Sherpas could pass, but I foresaw further difficulties, identical to the problems on Dhaulagiri. Rebuffat and Lachenal descended quickly to reconnoitre the north glacier, while Terray and I continued along the spur to satisfy ourselves that there was no possibility at all there. At 6,000 metres after a difficult slope of ice thinly powdered with snow, we decided against it, and descended the dangerous slope *en rappel* using our pitons and our 5-mm. 5-nylon rope. Once on the easier slopes it was a race against time to get back to camp before dark, and plan an attack for next day by the other route. The evacuation of camp, gear, and stores was completed next morning by the members of the expedition and the Sherpas Sarki and Arjeeba, after which Terray and I, with Sarki, left to join Lachenal and Rebuffat who were investigating the northern glacier. A quick climb along the right-bank moraine and the flanks of the Great Barrier brought us to the higher plateau. Suddenly at the foot of an ice-cliff we saw our future Camp I, where our friends were impatiently waiting for us. From here the mountain looked terrific—a mass of precipices, immense icy walls, and sharp ridges converging at the summit ridge. We were overwhelmed by this marvellous but awe-inspiring sight—tiny as we were, we proposed to scale these tremendous heights. The avalanches rumbling continuously and the grandeur of what we called the Great Barrier added to the impressiveness of the scene. We were decided as to the best route, all four of us preferred the one which took us to the summit most quickly; the probable route was as follows: a large plateau, several kilometres wide, a spine of mixed rock and ice which appeared to lead to another small plateau (which was actually much larger than it appeared to be from below)—from there the best possible route across the very steep crumbling snow slopes, a labyrinth of ice-walls, large transverse crevasses, and ridges where we anticipated we should find difficulties, and then finally, the tricky glacier, shaped like a sickle, which led to the highest summit yet reached by man. Now all that remained was to put our plans into practice.

I sent an order back to Tukucha: 'We have a chance of success if we do not waste a day, or even an hour.' This was explained to Sarki in sign language. He was the strongest, most faithful and devoted of all our Sherpas. He knew well that four days separated us from Tukucha, but he realized the need for haste—indeed on Sarki largely depended the success of our plans. With a broad grin he assured us





he would do his best and we were sure of it. I learnt afterwards that instead of taking four days to cover the distance, he had only taken a day and a half, for he had run day and most of the night the whole way to Tukucha. The Expedition was extremely grateful to him, and we were able to show our gratitude when we returned to Darjeeling.

We had no time to lose, and by common agreement set off at once with loads of 15 to 20 kilos each to establish Camp II with two tents and a certain amount of stores at about 6,000 metres at the foot of Annapurna. Spread out in single file across the vast plateau of the northern glacier we sweltered and felt stifled; in the centre of this circus the sun shone straight down on us, and the rays seemed to strike the snow-walls around and then glance back to concentrate on us. I can still feel that heat! Lachenal, who was very ingenious always, made two white hoods from a bag and he and Rebuffat looked like members of the Klu Klux Klan. They assured us that these did protect them. Terray and I preferred a thick coating of anti-sunburn cream. There seemed to be no air in this furnace and we longed to gain height and leave our Turkish bath. At 6,000 metres our loads seemed terribly heavy, and it took all our will-power to overcome lassitude. We had no Sherpas, for we had advanced too quickly for them to have reached us from their camp yet, but we all felt that on our efforts that day largely depended the success of the expedition. The monsoon was approaching relentlessly, and each day was of utmost importance—what mattered our efforts if we could win in the end?

At last we came to the plateau which we had seen from below: it was broad and roomy. It was hard to find a site completely sheltered from that perpetual Himalayan danger, the avalanche, so for that night we contented ourselves with comparative security. We put down our load. The view was really indescribable. Lost in the middle of ice and snow, amid the perpetual thundering of avalanches, we were surrounded by an extraordinary circle of peaks and ridges of over 7,000 metres. Close at hand was a jagged arête which we christened the 'Cauliflower Ridge'—then the north-west spur which we had tried out a few days earlier; in the distance, Dhaulagiri, a powerful pyramid, towering above the surrounding mountains; nearer, the inaccessible Nilgiris, their icy heads held high; farther to the right, the Great Barrier which I had already seen on a previous reconnaissance, the sides of which drop perpendicularly to the basin of the upper Miristi-Khola and our Base Camp; behind us, although the bad perspective was not flattering, Annapurna in all his majesty.

Camp II was quickly pitched. It was to be the advance Base Camp for the attacking parties, for it was only above it that any technical difficulties started. The plan of campaign had now to be settled and

was not easy. I had to consider the gear at hand, the problem of health, the difficulties and dangers, and above all the very limited time at our disposal. Our best manner of splitting forces seemed to be into three groups. Terray and two Sherpas, myself and two Sherpas, and thirdly Couzy, Lachenal, Rebuffat, and Schatz. While Terray and myself, with our Sherpas, went up and down, carrying and pitching the tents which were now at Camp II, our four friends were to go from camp to camp without Sherpas installing at each stage the gear they had themselves carried. This seemed to me the quickest and surest method.

In four days the camps were pitched, although the slopes turned out steeper than we had thought and the seracs were so close together and on such a large scale that we often had to climb over them. Handholds, steps for our feet in the vertical, sometimes overhanging icefalls; this was a technique with which we were all familiar, but of course it took a lot of time and at this height a lot of effort too. Nylon ropes fixed at these difficult passages helped the Sherpas along with their loads. Conditions were not out to help. We sank into the soft snow to our waists and it took hours to gain 100 metres, pulling each foot out in turn with our hands before we could make the next step forward. Pickaxes would hardly hold in the soft snow. We led turn about, and our great annoyance was that the weather deteriorated about 2 o'clock every day, and the snow nullified all our efforts. Terray's endurance was quite remarkable. He was the strong man of the party and very popular with the Sherpas. We felt our stock with them was very high—we were always in the lead and they would only take over if we ordered them to—we once asked Pansy if he would like to scale an ice-wall, but he smiled broadly and said politely: 'No, thank you, for Sahib only.'

At Camp III, pitched in a crevasse blocked with powder snow, the parties arrived exhausted. The Sherpas, though accustomed to high altitudes, always had bad headaches over 6,500 metres. The Sahibs reacted in different ways, according to temperament. Some spent restless feverish nights with shocking headaches which we soothed with medicine Oudet had distributed. Camp life is hard. We spent the afternoons pitching camp and deciding what we would take with us the following day. Appetites fell and it took all our will-power to make ourselves eat a little. In the evenings we took an incredible number of pills, vitamin B, vitamin C, aspirin, and sedative; with this assortment in my stomach I felt I had done my duty, and made sure my friends had taken all theirs too! In the higher camps Terray and I distributed pills to all the Sherpas, for they had even worse headaches than ours and could swallow nothing.

Returning to Camp II for the second time I decided that Lachenal,

who was improving every day, should come with me, and that Rebuffat, who had a touch of the sun, should wait one day for Terray. Couzy and Schatz would follow the day after that. At last this was real assault. The first rope available, Lachenal and myself, left for the summit. Couzy, Rebuffat, Schatz, and Terray were to be in support. It took a whole day to go from one camp to the other, so if all went well, 3rd June would be the day. Angtharkay, our faithful Sirdar, and his pupil Ang Dawa accompanied our rope. It seemed to me that the Sirdar's place was with the leading party; his experience would be invaluable if any big decisions had to be made. His courage and perseverance were indisputably in his favour. He and Ang Dawa, the favourite and the smallest, who had been very valuable during previous reconnaissances and who looked up to Angtharkay as to a god, were the ideal Sherpas to accompany us. Rebuffat and Terray had the Sherpas they knew best—Pansy, who after Angtharkay had the most experience, and his brother Aila.

We reached Camp III without much trouble by a route which I now knew well, having covered it twice. Camp IV was struck and carried over very steep slopes and along the long sickle ridge. Our Sherpas found it sticky going—we often found patches of sheer ice covered by several inches of rotten snow. The new Camp IV which we called Camp IV *bis* was pitched in the shelter of a serac at the beginning of the Sickle glacier in what seemed to us the most favourable site. Alas that we could not foresee that the icy wall which protected us so well would prove the disastrous screen on our return which prevented us from finding our tents. We were at 7,000 metres that day and Angtharkay and Ang Dawa returned immediately to the old camp IV to fetch the one tent left there and come up at dawn. We could then—all of us—spend the night at Camp IV *bis* or Camp V.

2nd June was fine and we prepared tea and waited for Angtharkay's return—we could eat nothing but nougat, which luckily still tasted good. Our Sirdar arrived late, having had some difficulty on the slope in spite of the fact that it was frozen so early in the morning. Our aim was to establish Camp V half-way to the top by a rocky spine which we had noticed from Camp I. The snow was deep and progress tiring; the slope was so steep we were afraid of starting an avalanche at every step. A long traverse to the left which I had planned out, then a difficult climb in a sort of thalweg led to the future camp. This thalweg had looked fairly easy from below but now appeared horribly steep. Several ice-walls had to be climbed, but they did not need roping, and were surmounted by step-cutting; we gained height gradually. The cauliflower ridge was at our feet—the Nilgiris, until now above us, lay below. Beyond the Great Barrier

we could guess at the Tibetan plateau. Only Dhaulagiri looked down on us. We stopped often and took it in turns to lead. Above we could see the rocky spine, our aim for the day: we hoped to find a platform up there large enough to be able to pitch our tent in safety for the night.

At these heights perception loses much of its acuteness. I am very conscious of it personally—I find it difficult to think of several things at once. Therefore I concentrated on one—the sole object—to reach the rocky spine which already seemed so close. But when, more tired than ever before, we reached the rocks, disappointment lay in wait for us; they were very steep and covered with a shell of ice without even a crack in it. No platform, no hope of putting up our little tent, our ‘coffin’—the place was most inhospitable and was to give us some of the worst memories of our lives. However, we resigned ourselves to making a platform in the steep slopes and Sherpas and Sahibs worked together. A great deal of snow had to be cleared and again we wondered at the endurance of the Sherpas. Eventually the tent was pitched on the brink of the abyss, where it collected all the snow which drifted down the slope, and there we had to spend the night, made fast to a piton in the chalky rock. I asked Ang Dawa and Angtharkay if they would like to stay on with us; I felt I could not order them to. There are times when the leader’s authority must bow to human reactions. Angtharkay said that though he would very much have liked to come to the top with us, nevertheless he preferred to return to Camp IV. His feet were a bit frozen and it would take him all night to rub them back to circulation. Soon our faithful Sherpas were but dots on the horizon and we were alone. We made some tea with difficulty and dutifully swallowed our pills—food of any sort was impossible. This was our last night, our vigil before the assault. Fully dressed we slid into our sleeping-bags, taking our boots in with us to keep them supple for the morning.

It was a horrible night. The wind blew and snow drifted, piling up against the tent. As the night wore on I was half buried by it, longing for dawn to escape the stifling mass, and wondering if I could stand it till the time came to start. Lachenal at my side was suffering different torments: he kept thinking that the tent, with us still in it, would be hurled over the precipice, even though he knew well that we were moored fast to the rock. By the time dawn broke at last we were thoroughly exhausted and neither of us felt strong enough to make a hot drink. It took all our will-power to put on our boots which, in spite of having been in our sleeping-bags, were frozen hard. Before leaving we put a few things in our rucksacks. I took a tube of condensed milk, some nougat, a pair of socks, and my movie camera. (I tried out the latter but unfortunately it would not work,



so although we had taken shots up to 7,500 metres we could not cover the rest of the climb in spite of all the care we had taken.)

We left at 6 o'clock, Louis Lachenal and I, to launch the final attack on the summit. We decided not to rope up for it would have been useless on the vast Sickle glacier, which, albeit steep, had no crevasses. It was fine but cold. Our very light crampons bit well into the patches of hard snow. Occasionally we broke through the crust and sank deep into very soft powder snow. After several hundred metres I stopped to look at the mountains round us, while Lachenal took off one sock that was making his boot too tight. We were higher than them all, save the gigantic Dhaulagiri. Below us stretched out the land of our reconnaissances which was so well imprinted on our minds. It all seemed strangely unreal and I felt I was living in a private world, although my thoughts were perfectly clear.

We took it in turns to lead, for marching at this altitude was very tiring. We could by now see the summit ridge and could make out a corridor to the extreme right which, although steep, seemed to lead to the top. We made for it. Hours passed, but we were not conscious of the passing of time. We seemed to be making good progress as compared to a man climbing Mont Blanc and my heart was full, for I felt nothing could keep victory from us. Then the last slope neared, as in a dream. It was steep and I was grateful for our crampons, which helped us to march fairly easily over the dangerous terrain towards our corridor—the snow was fairly hard. Lachenal and I, close together, panting and making frequent halts, kept looking up to know how much more of this purgatory had to be endured. The memory of the last hours is blurred and only certain incidents stand out in my mind. I well remember reaching the ridge and, after a traverse to the left, attaining the peak.

It seemed incredible that we were at last treading this snow after all our efforts to get there. Lachenal, in spite of the inner elation he felt but did not show, wanted to descend immediately as he could feel his feet beginning to freeze. We looked quickly down the precipitous southern slopes; I could not see the bottom, for a few clouds were floating several kilometres below us; I hardly knew if I were in heaven or on earth and my mind kept turning to all those men who had died on high mountains, and to friends in France. Our moments up there were quite indescribable, with the realization before us that we were actually standing on the highest peak in the world to be conquered by man. The green valley of Chamonix where I had spent my youth, at the foot of the lovely Mont Blanc massif, seemed far away. In those days the 4,800 metres had impressed me greatly and I revered those who had climbed them as heroes—and now, 8,000 metres! It seemed incredible and yet there I was!

We descended to the highest rocks on the summit, 2 metres below the actual peak ridge, to take photographs of the flags and pennants which we had brought with us. At that time these actions were a tremendous effort—the fixing of the flags was difficult—we could not find stones to make a cairn with—everything was frozen in—the setting of the camera required a great deal of concentration; I hurried on to get it all finished and return to the land of men. Lachenal had already left when I took a little condensed milk and repacked my rucksack. One last look at the summit which represented our joy, our glory, and our consolation, and I hurried to the corridor where Lachenal was—from there it was to be a veritable rush back to Camp V, which we had left that morning. As I left I pulled on my gloves, but suddenly one of them dropped and fell gently but unhesitatingly to the bottom; I watched it helplessly, knowing the catastrophe it meant—unfortunately it never occurred to me that I had a pair of socks in my rucksack. Pickaxe in hand, I lengthened my stride and hurried across the long traverse to try to catch up with Lachenal. The weather had deteriorated and the wind blew hard. Ugly clouds were surrounding us. The monsoon had arrived and our race against death had begun. In the distance in a gap in the clouds I saw Camp V, but the mists soon covered it again. Lachenal, still ahead, could be seen 50 metres in front of me through the mist till he reached the ice-slope just before the tent, and there I lost sight of him. Snow was now falling and it was bitterly cold. I reached camp and was thrilled to see—not one, but *two* tents. Rebuffat and Terray were there waiting for us. I shouted and asked where Lachenal was, but Lachenal had not arrived. . . . Terray shook me by the hand and noticed it was white and hard as wood. I had not even noticed it on the way down. He looked after me like a brother and rubbed it while I told him how sorry I was he had not been with us on the summit, he who had done so much to help the whole expedition; his reply warmed me: ‘You got to the top, Maurice, so we all got to the top.’

There was a shout outside and Terray jumped up and rushed out. It was Lachenal. A quarter of an hour later he brought him in. He had fallen about a hundred yards down the slope and had been very lucky in stopping his fall with his crampons.

So began our second night at 7,500 metres. Terray and Lachenal were in the tent we had had the night before, Rebuffat and myself in the other. Another horrible night, though the presence and devotion of our friends was a tremendous comfort. Snow fell again and piled up between the tents and the slope. Half-way through the night I was again buried, my hands over my lungs to give them breathing-room. The weather went from bad to worse, clouds covered us, and snow

fell relentlessly. We could not delay. We must get down as quickly as possible to lose height and find our fresher companions, who would look after us. When day came we started the descent. It was of course impossible to find our tracks, and we could only see 10 metres ahead of us. We tried to identify ice-walls and went on down, knowing that soon we should have to turn left to commence the traverse down to Camp IV. It was still early then, but we searched desperately for the tents the rest of the day, ploughing our way through snow, waist-deep. Terray, who was the freshest, led most of the way, and in order to see the dangers that lay ahead of us the better, took off his glasses. He paid for it next day by complete snow-blindness.

Night came and we still could not find Camp IV. We seemed to have visited every serac in the region, for it could have been hidden behind any of them. The mist was opaque and snow falling ceaselessly, the ground was always treacherous. Eventually we had to resign ourselves to bivouacking, although all four of us knew full well what a night spent in those conditions would mean. The best we could do was to find a crevasse in which we could shelter. Lachenal went several metres ahead to the end of the rope to search for one, and then suddenly disappeared before our eyes. Worried and alarmed, we approached the hole, when to our relief a sepulchral voice came from below and told us that the *bottom* of the crevasse, all in all, would be as good as we could find. So in turn we descended into a sort of underground room, several feet square, which was to be our sleeping apartment that night. I felt it might also very probably be our tomb!

It was impossible to eat and we had nothing to drink as we got ready for a terrible night. Lachenal could feel his feet hardening and my four limbs were freezing. Terray rubbed us both hard. Rebuffat made himself as comfortable as possible although his feet were worrying him too. Terray had brought a sleeping-bag which he generously shared with us—six feet fighting for a place in this cramped nest! Rebuffat put his feet on us to try to protect them a little; perched on the little camera I waited for the hours to pass. I did not even shiver. My senses seemed to be clear. I resented the hellish situation we were in, and I thought it very likely that night would be our last.

Dawn glimmered at last through the hole over our heads, to be followed immediately by an avalanche of powder snow which completely enshrouded us. A sinister portent. But it hardly worried us; we were already in pretty dire straits. It was essential we should escape from our prison, and Rebuffat climbed painfully up the gully we had descended the night before, and fixed a rope by which Terray clambered out, followed by the bare-footed Lachenal. I stayed below, for everything had been deeply buried in the snow, and

above all we had to find Lachenal's boots and mine, that had been taken off when our feet were rubbed. Without them this would indeed be our last resting-place. Some of the photographic equipment turned up, though the little camera was never found. After a feverish search in the snow, with bare feet and bare hands, for over an hour, I unearthed and sent them up. Then I too climbed out, digging my toe-nails in the walls of fresh snow. Outside it was marvellously fine—our last day was to be fine—the mountain had taken on the strangest, most mysterious colouring—she was darker than usual and ominously calm. Lachenal wanted to leave at once in his bare feet; he had become feverish and was rambling a little. Terray was blind. Rebuffat was blind. Lachenal's feet, and my hands and feet, were frozen. I looked around and realized Camp IV was on our left, not on our right, but we could not grope our way there. To start with we had to get out boots on. Lachenal succeeded, but even with everybody's help my wooden and swollen feet could not be pushed into mine. Our last moments seemed to have come and I told Terray to take the others down. He would not leave me. We all shouted loudly, hoping to attract the attention of Schatz and Couzy in Camp IV, but got no reply. With a terrific effort Terray got my boots on and we were ready to go, although more dead than alive. Annapurna was avenging her defeat. Mists were covering the top of the Sickle glacier. Suddenly, only 200 metres from us—I could hardly believe my eyes—a miracle appeared. Schatz was there, saw us, and came towards us as quickly as he could in the waist-deep snow. Our troubles seemed ended with his arrival. He came to us, and without a word embraced me. I told him we were not up to much but that we had reached the top. His presence and friendship warmed us, and gave us back the will to live which we seemed to have lost. The mountain cleared and became lighter—once again I noticed the sun and the blue sky. Life had begun again. It was wonderful just to be near Schatz, who symbolized for me at that moment the need of man for man, the joy that wipes out misery, the miracle that saves distress. We are too blind to realize what true charity and humanity mean. I learnt it that day.

Saved though we were we still had to be got down. I had to be towed behind Schatz back to Camp IV, where Couzy was. He tried to make me eat, but I had only one desire, to get to Oudot at Camp II and see what he could do to save my hands and feet. On a tight rope I descended the difficult ice-wall between Camp IV *bis* and Camp IV. At that hour of the day the snow was soft, and as my feet were of little use I let my body scrape through the snow, braking as much as possible. At Camp IV were our Sherpas, our good Sherpas that we thought we would never see again. They gave me a hot drink,

but all I wanted was to hurry down. I explained to Sarki and Aila that I was to go down between them on the rope, that I could not stand properly and that we must get to the Doctor-Sahib at Camp II. The descent began. We passed the large crevasse which blocked the whole glacier. The Sherpas went slowly and I asked them to hurry. We passed the ice-walls and I had to choose the way down, the way that could be taken with least risk.

It was midday. The sun was at its height and shone down on all the snow that had accumulated during the bad weather the day before. It was truly glorious and the colours were magnificent—but I could feel that the mountain was ready to crumble under the tremendous weight of top snow—I seemed to be able to feel her vibrating, shuddering and alive. Climbers often have this sixth sense that warns of impending danger, and it increased every minute until I could feel it in every pore. And then what I feared happened. The two Sherpas were ahead of me (and Rebuffat behind) when suddenly an entire slab fell away under their feet. I could see them being carried away and my instinct was to climb up quickly, quicker than the slab was falling. But it was inevitable, and I got carried away too. I shouted, hit the ice, wheeled round in the air, pirouetted, hit the ice again, shouted once more . . . the rope pulled and dragged me, I supposed to my death. But suddenly, like a condemned man when the platform is taken from under his feet and he finds himself hanging from the end of the rope, I found myself swinging over a vertical shaft of ice, at the bottom of which I could see a dizzy corridor running to the base. Hanging as I was with the rope round my head, arm, and leg, and of course face downwards, I was not exactly comfortable! I tried to improve my position by holding on to the ice where I could reach it. It was nice to be alive, but my left arm was hurt and I had no feeling in my hands; they might even be broken. I was afraid for my friends and shouted to warn them—then I felt something give on my rope apart from the naturally elastic nylon. I lay flat against the wall and looked up, and suddenly the head of Sarki appeared against the skyline. Three minutes later I was on the surface, looking at the mountains again. This time with a different eye. They did not seem to me as beautiful as before!

What ill fortune we had encountered in so short a time; the goddess of Annapurna—'goddess of the harvest'—she doesn't merit her name. She should have been called 'Kali, the beautiful but cruel'.

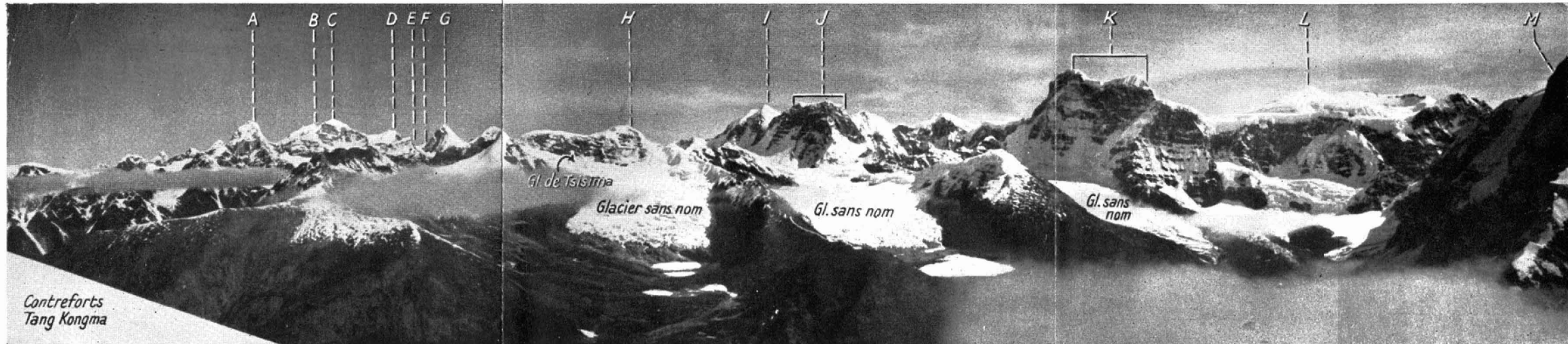
Rebuffat was unhurt; he only fell about 50 metres.

The descent continued: we reached the ice-walls. I could not stand at all and the question was, how was I to get down without using hands, feet, or crampons? Nevertheless it had to be done. The skin flaked off my hands and stuck to the ropes—my hands were so

terrible to look at that I hid them in a scarf. The descent seemed interminable; the Sherpas had not secured me properly and I kept slipping around, for I could no longer grip the ground. Below in the distance I could see men at Camp II and wondered if I could get there. The Sherpas seemed to understand and kept me very close to them. The last ice-slope was reached, and how my companions got down it without being pulled off by me, I just don't know. Two more Sherpas came up to meet us, Ichac and Oudot had sent them from Camp II. They were the good Phu Tharkay and a friend. They gave me a comforting drink and Phu Tarkay looked despairingly at me. I put my arm round his neck and rested my entire weight on him. It was good to know confidently that he had strength to support me. Angharkay steadied us behind, and so we crossed the last long plateau to Camp II where Oudot, Ichac, and Noyelle were anxiously awaiting us, and I handed myself over thankfully to their care. I was already lying in my tent with my eyes bandaged when the others arrived—Terray, Lachenal, Rebuffat, and the Sherpas. Annapurna was evacuated. No one remained on the mountain. We had beaten her, and I could lie back and think: the job has been finished; the struggle is over.

*Translated by* BARBARA TOBIN





*Nepal-Tibet frontier range from Lhonak, NE. Nepal*

- |                   |                           |                    |                    |
|-------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| A. Un-named peak. | D. Peak in Tibet.         | G. Peak in Tibet.  | K. The Outlier     |
| B. Nupchu         | E. Eastern spur of Chabuk | H. Dzanye          | L. Jongsang Peak   |
| C. Chabuk         | F. Chabuk La              | I-J. Lashar I & II | M. Spur of Drolimo |

*Photograph by R. Dittert*

# SWISS HIMALAYAN EXPEDITION, 1949

## NORTH-EAST NEPAL

RENÈ DITTERT

ON 18th March we left Switzerland by air for the Himalayas for the second successive year. Thirty hours later, in Calcutta, where the heat was terrific and the humidity intense, I picked up Rahul, who had been our liaison officer in Garhwal three years earlier. We went up to Darjeeling to enlist our Sherpas, several quite young but full of go and goodwill, with a leavening of older and well-trying men. We took on Pasang Lama as contractor and enrolled 200 coolies to carry our 4 tons of equipment and stores to base.

Returning to Calcutta via Kalimpong we disposed of the numerous diplomatic formalities attendant on our entry to north-east Nepal. This was a great relief, because in 1948 permission for Dhaulagiri had been refused us.

A dock strike delayed our stores in Colombo for three weeks, during which time the remaining members of our expedition joined us. These were Mme Annelies Lohner and Alfred Sutter of the 1947 Garhwal expedition, together with Dr. Wyss-Dunant of Geneva and two guides from Grindelwald, J. Pargätzi and A. Rubi.

It was not until 1st May that we were able to set out from Darjeeling, although to save time our stores and equipment had been specially packed in Europe in 66-lb. coolie loads, all ready for transportation. By 10th May we had reached Dzöngri, half-way to our intended base camp on the Kangchenjunga glacier. Two more stages took us over the Kang La, 16,680 feet, into Nepal and down to Tseram—leading several cases of snow blindness. Thence over the trying Mirgin La to the Char Chu valley and Kunza, with Jannu, the inaccessible 25,294-foot giant, towering up on our right hand. The next halt was at the hamlet of Kangbachen; the Vale of Kangbachen, though politically in Nepal, is ethnographically Tibetan. In fact only ninety years ago this part of Nepal was actually part of Tibet. The nineteenth day from Darjeeling found us at our base, Lhonak.

Here we established ourselves on a small alp, sheltered from the persistent west wind, between the Tsisima torrent and the moraine of the Kangchenjunga glacier.

After a few days' rest two reconnaissance groups set out to find what this vast region, much of it unexplored, could offer us in the way of possible ascents. One party, Mme Lohner, Sutter, and Rubi, went north towards the Chabuk La on the Nepal-Tibet frontier to

explore the triangle Drophmo, 23,300 feet, Jonsong peak, 24,416 feet, and Nupchu, *c.* 23,100 feet.

Pargätzi and I, with six Sherpas, went off in the opposite direction to examine the Ramtang glacier and the approaches to Kangbachen, 25,927 feet. We crossed the Kangchenjunga glacier and climbed over coarse dry grass alongside the Ramtang to a bivouac at 16,200 feet. Next day we crossed to the left bank and came to a semicircle of seracs averaging some 1,600 feet in height. The ice-fall was broken by a ledge, while the upper terrace was dominated by the immense sheer 6,000-foot face of Kangbachen, with its almost sheer flanks and its threatening hanging glaciers.

Uncertain of finding a site higher up, we camped at about 18,000 feet. It was unbearably hot inside the tent and the light was dazzling, but the moment the sun disappeared it froze hard, and that night the thermometer registered about 5 degrees Fahrenheit.

We left camp at about 8 a.m., intending to climb to the upper terrace, but on reaching the lower ledge we found that the only possible route was by way of a narrow couloir swept by avalanches and falling seracs. It would be dangerous, and for laden porters the risk would be unjustifiable, the more so because of their complete trust in us.

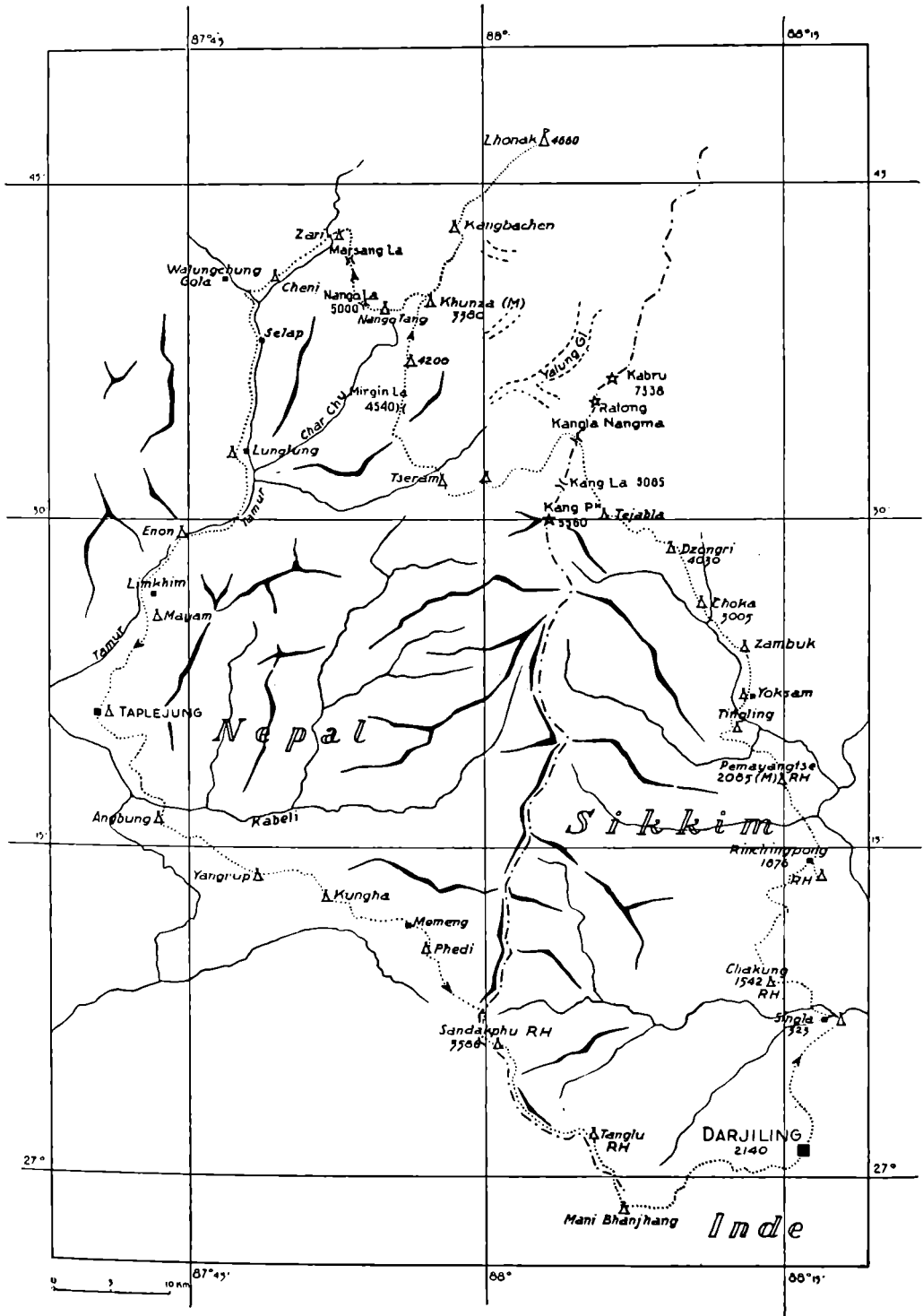
In any case access to Kangbachen from this side would be extremely problematical, even after reaching the higher terrace. This leads south-west to a col and from there up a steep crevassed snow-slope to the lowest point of the summit ridge. The ridge itself is about 2 miles long and, rising from 23,000 to 26,000 feet, presents a serious handicap, doubled by the difficulty of having to be sure of a retreat in case of bad weather. At the same time there seemed to be no technical difficulties.

We then returned to Lhonak.

#### PYRAMID PEAK (23,370 feet)

Situated on the main arête of the Nepal-Sikkim frontier, Pyramid peak is a colossal mountain; it is one of the loveliest in this portion of the Great Himalayan range.

Two previous attempts had been made, the first in 1926 by C. R. Cooke, Spencer Chapman, and J. B. Harrison, who, after ascending the Sphinx (22,890 feet), decided that the length and difficulty of the north-east arête were too great to be tackled then. In 1939 two Germans, Paidar and Schmaderer, with Grob, the Swiss, established a camp on the Langpo La with the intention of following the arête to the summit of the Pyramid itself. But the monsoon forced them to relinquish their plan. These two attempts were from bases in Sikkim.



On 27th May we left our Base Camp and Pargätzi and I went ahead to fix camps at Pangpema and Pangpegorma. Returning to Camp I, we rejoined Sutter and Dr. Wyss; Mme Lohner stayed at base as liaison and supply officer. A. Rubi, much to our regret, had to go back to Europe suffering from insomnia, a badly sunburnt face, and nervous exhaustion.

Again we made the wearisome ascent of the labyrinthine Ginsang glacier to Camp II on the West Langpo. After tea I went to ferret out a possible way through the seracs.

Next morning, in perfect weather, we started off through these strangely shaped ice-blocks and, thanks to my tracks of the previous evening, quickly attained a plateau which led us towards the steep faces of the Pyramid and the Sphinx. The Langpo La here forms a deep breach in the frontier ridge. We pitched Camp III there at about 21,000 feet, half burying the tents in snow to protect them from the wind. In front of us, 2 miles away, towered the Pyramid.

All night and all next day it blew and snowed and the temperature was below freezing-point. I had a bad headache and Gyalgen, the head Sherpa, managed to get himself drunk on methylated spirits! After a second tempestuous night it dawned clear, but the wind was so violent that we shifted the tents some 600 feet lower, and went down to Camp II to recover from the effects of the forty-hour storm.

The bad weather persisted until 4th June when, after a quiet night at the foot of the Langpo La, we managed to establish Camp IV on the north-eastern spur of the Sphinx at close on 22,000 feet. Three Sherpas, Gyalgen, Arjeeba, and Dawa Tondup, stayed with us, while Sutter took the others back to the Langpo La, while Pargätzi and I prepared tracks as far as the summit of the Sphinx. The view was superb. Orange-tinted mists drifted through the clear thin atmosphere and Everest, Makalu, and Lhotse stood out clearly on the western horizon. Sparkling peaks which stretched around us as far as the eye could see were a striking contrast to the sombre valleys.

We were up early that 6th June as there was a heavy day ahead of us. Unfortunately Dr. Wyss decided not to accompany us but to await our return at Camp IV. Even before leaving one of us had to take off his boots to rub his icy feet. Danger of frostbite, of course, is serious at these altitudes. The blood thickens and darkens and the number of red corpuscles decreases by about 9 millions to the cubic mm. at about 22,000 feet. Circulation to the extremities is so slow that they become cold quickly and are very hard to warm up again.

We left camp at 7 and climbed quickly to the Sphinx in the tracks we had made. We had to lose 350 feet of height in order to get to the col from which the north-east arête leads to the summit of the Pyramid. We had hoped to reach this ridge quickly, but high cornices

forced us down on to the fluted slopes above the West Langpo glacier. Gradually we worked our way back to the crest, only to be driven off it again by seracs. Mists crept insidiously over the mountain; the snow was heavy and balled in our crampons, making each step an effort. The slope became steeper, and on our right chunks of snow broke away and rolled down into the depths. Mercifully the mists hid the abyss from our sight, though from time to time a malicious gust of wind would lift the veil for an instant.

The gradient of the ridge was now about  $55^{\circ}$ , and again we were forced by cornices on to the almost sheer north face. All at once the pitch eased and we stood on the summit crest, about 80 yards from the top. We could hardly see it and were separated from it by a barrier of vertical spikes of frozen snow and ice. We would have had to have broken them down one after another—a titanic task at such an altitude, and it would have been a senseless undertaking as anyway the Pyramid had been conquered. We were overjoyed, despite the mist and storm which reminded us that we were at over 23,000 feet and that a mile and a half of arête separated us from our tents. The joy of conquering a Himalayan peak, however easy, always has to be paid for by hardship and fatigue. On this occasion the length of the climb and the distance covered, together with the scale of the difficulties we had encountered, had called for our utmost effort, and when we got back to camp we were all in. Our faces and nails were blue with exhaustion, and Dr. Wyss said we had reached the limit of our endurance.

Two days later, thirteen days after leaving Lhonak, we strolled into the Base Camp. The sky was blue, the earth was warm and fragrant with the scent of flowers, and the mountains were more splendid than ever. We were content.

#### TANG KONGMA PEAK (*c.* 20,500 feet)

After four days' rest, Pargätzi and I again took the long trail up the Kangchenjunga glacier. Our immediate aim was to establish a camp as high as possible, from which we would reconnoitre the unknown region on the right bank of the glacier. This consists of a broad spur which stretches for some 6 miles from our Base Camp at Lhonak to the highest point—Drohmo, 23,300 feet. Sutter had already deemed the north and north-west faces inaccessible. We wandered about for hours and finally camped by a muddy half-frozen pool. No sooner were our tents up than it began to rain, and then to snow. This lasted sixteen long hours.

Early next day I went out to find the clouds riven asunder, with patches of blue sky showing through. Kangchenjunga looked cold

and icy, and a heavy layer of snow covered the ground. Drohmo towered over 6,000 feet above us, and from where we stood we could see no promising approach. We worked obliquely along the mountain-side for two hours, and then, rounding a jagged, crumbling hump, we were astonished to see below us a deep little valley into which descended the glacier from the main ridge. We had found what we were looking for. By this route we would tackle Drohmo, and if, as I feared, we found it impracticable, we could transfer our attentions to another fine peak which rose from the same ridge on the other side of a snow-saddle.

We raced down the mountain, losing 3,000 feet in under half an hour, and fetched up, panting, in the meadow of Tang Kongma. Thanks to the torrent which roars down the valley, we found the exit between crumbling rock-faces. We gave the valley, peak, and glacier the same name—Tang Kongma, and so put this hitherto unknown spot on the map.

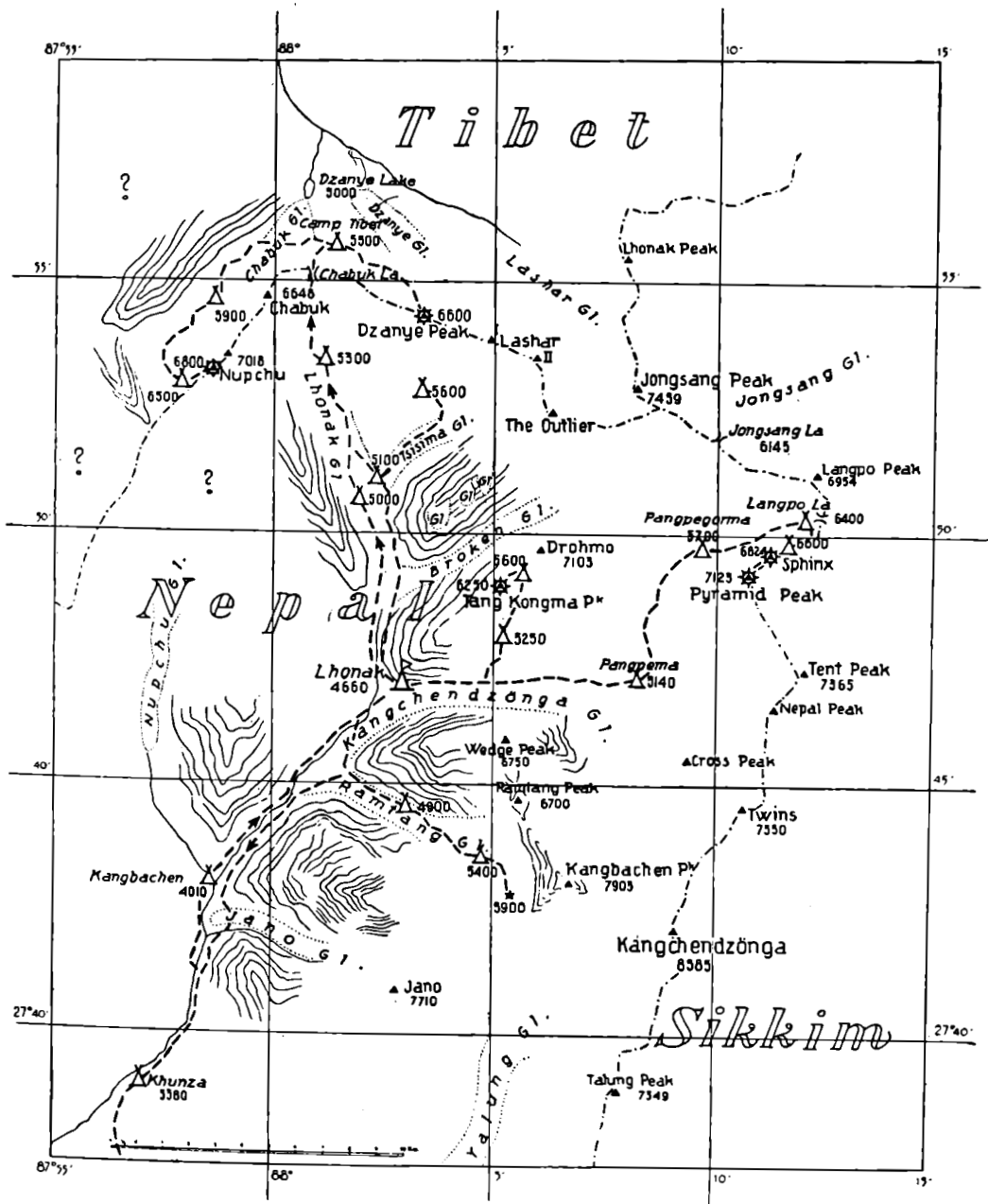
Three days later we returned and camped close to the glacier snout. Next day, after working through high ice-towers, we forced the ice-fall that gave access to the upper terrace. From here it was evident that Drohmo was unattainable, and we at once decided to tackle the Tang Kongma peak next day.

We established Camp II at about 18,000 feet and started off at 6 a.m. On the first rope were Sutter and Pargätzi, with Mme Lohner, while Dr. Wyss, Pasang, and I were on the second. The firm snow enabled us to move quickly and easily. We went straight up the pitches below the summit, by-passed a high serac, and then broke through on the summit crest. We reached the top at 10 o'clock. At last we had achieved a Himalayan ascent which was not killing, and which gave us a chance to enjoy to the full the unsurpassable view. Everest, Makalu, and Lhotse first drew our gaze, but many other peaks, less in stature but no less beautiful, enthralled and intrigued us. An endless chain of nameless peaks ran along the Tibetan frontier, an unknown and fascinating world which we counted ourselves fortunate to have chosen for our activities during the weeks to come.

One last look around, and we started down in the now dangerous soft snow on our way back to Base Camp. So we left the valley of Tang Kongma, with its glacier and dream peak, which had remained inviolate throughout the ages.

#### ATTEMPT ON NUPCHU (*c.* 23,160 feet)

Our activities on and about the Kangchenjunga glacier having come to an end, we could now turn our attention farther north, where the Nepal-Tibet frontier range is far less affected by the monsoon





than the Nepal–Sikkim border range. This is by reason of the height of the latter, which checks the monsoon clouds so that each succeeding chain of peaks is less affected as one proceeds north. In addition to this the winds sweeping down from Tibet too play their part. We thus avoided the monsoon conditions which had already become evident at Lhonak in the shape of strong winds, higher temperatures, and heavy showers.

From Tang Kongma peak we had studied the topography of this region, and then and there formed our plans for the next fortnight. It took a couple of days to rearrange the loads, with a continuous bustle between the various camps. Valuable help came from Khunza in the shape of five yaks which carried double loads up to Camp I.

On the morning of 20th June, leaving our Base Camp, we crossed the sand flats of the Tsisima and tackled the great frontal moraine of the Lhonak glacier, and then continued on up the right hand of the glacier to a small tarn, where we camped. The second day's march along the glacier was most unpleasant, but gradually the clouds thinned, the sky became clearer, and over Tibet it was blue. The mountains gradually appeared, but only one had a name—Chabuk. Opposite the camp and parallel to the glacier rose a powerful cliff, the lowest breach in which was the Chabuk col.

We began our reconnaissance next morning and crossed the glacier to the base of the rotten cliffs. Though we chose a route sheltered from stone chutes, nevertheless missiles whistled past our ears. But we safely reached the col. There are two different worlds, on either side of the frontier divide. On the one side crystalline mountains with jagged ridges and ragged slopes; on the other a region of rounded massifs, old, worn mountains—copper-hued, weather-eroded, swept by the unceasing west wind—Tibet.

We left one tent and some equipment, and went down to rejoin our friends at Camp II. Next day we all climbed to the wind-swept saddle. The descent on the Tibetan side was steep, through coarse loose snow, which entailed making deep tracks. We pitched Camp III above the Chabuk glacier at about 18,200 feet. The site, immediately below the pyramid Chabuk, seemed all right, but the harsh Tibetan climate soon made itself felt.

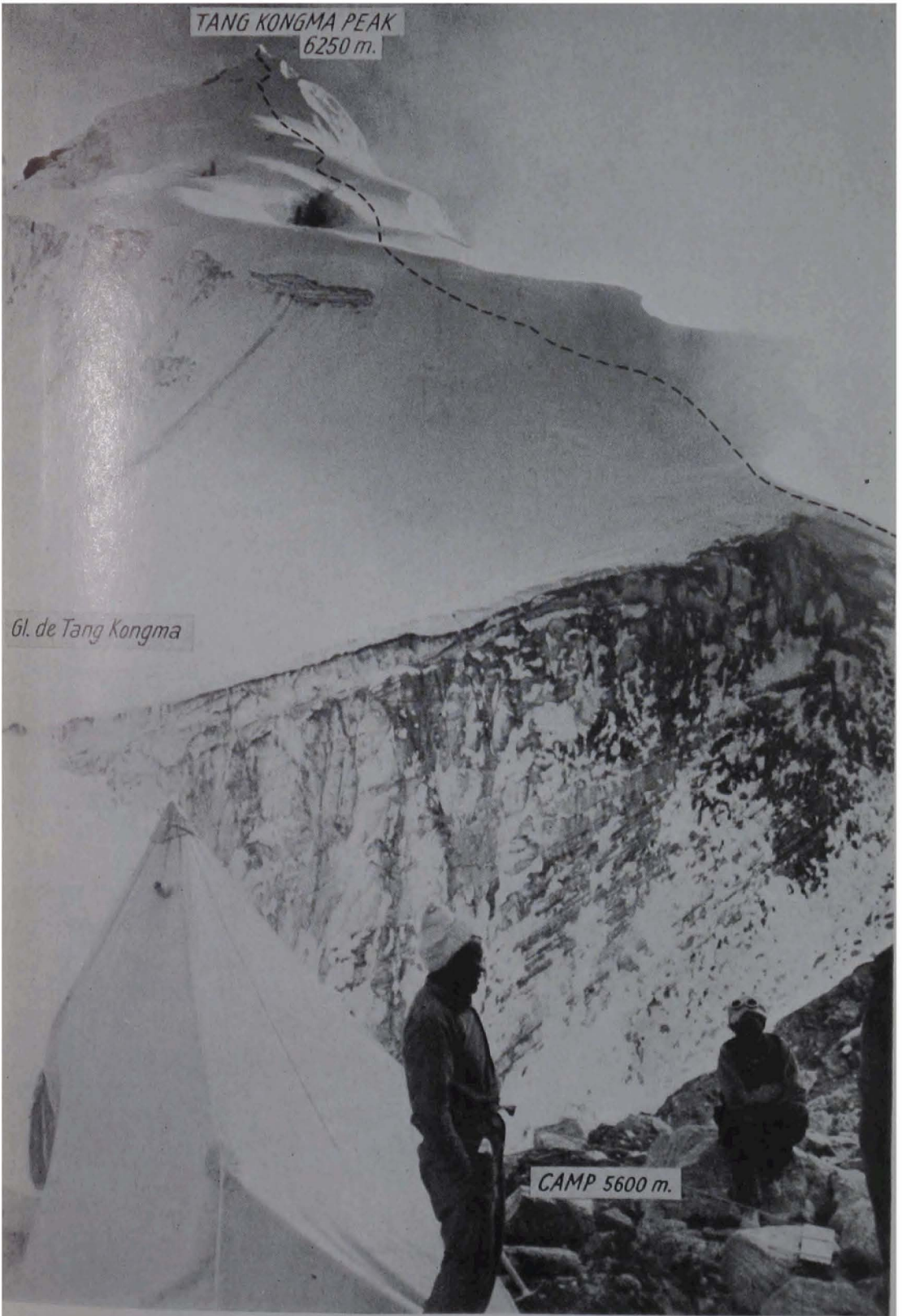
On 25th June we left Mme Lohner and Dr. Wyss to await our return at Camp III. Before us, across the glacier, rose Nupchu in a clear sky. The north-east spur was too long to consider, so we decided to try the south-west ridge, which was much shorter. The base of the mountain is encircled by a sheer cliff, crowned with a great wall of seracs and a hanging glacier which we planned to reach by working up the ledges and slabs. Camp IV was pitched on a stony slope close to this first rampart.

TANG KONGMA PEAK  
6250 m.

Gl. de Tang Kongma

CAMP 5600 m.

Dzanye (c. 21,780 ft.)  
Photograph by R. Dittert





We struck camp early, leaving only a couple of tents standing; a long traverse over treacherous rock led us to an exposed couloir. Here each European took a Sherpa on his rope. Ang Dawa was sick and unwillingly went back to camp. Our porters behaved admirably, though before long we got into a danger zone where we were exposed to bombardment from stone falls and avalanches. We by-passed the seracs and reached the hanging glacier. The sun was scorching, and it was unpleasantly hot. We were once more over 20,000 feet, and panted towards a saddle where we pitched Camp V at 21,700 feet, just below the ridge leading to the summit. Later we climbed up to the crest: the sun was setting and the light was softened by mist. In the deep valleys to the south we could see the heavy monsoon clouds moving sluggishly towards us like a dark rolling sea. Impressed, we hurried back to camp, knowing that when the shadows reached us it would be bitterly cold.

All night the tent was battered by the wind, and the sun rose late. We left at 7 and climbed quickly to the crest which we hoped to follow to the summit; but we found it would not go, crowned as it was by a series of fragile cornices, and we had to make our way along the north face some yards below the actual crest; we were clinging like flies above an immense abyss, and for hours on end cut a path with our axes along the fluted face. The packed snow was excellent for climbing, a factor essential on slopes so steep as to necessitate making handholes to help keep our balance.

About 20 feet from the crest we thought we were safe, when suddenly a sinister crack rent the air. Above me I saw the ridge subside, and wondered if I was dreaming or drunk, but realized it was an actual fact when about 160 feet of the huge cornice broke off and crashed down the north face. Great blocks of snow rolled over and disappeared from view beneath our feet, leaving us petrified with fright, although still on the ridge. We carried on, though for some minutes we were badly shaken. The traverses became more exposed, and the gradients even steeper, but we at last managed to cross the crest of the ridge, thereby conquering the first of Nupchu's bastions. The gradient became steeper still, and then we reached a small ledge where we could rest for a while. We were utterly weary after six hours of nervous tension at a numbing attitude. In the distance the clouds surged slowly towards us. I looked round this world of tremendous mountains, and the imperishable picture will always be with me. I shall remember to the end of my days the sun lighting up the mountains and the seas of mist in which light and shadow strive for mastery; I could sense Everest and Makalu screened by the clouds, while the great Tibetan plain stretched far away until lost to sight in the haze. We dreamed for an hour and then started off again. One hundred

and fifty feet up was a rocky saddle where we hoped the difficulties would be at an end. But what a disappointment—the mountain was steeper than ever, even more exposed—the whole west face was one great precipice. It became more and more risky and we had not the strength to carry on the bitter struggle. It had taken us many hours to gain less than 1,000 feet even. We decided the difficulties were too great. Personally I have never spent such a long time above so stupendous an abyss—nor have I ever traversed such steep slopes.

Though defeated we were satisfied that we had given of our best. Slowly and gradually we climbed down in the steps we had made, and at last reached safety, grateful that we were not lying somewhere at the foot of a precipice.

Our reverse had once again proved to us that in the Himalayas the ridges are too long and too narrow, and the cornices too dangerous: only mountains that are easy of access can be attempted with any chance of success.

#### DZANYE PEAK (c. 20,800 feet)

After our efforts on Nupchu we felt we had earned a day off. A little earlier each day the sun was covered by the monsoon clouds from the south, and day by day the weather became more threatening.

Sutter and I decided to have a look at the Dzanye lake, about a thousand feet below. A strange place: death-bed of several glaciers, which break into enormous chunks under the tremendous pressure of their own weight, shattering the silence with their death throes. There were patches of jade-green water here and there, breaking the thin layer of ice that covered the lake, and in the soft evening light it looked like a pastel of unspeakable melancholy.

We returned to camp, having decided to attempt the peak which commands the east side of the lake.

On 30th June the skies were heavy and the early mists clung to the frontier ridges. But it was our last chance, for our stores were all but finished and we must perforce turn south to Lhonak next day. So we set off, and on reaching the glacier put on our crampons. The frozen snow was conducive to fast climbing as we wound our way through seracs and across half-hidden crevasses. Our first objective was a wide col where the mists around us were thinned by a hail blizzard which lashed our already painful faces. The weather was foul, but it got no worse, and once on the col we and our four Sherpas were all glad of a rest.

We took it in turns to lead. The monotonous whiteness all around wearied our eyes. The gradient increased and we saw the bluish



tinge of the ice-belt above us. We found a vulnerable spot where a vertical cone of frozen snow adhering to the ice would enable us to reach the next pitch. Pargätzi, wielding his ice-axe, hacked and cleared a way for us. We continued through melted dangerous snow, steadying and helping the Sherpas. An hour later, the obstacle overcome, we saw the peak itself quite close at hand through a gap in the clouds. We congratulated Mme Lohner on her achievement, an ascent from camp to summit of about 3,000 feet in deplorable weather conditions.

We were indeed fortunate to have been able to climb this peak in the now definitely established monsoon. We got back to camp ten hours after we had left it; the weather was still foul. Separated as we were from our Base Camp, it was imperative that we should return to it next day before things got worse. Indeed, on 1st July, the Chabuk La greeted us with a snow-blizzard. The descent on the south side, over verglas-covered rocks and in piercing cold, was most unpleasant. For our heavily laden Sherpas the steepness was punishing, but they were surprisingly sure-footed. They too were well aware of the danger and lost no time. The snow lashed us and we were soaked as we struggled against it, but at last we reached the shelter of our tents at Camp II.

When we continued our journey next day the rain had stopped and a few rays of sunlight filtered through the clouds. By the left-bank moraine of the Lhonak glacier we marched through green dales covered in white and yellow edelweiss, forget-me-nots, anemones, rhododendrons, asters, roses, and fragrant mint. The clear streams meandered between granite rocks, in the shelter of which grew primulas, blue and yellow. These were dream valleys.

## RETURN TO NEPAL

After a few days' minor reconnaissance of the Tsisima basin, we finally quitted Lhonak on 18th July. We hired twenty-four yaks to help carry our ton and a half of stores and equipment to Khunza. These yaks transported two loads of 66 lb. each, securely strapped on either side.

Four days later, at Khunza, we picked up coolies for Taplejong on condition that they received anti-malarial treatment. On 24th July I started after my friends, who had gone ahead, leaving me to settle the transport details with Lama Terang, a most valuable helper, who carried out his jobs with a rare tact and diplomacy. I recommend him to anyone who goes to Khunza as a charming, courteous, and scrupulously honest man.

While his four yaks were being loaded, Gyalgen and his wife, who

was completely inebriated, raised a chorus of noisy protests complaining that they had been left the heaviest loads, and threatening me. This individual terrorized the whole neighbourhood and, we were told, not only had he stolen from two Americans, but threatened the lives of the entire family of a young village belle who had refused to marry him. A very undesirable type, and we were glad to get rid of him two days later.

We followed the river, and then branched off up a side valley towards the Nango La, which we had to cross to reach the Zari Chu valley, for the daily torrential rain had broken down the banks and bridges, and made it impossible for us to follow the shorter route taken by Dr. Wyss a fortnight earlier.

Our stage that day was very short, and our tents were pitched before the rain came down at 1.30. Next day it was still raining. We did not start early, although we had a long march ahead of us. It took us two hours to reach the Nango La (some 15,500 feet) through pasture and rotten rocks. The far side of the pass was very wild—a gorge between almost sheer cliffs, that brought us to the foot of the Marsong La. The descent from this col into the Zari Chu was troublesome for there was no track, and we had to follow a torrent which rushed down through water-hewn gorges. From our river-side camp Lama Terang climbed up to the village of Nup to collect coolies as replacements for the yaks, which we sent back.

This Zari Chu valley, which we followed for several days, lower down becomes the Tamur valley. The track, a veritable slough, ran beside the river between thick forest-clad slopes through which torrents and waterfalls tore their way. It was easy to see how these ungovernable waters could bring disaster to the plains during the monsoon. The sodden track wound on and on and up and down with an all-pervading smell of decaying vegetation and corruption. Day after day we trudged on in almost unceasing rain.

We rejoined the main Tibet–Nepal road which led through Walungchung-Gola, a market village, and Selap, a sordid hamlet of mud, bamboo, and black porkers, to Chinglen—rather cleaner, with terraced fields of maize. By the river was a primitive paper factory, where two men worked with the same type of pie as that used by the Egyptians and Chinese of old.

During the night at Enon there was a terrific cloud-burst which did not stop until 1 a.m. The level of the Tamur rose about 10 feet to within a few paces of our tents, speeding our departure considerably!

Soon after this we left the valley bottom to continue our journey higher up, away from the torrents. The country was now more populated and better cultivated. Taplejong, a thriving little town, is

the headquarters of the province of Dhankuta, on the trade-route from Tibet. The mud-walled thatched houses are attractive, gaily decorated with fuchsias and geraniums. The inhabitants, mostly Chetris, had never set eyes on a European and were greatly interested in us. There was always a crowd around us, mainly of women, who are as curious here as elsewhere!

The bulk of our Khunza men went back, and we engaged replacements—not without some difficulty. We paid a courtesy visit to a Nepalese officer and his two wives.

We left Taplejong on a hot sunny day, but heavy clouds were already gathering. Nevertheless it was a pleasant march through conifers, over carpets of pine needles to Angbung, whence the park-like country-side stretches to the foot of the Singalila ridge, the frontier. The slopes of this ridge are strewn with rotting fir-trees, victims of the heavy rainfall. (Between 15th June and the end of August 1949 there were only three fine days.) Once across the frontier we were on the good road which led us to Sandakphu and the shelter of a roof, after many days of rain and mist. Two more stages and we were greeted at the frontier bazaar of Mani Bhanjhang by the din of motor horns, the crowing of cocks, and the hurly-burly of the crowd. We drank our final chang, paid off our coolies, loaded our baggage on a lorry, and made for Darjeeling. At 11.30 on 7th August we were set down at the Mount Everest Hotel, where Dr. Wyss and Rahul, both in good form, welcomed us with our mail from Europe—and with a barber to remove our beards.

Thus, on its ninety-ninth day, ended our second expedition to the mountains of Asia. Our one unanimous wish was to come back some day and experience again a marvellous Himalayan adventure.

*Note.*—Renè Dittert has a most interesting and useful note for which we cannot, unfortunately, find space. It is on the porters who accompanied the expedition and on other transport. The eighteen porters were all Sherpas, varying in age and experience, but all determined to give a good account of themselves. They were given a generous scale of rations and equipped like the Europeans. As regards technique they had, most of them, been trained and were sure of themselves. They were careful on the rope, and with crampons, climbing well and prudently. Some of the younger ones, wearing crampons for the first time, negotiated a steep iced descent with surprising ease. The thirty Sherpanis who were engaged at the outset were excellent. Nearly always first to arrive in camp, they gave no trouble at all, and were always full of cheer. It is pointed out that though some of the coolies appear to have been highly paid, those engaged in the lower valleys were willing to accept less than the Darjeeling men. M. Dittert gracefully acknowledges the assistance rendered by our local secretary at Darjeeling, Mr. L. Krenek, and also by Mrs. Krenek. Finally, it is satisfactory to read that 'not one of our loads was lost or stolen'.—ED.



# SCOTTISH KUMAON EXPEDITION

W. H. MURRAY

UNTIL 1950 no expedition had ever set out from Scotland for the Himalaya. For although all men have an exploratory instinct, sad and material reasons severely cramp its expression. In February last Douglas Scott, Tom Weir, T. D. MacKinnon, and I, all of the Scottish Mountaineering Club, decided to finance and organize an expedition of our own. Our object was the exploration of mountain country, and our choice of area unanimous and made without discussion. Garwhal and Almora have been described by travellers as the most beautiful mountain country in the world, and for us that was sufficient.

Certain difficulties beset us at the outset, in that none of us had experience of Himalayan climbing, none could speak Hindustani, and we had only eight weeks to prepare. We managed the preparation in time by division of labour. Scott pored over maps and made a plan. Weir arranged food-supplies and transport, and MacKinnon the medical supplies. I myself laid on the organization and got good counsel. Our plan was in six parts, ranging west to east across the three parallel river gorges of the Dhauli, Gori, and Darma: (1) Penetration of the Rishiganga and Trisul Nala to attempt Bethartoli Himal (20,840 feet); (2) Reconnaissance of the Lampak range north-east of Dunagiri village; (3) mountaineering on the Lampak peaks from the Uja Tirche glacier on their north side (via Malari); (4) The forcing of the Girthi gorges from the Dhauli to the Gori, that is, 38 miles eastwards from Malari to Milam, thus linking two of the great trade-routes between Tibet and India (we could find no record of this having been done); (5) The crossing of the Ralam pass from the Gori to the Darmaganga; (6) Reconnaissance of Panch Chuli (22,650 feet), near the frontier of Nepal.

This was essentially a plan of travel and movement, not of siege tactics. It seemed ambitious for a first visit to the Himalaya, where so much has to be learned about a peculiar technique of travel. That we were able to carry it out does not mean that we did not make errors or meet difficulties; rather it means that the advance counsel given so willingly by Dr. Longstaff, H. W. Tilman, and Basil Goodfellow proved good; while doubters, who promised that our plan must collapse, had not reckoned on the high quality of Dhotial coolies and the goodwill of the Bhotias who were to help us in the upper villages.

The six parts of our plan were found to pivot, as it were, on the

arrival date of the monsoon—which in the Dhauli is normally the end of June. Thus Parts 1 and 2 had to be completed before the monsoon or they would fail. Parts 3 and 4 dodged the monsoon by taking us north of the chain's main axis, where rainfall is low. Parts 5 and 6 were planned to come at the end of the monsoon. However, as a consequence of our inexperience, unexpected weather, and post-war price-levels, several hitches occurred and were overcome only with difficulty.

The preliminary organization became a revelation to us in this respect; it showed us how very little we could hope to achieve without the goodwill of members of the Himalayan Club. I would especially mention the practical help given to us by J. A. K. Martyn of Dehra Dun, R. E. Hotz of Delhi, and A. R. Leyden of Bombay. But for the latter's eloquent persuasion of the Customs officials we should probably have died a lingering death on the Bombay quay.

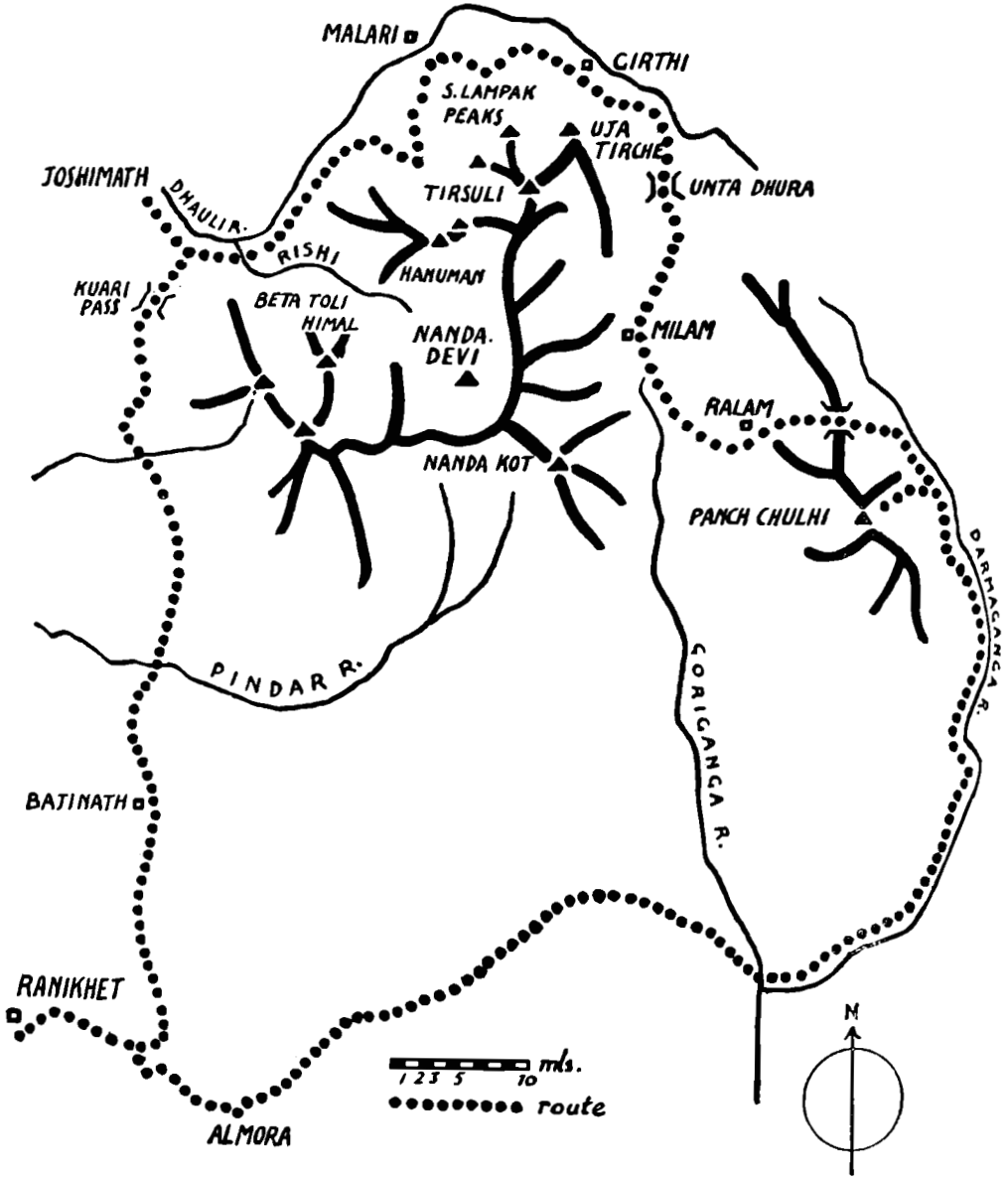
When we arrived at Ranikhet on 7th May, the best title for an article seemed likely to be 'With a thermometer in the Himalaya'. We required three days to allay the high temperatures and sore throats caused by the dusty plains—and to bargain with coolies. Some twenty-five Dhotionals were waiting for us. These had been laid on by Mrs. Ferguson of Essex House, who gave us invaluable assistance in this and other ways. We selected eighteen of the best men, mostly young and all tough, at the normal rate of Rs. 3 per day, plus Rs. 1 for mountain work. Never before had I met so many men all at one time whom I liked so well. They were very simple and upright, and soon proved themselves to be scrupulously honest and high-spirited. In four months' travel we had no pilfering and never a suggestion of mutiny. They cooked for us without extra pay.

Our needs were simple, however; for our policy was to live on the country. We had brought 440 lb. of food from Britain for high camps and to supplement the native diet. The total weight of gear for four months was 1,000 lb. This included four tents: two high-altitude tents (by Burns of Manchester and Black of Greenock) each weighing 12 lb.; one high-altitude tent for porters (from the Himalayan Club), 18 lb.; and a 'Bungalow' base-camp tent, 18 lb. with fly-sheet. These were to prove adequate for all purposes. A big ground-sheet, 12 feet by 12 feet, made an invaluable additional cover for coolies and gear.

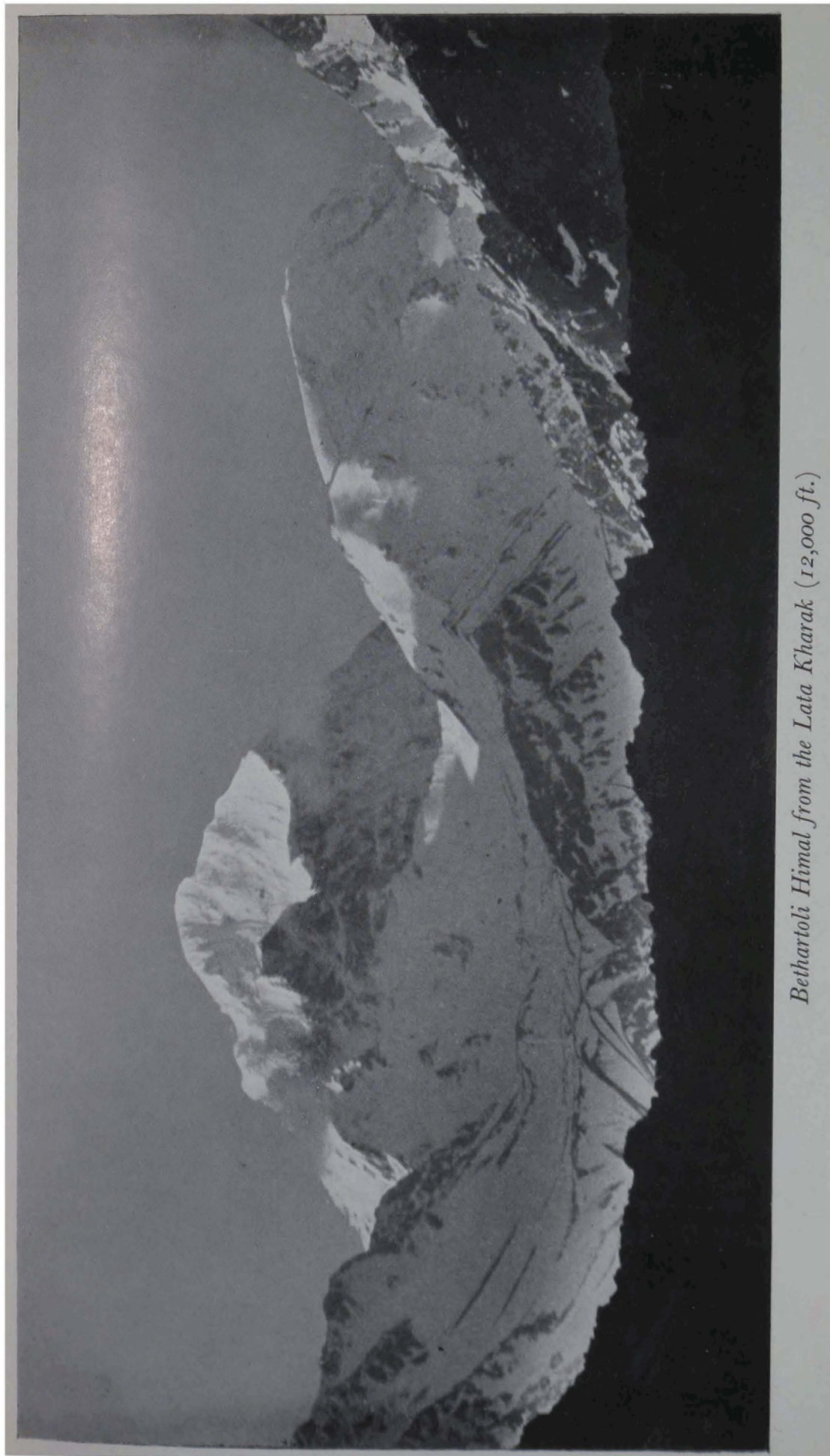
#### THE TRISUL NALA: BETHARTOLI HIMAL AND HANUMAN

On 14th May we went by bus to Garur, thence nine days over the Wan and Kuari passes to Tapoban on the Dhauli. Our head porter, Kuar Singh, made an excellent R.S.M. Every day he had fires going

by 5 a.m. and the men away by 6.30. We could stand back and let them strike and pitch the tents. At Tapoban we reorganized loads for a three weeks' invasion of the Rishi, and left a large dump behind us. We erred greatly in not buying our ata at Tapoban, where food



is plentiful, cheap, and good. Instead we bought in 300 lb. of ata, rice, and dal at Lata, 6 miles farther on, where quality turned out to be much lower. We delayed one day there while the grain was ground—a day used to good purpose by MacKinnon, Scott, and Weir, who reconnoitred the obscure 'path' up 3,000 feet of forest to the Lata kharak—a precaution that saved much time and labour next day. We camped on the kharak on 24th May. It gave us our first view of Bethartoli Himal, dome-shaped and dominating all the



*Bethartoli Himal from the Lata Kharak (12,000 ft.)*



*Camp III on North Face of Bethartoli Himal at 18,000 ft., 1st June 1950*



peaks to our south. It presented to us a vast and precipitous north face. Two great ice-ridges ran north and east to satellite tops. We had made tentative plans to attempt the north ridge from its north col, and could see that our approach from the Trisul Nala must be through a glacier-basin under the north face.

To this plan two shrewd blows were dealt in successive days. Remembering Shipton's two days of trouble in getting over the Lata pass (14,000 feet) in 1934, I profited, made a recce (for me the most exhausting day of the entire expedition, while I tried several false cols in deep snow) and in consequence got the coolies over the true pass in one day to Durashi. But, on the east side of the Lata pass, the route traversed by ledges across snow-laden cliffs, where a coolie dropped 100 lb. of ata over the edge. This cut six days off our time allowance, meaning that after one recce and attempt we should have no time for a second. Secondly, in crossing our next 14,000-foot pass above Durashi we had our first truly close view of Bethartoli Himal, and saw the north face to be plastered with hanging glaciers, threatening the discharge of avalanches right across the basin. The mountain was revealed as complex, posing several hard problems.

Two more days were spent in crossing the Dibrugheta kharak and traversing along the north flank of the Rishiganga. A wild tangle of thorn, cotoneaster, and rose-bush literally ripped the trousers off the coolies' legs. They were still travelling strongly when at last we came down to Duti at 11,000 feet beside the Rishi. Ever since Tapoban we had had the correct psychological set-up with the Dhotials. They knew that after Duti we should retain only six of the best men for four months' mountain work, so they were all trying to *be* six of the best. And then, when the six were chosen, they were very proud of it. They tried to show us we had been right. Their names were Perimal (head coolie), Zungia, Gorla, Matbir, Phakir, and Narbir, all from the village of Tsimpu in western Nepal. At Duti we dumped a maund of ata for the return journey.

Next morning we spent four hours moving 1 mile upstream, and the rest of the day in felling three trees to bridge the Rishi, which was here a white and roaring flood among giant boulders, between walls 5,000 feet high. After long and unsuccessful efforts we at last managed to topple the trees into position and lash them. Lightning flashed and thunder broke as we crossed.

On the following day we climbed 3 miles up the Trisul Nala and established Base Camp beside the Bethartoli glacier at 12,000 feet. Close reconnaissance of the north face revealed that within the glacier basin itself a great rock ridge ran up to the north col, acting thus as a protecting curtain against ice-avalanches coming off the face. This curtain seemed a god-given highway and we rejoiced. Camp II

was established near its base at 14,500 feet. Since seeing the mountain from Durashi I had formed an alternative plan of attempting the east ridge instead of the north, but that plan was now scrapped in favour of the original, which was indeed unfortunate.

We had intense frost at sunset. Facing our tents across the Rishi were rows of peaks that flashed like sharks' teeth, bearing names that rang like a peal of thunder—Changabang, Rishi Kot, Dungiri. Snow fell that night.

On 31st May, with three coolies, we made our way up the curtain ridge. Its rocky edge, snow-covered, made difficult climbing for laden men. We were all unacclimatized and altitude began to tell. One full breath was required to each step. Anything that checked the rhythm of breathing—the fall of a nearby avalanche or too long a stride—caused panting. At 17,000 feet the ridge became very thin indeed and we roped the coolies. It was now 2 o'clock and thunderclouds were blowing up the Rishi. So we decided to send the coolies down. We could not take them farther and expect them to get back alone. On rock they had remarkable natural talent, but obviously no experience of snow-bound rock. On a saddle at 17,000 feet we made Camp III. While Weir and MacKinnon cut out platforms for the two tents, Scott and I prospected ahead. To our dismay we came upon a tower dropping sheer on its far side. Roped together, we climbed along its thin crest and down a series of vertical steps to a block projecting over space. I lay flat and looked over the edge. A huge finger of rock tilted out over the glacier 1,000 feet below; from its tip to the ridge's continuation was a clear drop of 200 feet—a complete cut-off. We were defeated. We could do nothing save camp.

Next day was gloriously fine and our position sensational, hard against the ice-clad face of the main peak. I was strongly reminded of the Col de la Fourche of Mont Blanc, save that the south face of Mont Blanc slopes at a relatively gentle angle. We started to withdraw to Base Camp, and were at once astonished at the speed with which Himalayan snow degenerates under the fierce Himalayan sun. In the Alps one does not reckon on snow going bad until mid-day, but here it went thoroughly bad by 9 o'clock in the morning.

The food position now forbade a reconnaissance of the east ridge, which would be a four-day job at least, but we had been able to make a long-distance recce of the south-east ridge of Hanuman, an unclimbed peak of 19,970 feet at the junction of the Rishi and Ramani gorges. We repaired thither with all speed and established Base Camp on 2nd June. Camp II we placed at 16,000 feet on the east face, this in foul weather. The tents were sheathed in ice over-night.

Next morning we crawled out into a white and arctic world, to see Nanda Devi shooting arrow-like into blue sky from the bent bow



of the Rishi gorge. In  $2\frac{1}{2}$  hours we slanted 1,000 feet up to the east face to the south-east ridge of Hanuman, then followed a couloir of mixed snow and ice 1,000 feet to the crest, and the crest 1,000 feet to a tower, to which Scott led by delicate balance-work on loose and vertical rock. Beyond came a sudden chasm of 400 feet—once again a complete cut-off, invisible from a distance. We were barely 900 feet from the summit. As we started down the weather deteriorated rapidly.

Mist was thick when we won clear of the ridge at 4.30 p.m. In the morning I had taken a back-bearing; so now, in lowering cloud and steadily falling snow, we steered two hours by compass across the complex east face, through a maze of ridges and boulders. As darkness fell no tents had yet appeared. We thought we must have made some error, and began to fear benightment. Then I got a whiff of juniper smoke! Undoubtedly juniper. We turned into the wind. Within ten minutes shadowy figures emerged through the white gloom, each giving a delighted 'Salaam sahib'.

Despite the grey and trailing snow-veils, the raw cold and gloom of 7 p.m., the coolies had two fires going and tea ready. Soup, pemmican, tea, chupatties, biscuits, and honey were served to us in our sleeping-bags, while we listened to the blatter of wind-driven snow on the canvas and remembered our grim prospects of thirty minutes ago. The men gave this service of their free will, without having to be hunted, and without having been on an expedition before.

#### THE LAMPAK GROUP FROM DUNAGIRI

On 10th June we arrived back at Tapoban on the Dhauli. *Ata* here was Rs.  $\frac{1}{4}$  per seer as against Rs.  $\frac{2}{8}$  at Joshimath, only 6 miles away. Salt, ghur, rice, and dal were in good supply. An Indian friend at Bombay had prophesied that no coolies would be found in the Dhauli valley. He expressed alarm at our plans and concern at the certainty of the expedition's being stranded and unable to move. And sure enough, at Tapoban we could get no coolies. But after two days' hard bargaining I raised twelve men from Lata at Rs. 5 per day without return money. They made a good team with our six chosen Dhotials. Indeed, they wanted to stay with us for the remainder of the expedition—despite wild and angry scenes of dispute over loads on the morning of our setting out: a dispute which, without apparent reason and in the twinkling of an eye, ended in laughter all round.

For three days we travelled north up the Dhauliganga, which cuts 40 miles south from the Tibetan frontier. Not even the Rishi, I

thought, could match it as a canyon. Its walls are no higher, but are close-set and sheer. We had never before seen a glacier river so grey and powerful, moving huge boulders with a thunderous rumble deep down in the river-bed. When the sun shines the water glitters like wax, without sparkle. Not a beautiful scene. Yet at intervals, where some ravine cuts in and the walls give back, then sunlight streams through in shafts, and far above some solitary snow-peak stands sharp on the blue sky.

On our third day we turned east up the Dunagiri Gad. Behind us vast cloud masses were rolling up from the south. Thus far our mountain weather, in terms of cloud and rain, had been no whit better than Scottish, if no worse. But this cloud was different—unusually massive and low-lying. But surely it was too early for the monsoon?

Our immediate plan was to explore the Lampak range, a group of some ten unclimbed peaks north-east of Dunagiri village. Based on the latter, we hoped to spend ten days climbing before moving to the north side of the group. For six hours we climbed up a sunlit track lined with deodars, wild roses, and apricot trees, to the village at 11,800 feet. Sixty houses were built on the side of a low ridge, overlooking well-kept fields of wheat and potatoes. The villagers swiftly gathered in a central courtyard. The school, sitting in the open before a blackboard, broke up. Its twenty children filed into the yard; each came forward, bowed and saluted, then withdrew to the rear and sat down. All showed excellent manners and bearing. I explained our visit to the head man who, like all villagers we met throughout our entire journey, could understand my halting Hindustani perfectly, however difficult I found theirs. He at once promised all food we might need and all coolies. I then paid off the Lata men and we pitched camp beyond the village, beside a wood where a clear stream flowed past—a dozen unclimbed peaks around. An ideal spot for mountaineering. But day after day heavy pre-monsoon cloud came billowing up from the south. It completely prevented our reconnoitring the Lampak range. Had we known the routes we could have climbed. But first one must *see*. As it was, Weir and I made the first ascent of Peak 17,380 to our north-east, which gave a climb of 6,000 feet in  $7\frac{1}{2}$  hours. The route went by a long rock-ridge culminating in a sensational traverse across the face of a tower, and so on to the final snow-dome. The climb succeeded, but its real purpose, the reconnaissance of the bigger peaks behind, failed in cloud.

On 16th June Scott and MacKinnon made the first ascent of Peak 16,690 to our south, by the nearest of its two north ridges. They had a wonderful rock-climb on superb, milk-white granite. The sharp edge was serrated by little towers with sheer flanks. Day-long cloud

again prevented reconnaissance. But Weir and I repeated this climb, truly the most enjoyable we have had in the Himalaya, and were rewarded. For just one minute the summit clouds swirled aside, giving us a clear view of the Lampak 20,000-footers, 6 miles north-east. We saw no attempt was possible by their south-west faces. They presented iced walls like the north face of the Matterhorn, only considerably higher.

We resolved to cut our losses and go north. A base on the Tibetan side of the range would give us clearer skies. Instead of coolies, we obtained from Dunagiri five *jhopa* (better known as *dzo*)—the same beast that is called *jhibu* in the Goriganga—a cross between yak and cow. With these, on 19th and 20th July, we took the high-level route to Malari, a most delightful hill-track crossing two passes of 13,620 and 14,790 feet—a great improvement on the low-level route up the goat-crowded, dust-choked track in the Dhauri. So we came down to Malari, built in tiers on the verge of a great scarp. Ritual dancing was in progress to welcome and hasten the monsoon, thus confirming our fears.

#### THE ASCENT OF UJA TIRCHE

Five hundred pounds of ata was ground for us while we wrangled for two days about coolie wages. The men of Malari had not, it seemed, heard of Scotsmen and were slow to learn. At last, however, we beat them down from Rs. 7 to Rs. 4. On 23rd June we set off eastwards. With eighteen coolies, eighteen goats carrying the ata in saddlebags, and one cow we crossed the northern spur of Lampak in two marches by the Surans ka Dhura (15,000 feet). The descent lay down wide hill-sides of alpine flowers to our new base, Lampak, a deserted grazing-ground at 13,500 feet, beside the snout of the Uja Tirche glacier.

The glacier ran 7 miles south, fed by a horseshoe of ten 20,000-foot peaks. At the very back rose the tremendous north wall of Tirsuli. The peaks were all linked by one continuous ridge. The mountain dominating the Lampak was Uja Tirche (20,350 feet)—honoured with a name, in country where so many great peaks are unnamed, by virtue of its position at the north end of the horseshoe. Towards Tibet and the trade-route over the Kungribingri La it presented a sheer north-east face rising 8,000 feet from the Girthinganga. To the Surans ka Dhura it showed a sharp north ridge of 10,000 feet, which we luckily saw in profile on our day of arrival.

A good route went up the west flank of this ridge, joining its crest at 18,000 feet. There the ridge ran half a mile, bearing on its crest nine gigantic pinnacles. If these were passable—and we could indulge no fond hopes after our Rishi experience—access would be had

to a twisting snow-ridge of 2,000 feet, twice interrupted by high steps of ice. We determined to try this route at once.

Next morning our six Dhotials carried Camp I to 17,400 feet, where a broad scree-shelf lay 700 feet under the pinnacles. Our nearer view of the upper ice-walls showed each to be a triangle, the apex of a hanging glacier; the first, 1,000 feet up the ridge, 200 feet high; the second, 400 feet under the summit, 100 feet high. Either might defeat us. To our north and east, as far as the eye could see, stretched the bare lands of Tibet, roofed by shining skies and barred 120 miles away by a ripple of snows.

MacKinnon, meanwhile, went on alone and reconnoitred the pinnacles. He returned full of optimism. At 5.15 a.m. we climbed up to them and roped in two pairs, Weir with MacKinnon and Scott with myself. Never had we seen a ridge so fantastic. The pinnacles stuck madly askew out of the crest. The west flank was banded by horizontal strata, yellow, brown, and purple, providing seams by which we turned four pinnacles. Then came the central three, sheer on the west, overhung in front. We turned east by a ledge, chanced on a snow-choked chimney running up the face, and climbed by it to the crest. In grey light this seemed a sensational move, but we were then able to pass the remaining pinnacles on the western bands. A final buttress, split by a fortunate chimney, brought us on to the snow-ridge at 8.30.

The snow was frozen. We picked our way in crampons through thin crevasses where a hanging glacier pulled away. The ridge narrowed, swung this way and that, corniced heavily on our left, up to the first wall. Good snow at its base misled us into climbing the steep left-hand edge of the triangle. But this snow gradually thinned out on underlying ice. Steps had to be cut. The excessive angle high up forced us into a traverse across the face to the corniced right-hand edge, where slashed steps were still required for the edge spikes of crampons. I reached the top feeling dismay. The forenoon sun would loosen the snow-skin, and I suspected that the afternoon sun would rot the steps. Our return would have to go much lower on this right-hand edge, involving us in hours of downhill step-cutting in ice.

We were now half-way to the top. The edge twisted up in huge zigzags, raw-edged and corniced, falling abruptly on the right into cloud. After seven hours' climbing we reached the second triangle. We took it by the left edge and were again forced off the direct ascent of the apex, compelled to cut 50 feet on ice across the exposed face, then through another cornice. Sixty feet of quicker cutting in snow-ice brought us back to the true ridge. The way was free ahead. At 2 p.m. we gained the summit.

The bent bow of the edge gave just enough room for four men. Clouds rolled round us. The ascent had taken nearly nine hours, but we still imagined that the *descent* would require only half that time. Still, we feared deterioration of snow and turned down at 2.10 p.m., all on one rope. I went first, and already, at the upper wall, had to recut both hand- and foothold. Near the end of the traverse they looked sound and I used a foothold without reshaping. It broke away and I fell, braking with my axe until the rope tightened. I returned to the true ridge, and the others followed. It was something quite new in my experience here to find that not only had snow-ice rotted in the sun, but pure ice too. I had not dreamt that to be possible around 20,000 feet, least of all in cloud.

Below, the snow greatly worsened. It balled on the crampons. We all, except MacKinnon, took them off for greater security. Cornices on one side forced us on to snow-slopes that were inclined to slide. Great care was needed. We reached the big lower ice-wall at 4.30 p.m. The original route being too dangerous, we cut 150 feet down the ice-slope on our left and so to a crag on the west edge of the triangle, by which we descended 80 feet. There now remained a long rightward traverse across pure ice to regain the true ridge. The ice was hard, wet, brittle. Steps had thus to be large—and time-consuming. I cut one quarter of the way and returned. MacKinnon cut the second quarter. As he came back his crampon-spikes split off the whole base of a step and down he shot, to be stopped by the rope. Yet that ice was again clear ice. His use of crampons on it would have been justified in the Alps. Below him the ice-slope cascaded 4,000 feet over cliffs. He cut skilfully back to the crag. Then Scott and Weir went out and cut the third quarter.

At sunset, with 200 feet of nylon rope dragging at my waist, I completed the traverse. That was a wonderful moment when I stepped on to the north ridge. The party's safety was assured; the sky frostily clear. Westwards the spike of Kamet stood black upon the afterglow. Eastwards the risen moon swung to the tops like a thrown orange.

Our total supply of rope was now stretched across the ice-wall, so the two middle men had to clip themselves on to it with sling and karabiner and cross one at a time, sliding the ring. When all were over we sped downwards on the now freezing snow—one hour to the pinnacles. The moon was bright enough to light our way through the maze of spires, so that we reached Camp II at 11.15 p.m. Eighteen hours on a rock- and ice-ridge left us too tired for food. As we turned in Uja Tirche still thrust its silver wedge to the moon, and the great north ridge rose jagged against the stars.

## THE GIRTHI GORGE

Camp II on Uja Tirche gave us one clear view westwards across the Uja Tirche glacier to the mountain of South Lampak, 20,750 feet. It threw eastwards down to the glacier three long rock-ridges. Two of them looked impossibly icy, but the left-hand ridge of 5,000 feet most promising, even easy in its upper third. Four days later we pushed a new Camp II 3 miles up the glacier to the base of the ridge—a most charming alp. Three Dhotionals then carried Camp III up the crest to 18,500 feet, just under an 800-foot buttress. We pitched two tents on a sharp snow-ridge, each flank of which fell 1,000 feet to glaciers. Foul weather pinned us in the tents for two days, while on either side avalanches thundered day and night. In the end we retired over snow-bound rocks.

A week later we returned, only to be defeated above Camp III by rotten rock on the buttress. A party reckless of risk might have forced the buttress and gained the easy snow-ridge leading to the summit. In my own judgement the rock gave no reasonable hope of such a party's survival. We retired to Lampak Base Camp on 9th July.

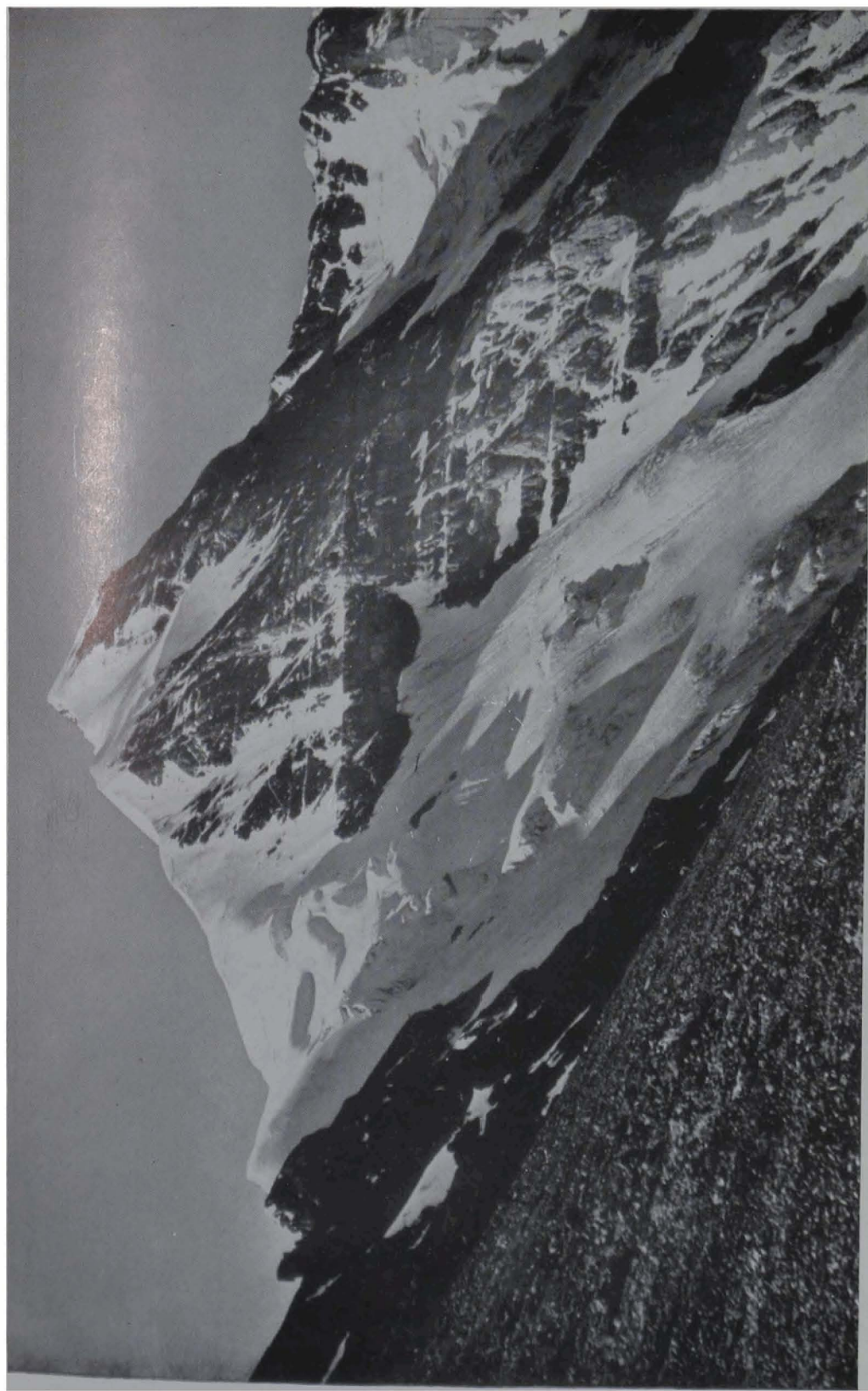
The way was now clear, and the time ripe, for Part 4 of our plan—the traverse by the Girthiganga from Malari 38 miles eastwards to Milam on the Goriganga. Our Lampak base was already 7 miles along the Girthi track—a track worn by Malari goat-herds to their eastern grazing grounds. Accordingly, on 10th July we dispatched Perimal to collect eleven more coolies and seven goats from Malari. The goats would carry our ata in saddle-bags. In three days the men and goats arrived. On 13th July we set out.

For the first time in weeks all monsoon cloud had vanished. In brilliant sunshine we slanted up from the glacier across the northern spur of Uja Tirche. Acres of the hill-side were covered thick in alpine flowers—blue primulas and rock geraniums, white anemones and saxifrage, purple stonecrop, dwarf yellow broom, and buttercups—which grew densely in fields sweeping down and across the hill-side. Everywhere there were delicious and heady scents. The very grass was burnished in the slant of the sun.

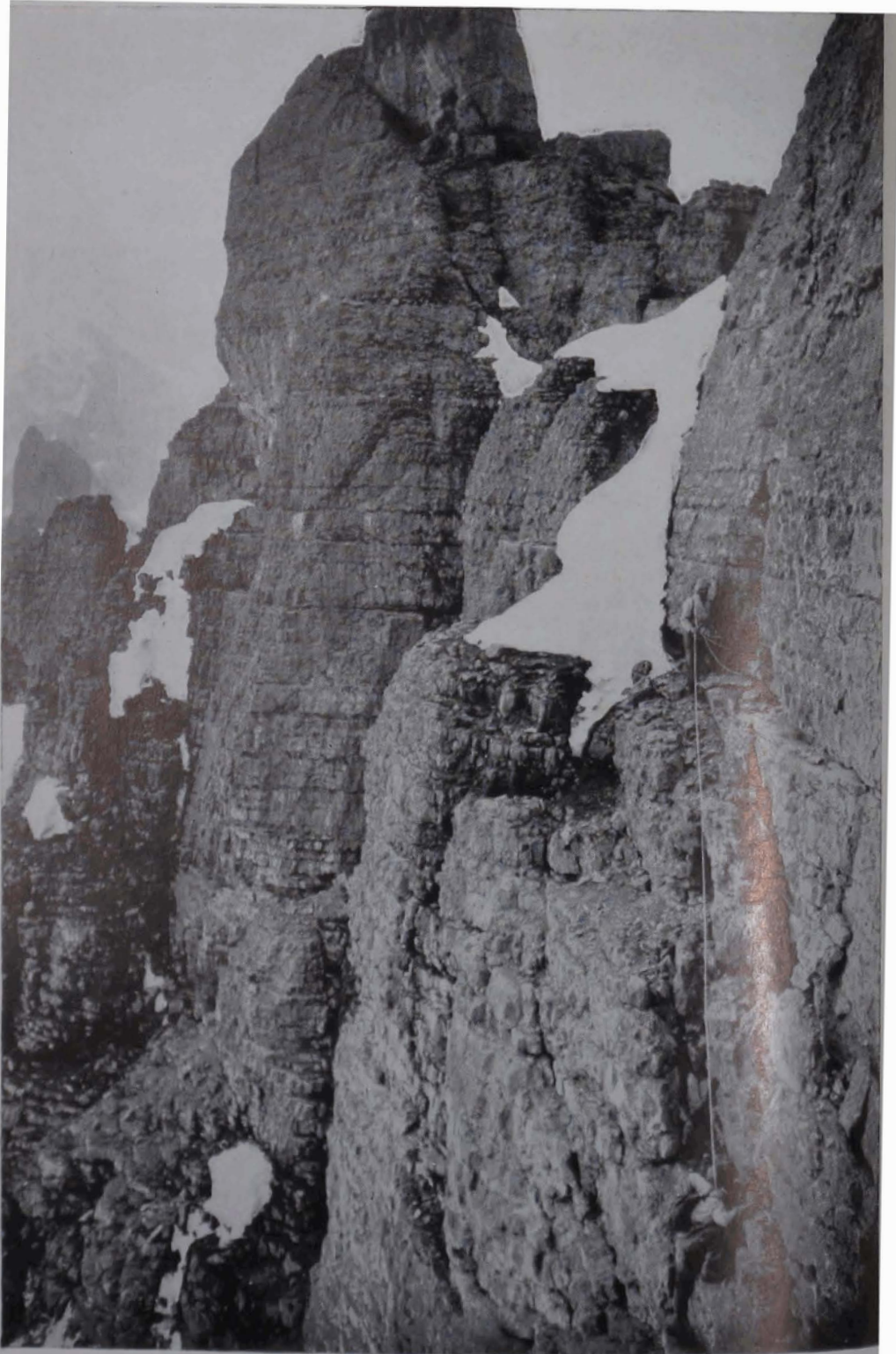
Then we crossed the col—and what a change confronted us! For the first time we looked into the gorge where the Kio Gad joins the Girthi. At the junction rose Ramba Kot, 17,000 feet—rose straight up in a chaos of jumbled towers and spires and buttresses. It was colourful rock, warm brown and yellow, but it walled the gorge for 6 miles; to us it looked fearsomely stark after those flower-thick alps on the Lampak side.

Although precipitous the gorge on our own flank was fortunately





*Uja Tırche (20,350 ft.). The North Ridge on left. The Rock face is 4,000 ft. From Camp II, Uja Tırche at 17,400 ft.*



*Pinnacles of Uja Tirche, on North Ridge at 18,000 ft. Mackinnon and Weir on rope. Route goes up the tongue of snow*



less steep. We picked our way along rock-walls bedecked with countless flowering shrubs and plants, supplemented now with purple thistle and silver birch, sometimes with pine—a Hanging Garden of Himachal. At each turn of the bluffs some new scent rose to the nostrils. And far aloft, clouds flitted among the wild pinnacles of Uja Tirche.

That day we made 4 miles. We camped on the only patch of flat ground big enough to take the floor-space of one tent, about 1,000 feet above the river. The coolies packed into a cave.

On our second day's march we had to cross eight great ravines. Only one of these drained a glacier. The difficulty we most feared in this whole traverse of the Girthiganga was the fording of glacier streams rushing in from the south. But on this north side of the main axis little rain had fallen for some days. There was much less water in these ravines than we had feared. The crossings were easy and often on snow-bridges, but the flanks were cliffs. I sometimes waited on one side to watch the party across to the other, where they appeared as twenty-seven white-and-black dots winding across invisible seams on walls that dropped 1,000 feet to the Girthi. Yet I always followed easily. The route continued, an improbable thread—it was so slender: at one moment arched by red roses; at the next like a belfry staircase; at another any stumble would have been fatal.

The path became literally a 'goat-track', going under overhangs where we had to crouch and place the feet slowly with that 1,000-foot drop an inch from the boot's welt: technically easy, yet so dramatic that all we lacked was a black bear coming round the next corner. At the day's end, when we came down to grass at the river's edge, we had travelled 3 miles.

A hundred yards upstream from camp we were delighted to find a two-log bridge leading on to a little plateau of cultivated ground, where two men of Malari had adventured to grow potatoes, barley, and 'papar'. They had devised an irrigation system, built and thatched two stone houses, in appearance like a Scottish shieling, and made two stone shrines above the fields. Their wives and three children were there. This was the farthest point to which the Malari colonizers had penetrated.

For two days after that the gorge broadened, granting us grassy alps. But we only covered  $7\frac{1}{2}$  miles. The river-bed had risen 4,000 feet to an altitude of 14,000 feet. Delay was caused by glacier streams. Goats had to be unloaded and reloaded. We ourselves had to strip off our trousers and fight a way over. On Day 5 cloud, rain, and sleet troubled our passage over the water-shed, the Unta Dhura, at 17,640 feet. *En route* we passed the frozen lake of Gangpani, the

highest source of the Girthi, at 16,570 feet. In drizzly sleet we joined the dismal trade-route from Tibet. The snow-lined track streamed with caravans of laden yaks, sheep, goats, and horses, driven by long-haired Tibetans, all wearing wide grins and ex-W.D. bush-hats.

We turned south, descending 5,000 feet, crossing two glaciers, and travelling in all 13 miles through the most desolate valleys before we could find a stick of wood for a fire. We camped at Samgong. We were all exhausted that night.

Next morning, 18th July, we strolled 3 miles into Milam.

We were greatly puzzled that no one before us should have forced the Girthi gorges. Not until three months later did we find that this *had* in fact been done in 1893 by Dr. Kurt Boeckh. We sincerely hope that our reopening of the route after nearly sixty years will be of real service to travellers. For it gave us the most wonderful journey that any of us had ever had. July is undoubtedly the best month for its flower-display.

We rested one week at Milam, greatly enjoying the company of the Christian medical missionary, Leonard Moules (a fellow member of the Club), who gave us nothing less than a banquet on arrival, and much valuable information about the country, people, weather, and mountain routes. Most sadly MacKinnon's three months' leave had now expired and he had to go home. Scott, Weir, and I carried on with Part 5.

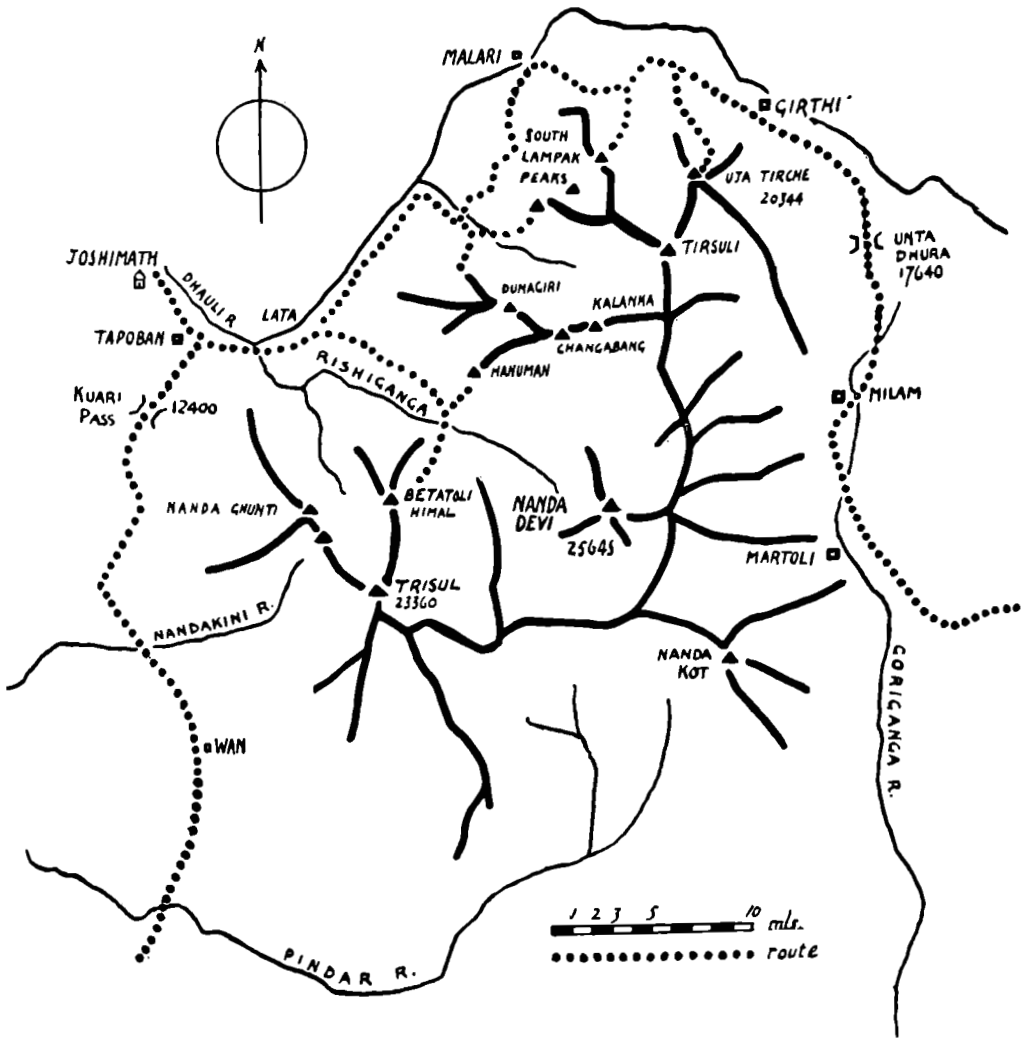
### THE RALAM PASS IN THE MONSOON

There was one part of our plan which from the beginning had given me a certain amount of apprehension. This was the six-day crossing of the Ralam Dhura, 18,470 feet, from Milam in the Gorgi-ganga to Sipu in the Darmaganga, near Nepal. There we should be in position to make reconnaissance of the Panch Chuli and try the ascent. We had intended leaving this move for the clear and settled weather of late September, had not the high cost of food and coolies precluded delay. We must go now, in the thick of monsoon cloud, consequently with small hope of success.

The name 'Panch Chuli' means the Five Fires—'fires' in the sense of fire-places. They symbolize the home-fires of five famous brothers, saints and heroes, who all married an Indian Princess named Draupadi. In defence of their kingdom they had to go to war with land-grabbing relatives. One of the five was Arjuna: and just before leading his army into battle Arjuna became conscience-stricken at the prospect of fighting relatives; so he turned to his charioteer for guidance: How could he ever be justified in going to war? But his

friend and charioteer is none other than Krishna, who is to Indians what Christ is to us—God incarnate. Krishna's answer is that inspired Hindu scripture, the Bhagavad Gita—the Song of God. Of all philosophies of life it seems one of the most practical.

At the close of their adventurous lives, the five brothers and



Draupadi travel into the Himalaya. They climb to the Abode of the Gods, and there are symbolized by these six peaks, the Panch Chuli.

They are an extraordinarily beautiful cluster, all difficult, all shapely. None have been climbed. Moreover, they are surrounded by a far-flung screen of thirty or forty other unclimbed mountains, through the heart of which we had now to travel by way of the Ralam Dhura.

But this crossing of the watershed between the Gori and Darma was 32 miles long and involved our crossing three passes and four

glaciers, which to us were unknown. Consequently the difficulties of route-finding in heavy cloud seemed likely to be serious. The Ralam Dhura had not been crossed for nine years; so far as we could discover, never before in the monsoon. Moreover, Dr. Longstaff had warned us that the pass was rather dangerous through stonefall even in pre-monsoon conditions.

Accordingly we abandoned hope of the pass before ever reaching Milam. Instead we made plans to take the longer and more southerly route by Mansiari and Sobala, only to have them dashed at Milam by reports that three bridges had been carried away by floods. We had now either to go by the Ralam Dhura or forfeit the Panch Chuli. The latter was not to be thought of. Unexpected encouragement came from Moules, who swore that we should get less cloud on the Ralam route than the southern one. To cap his counsel he produced for us a Bhotia named Delib Singh, who had crossed the pass before and was willing to go again. So we engaged eleven Milam men at Rs. 6 (no return money), and on 25th July set off with these and our six Dhotials.

Our first march went 9 miles down the Gori, which we crossed to the village of Tola. Next day we began our big break eastwards, climbing a 15,000-foot pass and descending 4,000 feet to Ralam—a cluster of twenty houses set on the side of a deep, green glen. This day's journey introduced us to a complete change of scenery—from stark scree to wide and fertile pastures knee-deep in flowers. At Ralam we met only women and children and old men. The active men were all away to Tibet for the season's trade. But we did meet much goodwill.

On our morning of leaving four drummers turned out to beat a tattoo, accompanied by fourteen boys who sang and danced for us. The procession went for a full mile before us towards the Shankalpa glacier. The drummers showed excellent sense of rhythm and the boys (all under ten) a startlingly well-controlled abandon in dancing. They sang in unison, sweetly and without affectation. The baksheesh that goes with such a demonstration, however, is somewhat ruinous to already impecunious mountaineers.

That same day we camped in thick cloud and drizzle several hundred feet under the Yankchar pass (16,500 feet), and next morning went over the far side to our second glacier, where we camped at 15,000 feet. The Ralam Dhura was now immediately overhead, 2½ miles round a bend in the glacier. And conditions could not have been worse. Inside four hours warm sunshine changed to cloud and drizzle, hail, sleet, snow, and thunder and lightning. All night long enormous avalanches thundered off the surrounding mountain-groups. I feared trouble with the coolies next day. Would they face

an 18,500-foot pass in dirty weather? Supposing they would, *could* they make such a crossing without full mountaineering equipment? I expected the worst—until the required miracle happened.

Towards midnight the sky cleared and we found ourselves circled by a dozen unclimbed mountains, sharp-pointed and snow-clad, gleaming in the light of a full moon. The scree beneath us flashed frostily. The sky next morning was still cloudless—almost black. The sun blazed upon the ice-fluted peaks. And this was the height of the monsoon!

We made fast progress up the Yankchar glacier. Led by Delib Singh and Tirlok Singh, the latter a tough and most high-spirited Bhotia from Milam who did half an hour's step-cutting among crevasses, and did it well, we arrived in four hours at the base of the rock and scree wall rising 600 feet to the pass. The wall was snow-dusted and looked difficult for a moment, until we saw an easy passage to the left-hand side. At midday we reached the crest—a col between two 20,000-foot peaks. These last are unclimbed, and I imagine will remain so.

Long-delayed clouds were now billowing up from the south-west, but we had arrived in the nick of time. A clear view was still open down the far side. There our third glacier rolled gently for several hundred feet, its wide ice-sheets covered with an inch or two of wet snow, then plunged 3,500 feet in ice-falls to the invisible fourth glacier, which cut across it at right angles. Although the first descent was not steep, yet it was so icy that I prepared myself mentally for two hours' step-cutting and rope-work in order to get the coolies down to a better surface. But before I knew what they were about, they had tipped the loads over the edge and gone flashing after them on their backsides. They went faster than they imagined, but all stopped safely a couple of hundred feet above the first crevasses. Only one crate split and cast the contents. By the grace of God it was the medicine chest, not food.

Crevasses now forced us leftwards to the flanking cliffs, which had already been discharging both heavy guns and light. Yet we made the passage without incident for an hour, until one ton-weight boulder whizzed straight at the last three coolies. They had good warning and ran hard at the correct angles. Immediately afterwards the glacier dropped sharply in an ice-fall of 1,000 feet. Direct descent was impossible, but an opportune ledge on the north-flanking cliff allowed us to rise off the glacier and descend all the way by a long rock-ridge—steep but technically easy.

That night we camped on a grassy alp beside our fourth glacier, the Nipchukang, and early next morning went down the narrow pastures of its left-hand moraine. Grass and flowers were soon

augmented by dwarf rhododendrons, then by cotoneasters and red rose bushes, at the last by birch and pine. After days spent among rock, snow, and ice our minds were once again enchanted by the rich scents of the vegetation. Down at Sipu, in the Lassar Yankti (11,200 feet), we pitched camp on a flat meadow where a stream bubbled through.

We had two delightful days of rest on this meadow, but I groaned for MacKinnon, who until Milam had been our Medicine Man. He had done excellent work in all the villages, having very good supplies with him. At Sipu I was much troubled by women. About half a dozen came for treatment, showing me stomachs pitted all over with clean scars, curiously like old vaccination marks. I thought that this was some obscure skin disease, so I painted them with Castellani's paint—a deep, imperial purple. It was wonderful stuff to look at. It gave me, and I am sure them too, great satisfaction. We parted, all hoping for the best. Not until a long time later did I discover what these skin marks really were. It seems that when these Bhotia women have tummy trouble—bad indigestion or dysentery—they lie down with a bit of red charcoal on their stomachs, while a kind friend blows it red-hot. . . . What I *ought* to have given them was a pill, not a skin-paint.

On 3rd August we moved 7 miles down-river to Sona, on the Darmaganga, below the east wall of Panch Chuli. Thus opened the last stage of our expedition.

### THE PANCH CHULI

We pitched our Base Camp a quarter of a mile up the Sona gad on the true left bank of the stream. On a first reconnaissance in the monsoon the ascent of even one of the six peaks was more than we could expect; for they are difficult even by Himalayan standards. But we did hope, by trial and error, to discover a route that might take some future party to the top. Our task was to explore and help distinguish bad ways from good. If lucky, we might gain the summit.

Next morning a semicircle of white and spiky peaks thrust clear of the clouds. The main top on the right, 22,650 feet, towered far above the others, not one of which was under 20,000 feet. My first reaction was to make a pencil sketch before they vanished again, a sketch destined later to serve a good end. Meanwhile the most promising route was clear. On each side of the summit great glaciers descended—on the left the Meola, on the right the Sona, each ending up in ice-falls 5,000 feet high. Up one of these glaciers we had to find a way. Their lower halves were impossible. But the upper halves, leading to the south and north summit ridges respectively,

looked climbable. But how to get there? Here we had a stroke of luck. Between the two glaciers stood a great cliff. One very steep grassy shelf slanted up its face. Could we get up that shelf we could then dodge the ice-falls by gaining the Sona glacier at 16,000 feet where the angle began to fall back, and where a small side glacier joined it. Once there we should be able to reach the north col at approximately 20,000 feet.

On 5th August the Dhotials carried Camp II 3 miles up the Sona gad to a little alp against the great cliff. Height 12,200 feet. It was perched like a nest on the mountain wall, with the vast ice-fall of the Meola plunging underneath. The camp made a most peaceful scene when I walked away in the evening and looked back—the cluster of tents, the bright juniper fire, the coolies sitting contentedly around, knitting, smoking, chatting—a scene that grew more dramatic at night. Then the stars stood out above the ring of the four peaks. The coolies' fire became a red splash in the dark, lighting up the smoke as it curled in tall columns against the black cliffs behind. In the big tent there was just one candle burning, but it seemed incredibly bright, lighting the whole tent pale green.

Next day we got all the coolies up that cliff—the shelf was full of strawberries and flowers—just as clouds rolled up from the Darma-ganga to blanket the route over the glacier snout. So we pitched Camp III on a snow-field at 16,000 feet, sent down four of the Dhotials, and waited. At 3.30 p.m. the cloud lifted and revealed the snout as an ice-fall of 1,500 feet flanked by rock-ridges. From below it had looked a mere nothing. Direct ascent was for Dhotials not possible, so we made reconnaissance for the morrow. Two hours' work disclosed a route between the glacier and the flank of the left-hand ridge, giving a gain in height sufficient to pass the ice-fall.

Cloud and drizzle delayed our morning's start until 7.30. This was the vital day. If only we could get Camp IV up to 19,000 feet in the upper glacier basin—just under the north col—we should be in a strong position for making Camp V and the summit. We climbed 1,500 feet up rotten rocks, then roped and cut a long line through marginal crevasses to the centre of the branch glacier, then straight up to the main glacier, which was three-quarters of a mile wide and heavily crevassed on its right-hand half. We therefore bore left, along a smooth and shining highway of  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles, only once rising on an ice-fall through which a central corridor rose invitingly.

We had just glimpsed this good route when the clouds again rolled over all. Behind them the sun burned intensely, its heat overpowering. The coolies were enervated by glacier lassitude, but kept going rather than let us down. We ourselves had too much to think

about to be enervated. The glacier being snow-covered, we had to keep wide awake to spot hidden crevasses. It was flanked too by great mountain walls, from which avalanches poured at five-minute intervals. In thick mists there was always the risk of our straying leftwards into the danger area.

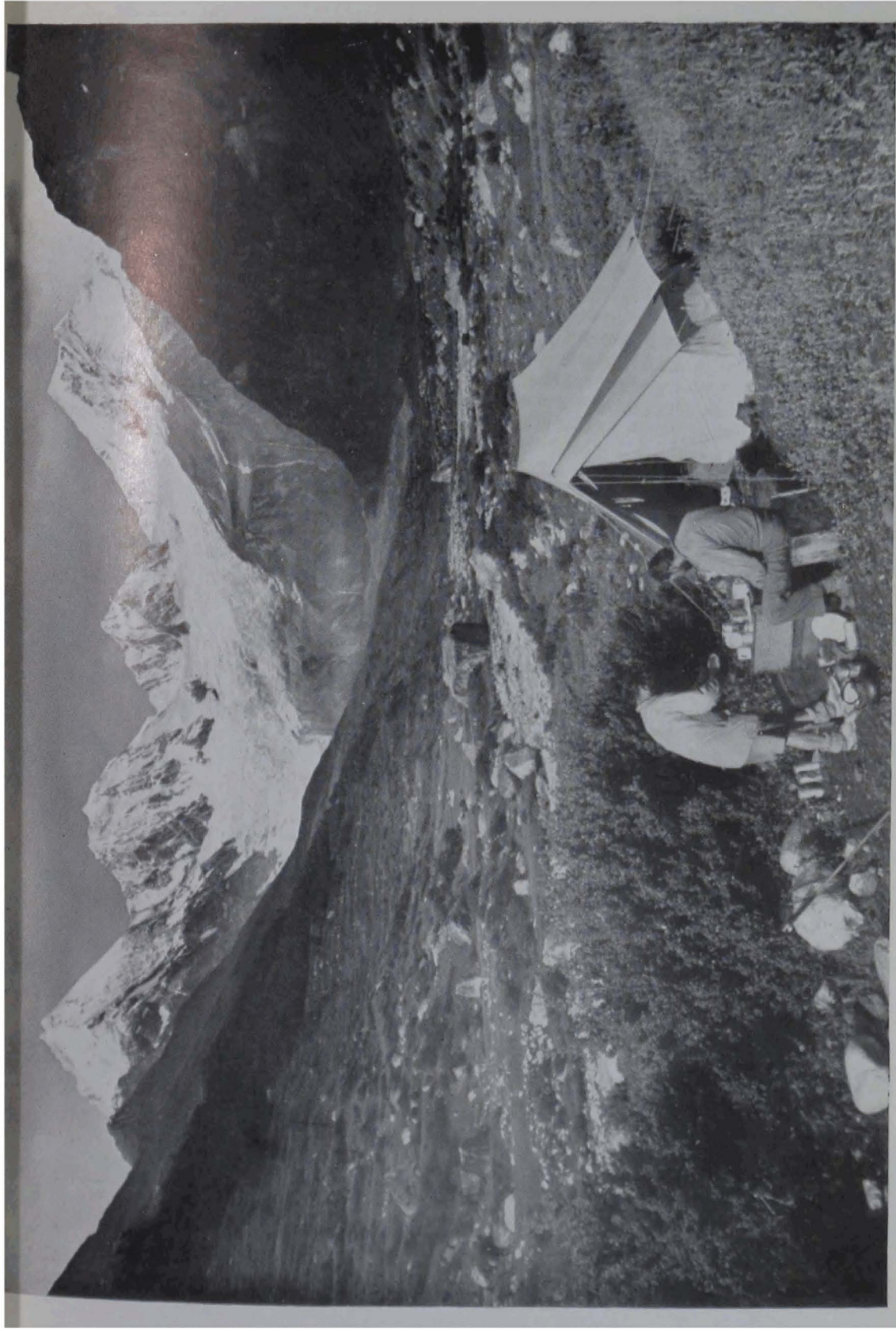
Above the final ice-fall the Dhotials could go no farther. We sent them back alone to Camp III, for they were men of resolution and good judgement. Scott, Weir, and I now carried the loads ourselves until we came to a patch of flat snow, spread like a magic carpet at the very brink of a huge crevasse, which gaped blue and hazily profound as though it were a hole in the surrounding clouds. This was an ideal camp-site—if safe. We hung around undecidedly, until the mist lifted for a few seconds. We were just out of range of the debris falling from a great ice-cliff. We pitched our tent. Height 19,000 feet.

Our work for next day was to carry Camp V up to the north col, so Scott and I set out in the late afternoon to reconnoitre. Level snow-fields led us easily to the glacier basin. The cliffs buttressing the col came into full view. A few minutes' very silent study showed them to be nearly 1,000 feet high and close to the vertical. They were ringed below by a bergschrund, from which 300 feet of bare ice swept up to the rocks—and the ice was everywhere raked by stone-fall. We were beaten.

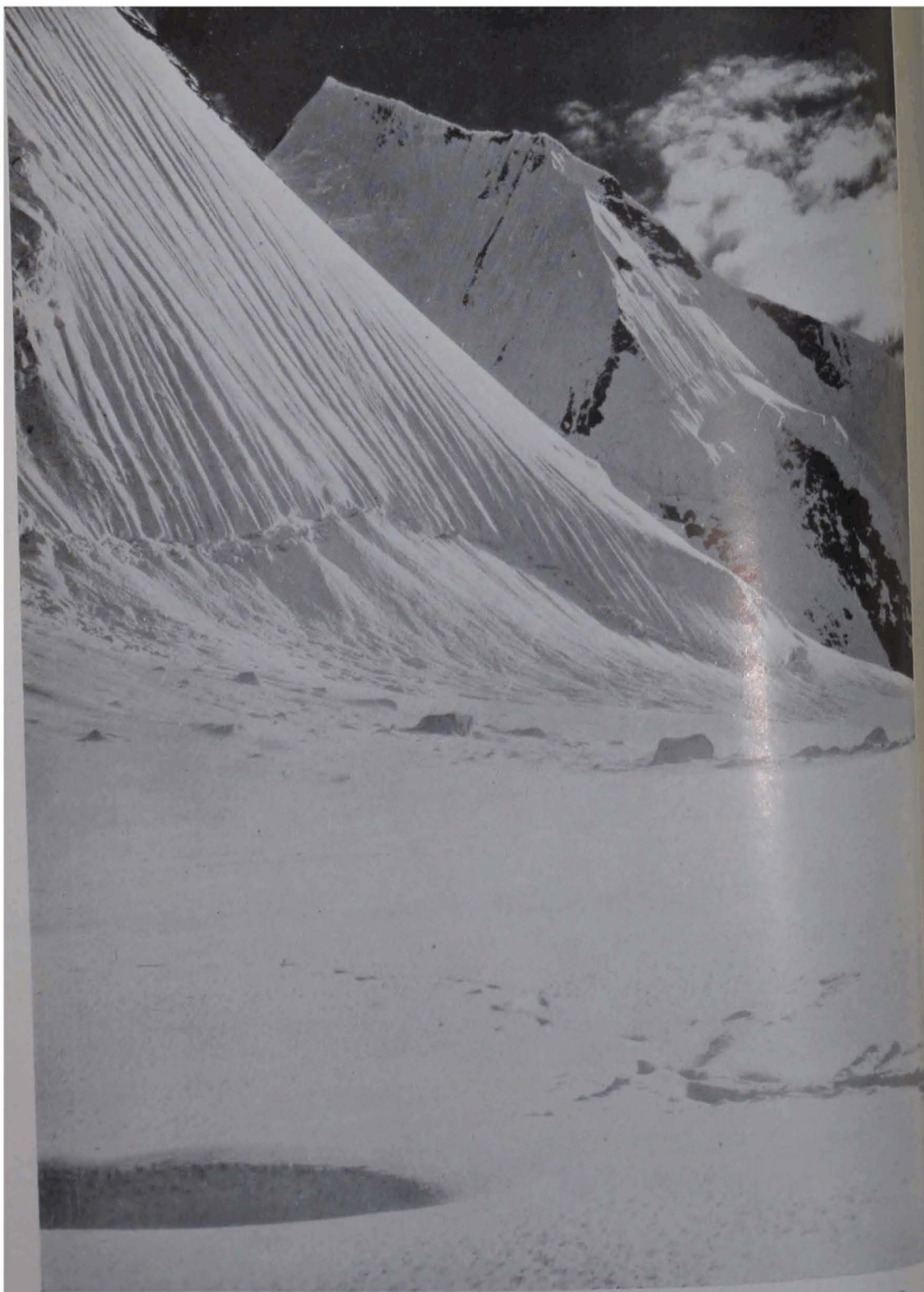
Our ascent thus far had even now earned us a true reward. The peak of Panch Chuli was right before our eyes, its upper ice-ridges so thin that we could see the sun shining through. And looking outwards our eyes ranged over the vast snow-fields, past the pin-point of the tent and across the profound gorge of the Darmaganga, now 10,000 feet below, among the clouds, to rank on rank of unknown snow-ranges, topped by towering cumuli and receding into the everlasting blue that roofs Tibet. Truly this *was* the abode of the Gods and the Five Brothers—worth much sacrifice of the flesh! And the sacrifice was certainly asked of us. For we stayed one more day up at that camp, the tent our sunshade, upon which intensely fierce sun beat—beat upon the snows and reflected back with all the heat and glare of a furnace. Snow-goggles had to be worn part-time inside the tent; even then our eyes grew inflamed. We lost our appetites by day and sleep by night. All night long the avalanches fell loud, near, and often. Our tent was 100 yards beyond the farthest debris marks, but one could not help wondering whether some greater fall might not sweep the camp-site. By daylight we judged it safe: no further falls could be great. But in the dead of night every new crash and rattle made one wonder.

At dawn we were glad to get away. We descended 7,000 feet to





*Panch Chuli (22,650 ft.) from Base Camp, Sona gad. Right to left: Summit—22,650 ft. Points—20,710 ft., 20,780 ft., 21,120 ft.*



*The Panch Chuli (22,650 ft.) from Camp IV at 19,000 ft. on the Upper Sonora glacier, 8th August 1950*

Camp II. Meanwhile, my pencil sketch suggested that access could be gained to the Meola glacier above its huge ice-fall, at 16,000 feet; and that if so it should be possible to reach the south col and to climb Panch Chuli's south ridge.

While Weir and the coolies returned to base, Scott and I made a new and successful reconnaissance. We climbed to 16,000 feet by way of the central cliff and found the only way on to the Meola. The upper glacier, by Chamonix standards, was not excessively difficult. The south col was partly screened from us, but the neighbouring slopes and angles augured no greater barrier like the north col. I think it is by this route that Panch Chuli will be climbed. For us it involved more ice-work and higher camps than our Dhotials could cope with; it required Sherpas or Bhotias familiar with snow-work. We returned to base.

On 13th August we began withdrawing down the Darmaganga.

Our goal was Almora, 160 miles south—a journey of fifteen days. Daily we lost height, dropping nearly 10,000 feet through the Middle Hills of Kumaon. The red fields of millet, which spread quilt-like around the high villages, gave way to the pale green of rice, and to maize standing twice as tall as a man. The heat again grew tropical! Enormous, bright-hued butterflies danced around our heads. Grey and red monkeys browsed among banana palms. Roasted corn-cobs appeared on our daily diet. As for the birds——! At last we heard the black partridge calling. In one day we saw the pigmy owlet as small as a thrush, the grey-headed flycatcher, a most brilliant sunbird that fluttered like a moth while it sipped nectar from the blooms of a shrub—but these are just a few among a great host.

Back at Ranikhet on 27th August we relaxed for a week, eating huge meals at Essex House, listening to the monkeys go thumping over the bungalow roof, and looking north across a vast jumble of wooded foot-hills to the clouded spires of Panch Chuli. It became possible to look back dispassionately on our four months' journey. Dr. Longstaff had told us: 'Mark your red-letter days by camps, not summits (no *time* there).' As with everything else he said we found he was absolutely right. Himalayan climbing did not seem to us to be better than Alpine, for the altitude is against full enjoyment. But the travel *among* the mountains—surely it can have no equal in the world! Full of uncertainty and variety, daily change of scene—always some new, unexpected encounter—it taught us much of permanent value. To my own mind the most important knowledge is how to enjoy the present without worry for the future. The Himalayan traveller who cannot swiftly acquire this philosophy and apply it will go mad with anxieties. From this first venture of ours it seems to me that the art of Himalayan mountaineering is to plan

and prepare for all the uncertainties—and then to forget them. Careful organization is needed to realize dreams: but our plans are to be subject to Providence, and their outcome, therefore, something we can always accept serenely, and in light of which act anew for the best. The art of mountain travel is the art of being bold—bold enough to enjoy life—now.

# NORWEGIAN EXPEDITION TO TIRICH MIR, 1950

H. R. A. STREATHER

## FOREWORD

SINCE 1907 when C. W. Rubenson and I. Monrad-Aas came very close to success on Kabru, the 24,000-foot south-western outlier of Kangchenjunga, Norwegian climbers have had several plans for Himalayan expeditions. These ambitions could not be realized until 1950 when sponsored by the Norsk Tindeklub and the Norwegian Geographical Society, following his reconnaissance of the previous year, Professor Arne Naess led his team to Chitral. The attainment of their goal by the Norwegians was largely due to the willing assistance and benevolence of the Government of Pakistan and the friendly co-operation and kindness of the authorities and people of that country. It proved to be of very great value to the expedition that Captain H. R. A. Streather of the Chitral State Scouts was permitted join the expedition. His knowledge of the region, of the inhabitants and their language, together with his capable handling of the porters, was invaluable.

We are glad to learn that a narrative of the expedition will appear in the *Himalayan Journal* from the pen of Captain Streather and we take this opportunity of thanking him and all his countrymen who, from the very beginning, were always willing to help us.

ARNE NÆSS

HENNING TONSBORG

(Pres. Norsk Tindeklub)

*The fact has not been noted, though a photograph indicates it, that the flags planted on the summit were those of Norway, Pakistan, and Great Britain.—ED.*

IT was in the summer of 1949, at the hot weather headquarters of the North West Frontier Government at Nathiagali, that I first met Professor Arne Naess. He had come to Pakistan with Arne Randers Heen on a small expedition to the Himalayas and the adjacent mountains and his particular interest lay in Tirich Mir in Chitral—a mountain that had been strongly recommended to him by Eric Shipton and by Professor Morgenstine, the Norwegian specialist in Afghan and Khowar languages.

He had also heard from Major Foskett, then of the Chitral Scouts, that there appeared to be a south-east ridge which might prove a possible line of assault to the summit. On this information Naess and Heen decided to go to Chitral and hold a reconnaissance on that part of the mountain—I had myself been to Chitral on leave and was



able to offer a little advice as to the journey there. I was also able to help by lending a few maps of the Tirich Mir region.

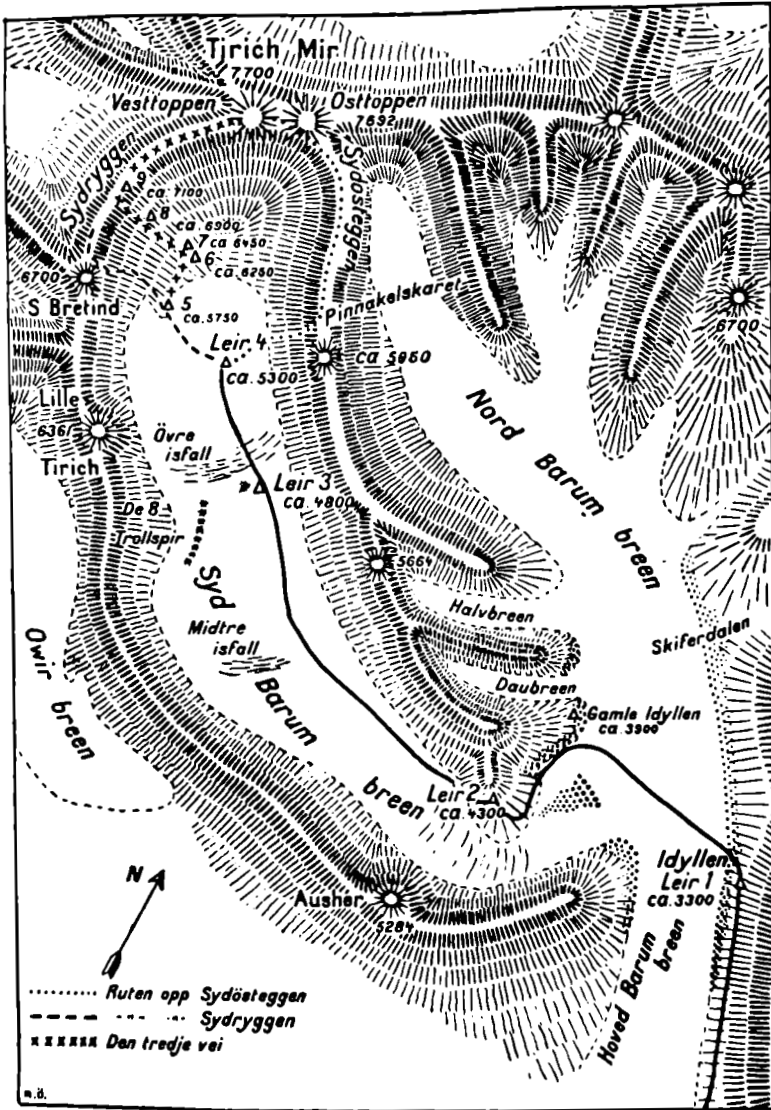
At that time I was not serving in the Chitral Scouts and little did I guess that the following year, not only would I be living in Chitral, but also was to have such luck as to be able to accept the invitation of the main Norwegian party, which was to follow the reconnaissance, to join them as their guest, and to help them with their transport problems.

Naess and Heen were unfortunate on their reconnaissance expedition in that they experienced trouble from their porters, even before they had reached the mountain. From 13,000 feet on they had the thankless task of trekking back and forth between five camps carrying their 350 lbs. of equipment to the highest camp at 19,000 feet. They had, however, expected porter trouble and it had been said that if Tirich Mir were ever to be conquered it would not be with porters from Chitral. The following year I did all I could to prove this saying untrue. Really well-picked Chitralis can hold their own anywhere. I do not believe for a minute that the average Chitrali could compare with an average Sherpa—as a porter, who could? But to condemn the Chitralis as ‘the worst porters in the world’, as I believe has been said, is gross injustice.

Tirich Mir, the highest and most easterly peak in the Kindukush range, lies between the Kunar or Chitral river and the Oxus. Latest maps show the west summit to be 25,263 feet and the eastern 25,237 feet. It lies in the centre of the independent state of Chitral. Both to the east and to the west the surrounding mountains are much lower and so Tirich Mir stands out in its isolated glory dominating the entire Chitral valley with its vast shining magnificence. There is little wonder that there has grown up about the mountain, in the minds of those who live under its spell, a multitude of superstitions and myth. The stories have been passed down from generation to generation and are believed, anyway in part, by even the most enlightened Chitralis. It is said that the summit is in the form of a castle inhabited by fairies. The fairies are guarded by frogs, the size of lorries, which live in the crevasses on the glaciers. Anyone venturing on the mountain will probably be devoured by the frogs, but should they survive these, then they are cursed to die within the next year. It is a cheerful thought and I am keenly awaiting to see what our fate is to be. There are said to be people in Chitral who have been up to visit the fairies, on invitation, and have lived to tell the tale. I have yet to meet one.

It was greatly to do with this superstition that we were particularly worried about the possibility of porters refusing to come with us. However, we need not have worried, for Chitral was then going

through such hard days that the villagers would do anything for a few rupees. The Methar, or ruler, had been forced to leave, there having been a revolution against his misrule and incompetence—and the State was only just recovering from virtual chaos. Porters were only too keen to enlist, but would they be just as keen when they



had been carrying a load for a few days and when they were suffering from mountain sickness at the higher camps? This was to be our great problem—how long could we rely on the porters? So far all previous reports of them had been bad.

There had been but few previous attempts to reach the summit of Tirich Mir. Survey of India officers had been in the region in 1928 and 1929 and had made unsuccessful efforts to reach high peaks suitable for triangulation in the neighbourhood. They had, however, collected useful data covering weather conditions in these years.

In 1935 members of a mainly scientific German expedition to the Hindukush made an unsuccessful attempt to reach the summit from the south.

In 1939 Smeaton, Miller, and Richard Orgill, with some experienced Sherpas, made an attack from the south by the Owir glacier. They reached the ridge between the Dirgol glacier and the South Barim glacier at a point just above what was later to be our Camp V, and between Little Tirich and South glacier peak, as they were later to be known to us. From there they had an impressive view of the south ridge but were disappointed by the steep drop down from South glacier peak to the South glacier col. Looking across the col the south shoulder looked to them to be very steep and uncompromising and they decided to turn back, as they did not think they had sufficient rope and pitons to make a secure fixed ropeway on the steep part of the route. On return to Base Camp they were to hear the grave news of the outbreak of the Second World War and so had to give up any idea of further attempts on Tirich and return to England. When they turned back from the ridge they had not given up hope and had it not been for the war, their attempt may well have succeeded.

After the war climbers of several countries had their eyes on Tirich Mir, but the Norwegians were the first to make definite plans for a reconnaissance in 1949, and a major assault in 1950.

In 1949 Naess and Heen put in much good work, in spite of having been let down so badly by their porters. On 11th July they started up the South Barum glacier and reached a point at about 18,000 feet where the glacier meets the main central pyramid of Tirich Mir. On the south side of the glacier was a formidable ridge with two main peaks which they called Little Tirich, marked on the map as 20,869 feet, and South glacier peak a little to the west at about 22,000 feet. The north side of the glacier was flanked by the steep south-east ridge, which leads directly to the eastern summit of Tirich.

From the Barum glacier the lower slopes of the south-east ridge seemed very steep and so no attempt was at first made to reach this ridge. Instead an attack was made on an S-shaped side glacier, which led to the ridge to the west of the Barum glacier, where the main south ridge of Tirich begins, at about 21,500 feet. Wide crevasses reaching from side to side of the South glacier forced them towards the west until they reached a point just beneath the summit of South glacier peak. They decided that the crevasses themselves would not prevent an expedition from reaching the south ridge, but in the middle of the South glacier were great ice-towers, which seemed very unstable and ready, at any moment, to start ice avalanches. However, that year they did not see even one avalanche on the



South glacier but, even so, concluded that it would not be a safe route for a big expedition, which would entail many crossings of the most dangerous places. The wiseness of their decision was proved only too conclusively in the following year, when we were to experience the most terrifying avalanches roaring down the upper part of the South glacier several times a day.

The next few days were spent by Naess and Heen in establishing a camp just below the south-east ridge. The steep 2,000 feet of rocks and snow-gullies did not prove as difficult as they had expected. They reached the ridge on 27th July and followed it sufficiently far to be certain that an ascent by the south-east ridge would be practicable. As they had only two days left at their disposal they did not attempt to establish camps on the ridge.

Home in Norway they were able to report that, with weather conditions as they were in 1949, with uninterrupted sunshine on the slopes between 15,000 and 21,000 feet and with only light snow showers higher up, a major expedition to Tirich Mir would have a very fair chance of success. At the same time, they feared that the fine weather conditions and the resulting avalanche-proof snow would make climbers over optimistic. It would tempt them to climb fast and to site camps in dangerous but convenient positions. If a major snow-storm should break then there would be more chance of disaster than under average conditions. It was quite clear to them from reports of the Indian Survey on weather conditions that, whereas June and July could show long stable sunny periods, at the same time snow-storms and mists at higher altitudes were not uncommon. There had been, at the beginning of June, just before the arrival of the reconnaissance party, a violent snow-storm lasting four days, which had set back the season in the whole of Chitral by about a fortnight. Fruits were late in ripening and snow conditions late into July were still bad, due mainly to this one single storm.

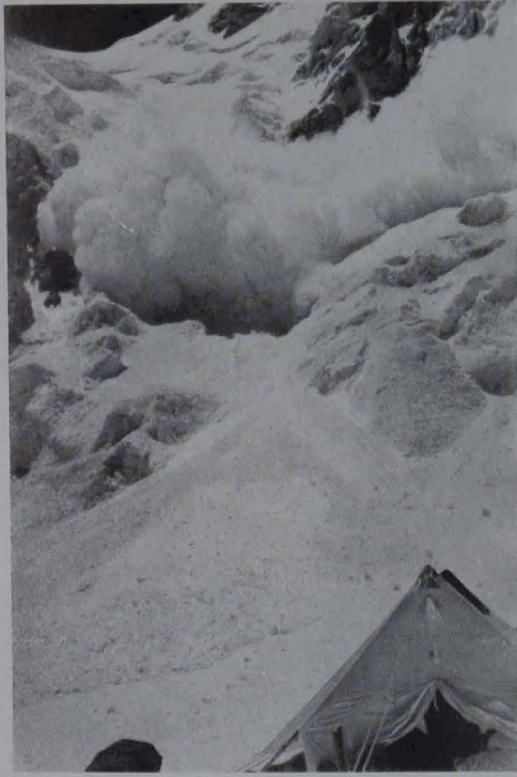
Naess and Heen concluded from their reconnaissances that the south-east ridge would have to be given priority as the likely route of attack to the summit. The South glacier route was in all ways more preferable, but the great danger of avalanches could not be ignored. If, in the following year, both the south-east ridge and the South glacier routes proved impracticable, then there was still a very tempting 'third route,' and short cut, leading directly to the south ridge, just below the summit, between the two main possible routes. This would have been the obvious way for an amateur to choose, but to an experienced mountaineer it was clear that the 'third route' would be suicidal in the event of a major snow-storm, and therefore, when planning a major expedition, it was better to forget about this tempting short cut.

And so it came about that, in Oslo, a major expedition sponsored by the Norwegian Alpine Club and the Norwegian Geographical Society was prepared during the winter of 1949–50 to make an assault on Tirich Mir in the summer of 1950. The party was to consist of five climbers, namely, Arne Naess (38), Hans Bugge (40), Henry Berg (27), Per Kvernberg (32), and Fridtjot Vogt Lorentzen (41), who was also to be doctor to the expedition. There were to be two scientists, Finn Jorstad (27) as geologist and Per Wendelbo (22) as botanist—Ramus Breistein and Arild Nybakken were to accompany as photographers. Professor Abdul Hamid Beg, of the Islamia College, Lahore, was invited to join as liaison officer. The expedition was to be led by Arne Naess.

Soon after I had met Naess in 1949 I was posted to the Chitral State Scouts. I am no mountaineer, but several years of service in the Scouts on various parts of the Frontier had naturally led to a great interest in the mountains amongst which I lived. Leaves spent trekking in Kashmir and Gilgit had fostered this interest and had taught me to look upon the great peaks from a climber's point of view. How well I remember in 1947 spending ten days trekking hard from Srinagar and back just to get a glimpse of Nanga Parbat at dawn, before it was enveloped in clouds. Later I was to have many wonderful views of this great mountain while flying from Peshawar to the new airfield recently built in Gilgit. No one can live in Chitral, dominated as the state is by the vastness of Tirich Mir, without being drawn towards that magic peak—and so it was with great enthusiasm that I read of the plans of the Norwegians for a major expedition in 1950. I wrote at once offering to help in any way I could—for being on the spot in Chitral and having a fair knowledge of local conditions and languages I felt that I was in a good position to help with many problems, particularly the very delicate question of porters. I think even then I had a secret hope that I would get a chance of going high on the mountain but I would not admit this to myself, let alone the Norwegians. I was in close touch with Professor Beg, and between us we were able to arrange the details for the reception of the party in Peshawar and the passage of them and their 3½ tons of equipment over the Lawari pass into the Chitral and on to the Base Camp.

Pakistan Government authorities were keen to do all they could to help and generously assisted the expedition in every way during the time they were in Pakistan.

On 4th June I met the party at Dir. This was as far as they were to be able to travel by lorry and from here we started our trek through Chitral to Base Camp. Professor Beg had already joined the party at Peshawar, as also had Mr. Chaudri, a young botanist from Lahore



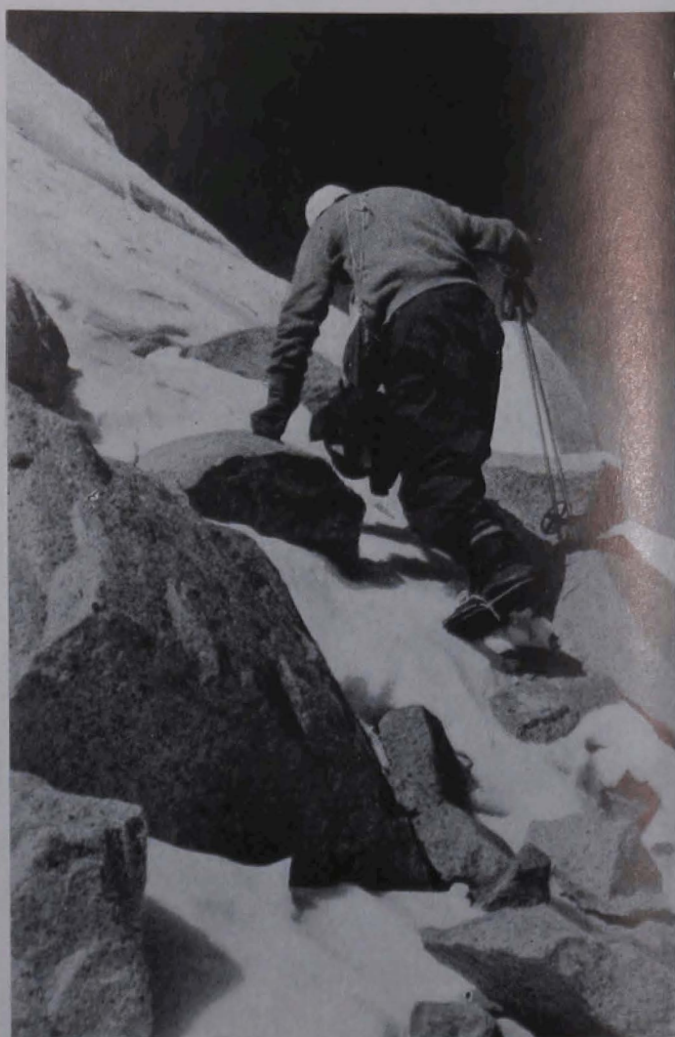
*Avalanche in the Upper Sona glacier*



*Tirich Mir*



*Naess and Streather on the summit, planting flags of Norway, Pakistan, the United Nations, and Great Britain*



*Arne Naess near the summit*

who was to stay with us for some time at Base Camp. The party of climbers as they arrived in Dir were a sad sight and seemed hardly capable of struggling over the Lawari pass into Chitral, let alone tackle Tirich Mir. The long journey from Norway and particularly the last part of their travels across the Sind desert by train had taken cruel toll of their health. I had written to warn them that they could not know the meaning of heat until they experienced the Sind desert in the summer. When they arrived they were more than ready to agree with me. I suspect also that they had been tempted to eat fruit from the dirty bazaar shops. Several days of rest were needed at Base Camp before they were fit again to go on with their work.

The journey from Dir to Base Camp was not without event. Our troubles started when we tried to get the hundred or so porters, who were to carry the equipment the first stages, started from Dir. It was late in the morning before the chaos of shouting and arguing ceased, and the last load left on its way.

The main route into Chitral from Pakistan is through Dir State and over the 10,000 foot Lawari pass. All goods going into Chitral must be carried over the pass by pack animals or by coolies. The pass is closed by deep snow, sometimes for weeks on end, during the winter, and it is not possible to get animals over until well into June. If we had been able to carry our equipment on mules our transport problem would have been much simplified, but there were but few animals crossing the pass at the time. Our first night was spent at Ziarat, a small post on the Chitral side of the pass. On the second day we rejoined the few miles of road which have been built in the State, and late in the evening reached the town of Chitral. The lorries in which we travelled had been dragged on the hard snow over the pass by hundreds of coolies many years earlier. Rough use on the roads of Chitral had done them little good and the 26-mile journey from Drosch to Chitral took us nearly four hours. In Chitral the party was welcomed by the Board of Administration which was at the time ruling the State in the absence of His Highness the Mehtar.

Accommodation was arranged in the grounds of the Palace, and a State Banquet was given in the evening. Unfortunately, the party were in no form to appreciate the splendid eastern food, but Professor Beg and I were able to do it full justice. The Assistant Political Agent, Mr. Mir Ajam, was also there to welcome the party to Chitral and he kindly made many arrangements for their comfort. He generously offered to send on mail by porter to us at Base Camp every few days. The Political Agent of Malakand, Major Mohd Yusuf, M.C., who is responsible for maintaining contact between the Pakistan Government and the three Frontier States of Dir, Swat, and Chitral, was at the time on tour in Chitral. He showed very great

interest in the aims of the expedition, and sent us on our way with every good wish for success.

Later, when returning to Peshawar, we were to enjoy the generous hospitality of his charming wife and himself to lunch at his house in Malakand.

After a short rest in Chitral we were ready for the four days' trek which was to take us to our Base Camp. We had engaged fresh porters to carry the equipment, and we were all looking forward to getting up to the cool mountains and away from the stifling heat of the Chitral valley. Even on the mountain it was the heat which was to prove so troublesome to the Norwegians, whereas to Beg, the porters, and I it was a welcome sight to see the sun rise in the morning and slowly feel our blood warm again, having spent the night in freezing agony.

We trekked for two days north, up the main Chitral valley, camping for the night at Koghozi and Barenis. On the third day we crossed the river by a very primitive and frightening bridge at Par-pish and reached Barum. This was the last village before Base Camp, and it was from this district that we hoped to enlist porters who would work on the mountain.

We called for volunteers and many came forward. The next day, 11th June, Base Camp was established at a height of about 12,000 feet at the snout of the South Barum glacier. Some of the keener and stronger-looking porters from Chitral and from Barum were selected to remain for work between the high camps, and the rest were paid off.

It had been arranged through the kindness of H.Q. Frontier Corps at Peshawar that a wireless station, manned by the Chitral State Scouts, should be established at Base Camp, and should remain there to enable the expedition to be in direct contact with Chitral and through Peshawar with the outside world. This proved very useful when it became necessary to call up further supplies from the porters from Chitral and it meant that news of our success was able to reach Norway the same day as we returned to Base Camp, and not after about a week, as would have been the case if it had had to be sent from Chitral after our return there.

Most of June was spent in establishing advanced Base Camp or Camp IV, near the top of the South Barum glacier, at about 17,800 feet. There were no serious obstacles, and a huge ice-fall between Camps III and IV proved easily climbable by a narrow path of snow on its east edge. Unfortunately, I missed much of this early work as I had been recalled to our headquarters in Drosh, from Base Camp, as there was still some doubt as to whether or not I was to be allowed to remain with the expedition. Eventually I was able to obtain leave and rejoin them at Camp IV later in June.



The three Hunza porters, who were to work with the expedition, were late in arriving at Gilgit, and did not join us until much of the heavy work in establishing the lower camps had already been completed. In many ways this was an advantage, for although only two of them proved fit for the work they were fresh for carrying at the higher camps. The third was a veteran from the German Nanga Parbat Expedition and although keen and efficient was much too old for any climbing. He spent most of the time in hospital at Camp IV. We had held high hopes of the Hunza men being our mainstay for the summit but as things turned out they did not prove better than the best of our Chitrali porters. Apart from the old veteran they were not pleasant to work with, and when the time came to pay them off two of them refused to accept their money, saying it was not enough. This was hard to understand as the Chitrali porters were more than pleased with their pay and the Hunza men were to receive an extra two rupees a day as travelling allowance while on their journey to and from Hunza. We sent their pay on to the Mir of Hunza. From what little I have seen of Gilgit, I do not think these two were typical of the likeable straightforward Gilgit people.

Soon after Advance Base Camp had been established the south-east ridge was inspected and it was soon found that the snow conditions were bad as compared with those at the time of the 1949 reconnaissance. It was therefore decided to give up the idea of an attack by this route—anyway until late in July.

These first days in Advance Base Camp were made all the more interesting by the frequency of avalanches from the hanging glaciers on the main Tirich marine. Three times one or more of the tents were levelled to the ground. There was, however, no part of the glacier completely safe from avalanches and so there seemed to be little point in moving the camp.

Having given up the idea of an ascent by the south-east ridge, our attention was turned to the South glacier route. On 3rd July Camp V at 19,000 feet was established, and reconnaissance of the upper South glacier was started.

We very soon realized that whatever had been the condition in 1949, the route this year was quite out of the question. The spirit of the glacier had quite changed. Several times a day avalanches were thundering down the steepest parts. The unhappy conclusion was reached that the South glacier route, too, must be given up.

This was a critical time for the expedition. Both the main possible routes of assault had proved disappointing, and the conclusion was forced upon us that we would have to try the more direct but dangerous route—the highly tempting short cut running between the other main routes directly to the south ridge. There was a

narrow snow-ridge running from the summit walls of Tirich and looking very attractive from Camp V. It seemed easy to reach about 21,000 feet and from then on it seemed necessary to make a formidable traverse of a steep but very smooth glacier covering the main wall of Tirich. Then there was a last very steep, partly rocky, climb until the upper part of the south ridge was reached at about 23,000 feet. Should we try this route? If the weather held we would have a very fair chance of success. Until then the weather had been very much in our favour and had produced what seemed to be avalanche-proof cone-ridge snow. On the other hand, we were getting well into July, and could we trust the fine-weather conditions to last for ever? If the weather changed and we experienced a major snow-storm above 21,000 feet and particularly on the summit ridge, then complete disaster would be almost inevitable. Both the traverse and the final climb up the summit ridge were highly exposed to snow avalanches and, as any storm inevitably would come from the west, with the prevailing wind, masses of fresh snow would be swept across the very broad summit ridge and would fall down the smooth and steep flanks which we had to traverse. If we saw a storm threatening there may be time to make a rapid descent to Camp V, from even as high as 24,000 feet, but having got height it is unlikely that the mere possibility of a pending storm would deter us from making a bid for the summit. High up only a real storm would halt us, and this would be too late, for even if we survived the storm descent of the steep flanks of the ridge, with fresh snow lying on the old hard snow, would have been well-nigh impossible. Every step would create an avalanche.

It was a hard decision which the leaders had to make, but eventually it was decided that fine weather would be a fair gamble and that we should try the 'third route'.

On 6th July Naess and Bugge held a reconnaissance on the first part of the route, but at about 20,000 feet they reached a step of about 200 feet, on the sharp snow edge. This was covered with waist-deep soft snow and at times it was almost impossible to get a foothold on the very narrow ice-edge under the snow. There was a great tendency to step out to one side or the other, both of which were extremely steep. Danger of starting an avalanche was great and the conclusion seemed warranted that further attempts should not be made here. There was, however, a very strong counter-argument for as yet we had not actually seen one avalanche on the surrounding very steep slopes. Below 22,000 feet all the avalanches seemed to be produced by hanging glaciers which broke off from time to time. The snow-slopes, even the steepest, were in an exceptionally stable condition due to the long spell of fine weather.



If this line of assault should be abandoned then we faced the depressing decision of having to transport all our equipment down again to Camp IV, and then to try again the south-east ridge in the hope that snow conditions there were more favourable than at the beginning of June.

As seen from Camp V it was clear that not only was the ridge very long but also that one could be faced with considerable technical difficulties. The morale of the few porters we then had with us was low, and it seemed unlikely that they would stay with us much longer if there was any further serious delay. Further, my leave was coming to an end and if we were to return to Camp IV I would not be able to stay long enough to help with the porters in an attempt by the south-east ridge.

Although it had tentatively been concluded that the 'third route' should not be further tried, it was decided that the other climbers should have one more look at the critical 200 feet the next day.

This day was to prove the most cheering we were to have during the climb. Naess and I went up some steep rocks between South glacier and the 'third route' in the hope that this might prove a possible by-pass to the critical snow-ridge. Although I had not previously experienced any difficult rock climbs of this sort, to follow Naess seemed easy—he climbed with such grace and simplicity, up what from below appeared to me to be quite impossible rocks, that I had no option but to follow.

Away on our right the main party had arrived at the ice-ridge, heavily laden with ropes, ice-axes, crampons, ice-bolts, and snow-shoes. On return to Camp V in the evening we were to hear that Kvernberg had suggested and tried an unusual technique. With snow-shoes attached in a curious way, and with an ice-axe in each hand, he had managed to struggle up the 200-foot step with a kind of swimming movement through the loose surface snow. The critical place having been secured by fixed ropes, the party returned to Camp V.

That evening, in high spirits, it was decided that next day an attempt to reach the summit by the 'third route' should start. Lots had already been drawn as to who should be in the first assault. Berg and Kvernberg had been the lucky winners.

On 8th July Camp VI was established, at about 20,500 feet, but when it was seen that this was at the tip of a hanging glacier, efforts were at once made to carry a little higher to Camp VII, at about 21,500 feet.

This first day of the attack, 8th July, was to prove a sad anticlimax after our high spirits of the previous evening. On our way to Camp VII two porters had left us, and only young Abdul Karim

and Mutaib, my orderly, were really fit. The effort of carrying the two extra loads between us, in addition to our already overladen packs, had exhausted us all. Late in the evening I had returned to Camp V with Abdul Karim and Mutaib, leaving Naess, Bugge, Berg, and Kvernberg to establish Camp VII. The plan was that, on the following day, they would make a reconnaissance of the route forward, and I should return to Camp VII with Abdul Karim and Mutaib—the three of us to act as porters for the assault.

Unfortunately, things were not to work out as planned. The 9th of July was to prove a fatal day. Early in the morning Abdul Karim came to my tent to say that Mutaib was ill. I very soon learned that this was no understatement. I went to the porter's tent and found him in the throes of an epileptic fit. I had not realized the fight that had been going on in his sub-conscience. In spite of all his outward joking about the fairies, he had now seen them. Inwardly he had been worrying about them from the day we left our headquarters at Drosh. This recalled to my mind an incident that had occurred while I was packing warm clothing for the expedition before leaving. I had a bright red polo-necked jersey that was very warm, and I put this out on my bed with the other things that I should be needing. When I came to packing I found that it had been put back in the cupboard. I asked Mutaib about this and he told me, with a guilty smile, that he had put it away as I could not wear it on Tirich Mir. He told me that the fairies did not like red and if I wore it they would certainly throw stones at me. I did not take this very seriously at the time but the red jersey was left behind. Now, in his mad state in Camp V, I was to see him scream and struggle every time he saw even a speck of red on a label of a tin.

The porters who had fallen out the previous day had left early for a lower camp and, apart from Abdul Karim, the only other person in Camp V at the time was Nybakken, the photographer who followed us to 21,000 feet. It took all the strength of the three of us to hold Mutaib and prevent him throwing himself and us down the steep rock-face to Camp IV. Eventually we had him securely roped and then we had to decide on our next step. Up in Camp VII the others would be wondering why the three of us had not set out to join them with further supplies. Should Abdul Karim and I go on, leaving Mutaib with Nybakken? When I mentioned this idea to Abdul Karim he flatly refused to leave Mutaib. They had become very good friends and he was determined to stick by him now that he was not well. This speaks well for the boy and was typical, as we later learned, of the spirit and manner of this very gallant little Chitrali. There seemed little point in my going up to Camp VII alone, and anyway I did not feel I could fairly leave Mutaib in his present state.

I decided to go down as quickly as possible to Camp IV and fetch Lorentzen, the doctor. We had given Mutaib strong doses of sleeping-tablets, but these had little or no effect. He continued to struggle and scream and to talk about the three fairies which were sitting on the tent watching him. He was not quiet until Lorentzen arrived and gave him a strong shot of morphia.

When we had not arrived in Camp VII the others had realized that something was wrong, and had amended their plans. They had decided to make an attempt without porters, but their luck had been no better than ours. They were all exhausted after the hard climb, with heavy loads, on the 8th, and on the next day Bugge had developed pneumonia. The advanced party tried to get forward but returned exhausted on the 12th. However, Camp VIII, at about 23,000 feet, had been established, and they were able to confirm that the summit ridge could probably be reached without serious technical difficulty by the 'third route'. To add to our troubles, during this critical period we had experienced a violent earthquake. Avalanches had come down all about us and we were quite sure that our end had come. Later we learned that the epicentre of the quake had been at Tirich Mir. This was little consolation.

Mutaib had to be taken down to Base Camp and sent home to his village, where he rapidly recovered, and Bugge taken down to Camp IV where careful treatment by Lorentzen soon put him right.

It was decided to make a second and last attempt by the 'third route' when we had rested. Snow conditions were deteriorating and so we could not wait for long. The weather might also change any day.

Bugge and Naess were to have taken the lead in the second assault, but Bugge would not be fit to climb for some time. It was decided that Naess and Berg should go and that I should attempt to accompany them to encourage the porters. Abdul Karim was still with us, although I had had great difficulty in persuading him to stay and not go down with Mutaib, and we had also two of the Hunza porters, who had been in Camp IV and were still fit.

Kvernberg was to try alone, knowing that he could fall back on our camps, moving steadily up behind him, if he should experience any difficulty.

On 21st July, as we reached the summit ridge, at about 23,400 feet, we could see him about 1,000 feet above us, having spent the night in the open, at about 23,500 feet. He had a fair chance of reaching the summit that day. Late that evening he joined us in Camp IX and we learned that he had reached the summit, in beautiful weather, at about 6 o'clock.

The summit ridge did not offer any serious technical difficulties,

but the snow was very deep and treacherous. It proved much easier to gain height after we had reached the protruding ribs of rock which led to the ridge.

Camp IX, just as Camp VII and VIII, was nothing more than a small snow cave, but somehow we managed to keep some pretence of warmth and to make plenty of hot drink. The three porters had stayed with us to the last camp, and from there had returned to Camp VII, and then down to Camp V. We had hoped that we might have Abdul Karim with us to the summit, but the last two days had been too much for him and we had to send him down with the others. He had been keen to come on, but was suffering from both head- and stomach-aches, and this was too much even for his indomitable spirit. The hardest job at these high camps was to get the porters started in the morning. We would have liked to have set out early, when the snow was still hard, but it seemed impossible to get them to move until the sun had risen and slowly brought them back to life. By this time they were carrying so little that we would probably have done better to go on without them.

Having reached Camp IX and sent the porters down, Naess, Berg, and I set about making our snow cave. None of us by then was thinking too clearly, and we committed the first of our two serious mistakes that night. We made much too big an opening to the cave, and in the morning were covered by snow, which had been blown in on us by the strong wind from the west. Later, when we crawled into our sleeping-bags, we committed our second serious mistake. We failed to take our boots into our bags with us and, in the morning, they were, of course, frozen hard. It was some time before the sun had enough heat to melt them, and the few candles we had with us proved of little help. This one mistake might well have spoilt our chance of reaching the summit.

Because of the delay over our boots we were very late in starting, and at one moment it seemed that we would not have time to reach the summit and return to Camp IX before dark. We had with us nothing but cameras and flags and a little extra warm clothing, but even so my rucksack seemed to weigh a ton—as also did my boots. I had slept badly for the last three nights and had little energy left for the summit. Berg did all he could to help me, for which I was more than grateful. It was surprising how well he and I got along together. He could not speak a word of English and I could not speak a word of Norwegian. I soon realized that I was very nearly exhausted when I saw, coming down the snow towards me, a large black elephant—not pink. I ducked down, hoping that it would pass over my head, but when I looked up again it was still there—a small rock firmly bedded in the snow many yards above me.

We reached the summit at about 6 o'clock. The view was magnificent, in spite of the clouds to the north and north-west. The Western Karakoram and the Kashmir mountains, with Nanga Parbat, could be seen above the clouds 150 miles away. We could look down, across the Oxus, into the Soviet Union, and at the same time north-east into Chinese Turkistan. From where we stood, with a turn of the head we could look into Pakistan, Afghanistan, Russia, China, Kashmir, and possibly even Tibet.

A few days later we were all back again at Base Camp. Only then did we appreciate the beauty of this peaceful Morain Camp at the snout of the South Barum glacier. The trees were green and the ground was carpeted by countless mountain plants. For weeks we had seen nothing but snow, ice, and rocks.

We had been very slightly frost-bitten during the last day to the summit, but did not realize this until we had returned to Camp I. We found it difficult to walk for many days, but luckily there were no more serious consequences.

The scientists had been working hard and had gathered much interesting material. They had been in the same camp for nearly two months, but even so were reluctant to leave when the time came to pack for home.

Looking back there seems so many things that contributed to the success of the expedition. The months of careful planning in Norway, the really good, well-chosen equipment, and the vast experience of five of the best Norwegian climbers all played their great part. But I think we should not forget how perfectly the weather favoured us. Surely no one could have hoped for better.

As 'Chief Coolie', as I later became known in Chitral, I should like to pay tribute to those many Chitralis and three Hunzias who worked with us as porters. Although on many occasions they tried our patience to the utmost, and at times even let us down, we could not have achieved success without them. They may have many shortcomings, but I am sure there is not one of us who could but help liking these distant, simple folk. And particularly I shall remember those two gallant Chitrali boys, Abdul Karim from the village of Awi in the Barum valley, who served us so well, and Sepoy Mutaib of the Chitral State Scouts, from the village of Tirich, who was doing so well before he was overcome by the superstition of the mountain. With better luck these two friends may well have reached the summit with us.

Lastly, I must thank the Norwegians for inviting me to join them, and for giving me the chance of being with them to the summit—a privilege and an honour which I shall never forget.

# SIKKIM. KHANGKYONG PLATEAU AND KANGCHENJAU

T. H. BRAHAM

WHEN, for a variety of reasons, I was obliged to choose the month of November for my visit to Sikkim in 1949, the lateness of the season and the possibility of extreme cold at higher altitudes caused me grave misgivings. Against this, however, was the experience of two earlier visits made during October when constant bad weather and a lot of fresh snow in the higher valleys had restricted most of my plans, and had not convinced me that the period of clear dry weather that usually takes place between the end of the monsoon and the onset of winter could normally be expected much before the end of October. Another point I liked to remember was the ascent of Kabru, 24,075 feet, made by C. R. Cooke on 18th November 1935<sup>1</sup> during a period of extremely favourable weather. Again, in 1937 C. R. Cooke and H. C. J. Hunt had spent the whole of October and November in the Zemu glacier region, ascending the 23,500-foot summit of Nepal peak on 7th November.<sup>2</sup> That this season is so seldom chosen for high mountain climbing and exploration only served to increase my interest in making a further experiment. After all, in every mountain journey the final vote is always cast by the weather, and unfortunately the experience of past travellers has shown that there is no predominantly best season in Sikkim.

The monsoon of 1949 was a late one, and heavy rain continued throughout October. As late as 29th October rain was still falling in the lower valleys, and the high mountains were covered in cloud. With the beginning of November, however, conditions became more settled, and for a long period (over three weeks) the weather remained beautifully clear, with all the peaks standing out sharply in brilliant blue skies and never a wisp of cloud to cast the faintest shadow over the scene. But three weeks is a short season in the Himalayas; and towards the end of November, when heavy clouds had rolled over the lofty regions, one was reminded of the terrible winter in the heights.

With a time-limit of four to five weeks at my disposal, I had planned a small expedition having two main objects in mind. Sikkim, unlike the rest of the vast Himalayan chain of which it forms so small a part, is now so well known and so thoroughly explored that it is rather difficult to find in it an area still unvisited.

<sup>1</sup> *Himalayan Journal*, vol. viii, p. 107.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. x, p. 49.

*Kangchenjau (22,603 ft.). From above Dunkung*





To my delight, however, I had observed that a fairly large snow plateau shown on the map situated directly south of Pauhunri in north-east Sikkim appeared never to have been explored. An attempt to reach it from the south and to find a way out from the north was therefore to be the first object of my expedition. Secondly, I hoped to make an attempt on Kangchenjau, 22,603 feet, from the north.

The Sebo Chu, which springs from the Khangkyong glacier, had been visited previously. In 1934 G. B. Gourlay and J. B. Auden travelled up this valley from Lachung, hoping to find the Karpo La.<sup>1</sup> They reached up to about 16,500 feet, overlooking the west side of the valley, before bad weather forced a retreat. But they obtained excellent photographs of the glacial plateau at the head of the valley bounded by an impressive wall of high peaks. They were able to disprove the existence of two glaciers descending to the Sebo Chu valley, incorrectly shown on the old Survey of India map; and to report that there is one large one fed by subsidiary glaciers issuing from the upper plateau. The Sebo Chu was visited again in 1936 by Captain Sams of the Survey of India, also in an attempt to find the Karpo La. From a point about 6 miles beyond Mome Samdong he went up to a pass which he believed to be the Karpo La, but which must in fact have been about 3 miles north of the actual Karpo La. His pass led to a valley which he believed to be the Khonpuk valley; from here, according to his account, another pass 600 feet higher leads into the Sebo Chu valley.<sup>2</sup> Later that year Mrs. Townend decided to follow Captain Sams's route into the Sebo Chu. She crossed a snow-saddle above Mome Samdong and descended to a snow-covered glacier on the east, reaching a wide valley draining from north to south, whose stream lower down joins the Sebo Chu. Her route did not correspond exactly with that followed by Captain Sams. It was not until much later that the Karpo La was placed on the map and the gaps in this area filled in when the new Survey of India sheet appeared in 1940.

On my journey I was joined by M. Hruska, a Czech from Calcutta, who is a ski expert and an enthusiastic lover of mountains. His Himalayan experience had been confined to several visits to Kashmir for winter sports. He carried a pair of ski, hoping that they might be put to good use on the snow plateau.

I was very fortunate to obtain Angtharkay, who proved once again, if such proof were needed, his outstanding excellence and amiability. The four other Sherpas engaged were Dawa Thondup, Arjeeba, Sona, and Mingma Sitar.

Hruska and I left Calcutta on 29th October, reaching Gangtok late in the afternoon on the 30th in misty weather, and we set out

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. vii, p. 139.

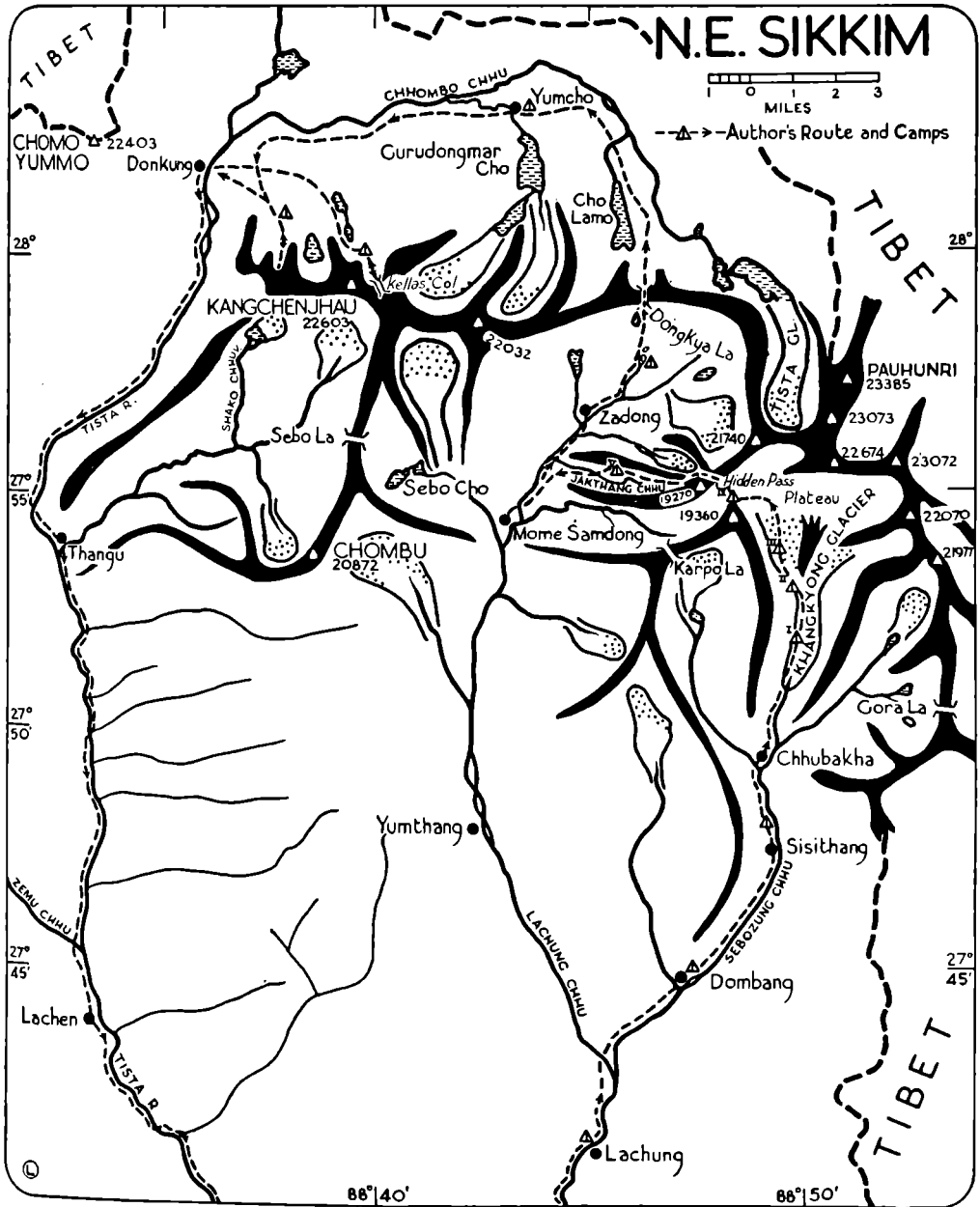
<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. ix, p. 155.

for Dikchu on the following morning, having temporarily engaged two local men and four mules to carry the bulk of our stores, which were to be dumped in Mome Samdong. Four days marching, accompanied by the usual agonies of heavy boots and rucksacks, took us to Lachung. The weather looked reassuring and all the peaks were free of cloud, though evidently covered with some new snow.

We left Lachung on 4th November and branched east up the Sebo Chu valley, halting in the early afternoon at Dombang, where there is an excellent little hut, constructed in 1936. The sole inhabitants were a family of seven engaged in cultivating a medicinal plant grown by the State. Here we began to experience temperatures below freezing; and from this point onwards, throughout our residence in this valley, we experienced fewer and fewer hours of sunshine each day: the sun seldom reached us before 8 a.m., and always left us before 2.30 p.m., darkness falling completely soon after 5 p.m. No people were met with in the valley, although it was evident that the upper reaches are used by herdsmen during the summer. A good track exists as far as 2 miles below the snout of the Khangkyong glacier, from which point it branches east to the Gora La pass leading into Tibet. The chowkidar of the hut at Dombang, a pleasant old man, assured me that we were the first travellers he had seen during his fourteen years' residence there.

The following day's march, a mixture of boulder-hopping along the river-bed and stiff climbing up dwarf forests of rhododendron and juniper, was rather tedious. The porters found it heavy going with their loads, so we camped in the early afternoon in a little patch of forest above the rocky bed of the river a mile beyond Sisi-thang at an altitude of 12,500 feet. We were on our way again at nine o'clock the next morning, soon after the sun reached us. Some deserted huts were seen at Singna Phyakuchen and Chubakha. By now the valley had broadened out to a vast boulder-strewn plain, and we obtained our first view of our objective, bounded on the north by a mighty wall of peaks. Fresh snow lay about the valley down to 13,000 feet, but was not in sufficient quantity to prove troublesome. Soon the valley branched to west and east; the former leading to the Karpo La and the latter to the Gora La. We camped that afternoon at about 14,000 feet, one mile above the snout of the Khangkyong glacier on the right bank.

Seventeen degrees of frost in the night had a demoralizing effect on the porters. It became evident that they considered it advisable that a reconnaissance should first be made to find out whether a route to the plateau was possible before committing ourselves to a higher camp. As this sounded like sound common sense I consented. Five of us left camp soon after breakfast, and made slow progress up



the moraine, which turned out to be snow-covered and thus highly unpleasant. By noon we had covered about 2 miles, when we halted at a pleasant site below the moraine commanding an excellent view. We were greatly cheered by what we saw. The moraine ridge ended 2 miles higher up on a rocky spur which in turn led to an ice-slope rising gently upwards on to the plateau at its extreme western end. Everything to the east of this was a gigantic maze of ice-falls. We immediately set about preparing a camp site here for the morrow; and later descended to camp in under two hours.

Camp II was established at about 15,500 feet the next day. With a clear view of the route ahead of us we hoped we might reach the plateau on the following day. Once again, however, progress was impeded by the now heavily snow-covered moraine, which the porters found particularly trying. We were relieved to reach at last the lower ice-falls, though the descent on to the glacier from the moraine ridge delayed us a bit. We found ourselves travelling very slowly on the heavily snow-covered glacier, partly perhaps owing to lassitude. The crevasses were reassuringly bridged with heavy layers of consolidated snow and presented no difficulty. It was almost 2 p.m. when we found ourselves past the lower ice-falls and skirting the foot of the upper ice-falls at about 16,500 feet, but still a long way from the top of the plateau. I asked Angtharkay if he wanted to push on to the top that day and he passed on the question to the Sherpas, who replied that they would rather not give their answer. Everyone appeared to have had enough, and moreover Hruska began to show symptoms of an attack of mountain sickness. We had just begun to clear a site for the tents when the sun left us and it grew bitterly cold; to make matters worse one of our two primus stoves refused to work. Hruska was ill during the night, and had come to the decision that he would have to descend to lower altitudes on the following day. But, feeling a little better in the morning, he very gallantly agreed to carry on in order to avoid the splitting up of the party and a weakening in our porter strength. He left camp early, breakfastless, as he was obliged to go very slowly. More tedious going was provided by a rocky outcrop covered with snow immediately above our camp. Thereafter there was no further difficulty; a gentle rise of 1,000 feet up a narrow snow-slope at the extreme western end of the glacier skirting the ice-falls on our right brought us on to the plateau.

It was an exhilarating sight. A vast expanse of white stretched level directly ahead of us for a distance of about two miles, and appeared to be at least double that distance from west to east. But whilst the map shows the latter expanse to be almost level also, it proved to be a gradually rising mass of glacier hopelessly riven with

crevasses and broken into innumerable ice-falls descending in cascades from the mountain barriers rising to the north and east. From our lower camps I had been attracted by a peak at the eastern end—probably that marked on the map as 22,079 feet—which appeared to offer a straightforward route to the top; but I could see clearly now that its lower defences would provide considerable difficulty apart from the constant danger of ice avalanches. The attractive summit at the western end rising to a shapely pyramid—probably Peak 22,674 feet—had seemed to be accessible along its western ridge via a subsidiary summit and snow-saddle; but its aspect appeared changed now and it would evidently provide a climb of considerable length and some difficulty. The rest was fearful rock walls and precipices of 3,000 to 4,000 feet. It is possible, of course, that some of these peaks might be easily reached from the north, and they would be sure to provide an interesting problem to future explorers.

We were not a strong enough party to attempt any of these peaks, and our immediate objective, therefore, was to find a practicable route out of the plateau. There seemed to be a col in the north at the foot of the western ridge of Peak 22,674 feet; Auden and Gourlay had referred to it as possibly leading on to the Tista glacier flowing to the west of Pauhunri. But we preferred to try to find a way out towards the west in the direction of Mome Samdong. When nearing the top of the plateau it had seemed that there was an accessible col in just that direction; we had been able to see only the top of it, and it looked like an easy snow-saddle. At closer quarters, however, it became evident that it would be impracticable for a laden party like ours. It presented an almost vertical rock-face rising for 500 feet directly above the glacier, followed by a snow-slope set at a steep angle leading to the top. Nor was there any other possible alternative visible in the direction we had chosen. Directly before us, to the north, at the end of the level stretch of the plateau, we noticed a prominent reddish-coloured rock; the snow-field rose in a gentle slope beyond this point and appeared to continue in a gradual rise towards the west. We optimistically hoped that by proceeding in this direction we might find a suitable col now hidden from our view behind the red rock.

The crossing of the plateau was infinitely laborious. It involved two hours of hard going through knee-deep snow; all of us taking turns at the painful business of beating a track. It was almost 2 o'clock when, with freezing feet, we arrived at the foot of the red rock. As the sun would soon be leaving us we decided that it would be wiser to halt here and leave for the next day our search for the col. We placed our fourth camp on a convenient stony patch at about 18,200 feet, directly below the red rock cliff. Hruska was again sick

during the night and I admired his pluck in carrying on, especially as he had been unable to eat for two days.

We struck camp at eight o'clock the following morning and immediately tackled the slope on our right. The snow had evidently not consolidated at all during the night, for even at that hour it broke through more than ankle deep at every step. On reaching the top of the first rise we were confronted by some nasty-looking crevasses, which we managed to avoid by bearing constantly to the left. Thereafter, following a lengthy snow-slope, the highest point of which we almost imperceptibly arrived at, we suddenly realized that we were standing on our pass. Before us stretched a level snow-field, evidently draining into a valley towards the west. Our pass, Hidden pass, as I called it, lies between Peak 21,740 feet and Peak 19,270 feet, and almost directly below the lower snow-slopes of the latter. It had not been visible to us from the plateau; nor was it visible later, soon after we began to descend. I estimated its height to be just over 19,000 feet. The view was superb and was unspoilt by a single cloud. Kangchenjunga and all the giants of Sikkim in the far west looked terribly impressive even at that distance; whilst, nearer at hand, Chombu's extraordinary eastern aspect presented a fascinating sight. A glance back at the plateau from the pass confirmed my impression that the peaks rising from it are rendered difficult of approach by the extremely broken nature of the ground, which is not indicated on the map. Only in its extreme western section would one be permitted some freedom of movement; the remainder of it would provide complex glacier travel of a high order, with the ground rising continually to the east. After spending half an hour on the pass, we began the descent. The spacious snow-slopes which led down at first encouraged Hruska, in spite of his weakness, to put on his ski. Though they were only usable for a comparatively short stretch they provided him with some enjoyment and the porters with considerable delight; but I wonder whether they justified their weight and awkward carriage for over three weeks.

From the pass we had intended to follow the little glacier which is marked on the map as providing a convenient short cut to Zadong on the Donkya La route. This glacier, however, which broke away to our right at the end of the level stretch of snow, presented a formidable series of ice-falls so terrifying to behold that we bore to the left down a larger glacier evidently draining into the main valley of the Jakthang Chu. Looking up towards the plateau for the last time, I was surprised to behold three pyramid-shaped peaks rising close behind one another to the north, directly north of Peak 22,674 feet. This was puzzling, as the map indicates only one 23,000-foot peak lying between Peak 22,674 feet and Pauhunri to the north. None of



*Sikkim-Tibet frontier range*

*Left to right, peaks 23,073, 22,674, 23,072, 22,070, and 21,977*

*Photograph T. E. Braham*



the three peaks we saw was identifiable as Pauhunri itself, although the northernmost appeared to be farther away than the other two. Our downward route, which had appeared easy at first, now began to look dangerous. Accompanied by an increase in the general gradient, we were confronted by an enormous system of crevasses. Once again we were very fortunate to find firm bridges of consolidated snow across some of these gaping chasms, of which so many required to be crossed. I think that a traverse of this glacier during the summer would prove considerably difficult, with a far greater number of rifts uncovered and precarious bridges across others. By bearing to the right we eventually reached the moraine, snow-covered and troublesome at first, but later providing the diversion of easy boulder-hopping. The valley turned out to be on a larger scale than we had imagined, and it became evident that there was no possibility of our descending on to the Dongkya La track or Mome Samdong that day. We camped in the afternoon at a pleasant spot at about 17,000 feet on the right bank above two little frozen lakes. The Karpo La was visible directly to the south across the glacier along a jagged ridge of rocky spires and snow-covered summits forming the southern wall of the valley. I was sitting outside my tent before dinner when Angtharkay, who had climbed a little above camp to collect some scrub fuel, called out enthusiastically that Kangchenjau was visible. I soon joined him and was rather thrilled to see part of the impressive southern precipices aglow in the last rays of sunset.

The descent of the Jakthang Chu valley on the following day provided easy going and turned out to be most pleasant. Bearing continually to the right, we managed to avoid most of the snow lying in the valley. We finished off by skirting a long spur running roughly from north to south, and descended on to the Dongkya La track about 1 mile above Mome Samdong. Snow lay heavily everywhere and the little yak herd settlement, which we reached in the early afternoon, was quite deserted. We found our stores, left by our mules some days earlier, intact inside the Club Hut.

The weather had been very kind to us. Since leaving Lachung we had hardly seen a single cloud; and although we had never received more than six hours' sunshine each day, there had been no wind, which probably explained why all the snow that had fallen in the last week of October still lay heavily everywhere. The lowest night temperature recorded was 10° F.

The day after our arrival in Mome Samdong was a rest day, but Hruska, who had not fully recovered from the effects of mountain sickness, felt that it would be inadvisable for him to undertake the second part of our journey. Accordingly, accompanied by Sona, he left Mome Samdong that day to commence the return journey to

Gangtok. Sona was replaced by a Tibetan, Lhakpa Tundu, whom we had engaged in Gangtok and who got on well with the Sherpas.

It was a few years ago that I had first conceived the idea of making an attempt on Kangchenjau. Dr. A. M. Kellas's modest description of his ascent of the mountain in 1912 had made a deep impression on me. I could never hope to recapture the emotions he must have felt in those early days of Himalayan travel when every ascent was a fine achievement, with porters not yet trained and frequently disinclined to approach the higher snows. Dr. Kellas's ascent of Kangchenjau had been made via a 21,000-foot col which he approached from the north above Donkung. From the col, however, he noticed that a much preferable route would be from the south side of his col which could be reached by proceeding south-west along the north-east Kangchenjau glacier which drains into a lake directly south of Gurudongmar Cho. He recommended a camp on the glacier at 20,000 feet which, he remarked, would render the ascent of the mountain comparatively easy. This encouraging suggestion provided a good reason for my choice in attempting a mountain that had already been climbed. Another reason, rather lacking in modesty perhaps, was that of the three highest mountains in that area, Chomiomo and Pauhunri being the other two, Kangchenjau alone had not been ascended since Dr. Kellas's first ascents. In fact, whilst much interest has been shown in Chomiomo and Pauhunri, there seems to be only one recorded attempt on Kangchenjau, made by N. A. Tombazi in 1919,<sup>1</sup> and the route followed was that recommended by Kellas, referred to above. After reaching about 20,000 feet on the north-east Kangchenjau glacier, Tombazi was forced to retreat by bad weather.

I left Mome Samdong with five men on 14th November. Under normal conditions a camp can be made beside Cho Lamo in one stage over the Dongkya La. Our rate of progress, however, was greatly reduced by the heavy snow lying along the valley north of Mome Samdong. Five and a half hours' marching brought us to a pleasant site near two small lakes about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles below the pass at an altitude of 17,500 feet. Here, finding peat-like fuel, we decided to camp. The following day we crossed the Donkya La in brilliant weather which provided most impressive views of the surrounding peaks and of distant Tibet. A solitary Tibetan, who accompanied us over the pass, pointed out the crumbling remains of the massive fortifications standing above the Donkya La ridge running from east to west. These high watch-towers were in use during the Tibetan-Sikkimese wars to ward off invaders in the days when the boundary-line between the two countries ended here. We camped in the afternoon at Yumcho, north of

<sup>1</sup> *Himalayan Journal*, vol. ii, p. 10.

Gurudongmar Cho. The aspect presented by Kangchenjau from this spot was not encouraging, and I climbed some distance above our camp in the evening to investigate our route for the next day. Skirting Gurudongmar Cho I came to the foot of the next lake. The Kangchenjau glacier sweeps round in a great curve to the south-west from this point, and it appeared to me to be rather badly broken. Kellas's 21,000-foot col on Kangchenjau was of course not visible from my viewpoint, but the approach from this side struck me as being lengthy and I did not feel at all confident that we should find an easy way to the top of the col from the head of the glacier. The upper ice formations of glaciers are often subject to great change from year to year, and a route that may have offered an easy approach in 1912 could not be counted upon to provide similar conditions thirty-seven years later. I now feel some tinge of regret that I did not, in spite of this, make an attempt to investigate this route; but at the time I adopted the line of least resistance and felt that I could not do better than follow in Dr. Kellas's footsteps and attempt to reach his col from the north.

When we started westwards down the plain the following day, I was puzzled to observe no sign of the col nor of the two lakes which, I was aware, lay directly to the north of its approaches. We had reached a point about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles above Donkung when I discovered a col providing an approach from the north, from which there seemed to be an easy climb up one of Kangchenjau's ridges. Here I committed a grave error in route-finding and decided to make for this col and make an attempt on the mountain along this route. The small glacier draining north from this col offered a straightforward approach, and we placed a camp at the foot of its moraine at about 16,000 feet, intending to place another camp on the col or at a suitable spot on the ridge above it the next day. After a very cold night Angtharkay, Dawa Thondup, Arjeeba, and I started at 9.30 a.m., half an hour after the sun reached us, leaving Mingma Sitar and Lhakpa Tundu to strike camp and descend to Donkung. We reached our col in just over three hours, after a stiff climb up the last 200 feet. Standing on a very narrow rocky platform with a precipitous descent into the Shako Chu valley to the south, I realized at once that our route was impracticable. The western ridge of Kangchenjau, which in its lower reaches is badly broken and heavily corniced and higher up reveals unpleasant rock buttresses, ends in a snow-shoulder almost 2,000 feet below the western (lower) summit; it is of considerable length. I estimated the height of our col to be about 17,500 feet. There was nothing for it but to swallow our pride and turn back. I was bitterly disappointed; but I had by no means resigned our attempt on the mountain. We descended to

Donkung the same evening, and I think the Sherpas had envisaged our descent to Thangu the next day. Inside the dark, smoke-be-fogged yak herd's hut that night, however, I managed to win their confidence sufficiently to persuade them that our attempt on the mountain should be renewed—this time by Kellas's route. Their price was a day's rest first in Donkung, which I was quite ready to grant.

I left Donkung again on 19th November accompanied by Angtharkay, Dawa Thondup, and Arjeeba. Bearing east we turned right up a low ridge, and descended into a small valley containing two frozen lakes leading directly to the foot of the slopes rising to Kellas's 21,000 foot col. We placed our camp at about 19,000 feet, 1 mile from the foot of the col. As we were receiving less than six hours' sunshine a day, we realized that it would be necessary for us to establish a camp on the col if we were to allow ourselves some chance of reaching the summit of the mountain. Kellas, who had made his ascent in early August, had placed his last camp at the foot of the slopes leading to the col, and the climb to the summit had taken just over six hours from that camp. The night at our 19,000-foot camp was the coldest we had experienced, and the thermometer registered 36 degrees of frost. Added to this was the wind, our constant companion ever since crossing the Donkya La, which was so severe that night that it blew my tent in on top of me, and I was obliged to perform the painful task of refixing the guy-ropes in the bitter blasts outside. For once the Sherpas were late in stirring and they did not set the primus going until after 7.15 a.m. The sun did not reach us until 8.45, and when it did the wind, which had abated hardly at all, drove away the little warmth that its rays might otherwise have provided. A distressing discovery that we had made the previous day, which was confirmed the next morning, was that the slopes leading to the col received no sunshine at all, the col itself very little, and the upper part of the mountain two to three hours in the late afternoon. It was almost 9.30 a.m. by the time we set out, our object being to place a camp on the col that day. In just over an hour we reached the foot of the slopes, and were pleased to find that the snow was in perfect order. The surface was hard, probably due to the action of the wind, and steps could readily be kicked or scraped. The first few hundred feet provided no difficulty. But beyond that, with a steady increase in the general angle, steps had to be formed with greater care, handholds sometimes being required. We were keeping towards the corner of the slope, close to the rock precipices on the east. The wind troubled us incessantly and the cold was intense; we had already lost all sensation in our toes and fingers. Arjeeba and Dawa Thondup had lagged behind all morning, and

showed some reluctance in continuing with the attempt. They remarked to me twice that their feet were cold. At about 1 p.m. we had reached a point two-thirds of the way up and probably 500 or 600 feet below the col, when I began to feel that to continue the climb under existing conditions would mean exposing ourselves to the almost certain danger of frost-bite. Moreover, a camp placed on the col would receive no sunshine until 10 o'clock the following morning. I consulted Angtharkay, and he asked the others, who gave the immediate answer that it was too cold to go on. This was one of the occasions on which Angtharkay revealed his great superiority over the others. Whilst he complained of the cold, like all of us did, he showed himself willing to carry on in spite of it, and remarked that with clear weather and good snow conditions we were near enough the summit of Kangchenjau to reach it. But the persistent wind, the total absence of sunshine, and the numbness we all felt in fingers and toes could not easily be gainsaid; and it was with the greatest reluctance that I gave the order to retreat. The cold had defeated us. Had this north side of the mountain received but a few hours of sunshine in the morning, I do not think our attempt would have been unsuccessful. The route is not difficult, nor is it of great length. The crux of the climb is in the ascent to the col, which increases in difficulty near the top. The remaining 1,600 feet above the col along the summit ridge appear to be quite straightforward except for a narrow belt of rocks which can be avoided easily by bearing to the right. It was most regrettable that we had to turn back. Snow conditions, which had proved so good, would have provided us with splendid climbing on the ridge; the summit plateau appeared deceptively near. If Angtharkay's indomitable spirit had rather shamed me, the obvious relief shown by Arjeeba and Dawa Thondup when we began to descend salved my conscience a little. We returned to Donkung the same evening, arriving just before dark, and despite land-slides and other vicissitudes reached Gangtok on 26th November.

I would like to conclude this brief account with the sentiments expressed some years ago by Dr. Kellas, for they express better than anything else I know why man's love for the hills takes him again and again to remote regions in order to capture some of their joys: 'If one were asked to give a justification of our glorious pastime, one might venture to say, mountaineering is the most philosophical sport in the world.'

(*Note.*—As with scores of other Tibetan place-names the spelling of Kangchenjau seems to vary with every writer's whim, and every cartographer's fancy, with recurring controversy.—ED.)

SIR JOSEPH HOOKER, K.C.S.I., M.D., D.C.L., F.R.S.  
EARLY TRAVELS IN NEPAL AND SIKKIM

F. F. FERGUSSON

SIR JOSEPH HOOKER commenced his travels in Nepal and Sikkim in the year 1848, and the extent of these travels entitles him to be looked upon as one of the pioneers in the exploration of a region which is of special interest to members of the Himalayan Club.

A very detailed account of his expeditions and the scientific work accomplished on them is available in *Himalayan Journals or Notes of a Naturalist* by Sir J. D. Hooker, and should prove of great interest to all who travel in Sikkim.

Joseph Hooker was the second son of Sir W. J. Hooker, a Director of Kew Gardens, and his mother was the daughter of Mr. Dawson Turner, F.R.S., of Yarmouth; he was born in 1817 and studied medicine at Glasgow University, graduating M.D. in 1839.

The pursuit of medicine, however, claimed only about four years of his life—from 1839 to 1843—while serving as Assistant Surgeon on the Antarctic Expedition under Sir James Clark Ross, and even on this expedition he worked unofficially as naturalist.

Dr. Hooker, as he then was, decided, on his return from the Antarctic, to visit India in order to add a knowledge of the natural history of the tropics to that of the temperate zones, and through his father's influence with the Earl of Carlisle (then Chief Commissioner of Woods and Forests) his proposed expedition received government aid in the form of a grant of £400 per annum for two years. On the voyage to India Hooker was fortunate enough to be a fellow passenger with the Marquis of Dalhousie, the Governor-General of India, who honoured him with his friendship and help in many directions.

Calcutta was reached on 12th January 1848 after a voyage of two months, and on the 28th Hooker had already left to join the camp of Mr. Williams of the Geological Survey at the Damoodia Coal Fields, and throughout his travels, besides practising the same economy of time, he displayed an energy and devotion to his scientific work which is amazing when one attempts to visualize the discomforts of travel in those days; he records in his journals observations embracing geology, meteorology, botany, and human geography together with a wealth of comparisons and deductions therefrom which are at once a tribute to his erudition and to his industry.

Hooker travelled as far as the Kaimur river with Williams, whence he set out for Darjeeling, going via Benares and Purnea; every

moment of the journey was apparently occupied with the minutiae of his scientific observations.

Darjeeling was reached on 16th April and owing to the difficulty of obtaining permission to travel in Sikkim Territory Hooker was detained there, occupied in making short local excursions until 27th October when, negotiations with the Sikkim authorities having failed, he set out for a visit to Nepal, hoping that the necessary permission to enter Sikkim would be granted in time to be of use to him.

Some idea of Hooker's zeal in the pursuit of his scientific work and of the scope of his observations may be gathered from the following passage taken from his journal:

I carried myself a small barometer, a large knife and digger for plants, note book, telescope, compass, and other instruments, whilst two or three Lepcha lads, who accompanied me as satellites, carried a botanizing box, thermometers, sextant and artificial horizon, measuring tape, azimuth compass and stand, geological hammer, bottles and boxes for insects, sketch book and etc. arranged in compartments of strong canvas bags.

For this journey the selection of porters proved something of a difficulty; Lepchas were considered to be the most suitable but they feared to enter such a warlike country as Nepal and were moreover said to be unfit for work in the snowy regions; the choice eventually fell upon some Bhotan runaways who were at that time domiciled in Darjeeling and were said to be accustomed to travel at all elevations and to fear nothing but a return to their own country, from which they had fled to escape slavery or retribution for their evil deeds.

The choice turned out to be unfortunate, as the men chosen were unreliable and lazy, and earned from their master the following description: 'The Bhotan coolies behaved worse than ever; their conduct being in all respects typical of the turbulent mulish race to which they belong. They had been plundering my provisions as they went along and neither the Sirdar nor the Ghurka soldiers had the smallest authority over them.' He had decided to dismiss these coolies and engage Ghurkas when he was relieved of the necessity by their desertion; some of them, however, returned of their own accord later on.

On 18th November, while camped at Mywa Guola on the Tambur river, Hooker received letters from his friend Dr. Campbell in Darjeeling, born by a Lepcha from the court of Sikkim, giving the necessary permission to enter that country and stay as long as he wished; the bearer of the letter attached himself to Hooker and served him well for some months.

After continuing up the valley of the Tambur beyond the village



of Walloong to the pass leading from Nepal to Tibet, where his observations gave an altitude of 16,764 feet, Hooker retraced his steps with a view to crossing over into Sikkim by way of the Nango or Kambachen and Kanglanamo passes; the route lay up the Yangma valley and across the pass to the south of Mt. Nango to the village of Kambachen, where a halt was made.

The villagers received the expedition in a kindly manner and presented Hooker with the leg of a musk deer and some potatoes which he says were about as big as walnuts but which he was nevertheless glad to receive as his provisions had become greatly depleted.

The village of Kambachen was left on 5th December and Hooker proceeded over the Choonjerma pass, which he reached at sunset, pushing on down in order to reach the upper reaches of the Yalloong valley, where he could be sure of obtaining wood for fires, as he was wet through himself and some of his coolies had suffered from frost-bite; upon their arrival in camp Hooker gave them each a nip of brandy, which they received with considerable joy.

Next day the route lay down the valley, where they were met by a party travelling with sheep laden with salt and were told that the next village was deserted owing to the lateness of the season and that the pass of Kanglanamo was no longer practicable; Hooker therefore had to abandon the idea of proceeding into Sikkim by that route, and instead was obliged to follow the west flank of Singalelah to the first pass which he might find open.

On 7th December the ascent to a saddle on the Yaloong ridge was made and the ridge was followed for several days entailing the traversing of valleys flowing into the Tambur and the intervening ridges. It was on this part of his journey that Hooker discovered, to his great mortification, that his Ghurka havildar had been defrauding him of all the presents and offerings usually made by the inhabitants to strangers, and this to such an extent that the havildar's coolies were groaning under heavy loads, while Hooker's were lightly laden.

The entry into Sikkim was made on the morning of 15th December by way of the Ishumbo pass over the Singalelah ridge, at an elevation of 11,000 feet, and notwithstanding that Hooker had, on the previous evening, consumed the last remains of his food, consisting of a miserable starved pullet with some rice and chili vinegar, he pursued his scientific observations with his characteristic devotion and vigour throughout the day, arriving at 7 p.m. at the village of Lingcham, where he was received by the head man with a salute of musketry and an abundance of provisions and murwa beer.

While at Lingcham news was received that letters were awaiting him at Yoksun, as he had been expected to cross by the Kanglanamo

pass, and later a letter arrived from Dr. Campbell asking Hooker to meet him on the Teesta river at Bhomsong, where he had gone to attempt to enter into a conference with the ruler of Sikkim.

Hooker proceeded via Pemiongchi, receiving lavish hospitality at every village; he was met by Dr. Campbell, who escorted him to his camp on the Teesta, where a present from the Rajah consisting of a brick of Tibetan tea, 80 lb. of rancid yak butter done up in a yak-hair cloth, and numerous other items, was received.

Dr. Campbell had been sent by the British Government to attempt to enter into direct conversation with the Rajah in order to circumvent the baleful influence of his Dewan, who was the author of all the trouble then existing between India and Sikkim; on their way to an interview with the Rajah, which had been arranged with much difficulty, they were played a very shabby trick by the Dewan, who contrived that the presents brought by the Europeans should be sent in prior to the audience instead of being presented by themselves afterwards, thus making them appear as suppliants or tributaries to His Highness.

The Dewan was a most unscrupulous man who took every advantage of his master's age and devotion to religious practices in order to advance the interests of himself and his relatives.

Dr. Campbell's mission now being at an end he decided to accompany his friend some distance on his way north to explore the region round Kinchinjunga; they visited temples and convents at Tassiding and finally parted company at Pemiongchi on 2nd January 1849. Hooker continued on to Yoksun where he stayed for some days, leaving on the 7th on an expedition to the foot of Kinchinjunga by way of the Ratong valley, and ascending what he described as a very steep mountain called 'Mon Lepcha', from the summit of which he obtained views southwards to Darjeeling and northwards to Kinchinjunga, which he said fronted him as Mont Blanc does the beholder from the opposite side of the valley of Chamonix.

It is interesting to note that at this time Kinchinjunga was supposed to be the highest mountain in the world and it was partly for this reason that Hooker was anxious to explore its neighbourhood.

The next camping-place of the expedition was at some stone huts on a spur of Jongri at an elevation of 13,000 feet, where a stay of some days was made; Hooker gave the only habitable hut to his coolies and arranged for himself a lean-to contrived of some of his blankets and a stone wall; during their stay at this camp the whole party suffered considerably from a snow-storm, from cold during the night, and the strong sunlight on the snow, against which they improvised various protective devices such as pieces of old veil, shades of yak hair, and the coolies even drew across their eyes the loosened

hair of their pigtailed; during the night Hooker's Tibetan puppy showed signs of uneasiness but eventually settled down at his master's feet and went to sleep.

The expedition now returned to Yoksun, where the villagers received them again with great kindness, and Darjeeling was reached on 19th January via Tengling and Tchongpong.

Hooker spent the greater part of the next two months on a tour in the Terai doing botanical and geological work, only returning to Darjeeling on 24th March, where the following five weeks were spent in preparation for his projected visit to the higher parts of Sikkim; vexatious opposition was again encountered from the Dewan to the Rajah and he finally left, on 3rd May, after having informed the Rajah's Agent that unless an official objection came from the ruler himself, through a properly accredited representative to the Government of India, he intended to proceed.

On his arrival at Namtchi Hooker was met by a Lama attached to the local mendong, who after some disingenuous dissembling informed him that instructions had been received to stop his progress; Hooker gave the Lama short shrift, told him that he intended to proceed, and forthwith dismissed him.

Later on at the village of Gorh Hooker was again met by a Lama, who informed him that the road was impassable and endeavoured to dissuade him from continuing, even going to the length, during the night, of removing the planks forming a bridge over a stream which crossed the route.

Hooker, however, was not to be so easily deterred, and next day he continued his journey accompanied by the Lama, whom he described as a disagreeable-looking fellow and on whom he got his own back to a certain extent by putting him to all the trouble he could devise.

The same annoying opposition was met with continually, and we find Hooker at Chungtam being met by a bearer with a letter, supposedly written by the Durbar, commanding him to return immediately, which injunction, however, he disregarded.

Notwithstanding the continual obstruction Hooker never shirked his scientific work for an instant, his journal being a continual commentary on the plants he saw and on their resemblance to those he knew of or had seen elsewhere.

On 2nd June he received the unpleasant news that a party bringing food to him from Darjeeling had not continued their journey, being afraid of landslips along the route; this left him very short of food, but he continued on to Lamteng, where further obstructive tactics were employed to deceive him as to the exact location of the Tibetan frontier; here, on 5th June, he received one bag of rice

from Darjeeling—all that remained of what had been dispatched; however, letters informed him that more was to follow later; to add to his tribulations he lost many of his plant specimens through dampness and an insufficiency of sunny days to effect drying.

While encamped at the junction of Zemu and Thlonok rivers Hooker ascended many times the north flank of Tukcham to obtain views and compass bearings; from this camp also he made two unsuccessful attempts to ascend the Thlonok to the great glaciers at the foot of Kinchinjunga; later on, however, he found a path leading up the Zemu and took his tent and some of his men to a suitable camping-place at an elevation of 12,070 feet; from this spot several attempts were made to ascend the river, but owing to the dense growth of rhododendron bushes and the cliffs his efforts met with no success.

In this camp Hooker had a very narrow escape from a huge piece of granite which fell from the cliff at the very door of his tent, nearly killing him and his dog.

The camp was evidently a miserable one owing to the incessant rain, and to add to their difficulties a band of some fifty men sent by the Lachen Phipun actively interfered with Hooker's men, making it necessary for him to make a show of resistance in order to rid himself of their importunities.

A descent to Thlonok was made on 2nd July, where letters were received from Dr. Campbell and from the Rajah authorizing Hooker to continue to the Tibetan frontier; presents of food from the Rajah and Ranee accompanied the letters.

The representative who brought the letters wished to hurry Hooker on to the frontier and back and insisted that it was located at Tallum Samdong, but Hooker was not to be put off so easily.

On 11th July five coolies arrived with rice and letters from England, and Hooker set off up the Lachen on the following day, reaching Tungu on the 23rd; from Tungu the Phipun conducted Hooker towards Kongra Lama, arriving at the Phipun's camp about 11 miles beyond Tungu, where they were hospitably entertained by his wife. Kongra Lama was visited and many botanical specimens were collected, after which the party returned to Tungu.

On the 26th, at the invitation of the Phipun, Hooker visited a party of Tibetans encamped at the foot of Kinchinjau and the source of the Chachoo, obtaining by the boiling-point method an altitude of 16,522 feet; as they were all suffering from the great cold, hot toddy was made from the water used in making the observation and served out to all hands; Hooker records that this refreshed them wonderfully.

A week was spent at Tungu ascending the surrounding mountains

and mixing with the people, by whom Hooker was apparently very well received; he left this camp on 30th July and reached Choongtam on 5th August, where a stay was made until the 15th in order to arrange the botanical and other scientific collections made in the Lachen valley.

Further supplies arrived from Darjeeling on the 15th and a start up the valley of the Lachoong was made on the same day: in crossing a bridge over the river Hooker lost his dog Kinchin, which fell into the river and was swept away; this was a sad loss as the dog had been his constant companion for a long time.

The next camp was made at Lachoong, from which place the Tunkra-la pass was visited, which Hooker found to live up to its reputation of being the snowiest pass in Sikkim; he camped for two days under a rock at the foot of a glacier directly fronting Tunkra mountain at an elevation of 15,250 feet.

On 29th August the party continued up the valley from Lachoong, arriving at Yeumtong the next day, leaving again the following day for Mome Samdong, where they camped until 30th September.

At Mome Samdong Hooker made fifty-six barometrical observations for altitude, the mean of which placed his camp at 15,362 feet.

He visited the Donkia pass on the 9th and ascended to about 19,300 feet on the slopes of Donkia itself, and he relates that he repeatedly attempted to climb Kinchinjow and Donkia, but never succeeded in getting higher than about 19,000 feet, though he does not say why except that he adds a footnote reading as follows: 'An elevation of 20,000 and perhaps 22,000 feet might, I should think, easily be attained by practice in Thibet north of Sikkim.'

Hooker's failure to go higher could probably be attributed to the want of proper equipment and food and to faulty climbing technique, but in courage he was certainly not lacking.

On 20th September he ascended to the Great Donkia glacier east of Mome Samdong and records that he found progress over it far more fatiguing than that experienced on any Swiss glacier; he had two days previously visited Sebolah pass, the height of which he determined to be between 17,585 feet and 17,517 feet.

On 5th October Hooker met his friend Dr. Campbell at Choongtam, where he had gone to meet him, Campbell having decided to visit Sikkim in the hope of coming to a better understanding with the Rajah and his officials.

The two friends decided to try to visit the Kongra Lama by way of Cholamoo lakes and the Donkia pass and they arrived at Tungu on the 9th, where Dr. Campbell took the Lachen Phipun to task for his obstructional tactics in dealing with Hooker.

The party set out for the Donkia pass on the 16th, where they were met by a Tibetan guard; and Hooker, scenting a possible refusal of permission to continue, dashed past on his pony, being pursued for some distance by Tibetan soldiers; he continued on to Yeumtso, where he was relieved to find the Tchebu Lama and the Lachen Phipun; Campbell also arrived soon after sunset, having followed Hooker's route, after the more diplomatic preliminaries of obtaining permission from the Tibetan guard had been gone through.

From the camp at Yeumtso they ascended Bhomtso, the altitude of which they made 18,305 feet by boiling-point observation; a second ascension was made on the 18th in order to carry out a series of check observations, a proceeding which greatly puzzled the Tibetans who accompanied them.

On the way to the Donkia pass Hooker made another attempt to climb Donkia mountain, reaching this time again an altitude of 19,000 feet, after which he continued on to Mome Samdong, where Campbell had already made camp.

Hooker recounts an episode which illustrates the great fidelity of one of his servants; they had descended as far as Lachoong when Hooker found that one of his thermometers had dropped through a hole in the sack in which Cheytoong, a Lepcha, had been carrying it; on learning of its loss Cheytoong was very distressed and made preparations to return and look for it at the hot springs of the Kinchinjow glacier; three days later he overtook the expedition at Keodom, radiant with joy at having found the lost instrument.

The expedition now proceeded to Singtam and on 3rd November they saw for the first time the Rajah's house at the village of Rangang, near which they were met by a large party of armed Lepchas who escorted them to the village; they noticed that neither presents nor greetings came from the Rajah nor were they able to gain an audience, for which Campbell was anxious in order to transact official business.

From now on they met much insolence and rudeness, most of which was obviously directed against Campbell, but it is worthy of note that some among the officials were friendly and received both Hooker and Campbell in their homes.

They continued on to Chola and Yakla passes; leaving Barfonchen on 7th November they emerged from the woods at Chumanako, where obstruction by the authorities took a much more serious turn than heretofore.

Campbell had to defend himself with a stick against some Sikkim Sepoys, and later, when they were resting in a hut, a crowd of people came in, at which Campbell said it would be preferable to leave the

hut to them and went out to see the tents pitched; suddenly Hooker heard his friend call out: 'Hooker! Hooker! the savages are murdering me!' Hooker, who rushed out to render assistance, was also attacked and pressed back into the hut, where he was forcibly held but not maltreated.

Soon after this attack the Singtam Soubah and the Tchebu Lama entered, signed to the captors to release Hooker, and then informed him that Campbell had been arrested on the orders of the Rajah, who was dissatisfied with his conduct as a government officer during the past twelve years.

The two friends were kept separate, but with the connivance of some friendly people they managed to exchange written notes; the next day the Soubah and the Dingpun offered Hooker his freedom to proceed to the Yakla pass if he so wished, but Hooker refused to leave Campbell.

They were finally taken to Tumloong, Campbell being treated with great indignity throughout the journey, and on arrival at the village they were placed under guard in separate prison rooms.

After a long interview on 13th November between Hooker and one of the Rajah's councillors the two Englishmen were, to their great relief, housed together.

It is typical of Hooker that during his confinement he did not neglect his scientific observations. During their detention many of the good families in the village sent presents in secret to the prisoners and the Ranee herself sent tobacco to Hooker and brown sugar and murwa beer to Campbell.

The Dewan, who was throughout the instigator of all the trouble, returned from Tibet on 20th November and employed every device to persuade Campbell to give him a letter exonerating the Sikkim authorities from their reprehensible behaviour, but Campbell was too stout-hearted a man to accede to such an impudent request. By this time the Dewan began to fear for the consequences of his conduct, for the Lamas of Pemiongchi, Changachelling, Tassiding, and other places began to arrive at Tumloong to protest in person to the Rajah against the Dewan's action. The Pemiongchi Lama, an old and venerable man of over seventy years of age, was evidently much distressed at seeing Campbell a prisoner and suffering from ill treatment, and voiced his disapproval.

After an interview with the Dewan on the 22nd they were allowed to communicate with their friends in India, and Hooker wrote directly to Lord Dalhousie, giving him the hint that a letter couched in very strong terms would be needed to effect their release.

Hooker's letter resulted in a show of force being made by the British Government at Darjeeling, causing the Sikkim authorities



to release the prisoners and speed them on their way on 9th December.

They received presents from the Rajah and Ranee, official families, and the whole population, and accompanied by the Dewan they commenced their return journey, but still under surveillance and still pestered by the arrogance of this objectionable fellow, who caused delays in the progress and did everything else in his power to make things as unpleasant as he could for his two protégés.

The closer they got to Darjeeling the shorter became the daily marches, one of which only attained to 3 miles, probably due to the nervousness of the Dewan at his approach to British territory; nevertheless, up to the last possible moment he adopted every device known to an extremely crafty mind to extract some advantage out of the two men he was supposed to be escorting, but on the afternoon of 23rd December he finally gave in and released them.

Hooker and Campbell arrived in Darjeeling in the evening, where they were received with great joy by Mr. Hodgson.

Some further journeys were made by Hooker in the Khasia hills, Shillong district, and in other parts of eastern India, and he finally left the country on 28th January 1851, arriving in England on 25th March of the same year.

The reading of Hooker's journals, which are in the Himalayan Club Library, is recommended to anyone who is interested in the Eastern Himalayas; they form a very detailed record of travel in times now beyond the reach of memory of any living traveller and are of considerable value from the point of view of the history of travel in that part of the world.

It is a tribute to Hooker's labours as a scientist that his seven-volume work, *The Flora of British India*, is still looked upon as one of the standard works on Indian botany, and it is very fitting that a charming little Wedgewood portrait of him is still to be seen hanging on the walls of the Herbarium of the Botanical Gardens in Calcutta.

*Note.*—The spelling of place and other names is of course Hooker's.—ED.

## EXPEDITIONS

### THE EAST MUSTAGH PASS, IN THE CENTRAL KARAKORAM

Reference Survey of India Maps, 4 miles to the inch, Sheets 51 D, Raskam, and 52 A, K2.

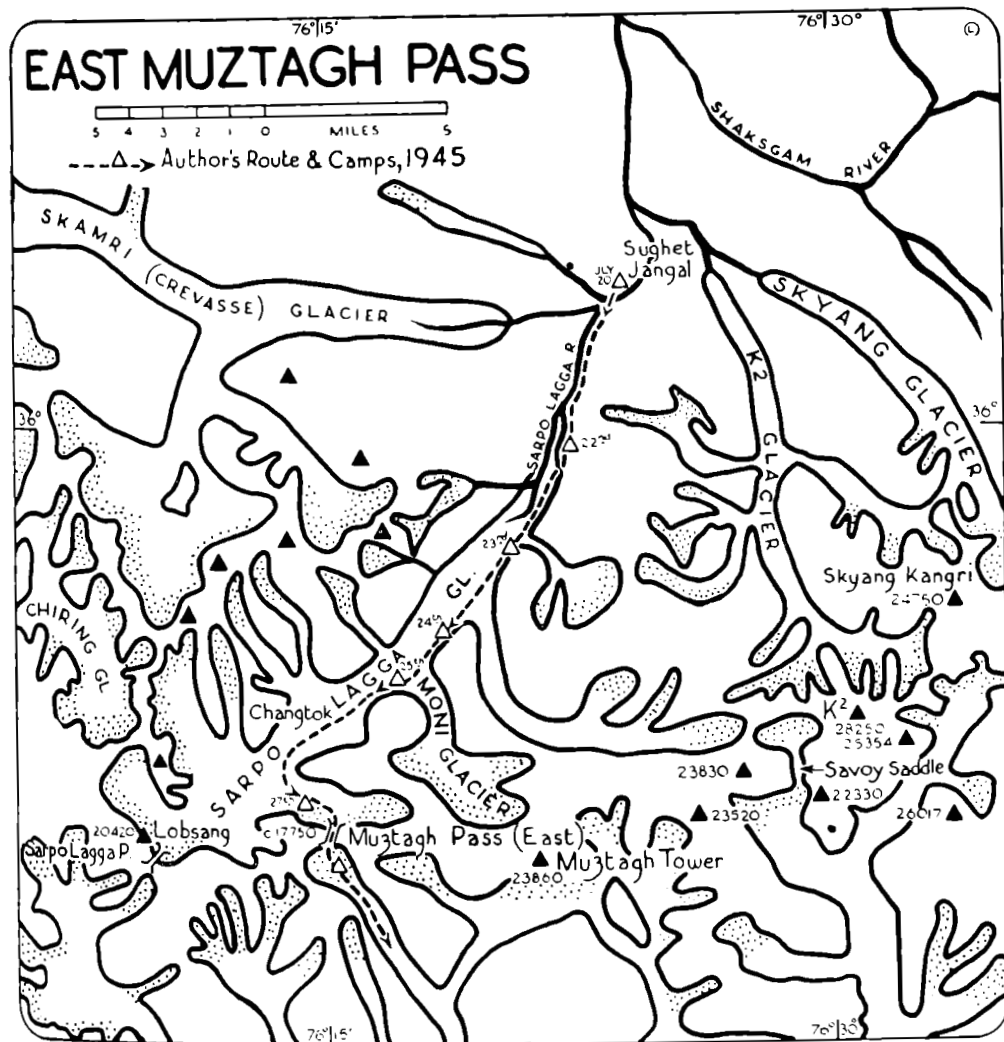
THERE is so little known about the East Mustagh pass, which is really THE Mustagh pass, and has only recently been adorned with a distinguishing adjective, that an account of crossing the pass in 1945 may be of interest. The pass, too, has been seldom crossed in recent years, and most descriptions of it are either inaccessible or scanty. The narrative now given refers to a journey made from north to south, and in the same direction as that taken by Sir Francis Younghusband in 1887. It is a pity, incidentally, that that great traveller does not give a fuller account of his venture.

We left camp, which was  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles above and opposite to Sughet Jangal, on 21st July 1945 after a night of wind which had covered everything with sand. We at once crossed the Sarpo Lagga stream; and early though it was the current was swift and high, and fording was difficult. One coolie was swept away, but one of our Hunza lads grabbed him and dragged him out, together with his load of precious atta (flour). It took us fifty minutes to ford the stream, and we zig-zagged as we groped for a firm footing in the ever-shifting bed of the stream. It was, unfortunately, impossible to use our zaq or skin raft. After the first crossing the coolies had to return and fetch the bags of flour, but these were a compact and easy load. Whilst they were away I went down to Sughet Jangal, where Mr. Eric Shipton and his party had been the previous year, but I found no traces of them. Sughet Jangal was a pleasant spot, with abundant wood and grass, and myriads of mosquitoes. We saw a wolf in the undergrowth.

We were now close to the mouth of the Sarpo Lagga glacier, and on Sunday, 22nd July, just as dawn broke, we stumbled over the stones on the right of the valley, and turned right, up the Sarpo Lagga proper. The snout of the glacier was hideous in the extreme. We camped a mile farther up as the coolies had to return to fetch the flour, which made all progress very slow. There was no fuel at this camp, but by searching the cliff above us we were able to grub up enough bad brushwood to make tea for the party. We were very cramped and were all huddled together on the stones, but a trickle of good water compensated for the inconvenience. The weather was dry and fine, but the haze, the detestable *bulut* of Turkistan, enveloped everything and destroyed any view. Even the junction of the

Sarpo Lagga with the adjacent Crevasse glacier, now renamed the Skamri, was hardly visible.

At 4 p.m. there was a roar, and a great mass of swirling black water swept down, from nowhere, on to the camp. Our tents escaped,



but the flood inundated the coolies camping-ground, but we were able to rescue their belongings and no harm was done.

The next day we continued our ascent of the nala, and a very boring business it was. We trudged up the right of the valley. The going was hard but at last we reached a level piece of ground, and camped. This was the last place where there was any wood, and that was only roots of shrubs.

Our affection for the Sarpo Lagga glacier did not increase as we saw more of it. It was a dirty mass of rubbish, indented with small streams, lakelets, and other evidences of decay. Above our camp was a tired piece of glacier, which had not the strength to reach the floor.

Desiccation was everywhere evident, and although there were white outcrops of ice on the upper part of the glacier, the glacier itself was certainly in retreat. The lower part was peculiarly lifeless, with its ice-cliffs, large hollows, and other ravages which the state of the ice did not manage to repair.

On 24th July we halted, partly to let the coolies take on the rations farther up the valley, but chiefly to find out where we were. It was impossible to identify the names on the map, and there was no one to ask, as nobody had ever been here before. There was in fact no traffic. I climbed up the right of the nala during this halt, and was rewarded with a fine view as the haze had lifted, but it was impossible to identify the position of the pass. We continued our wearisome crawl up the valley the next day, but only reached what we thought was the right of the Moni glacier. The following day we avoided the immediate crossing of the glacier by descending to the medial moraine of the Sarpo Lagga, and although we had to avoid the pools, cliffs, and other apparatus of the dead ice we were thankful not to have to scramble over the pinnacles, hummocks, and other obstacles of the Moni ice.

We now camped opposite some green patches on the left of the nala, but we still did not know where we were, so called the place Moni for want of a better name. Opposite us, looking so near though actually so far, were these green patches and a hint of fuel. But although three stout young Shimshalis went over to search, they came back empty handed.

After a comfortable night, for although it was very cold we were at any rate sheltered, we started for where the Mustagh pass should be. It was 7 a.m. by my watch, but that meant nothing, as it was standard time—or any time other than true sun time. I had gone out on the snow at 2 a.m. to look at the weather, and was worried at seeing a small cloud, the size of a man's hand, and a most ominous symptom. Sure enough, when we actually started, the whole firmament was overcast. There was a bitter, cutting wind and snow scurries were blowing. Here and there we could discern a bit of blue sky, and even a little rare sunshine appeared occasionally. The trouble was that we did not know where we were going. I went first with one of the raft-men. We had two of these experts with us, as well as the inelegant but now useless raft, and very good the men were. We were still in the main Sarpo Lagga valley, and we toiled along up smooth snow in the centre of the glacier. At last we came to the mouth of a side nala, which came in on the left from the south. Here we turned left, more by good luck than anything else, and continued up and up, still over a smooth slope, with dry rocks on our right. To our relief we found some old shelters and rough sleeping-places,

and were certain that we were now at Changtok Brangsa, the halting- or camping-place of the Big Rock. The place was not marked on any map, and the Changtok or Spantok that is marked is not the same.

These unromantic traces of human beings cheered us enormously. We were convinced that at last we were on the right road to the pass. So we halted. There was a raging storm, but in the bitter wind we succeeded in pitching the tents. We had a few sticks in a little bag, and managed to brew some tea, but owing to the altitude the boiling-point was low, and the stuff hardly worth drinking. But we did not care: we had arrived at the right spot. The night of 27th/28th July was terribly cold, and no wonder, as we were on snow at a height of at least 17,000 feet. We slept, as the men said, like marmots, all curled up and damnably chilly. Early in the morning there was a sharp fall of snow, but it was easily shaken off.

To gain the summit of the pass proved to be a gentle walk of one hour and a quarter. The crest was approximately 17,750 feet. One estimate is 19,000 feet, but that is certainly an exaggeration. As we looked down on the Baltistan side of the pass we quickly realized why it had fallen into disuse. On the left was a huge five-tiered ice-fall, hardly a bergschrund, and on the right was a precipitous cliff. Between the two lay an impassable chasm. The descent was bad for men, and out of the question for any animals. To go down on the Baltistan side we had to cut steps where we could, and on the rock, which was fortunately firm, we managed to get a foothold, but only a fraction of our boots could get on the tiny ledges of stone which was all that we could find. The coolies did wonders; but then the foot of the hill-man is really prehensile, and not a mere dead piece of flatness as is that of the so-called product of civilization, with the clumsy boots that such a creature must wear. When we arrived at the base of the pass we looked up and wondered how we had done it.

We found ourselves on a wide, almost level snow-field, which hid the ice below. The crevasses were many but not very dangerous. To reach our camping-ground farther down we had a very rocky and troublesome moraine to cross, but we found some wood and that cheered us immensely. Besides, we had a sleep in the warm sun, and above all the pass was behind us. We did not care a doit for the maze of snow and ice that lay before us.

R. C. F. S.

*Note.*—In his book, *Karakoram and Western Himalaya* (Constable, London, 1912), the author, Filippo de Filippi, has a reference to the Mustagh pass on p. 197. The pass was open until the first half of the nineteenth century, and had previously been regularly used as a through route from Turkistan.

In 1903 Herr Ferber went to the crest of the pass, from the Baltistan side, but did not go farther. (See the author's note on p. 199 of the above book.) It is evident that there has always been a regular route between Baltistan and Turkistan over this pass, and there is no reason why the route should not be reopened when the snow and ice permit. Passes always vary from year to year; but, provided the weather is good, any pass can be crossed if proper precautions are taken.

## THE TSOMORARI TO THE TIBETAN FRONTIER AT DEMCHOK

Maps: Survey of India, 4 miles to the inch, Sheets 52 L, 52 P.

IT was on 4th August 1946 that Major C. W. M. Young, of the Royal Corps of Signals, and myself first saw the Tsomorari. *Tso* is the Tibetan for lake, and this was a noble sheet of water. It is 15 miles in length, and from 3 to 5 miles broad, and is 14,900 feet above sea-level.

We had spent a miserable night, for it had been bitterly cold and a heavy white frost had soaked the tents and delayed our start till 7 a.m. by our watches, though what the real local time was we had no idea. From camp we crawled up a long sloping valley, which grew narrower and narrower, till we reached the crest of the Yala Nyamo La (17,588 feet). There, below us, bathed in the sunlight, was the Tsomorari, an unruffled expanse of deep prussian blue, with the purple-brown mountains beyond. Above lay great banks of cloud. It was a lovely sight, and we gazed with delight on the scene.

The descent was very steep, to a green oasis studded with Changpa tents. We camped by a clear stream and spent a couple of nights pleasantly enough, although the wind was violent and threatened to blow down the tents. There is always something disagreeable in these uplands. The place was Karzok Fu. Our halt was needed, as we had to wash and tidy up, and there was the eternal bother over transport. One cannot be always tough and strenuous, and on extended trips like this it is no use to be for ever active. Many travellers are, and achieve less than the lazy ones. The indifference that arises from the rarified air cannot be exaggerated.

We left Karzok Fu on 6th August and went down a narrow valley to the lake. Our journey was complicated by the yaks, who hated carrying our kit and kept throwing off the loads, to the despair of the cook and fury of the rest of us. On reaching the side of the lake we saw the famous gonpa or monastery of Karzok. We did not go inside as we had had a surfeit of these places, but admired it from

without. It was a large building with five big chortens. There was a huddle of squalid buildings round it, but it would not do to be too critical, as this was the only inhabited place near the lake. The cold must be trying, but there were fields of barley nearly ripe, and it was said to be the highest place in the world where crops were grown. It was some 15,000 feet above sea-level, and one could well believe it: but it was no place to live in.

We spent the entire day walking down the western side of the lake. At first there were one or two streams, but afterwards the only water was from the lake itself. Although the lake was marked brackish on the map the water was tolerable, and could be used in case of need; but we were not very keen about it. Our Hunza men liked cold, fresh, and sweet water, and as the locals assured us that the water, if drunk, would upset our stomachs we all refrained from using it.

Towards evening, bored to tears, we arrived at the end of the lake, at a poor sort of place, Kiangdom. It was an ugly, morose spot, with a howling wind, but it had a spring of good water, and had to do. Next day we went on to Unti, marked Uti on the map. Although we puffed and panted up the Narbu Dongri La (16,237 feet) it was of no interest. I wondered as I toiled up it why one never seemed to get enough air into one's lungs, a silly thought, but the country is so very deceptive, and one can never realize how high the whole region is. On the way to the pass we saw twenty-five kiang and a number of hares, and my head Hunza man shot a Tibetan grouse, a scarce bird, but very good to eat. There was a lot of vegetation, and masses of white pedicularis.

The country was not inspiring. The series of rolling downs, covered with sparse grass, was arid and uninviting. The whole area was bone-dry, but there was a good stream at Unti, a dull place, 15,689 feet up, but sheltered. We saw an ovis ammon, and the country was good for shikar. The wind was treacherous and the country open, and stalking would be difficult, and so sport would be good. Wherever these fine sheep are found it is never easy to get a shot.

Although we had crossed one pass since we left Karzok Fu, we were still in the drainage area of the Pare Chu or Parang river, which flows into the Spiti river. The entire region was unmapped and little known and the frontier between Kashmir and Tibet was undemarcated. We were bound for Hanlé and had two more passes to cross. We wandered on amidst this maze of downs, passing above the green swampy plain of Tegarzung. At last we came to the foot of the Lenak La, and camped at 16,443 feet. The Ladakhi yakmen, indifferent to time or distance, and thinking only of their comfort, wanted to stop much farther back. It was a great mistake, and we



would have none of it. There were a great number of kiang, but the Ladakhis refused to eat them, and we could not manage ourselves to devour one of these large beasts. The Ladakhis also refused to eat hares or marmots, and showed a surprising nicety of diet, but they were foolish to reject good food, considering the rubbish they put inside themselves.

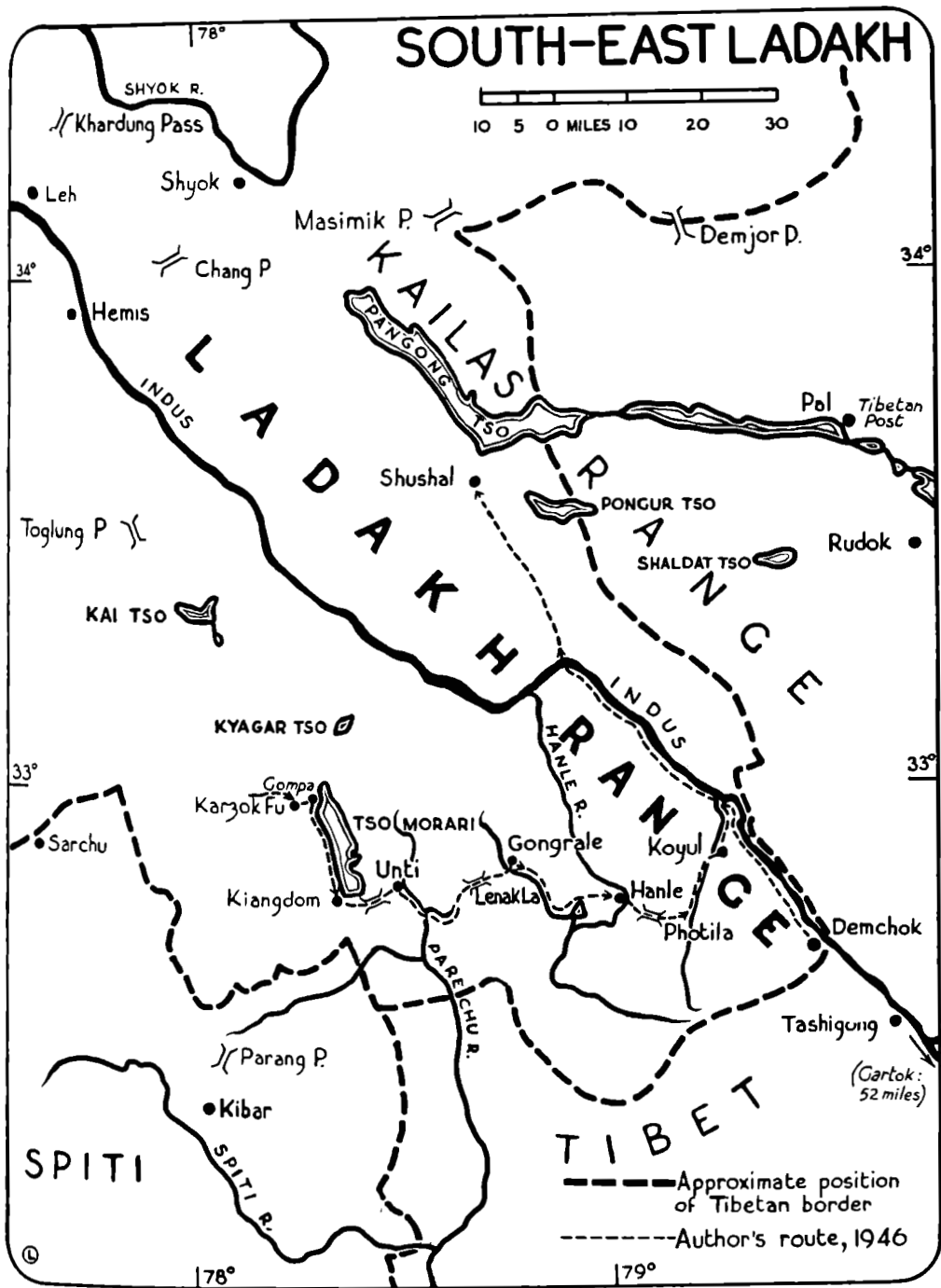
After a warm and sheltered night we struggled to the top of the Lenak La (17,800 feet) in  $2\frac{1}{2}$  hours. Mouse hares were numerous, and so were picas, with a black marking on their flanks. We shot some hares and very good they were. Perhaps for this reason the Ladakhis came and asked for some of the meat, and forgot their scruples.

We had a truly dismal view from the top of the pass. It was, however, extensive, especially towards Spiti, but it was mournful and depressing in the dull light of an overcast sky. In front, to the north, was the barren outline of the Ladakh range, a most unromantic mass of mountain. We hurried down from the cold and gloom of the pass, entered a narrow grassy valley, and camped 2 miles below Gongrale. Next day we pushed on, crossed a plain called Thang-chunkiri consisting chiefly of bulldust, went over a saddle only 15,125 feet high and entered the Hanlé plain. The descent at first was precipitous, and we camped not far from the monastery. Sheet 52 L bore only the vaguest resemblance to the country, and Young was very put out. It is never wise to trust these maps. After all, the survey is an old one, and the country remote and uninhabited, and very unprofitable.

Hanlé is well known and needs little description. It consists of an impressively sited monastery and one tree. We visited the gonpa, and the monks staged a devil dance for us and were most courteous. Young was busy with his cine-camera, as he is a great expert in all cinematograph work. The results were admirable. Of course, everything the monks did for us went down on the bill, and rightly so. They cannot be expected to amuse tourists for nothing.

Our destination was Demchok, which lay south-east from Hanlé. The direct route was impossible, owing to the Ladakh range which lay between. So we had to make a detour, at first due north down the valley of the Koyul to its junction with the Indus, and then up the left bank of that river to Demchok. So we set forth from Hanlé, after a night spoilt by braying donkeys and barking dogs, but diversified by a kiang being chased by a wolf through the camp.

We crossed the Hanlé river, unexpectedly deep and awkward, and in  $3\frac{1}{2}$  hours reached the top of the Photi La (17,958 feet). We were surprised to find two small streams on the crest, which was flat enough for a camp, but very cold. On the way to the pass Daulat



had missed some burrhel but one of the men had killed a hare with a stone, so there was something to eat. We camped at Lego Chumik (15,566 feet), below the pass.

Next day we pushed on to Koyul village, passing the abandoned fort of Bemkhar, in the middle of cultivation. We stayed at Koyul for two nights. We had to collect transport, which is always such a nightmare, and we wanted to see the people, who differed from those we had previously met. The women especially were dressed differently, and wore a square head-dress, and they, and indeed the men also, were more purely Tibetan in appearance and habit than those farther west.

There was a local official at Koyul, a kotwal, whose job it was to protect the interests of the state. What those interests were and how he did it we failed to discover. The undelimited frontier between Kashmir and Tibet was close by, but no one quite knew where it was. Koyul was a pleasant place, with a large number of dilapidated emblems of religion. It had clearly been a very pious spot.

We walked down the Koyul valley as far as the Indus. It was a good march. The fields were full of barley and other local crops, chiefly peas and beans, but no wheat, as it was too cold. Besides, barley makes beer, and that is important. There was a cheerful stream, pastures full of cattle, and an inhabited air about the place. Everywhere the ruins of past piety met our eyes.

We were quite sorry to reach the Indus and turn south-east. It was a dull march and very arid. We lost our way and grew very peevish. Finally we could stand it no longer and marched straight to the river, and camped agreeably even though it was raining. There was plenty of grass, fuel, and water, the three necessities which a traveller desires, and with these he should be well satisfied.

We arrived at Demchok on 16th August, and found it was only  $8\frac{1}{2}$  miles. So we were early, and it was just as well. We spent the entire day in wrangling with the Tibetans. The local Tibetan official had prudently disappeared, and an odd collection of irresponsible savages pretended to minister to us. What we wanted was some guarantee that we should be able to buy the supplies of sattu, the local barley flour, and other needs of our Ladakhis. We could get no satisfaction whatever. So we decided with reluctance to give up going on. It is no use at all entering the unknown unless there is something settled. Of course one can go everywhere taking loads of what is needed, but that costs a great deal of money. We showed all our documents, written in flowing Tibetan, but it was useless. I daresay that we were over-cautious, but gate-crashing in Tibet is not a wise pastime.

Demchok was not an exciting place at all. The frontier was ill

defined, although a stream, hard to cross at midday, was supposed to mark it. On what was unquestionably Kashmiri territory numerous flocks were grazing. It was evidently the concern of no one, least of all of the kotwal, to safeguard the interest of either country. The truth was, of course, that it did not matter, as the people did not care a doit for political restrictions. After all, they were Tibetans, irrespective of what side of an arbitrary frontier line they lived.

We tried to cross the Indus at Demchok and return a different way, but it was impossible. The river was deep and unfordable, so we returned down the road we had come, in a very bad temper. We went down to Nimu-Mud, crossed the Indus, which was wide and shallow, and eventually reached Shushal (Chushal) where Young left me, as he had to hurry back to India.

R. C. F. S.

### SIKKIM TREK

DESPITE the extreme physical discomfort and the rigours of climbing through ice and snow, often enveloped in masses of damp cloud or swept by equally damp but piercing cold winds, mountaineering or trekking in high places has always offered to a certain type of mentality an attraction that is very nearly irresistible. Why this section of humanity should take such delight in maltreating their own bodies has never been discovered, but it is similar to the lemmings, who annually set out from the coast of Norway to drown themselves in the inhospitable waters of the North Sea.

Being myself of this persuasion, it was inevitable that sooner or later after my arrival in India I should find myself a member of a party of five who last October crossed the Penlong La, of some 6,000 feet, which represents to the trekker the first stage of the ever upward journey into the Himalayas.

Behind him lies the last town, the last electric light, the last motor-car, and beyond, hills rising on hills, climate and vegetation stratified by height, from the sultry valleys full of rainbow butterflies, lianas, tree-ferns, orchids, up through pleasant meadows and orchards, through the pines festooned with fairy lichen, the forbidding rhododendron swamps where tangled roots and black deep bog are the only road, ever upwards through the low brushwood, the boulder-strewn wastes, the towering black crags, until finally the snows' soaring white pinnacles and toppling glaciers, playing hide-and-seek with the clouds.

On this occasion we took about ten days to reach our first base, Green Lake, a grassy meadow with a 'southern aspect' about 10

miles up the immense Zemu glacier, and maybe 6 or 7 miles from Kangchenjunga. By that time we had walked 76 miles, and we were at a height of 16,000 feet above sea-level.

I personally had done a very silly thing. My abominable boots, which I had purchased in Calcutta, fitted me in that city, but upon setting out I had doused them liberally with oil, and they had promptly shrunk. I sympathize with the victims of the ancient and then well-established Inquisitorial torture, 'The Boot'. After the first day of 14 miles, pounding downhill most of the way, I had three blisters, two broken. On the next day I wore thick socks, and a pair of Pathan chaplis, but the soles were so thin that the jagged ground became an agony to walk upon. My only consolation was that I could wade through every stream, soaking my burning feet in delicious numbing coolness.

Next day I tried the boots again, but by now my feet had spread. I hobbled 50 yards and then sat down to admire the view. I put the chaplis on once more, but the soles of my feet were bruised. However, I got half-way, and then I drew my wicked-looking Tibetan knife, which I had obtained from a shaggy Tibetan muleteer in exchange for a pocket compass which fascinated him, and sitting cross-legged I sliced away the toes of my despicable boots, while the porters looked on with glee.

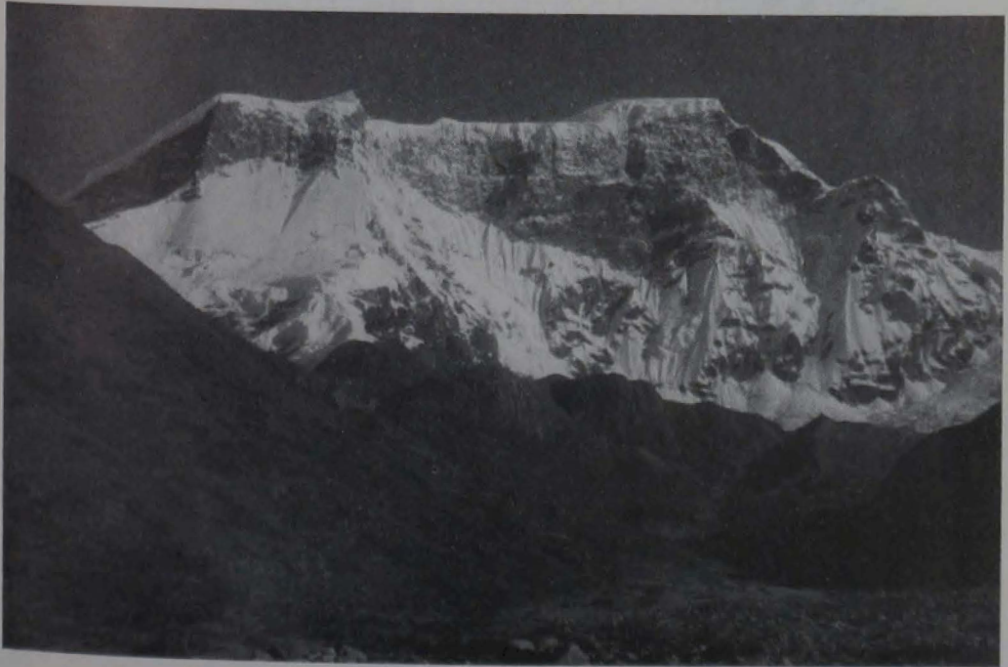
The relief was instantaneous, and after that I had very little trouble except for a tendency of the toes to flap.

But by then my feet were a Picasso mural of empurpled flesh, engrained dirt, and ragged pieces of plaster, and I did not really enjoy walking until we reached Green Lake, by which time I had changed into my oversize boots, intended to accommodate my thick sea-boot stockings.

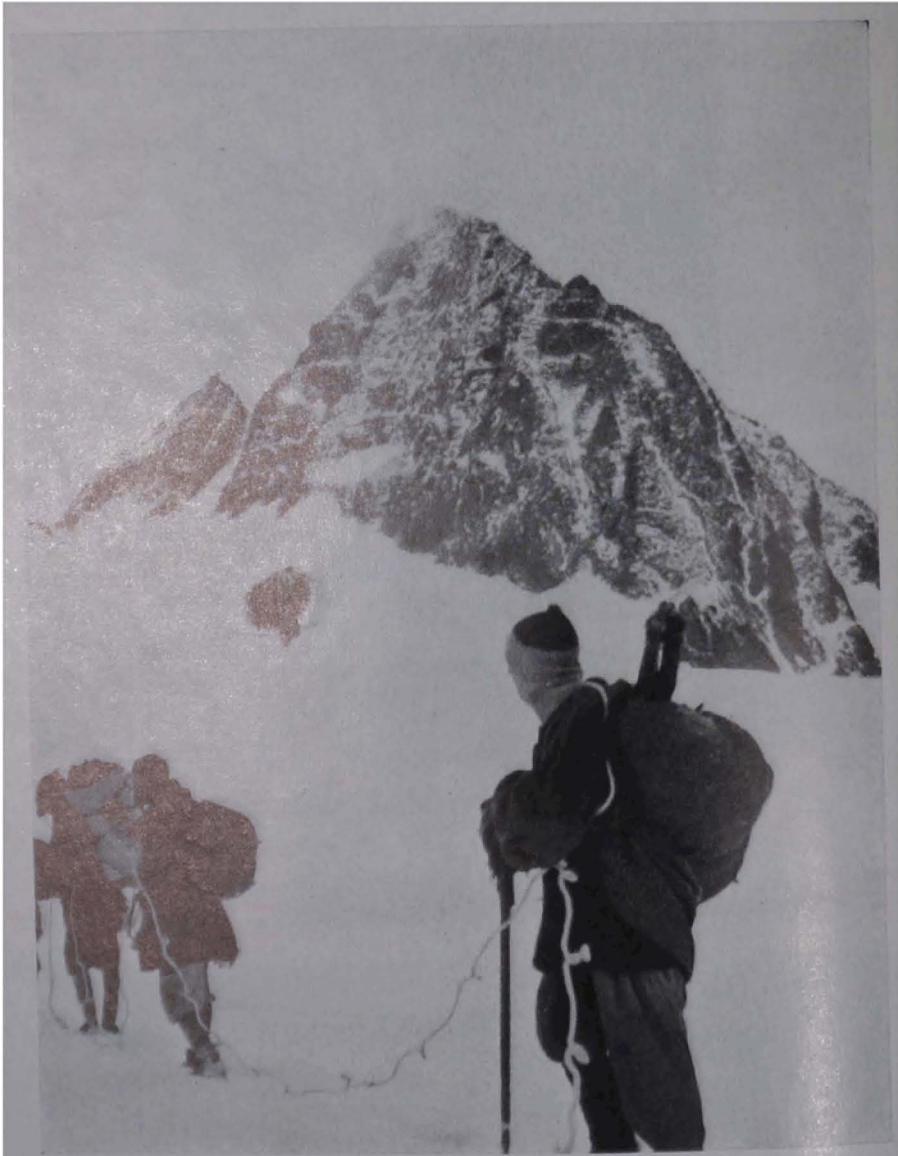
The view from Green Lake is one of the finest in the world and it has been written of more than once in these pages, so I must curb my enthusiasm. Nevertheless I would offer my own homage to Siniolchu—Queen of the Himalaya—who rises as delicate and sheer as Kangchenjunga is massive and forbidding. Her fluted ice-cliffs seemed to shine with an inner light—and then the vision was veiled by cloud. But looking up, there, as in a window, brighter, higher, and bluer than I had conceived, was framed one delicate lacework of ice. We climbed on for several hours until we found ourselves on a sharp arête, guarded at either end by a steep gendarme. The mist cleared and we could gaze down a 500-foot cliff, at the base of which was the 'Hidden Glacier'. Here, at about 19,400 feet, we bivouacked—not too uncomfortable. Next morning the weather seemed uncertain, we had no rope, and, except for our head porter, Pasang, very little experience, so prudence overcame what valour we had. It snowed



*'Hidden Glacier', near 'Little Siniolchu',  
looking north-west. The peak in far dis-  
tance is part of the Chorten Nyima range*



*Kangchenjau, from the Sebu La*



*Kolahui (17,799 ft.)*

Route followed was across face of smaller peak to intervening col and thence starting up face. The cord held by coolies is not climbing rope

heavily, and it was through already deep snow that we struggled back to Lachen. Here we ran into the Dewan of Sikkim, Mr. Lall, scholar of Balliol and a member of the Club, who was paying a call on the Abbot.

Next day three of us headed for the Jha Chu and the Sebu La La, which we negotiated successfully, but found very heavy snow on the east side. It is not possible to describe adequately the grandeur, the vastness of that tremendous ring of great peaks which form the encircling horizon. The remainder of our homeward journey was most pleasant, and culminated in a grand party at His Highness the Maharajah's Palace at Gangtok.

GEORGE WALLER

### SIMLA: MURAL KANDA AND RETURN

*14th-18th June 1950*

THE writers left Simla on 14th June 1950 by early morning bus to Narkanda, about 40 miles, with the intention of walking via Baghi to Sungri, and of climbing Mural Kanda, 12,400 feet. We returned to Simla on the evening of 18th June.

On arrival at Narkanda they were advised to avoid the main Narkanda-Baghi road because of the danger of falling rock consequent upon road repairs, and took instead a higher track which separates from the main Narkanda-Thandar road 1 mile from Narkanda as a mountain track rising sharply upwards to the right. This path rises steeply, skirts Hatu (10,456 feet), leaving it on the right, and passes over a neighbouring height about 300 feet lower than Hatu and approximately east of it. This diversion rejoins the Narkanda-Baghi road about half a mile from Baghi. The total distance is about 8 miles.

Baghi to Sungri, 16½ miles, was covered the next day, the road being a very pleasant one maintaining a steady height of about 8,500 feet, although rising to 9,700 feet at Khadralla, 7½ miles from Baghi, where for those who would prefer to do Baghi-Sungri in two days there is a rest house.

On the following day, with a guide, Mural Kanda was climbed. The path rises steeply from the dak bungalow at Sungri, and continues to rise, keeping more or less to the ridge, in an easterly direction, for about 4 miles, where there is a sharp descent before the climb continues and a change of direction to the north. The total distance to the top was covered in 4½ hours, the return journey in



3½ hours. The walking distance, there and back, was estimated as about 16 miles.

The return to Simla was by the same route, except that, by starting early, it was found possible to follow the Baghi–Narkanda road, the danger points being passed before the work began on the new road (approximately 9.30 a.m.).

Baggage was carried by mule, coolies (by reason of the harvest and of the road reconstruction) being virtually unobtainable. The Kailas Transport Company, Narkanda, were very helpful in the matter of transport. Accommodation at Baghi and Sungri was in dak bungalows. Previous application for permission to use them should be made to the Executive Engineer, Mahasu Division, Kennedy House, Simla.

This short trek is highly recommended. Mural Kanda is one of the very few 12,000-foot mountains within easy reach of a hill-station, the dak bungalows are comfortable and excellently situated, whilst the scenery is uniformly interesting. At certain seasons (and owing to the onset of monsoon weather we were unlucky in this respect) and more particularly in October, the views of the snows from the dak bungalows and from Mural Kanda are superb.

Notes on some of the birds encountered are appended by J. H. Bishop, a keen ornithologist.

#### *Some Bird Notes*

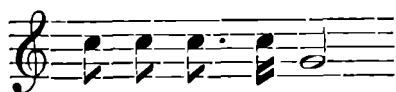
The Narkanda–Baghi forest (8,500–10,500 feet), accessible by motor from Simla in four hours, contains many interesting birds not usually seen near hill-stations. We came across the orange-gorgeted fly-catcher, the slate-blue fly-catcher, several pairs of white-collared blackbirds, missel-thrushes, Simla black- and brown-crested tits, and we heard several times unfamiliar call-notes. The late Mr. A. E. Jones, in his booklet *The Common Birds of Simla*, mentioned that bull-finches also are to be found there.

The 16 miles from Baghi to Sungri (ranging 8,500–10,000 feet) did not reveal any other birds than those in the Narkanda area, though the eastern variegated laughing thrush became more common, and an unidentified warbler, too, which started his song with a long whistle.

Sungri leads on to the high, bare slopes of Mural Kanda, and we came across six Monal pheasants on our day's climb; at about 11,500 feet, where the trees give way to grassy uplands, tree-pipits, rose-finches, black redstarts, and rufous-tailed fly-catchers were breeding.

Dr. Phillips made a note (below) of the call of what must have

been the allied grosbeak, which I think is worth recording, as it is not noted either in Whistler or Salim Ali's *Indian Hill Birds*, and is quite unlike the call of the black-and-yellow grosbeak (*Picteroides vigors*).



The key is estimated. The bird starts its call about a third below the first note of the normal cuckoo's (*Cuculus canorus hinnaeus*) call.

We heard this at about 11,000 feet and only once. Does this indicate that the allied grosbeak is found at higher altitudes than the black-and-yellow, which was common from 7,000 feet all the way from within 4 miles of Simla?

This note excludes the commoner birds. It is added because it indicates what a rich field is open to north Indian ornithologists who have only a short holiday. I may add that we heard, even at 12,200 feet, many other bird-calls which we could not trace or identify.

L. R. PHILLIPS and J. H. BISHOP

### SOME BIRDS SEEN IN LAHUL

LAHUL is one of those areas of the high Himalayas that can only be reached by way of a high pass. Although the two main head-waters of the Chenab river—the Bhaga and the Chandra—rise in Lahul and flow along its two valleys at a height mostly under 11,000 feet, the trek right along the Chenab from the plains seems to be impossible. Indeed, even the parts of the Chenab valley that are in the north-east of Chamba State, 50 miles lower down-stream than Lahul, can best be reached by crossing even higher passes than those that lead to Lahul.

Once you have crossed the Rohtang pass and descended into the Chandra valley you leave the characteristic Himalayan forest behind you. The Kulu valley is as well wooded as any part of the outer Himalaya, but the Pir Panjal Mountains, which separate it from Lahul, act as a barrier also against the monsoon. The total average rainfall in Lahul is only some 25 inches, and of this total more falls in the spring than in the monsoon months.

The absence of trees means a great reduction in the number of birds. During a fortnight's trek in June 1950 I noted less than sixty species. Probably if I had spent a fortnight trekking over the Kulu valley I might have seen twice that number. My companions were Captain Ranald, R.N., and Mrs. Ranald, Mrs. Narendra Nath, and Miss Parry. They all kindly helped in the look-out for birds.

Lahul is not quite treeless. One species of pine occurs, three of juniper, and one at least of birch; and there are extensive groves of willow and poplar in the cultivated areas which have been planted during the past eighty years. There is also some cotoneaster and rose scrub.

The pine woods, sparse and not extensive, grow on northern slopes and I did not visit them. Between Keylang and Jispa, for nearly 10 miles, there is a fairly extensive wood of *Juniperus magnipoda*, with an upright growth and an appearance almost exactly like that of a pine-tree. This woodland contained several birds not seen elsewhere, and I was sorry not to be able to spend more time in it. It would probably yield some interesting secrets.

Amongst the most conspicuous birds are vultures and choughs. Wherever you stand to rest, if you scan the mountain-tops you are likely to discover one or more griffon vultures, and the fine lammergeier, with brown body, narrow silvery wings, golden crown, and painted tail, is scarcely less common. Towards sunset especially you may see a dozen or more of these two species soaring in the sky. The lammergeier is, perhaps, half-way between vulture and eagle; but of true eagles I saw none. Kestrels and sparrow-hawks were seen in small numbers.

Flocks of choughs are to be seen and heard every day. The yellow-billed species is the commoner, but the red-billed is not uncommon, and these two 'mountain-crows' often occur in flocks together. We noticed a few jungle crows and half a dozen ravens—the latter is the huge Tibetan raven, the largest crow, I believe, in all the world. Neither of these birds breeds in Lahul, but they are said to come with the flocks of sheep and goats—that is, in the early summer.

The only other moderately large birds in Lahul are pigeons. The common rock pigeon is plentiful, and just as tame as it is in the plains. Here and there you may also see the beautiful snow pigeon, with grey head, white underparts, dark wings, and black-and-white tail.

Among the groves of willows a noisy common species is the variegated laughing-thrush; and the smaller, dark-brown streaked laughing-thrush is also locally plentiful. The abundance of the variegated laughing-thrush amazed me. Its usual habitat is the dense, high jungle of the Himalayan hills, as for instance on some of the slopes above Simla; and it usually hides itself in the foliage and only allows an occasional fleeting glimpse to the bird-watcher. In Lahul they can hide themselves when they like in the dense foliage of the willows; but I saw several out in the open, even hopping on the ground, where their bright colours might lead one to mistake them for jays. Of the true thrushes the whistling-thrush is much the com-

monest. His black form and yellow bill are to be seen well up to 11,000 feet above the sea, usually near water. Sometimes we heard his fine song. Occasionally we also noticed the blue rock-thrush, a smaller, bluer, but much less glossy bird than the whistling-thrush.

Finches are abundant in these high desolations. We came upon several parties of rose-finches. There are at least a dozen different species that breed in the high Himalaya, and they are not easily distinguished. In Lahul we saw at least two distinct species. In both the male bird was a brilliant red colour.

Great flocks of mountain-finches, a plain-coloured bird dressed all in various hues of brown, were frequently encountered along the mountain-sides. And then there was a smaller, darker brown finch, with a brilliant gold forehead, the gold-fronted finch. About Jispa, in particular, among the junipers, they were abundant, and it was a charming sight watching dozens of them hovering in the breeze and settling from time to time on rocks or low bushes. They kept up a gay little twitter. Usually some Himalayan gold-finches were associating with them, and once at least I saw Himalayan green-finches in a party. These gay little finches seemed to me among the most attractive birds to be found in Lahul. Another common bird of the finch tribe is the meadow bunting.

A bird that was quite new to me and which we only found in the neighbourhood of trees, whether juniper or willow, was the blue-headed robin. This bird gave us a lot of trouble. It was fairly common in the wooded strip of the Bhaga valley. As it flitted among the trees, or sat in full view on a rock or bush, it looked to be a small black bird with white, or dirty greyish-white, on the under-parts, a patch of white in the wing, and a white cap. Was it some kind of fly-catcher, or a chat, or what? Though we searched through the pages of Stuart-Baker we could not find it. Then I happened to see that the description of the blue-headed robin fitted it in every respect except the blue head. As it happened, the very next day, close to Keylang, I saw one settle on the path below me. Through binoculars I could now see that the 'white' cap was in fact pale bluish. But the man who first called it 'blue-headed robin' must have named it from skins. The blue is very difficult to detect in the field. In shape and behaviour the bird is a true robin. Its mate is a modest brown little bird.

The two rivers and their side-streams provided few special birds, such as wagtails—grey and Hodgson's pied, dippers—both brown- and white-breasted, and the beautiful white-capped water-redstart in gorgeous black, chestnut, and white plumage.

The stony scree were apt to seem birdless; but if one stopped to watch a few birds might soon be found. Thus, on our last day in Lahul I sat on a rock among some scree for my lunch, 2 miles below

Khoksar, and while I sat there I saw a pair of white-capped redstarts, a pair of Indian redstarts (this is a common species all through Lahul), a blue rock-thrush, several pairs of mountain finches, a pair of gold-fronted finches, and a greyish willow-warbler.

It is not necessary to mention every bird that we saw. In some areas one of the most characteristic sounds was the persistent song of the chiff-chaff. The striking five-note silver-bell-like song of the large-billed willow-warbler was also heard more than once.

Two or three times we had the good luck to see that beautiful bird the wall-creeper, with the flaming patch of red in his wings. The Himalayan tree-creeper also occurs and we saw it at least twice. This is almost the only species we saw which was not recorded by the late Mr. Hugh Whistler, when he wrote of the birds of Lahul in the *Ibis* of 1925.

HORACE G. ALEXANDER

## THE KOLAHOI GROUP

### *An Historical Sketch*

THE first recorded attempt to climb the highest of the three main peaks of the Kolahoi Group in Kashmir (Survey of India Map, 1 inch, 43 N/8) was made by Captain Corry and Lieutenant Squires in 1911. This peak, locally known as Gashibrar (interpreted as meaning 'The Goddess of Light'), is 17,799 feet in height and the loftiest in Kashmir proper. The climbers reached a point within 40 feet of the summit, Dr. Neve's party finding a cairn of stones at the spot the following year.

The two other main peaks are Buttress peak (16,785 feet), a mile to the south of Gashibrar, and Bur Dalau (16,764 feet), a mile and a half to the south-east. Dr. Ernest Neve and Kenneth Mason made the first ascent of the latter on 21st June 1911, by the eastern arête.

In 1912 the same party made the first ascent of Gashibrar,<sup>1</sup> following the Armiun Nar, crossing the Har Nag pass (Hari Gati on the Survey of India Map) and reaching the ice-field south of Kolahoi from the east, where, at an altitude of about 15,000 feet, camp was pitched. Facing them was the pyramidal peak, rising steeply 2,500 feet. The next day, accompanied by twelve porters, they crossed a mile of glacier and began the ascent up the right side of the eastern couloir. Traversing, they continued on the left side up steep rocks

<sup>1</sup> *Alpine Journal*, November 1912, vol. xxvi, pp. 407-9.

and finally halted on a rocky ledge at about 16,200 feet, where, after clearing a space in the snow, a Whymper tent was pitched.

Before dawn on the following day, 28th June, the climbing party began the final ascent, occasionally cutting steps up the snow-filled couloir, and reaching the main eastern arête after five hours' climbing. The remainder of the ascent consisted of a 300-yard scramble along and up this jagged arête. This took  $4\frac{1}{2}$  hours owing to the need for caution, as the party frequently found itself compelled to walk on the junction of snow-cornice with arête edge. The summit was attained by 2 p.m., the last 60 feet of the climb being on snow. The summit itself was (and still is) snow-capped and heavily corniced to the north and west and less so to the east.

From here the chief points of the Pir Panjal range to the west were visible. To the north the Nanga Parbat ridge stood out in dazzling whiteness, while the snowy plateau of Nun Kun and unclimbed Nun (23,410 feet) were prominent in the east.

Dr. Neve's party found the descent more difficult than the ascent, the negotiating of the main arête down as far as the couloir taking five hours, and the descent to the little shelter tent had to be completed by moonlight. The total time spent on this climb from 16,200 feet to 17,799 feet (about 1,600 feet) and return was about sixteen hours.

The next ascent of Gashibrar was made by Mr. C. R. Cooke and Lieutenant B. W. Battye, whose route was very similar to Dr. Neve's. They also camped near point 15,314, but their first attempt was made up a long rib of steep but easy rock at the eastern end of the south face. They were brought to a halt at the 'Castle', a formidable mass of rock at about 16,200 feet on the crest of the east ridge, but managed to turn it and regain the eastern arête. Instead of camping at this height, as Dr. Neve's party did, they descended by 'Neve's Couloir' and, presumably on the next day, 10th July 1926, made a second attempt; this time ascending to the east ridge via Neve's Couloir. They left camp at 6 a.m. and reached the summit at 1.30 p.m.<sup>1</sup>

In 1935 Lieutenant, now Colonel, John Hunt with Flight-Lieutenant Rowland Brotherhood, R.A.F., who had both returned recently from Peak 36 in the Karakoram and were unaware of the details of the climb led by Dr. Neve, made a new ascent of Gashibrar.<sup>2</sup> Instead of approaching the glacier by the Har Nag route, they turned off at Armiun in a northerly direction, climbing up steep grass slopes and snow-beds to the summit of 'Roof Peak' (so named by Dr. Neve) marked on the map as 15,193. They continued up the west edge of

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, May 1927; *Himalayan Journal*, 1937, vol. ix, pp. 173-4.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 1936, vol. viii, pp. 103-6.

the Musa Sab-in Qabr glacier until, at 10.45 a.m., they reached a col between Buttress peak and Bur Dalau. A mile's walk across the glacier south of Gashibrar brought them to the foot of the peak, and, although the previous route to the summit was not known at the time, they decided to attempt an ascent via the east ridge. They did not choose Neve's Couloir, however, but a prominent rib well to the west of it. This rib is continuous until just below the summit and forms the western edge of the largest snow couloir on the south face.

They commenced climbing, unroped, up fairly precipitous rock, which improved with the height, but following some difficulties at a point about 1,000 feet above the glacier they decided to rope up. Higher up the rib is interrupted by a horizontal band of snow which cuts across it from the south-west ridge and joins the great couloir. After a short traverse Hunt and Brotherhood were able to negotiate the snow-band and regain the main rib. Shortly afterwards the steep snow-slope below the summit was reached and, kicking steps in the snow, the climbers joined the east arête at the point where it disappears into the ice-cap.

The ascent from the glacier had taken only  $2\frac{1}{2}$  hours—evidence of the party's fitness and state of training after the Karakoram climb. Unfortunately they were denied the wonderful vista afforded Dr. Neve's party, as huge monsoon clouds had been piling up during the ascent, and now completely obscured the panorama.

Having observed that belays suitable for roping down were scarce on the route by which they ascended, the two climbers followed Dr. Neve's route down the main eastern arête, taking great care on account of their fatigued condition. Before reaching the couloir used in 1912, however, they turned off down a rib running directly down to the glacier, which they reached in  $3\frac{1}{2}$  hours. Hurrying across the snow they returned to the col by 6 p.m. and, after a snack, pressed on to Armiun, 5,000 feet below, arriving at 8 p.m.

In the following year Gashibrar was climbed for the first time by a lady, Miss M. V. Sanderson, who made the ascent by Hunt and Brotherhood's great couloir route in August, with the shikari Aziza.<sup>1</sup> She visited Kolahoi again in July 1937 with Lieutenant James Waller, R.A.<sup>2</sup> They approached the massif from the north and camped on the north-east ice-fall. At one time they contemplated an ascent via the 5,000-foot-high great north ridge, but on further consideration worked their way round to the south face and tackled the peak by the more popular east ridge. They too encountered and negotiated the formidable 'Castle', finally regaining the ridge at the point where it is joined by Neve's Couloir, and reaching the summit at 3.15 p.m., eight hours after setting out. They descended by the

<sup>1</sup> *Himalayan Journal*, 1938, vol. x, pp. 162-3.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

great couloir, the western edge of which had been used by Hunt and Brotherhood in 1935 for their ascent, but considered too tricky for a descent. Waller, though describing the snow as unpleasantly icy in places, reported that a climb down the centre of the great couloir seemed considerably easier and shorter than the usual descent via the eastern arête and Neve's or some other minor couloir.

Gashibrar has, I understand, been climbed several times since 1937, although details are not to hand. Captain R. E. A. James, who is at present planning his second attempt on Nun, made the ascent in 1941.

A solitary ascent was made by R. D. Leakey on 30th June 1945.<sup>1</sup> After a trek from Sonamarg he bivouacked at the foot of a peak a mile and a half east-north-east of Gashibrar, and ascended the peak by the east ridge, taking ten hours. He returned by moonlight along the same route.

An Indian student expedition organized by the Punjab Mountaineering Club and led by W. Cowley tackled the peak during the succeeding month. A base camp was established in the West Liddar valley near the north Kolahoi glacier. After a two-day reconnaissance of the area, an advanced camp was pitched on the rocky island dividing the north glacier. A reconnaissance of Gashibrar itself up to 17,000 feet preceded the ascent made on the fifth day by a party led by H. A. Hamid Khan. The value of a careful reconnaissance is proved by the fact that the three who attained the summit took only four hours.<sup>2</sup>

Lieutenant James Waller climbed Buttress peak (16,785 feet) for the first time in 1933.<sup>3</sup> He camped at the snout of the Musa Sab-in Qabr glacier at a height of about 13,200 feet. On 1st September he and his tiffin-coolie, whom he had trained to climb, ascended the Buttress peak without difficulty by 10.30 a.m. During most of the climb they fed on sugar, with a light meal at 6 a.m. They returned to camp by 1.30 p.m.

Among the minor peaks of the Kolahoi Group are Roof peak (15,193 feet) and a point about half a mile north-west of the Buttress and due east of the pass between Katarnag and the western glacier of Kolahoi. This is sometimes called Katarnag peak and has not, I believe, yet been climbed.

In June 1947 Mr. Graham Dorsett and I made a brief photographic reconnaissance of the Kolahoi Group.<sup>4</sup> We had some diffi-

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., 1946, vol. xiii, pp. 100-1.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 101-2.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 1934, vol. vi, pp. 132-3.

<sup>4</sup> Our reconnaissance and misguided attempt on Gashibrar is described at length in an article by Mr. Dorsett in the *Onlooker Annual*, 1948, pp. 59 and 60. I



culty in crossing the Hari Gati pass (12,729 feet) as the track on the south side ends below a rocky waterfall, practically impassable for baggage ponies. We pitched camp on the south shores of the Lake Har Nag.

On 25th June we ascended the grass and snow slopes to the west of the lake until we reached a precipice overlooking the Bur Dalau glacier and facing the steep south face of the mountain. A scramble along this cliff to the west brought us to a hump from which we could look across the higher slopes of the Musa Sab-in Qabr glacier to the Buttress peak.

The following day we skirted Lake Har Nag—which was still partly frozen over—and followed the Dacchinpor Nar for a couple of miles, finally turning west and labouring up the large tumbled boulders forming the moraine of the east Kolahoi glacier. The Kashmir winter of 1946–7 had been unusually severe and snow conditions on the glacier were bad. We therefore kept to the slopes bounding the north side of it and climbed to the summit of a ridge which divides the north-east and east glaciers. From this point, at a height of about 15,000 feet, we had a view of the three main peaks from an unusual angle and could also see the Amarnath Mountains to the north-east and Nun Kun to the south-east.

Kolahoi is the most alpine of the more easily accessible Kashmir peaks, as it is possible to motor and walk or ride from Rawalpindi to Base Camp in 2½ days with ease. Without doubt June is the best month for climbing in this region. Lieutenant Waller, in August 1933, was forced to camp at Armiun for ten days in vile weather.

On Gashibrar, from all reports, the climb is impressive and awe-inspiring, but presents no outstanding difficulties, for there is almost always secure hand- and foot-hold. The rock is a very stable trap and affords good practice. The difficulty depends on the amount and condition of the snow.

The route taken by Lieutenant John Hunt in 1935, via the col between Buttress peak and Bur Dalau, seems shorter and more attractive than the Har Nag detour. Most parties, however, would be well advised to make a bivouack at or near the col, in order to avoid the ascent of 7,500 feet and descent of the same amount, with a horizontal distance of 5 miles each way involved by climbing from Armiun.

FRANCIS LEESON

might mention that there is an error in the caption to the picture of Bur Dalau on p. 60. Ali Khan is not, of course, on Buttress peak, but on the highest point of a cliff opposite the south face of Bur Dalau.

## ANOTHER ROUTE ON KOLAHOI

IN the *Himalayan Journal*, vol. viii, 1936, p. 106, in a footnote to an account by Hunt of a new ascent of Kolahoi (17,799 feet) by the south face, the editor wrote that he would be glad to hear of any other ascents of Kolahoi between 1912 and 1935, and by what route. The subject is referred to again in vol. xii, 1940, p. 122, by no less an authority than Dr. Ernest Neve, who writes: 'The first ascent was made by Kenneth Mason and me in 1912. Since then it has been climbed several times, generally by the same route (the east ridge), but once by a new route, the southern face, by Hunt and Brotherhood in 1935.' References in the *Himalayan Journal* finish with a note in vol. xiii, 1946, pp. 100, 101, deprecating the misleading publicity given in the *Statesman* to a lone ascent of the east ridge by R. D. Leakey, and welcoming an ascent a few weeks later by three Indian climbers led by H. A. Hamid Khan. It may be of interest, therefore, to record some details of an ascent I made in September 1941, by the south-west ridge, in company with a Kashmiri shikari employed by Bahar Shah of Srinagar.

Under the auspices of the said shikari, one Ahdoos, a young man of confident and engaging disposition, I was making the best use I could of an unexpected spell of leave from Waziristan. We had walked up the Sind valley, ascended two peaks from the Thajiwas valley, and another from Baltal, whence we crossed to a pleasant camp site about a mile south of Har Nag. Life here was enriched by a patch of blue poppies, enlivened by quantities of large-sized marmots, and invigorated by swimming in the cold waters of Har Nag.

We were already 2,000 feet higher than the camp in Armiun Nar from which Hunt and Brotherhood had climbed the peak in 1935, but it was not high enough for us. We intended to camp on the glacier basin enclosed by Kolahoi, Buttress peak, and Bur Dalau, and if there had been anyone to see us setting out they might have been excused for thinking that we were spending a week there. Ahdoos was clad in a smart plus-four suit of superb Harris tweed. His climbing boots and eiderdown sleeping-bag were of French make, the best that money could buy. He modestly informed me that they had been presented to him by a grateful client. An extra camp coolie was entrusted with the task of carrying his hookah; I had seen nothing more incongruous since a chance meeting with a trio of Japanese students on the Bietschhorn in 1938, one of whom had an umbrella sticking out of his sack, a piece of climbing equipment which sent my brother into fits of uncontrollable laughter whenever he thought of it for the next three days.

The usual way from this side on to the glacier east of Kolahoi runs up a corridor between the snout of the glacier and a broken rock-ridge containing it on the north (see map in *Himalayan Journal*, vol. viii, 1936, p. 104). The mountain was first seen from above this corridor, and after staring haughtily at us for a few minutes it disappeared in cloud.

We subscribed to the erection of an exceedingly draughty and cumbersome tent on the windswept glacier about half a mile to the south of the peak, which had not reappeared, and sent the coolies down. After our evening meal Ahdoo kindly invited me to share his hookah. I mistrusted the look of his tobacco but unexpectedly found it a cool and refreshing smoke.

At that time I knew little more of Kolahoi than its name, and we had decided to try the south-west ridge for the simple and excellent reason that we liked the look of it. The subsidiary peak (or is it an enormous gendarme?) on the lower half of this ridge looked as though it could be turned by a traverse across its face to the little snow-col which divides it from the upper part of the mountain. Amid Ahdoo's continuous flow of entertaining and more or less fanciful talk, I never discovered for certain whether in fact he had climbed Kolahoi before. He certainly pointed out correctly the original route followed by Mason and Neve.

We left camp in the morning about 6.30 and plodded up the easy glacier slopes leading to the lower end of the rocks south of the subsidiary peak. We ascended these until we judged we were approaching the level of the snow-col which is such a conspicuous feature of this ridge, when we edged out on to the east side and found a convenient series of cracks and ledges by which we outflanked the peak and found ourselves on the col. From here the ridge, which is steep, is much less sharply defined than it appears to be from the south-east. The rock is for the most part sound and nowhere particularly difficult. There is a continuous succession of cracks, flakes, chimneys, riblets, and ledges, and by following the line of least resistance we soon saw the peak across the col sink down into insignificance and then disappear in the mist. There were a few inches of wet snow on the mountain and more started to fall, so that on the upper part of the climb visibility was barely a rope's length. Ahdoo, who was then leading, though a little primitive with the rope had all the hillman's natural balance on rock, and showed obvious pleasure whenever he was on a mountain. He was as disappointed as I that there was no view.

It is hard to evaluate character when vision is restricted to a few yards of rock-edge rendered featureless in the unicoloured mist, more especially when the next few yards are clearly of no difficulty. We



*Khangkyong Plateau. Looking NNE. Peaks 22,674, 23,072, 22,686, 22,079, and 21,977*



*The Karpo La (17,660 ft.). Across glacier above Jakthan Chu valley*

went on climbing steadily with barely a pause and quite suddenly reached the bottom of the triangular snow-slope stretching to the summit, the top of which we treated with exaggerated respect where we felt it might be corniced over the tremendous precipices of the north face. We had taken  $5\frac{1}{2}$  hours, though some of this time included a prolonged halt for a second breakfast.

The comparative straightforwardness of this route may be judged by the fact that during the descent to the col it was only twice necessary to move one at a time. At the col the mist had cleared and we could see our dutiful coolies sitting idly in the snow, having already packed up the tent. We turned down the snow gully leading to the glacier and joined them. Our time from the summit was just over two hours.

It only remains to add that I dropped my red filter in the snout of the glacier, and that we spent three days sitting at Arau in torrential rain, and two more in Islamabad because floods had rendered the road between Islamabad and Srinagar impassable to all traffic.

I make no excuse for describing in some detail an ascent which, at the time, I felt fairly sure must have been something of a highway. Now I am less certain. If it has been already recorded elsewhere let it be admitted that I am one of, I think, a not inconsiderable number who often regret that they are now living so far from the Himalaya, and who enjoy the recollection of a climb there, be it never so modest.

PETER WORMALD

## TOUR TO NORTHERN SIKKIM

*Time.* 20th November to 14th December 1948.

*Weather.* 20th to 25th: Fair in the mornings but rain in the afternoon. 26th to 29th: Very bad, snow. 30th onwards: Very good, hardly any clouds, except for the period from 6th to 9th December: cloudy, but hardly any precipitation.

*Bungalows.* The fees have been raised to Rs. 3 per head, no maximum. (That means 10 persons would have to pay Rs. 30). Gangtok bungalow is at present occupied by officials. No booking for it is accepted at Darjeeling. It is better for anybody intending to stay at Gangtok to ask well in advance.

*Transport.* There is plenty at Gangtok at that time of the year. We managed to get donkeys for Rs. 4 a day from Gangtok to Lachen. On the way back from Lachung we had to pay Rs. 6 per day (which is the usual rate) and Rs. 6 for the return journey (e.g. Rs. 30 per horse). Coolies are available for Rs. 3 a day at Gangtok. From

Lachung onwards we had to agree to pay Rs. 5 per day per coolie owing to the deep snow.

*Food.* Eggs (all the way) Rs. 1 to 1/8 per dozen. Milk (sometimes difficult to get) As. 6 to 8 per seer. Potatoes (all the way) As. 6 to 9 per seer. Meat was difficult to obtain; it is normally brought by the Tibetans, but this time the traffic was temporarily interrupted.

*General remarks.* Miss Vitants, of the Finnish Mission, is very helpful. She works alternatively at Lachen, Lachung, and Mangen. At Lachen the headmaster is willing to give any help required. So is the teacher at Lachung (if you give him some bakshish!). There is a constant traffic from Lachen via Thangu and over the passes to Tibet even at that time of the year. It is *not* so at Lachung. The Donkya La is hardly used at all so late. At about the middle of December half the village of Lachung goes over the Donkya La to Tibet to buy sheep. There is then a very good track; all the people agreed that the heavy snowfall this year was quite exceptional. There is normally good weather up to the middle of December or even later.

*Snow-line.* At about 12,000 feet before the snowfall, then down to 7,500 feet. On steep southern slopes it receded to 12,000 feet (now 20.12 ins. at about 15,000 ft.), on level ground to 10,000 feet, but the snow-line hardly changed on northern slopes.

L. O. KRENEK and DR. (MRS.) E. KRENEK

# HIMALAYAN PORTERS

*List compiled September 1950*

OF the 175 porters mentioned 51 have died and 24 were killed in the mountains. Twenty-nine, still fit for mountaineering, are at present available in Darjeeling.

This list does not include the names of the young porters now working on small treks in Sikkim, who have no high altitude experience. Nor does it include the names of the seven porters killed on the slopes of the North Col on Everest in 1922. Their names were not given in the official report.

[As we go to press information has come in of the names of the seven porters killed on Everest in 1922. They are inscribed, alongside those of Kellas, Mallory, and Irvine, on the Memorial Cairn at the Base Camp. Their full names and numbers have not yet been ascertained.—ED.]

## Abbreviations

Annap	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	Annapurna
Ev	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	Everest
Garh	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	Garhwal
Kanch	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	Kangchenjunga
KK	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	Karakoram
N.P.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	Nanga Parbat
Rakap	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	Rakaposhi
Sik	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	Sikkim

\* The best porters available (eight).

† Now available at Darjeeling.

‡ Died—killed in the mountains.

D. Died.

<i>Himalayan Cl. No.</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Date of birth</i>	<i>Expeditions</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
61*	Aila Sherpa	1913	36: Ev. 37: Shaksgam. 38: Gangotri (Austr). 39: Sik (Grob). 49: Pyramid Pk. 50: Annapurna.	One of the best Sherpas available at present. <i>Tiger's Badge.</i>
10*	Ajeeba	1911	33: Ev. 35: Kabru. 36: Ev. 37: Sik (Grob). 38: Rakap. 39: Sik (Grob). 47: Gangotri. 49: Pyramid Pk. 50: Annap. 50/51: KK (Marsh).	Very experienced. One of the best Sherpas now available.

<i>Himalayan Cl. No.</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Date of birth</i>	<i>Expeditions</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
43†	Ang Babu	1915	30: Kanch. 33: Ev. 35: Ev. 36: Ev. 39: Lahoul (Krenek).	Good only for minor expeditions.
40	Ang Dawa I (Thamay)	..	36: Ev. 37: Sik (Grob). 38: Ev. 39: Garh (Roch). 47: Garh (Roch).	Now at Sola Khumbu.
41†	Ang Dawa II	1915	36: Ev. 47: Rakap. 50: Garh (Dittert).	Still going strong. Reliable sirdar and excellent cook.
42	Ang Dawa III (Luckla)	..	36: Ev. 38: Gangotri.	Now at Sola Khumbu.
152†	Ang Dawa IV (Chota)	1928	49: Pyramid Pk. 50: Annap. 50: Garh (Dittert).	Promising young porter.
..	Ang Dawa V	1929	49: Pyramid Pk.	Did quite well.
D. 116	Ang Karma	1913	36: Ev. 38: Ev. 42: Lama Amden. 43: Bandarpunch.	Died during the war.
1†	Ang Nima	1907	33: Ev. 34: N.P. 34: Sik (Gourley). 36: Simvu. 36: Fluted Pk. 39: Lahoul. 49: Pyramid Pk.	Willing, but slow to grasp things.
..	Ang Nurbu	..	47: Garh (Roch).	Now at Sola Khumbu.
D. 24	Ang Pasang	1912	33: Ev. 34: Sik (Gourley). 36: Tibet (Martyn).	Died in 1943.
D ..	Ang Pemba	..	38: K2.	Died in 1942.
103	Ang Phuri	..	36: KK (French).	?
D. 44	Ang Phurwa	..	36: Ev.	Died in 1937.
89	Ang Temba II	..	36: KK (French).	Too old now.
155†	Ang Temba III	1932	49: Pyramid Pk. 50/51: KK (Marsh).	Did well in 1949.
D ..	Ang Tenzing I	1908	24: Ev. 34: N.P. 35: Garh (Auden).	Died in 1936.
3‡	Ang Tenzing II	1912	29: Kanch. 30: Kanch. 33: Ev. 35: Ev. 36: Ev. 37: Shaksgam. 38: Gangotri (Aust) 46: Nun Kun.	Died in 1949 whilst on tour with Wood in Lhonak. Malaria. <i>Tiger's Badge.</i>
..	Ang Tenzing III	1922	47: Rakap.	Now at Sola Khumbu.
13	Ang Thari	1915	35: Kabru. 36: Ev.	Now at Sola Khumbu.
19*	Ang Tharkay	1909	31: Kanch. 33: Ev. 34: Nanda Devi. 36: Ev. 36: Garh	Very likely the best and most experienced Sher-



		(Osmaston). 37: Shaksgam. 38: Ev. 39: KK (Shipton). 45: Pauhunri. 49: Kanchenjau. 50: Annapurna.	pa now working. Highly praised. <i>Tiger's Badge</i> .
Ang Tsering I	1910	24: Ev. 30: Kanch. 31: Kamet. 33: Ev. 34: N.P. 36: Ev. 39: Lahoul (Krenek).	German order of the Red Cross (Nanga Parbat, 34). Works as sirdar on treks below snow-line.
Ang Tsering II	1909	33: Ev. 35: Ev. 35: Kabru. 36: Ev. 37: N.P.	Killed in ava- lanche on Nanga Parbat 1937.
Ang Tsering III ('Pansy')	1907	36: Ev. 37: Garh (Gar- diner). 38: Sik (Grob). 39: Sik (Grob). 49: Pyramid Pk. 50: Annap. 50: Nepal (Madgavkar).	Rather old now but still going strong. <i>Tiger's Badge</i> .
Ang Tsering IV	1915	36: KK (French). 47: Garh (Roch). 49: Pyramid Pk. 50: Nepal (Madgavkar).	In 1949 employed as Post Runner only.
Champa Lama	1913	34: Tibet (Bell). 35: Sik (Twynam).	Left Darjeeling 1937, returned 1949. Excellent cook and sirdar, inexperienced climber.
Chettan	..	22: Ev. 24: Ev. 26: Kumaon (Rutt- ledge). 27: Garh (Ruttledge). 29: Kanch. 30: Kanch.	In his time one of the most famous of the Tigers. Killed in ava- lanche on Kanch.
Chong Karma	..	36: KK (French). 37: N.P.	Killed in ava- lanche on Nanga Parbat.
Chung Tsering Chung Chung	.. 1900	36: KK (French). 33: Ev. 36: Ev.	? Now cook in Alu- bari monastery.
Chumbi	..	36: KK (French).	?
Dakschi	..	33: Ev. 34: N.P.	Died on Nanga Parbat.
Da Namgyal	1895	29: Kanch. 30: Kanch.	Died 1938.
Da Namgyal II	1925	49: Nepal (Tilman). 50: Nepal (Til- man).	New man, no re- ports received so far.
Da Nurbu	1925	50: Nepal (Madgav- kar).	New man.
Da Tenzing Dawa Thondup	.. 1907	36: KK (French). 33: Ev. 34: N.P. 35:	Died 1939. Though rather old

<i>Himalayan Cl. No.</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Date of birth</i>	<i>Expeditions</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
D. 53	Dawa Tsering Bhutia	1916	K.36. 35: Garh (Auden). 36: Ev. 37: Sik (Cook). 38: Masherbrum. 39: K.2. 47: Gangotri (Roch). 50: Annap. 50: Garh (Dittert). 45: Chomo Yummo. 43: Bandarpunch. 36: KK (French).	is still really excellent. He reached the summit of Abi Gamin in 1950. Order of German Red Cross. <i>Tiger's Badge</i> . Died 1946. <i>Him. Journal</i> , 1940, p. 141, states No. 53 received Tiger's Badge, an error: Dawa Tsering <i>Sherpa</i> received it.
D. ..	Dawa Tsering Sherpa	..	33: Ev. 36: Ev. 38: Ev.	Died in 1939. <i>Tiger's Badge</i> .
113	Dhunbir Lepcha	..	36: KK (French).	?
122	Dongri	..	36: Ev.	?
55	Dorji Mistri	..	36: Ev.	Works now as Mistri at Kalimpong.
D. 14	Dupha	..	21: Ev. 22: Ev.	Died 1935.
D. 91	Genden Umdu	1909	36: KK (French). 39: Sik (Grob).	Died in 1943.
.. †	Geyley	..	22: Ev. 34: N.P.	Died on Nanga Parbat 1934.
84	Girmey Chakki Bhutia	..	36: Ev.	Too old now.
59	Gna Temba	..	36: Ev.	Gone to Sola Khumbu.
118 †	Gombu	..	36: Ev. 39: Garh (Roch).	Killed in avalanche on Chaukamba 1939.
56	Gyalgen I Khumjung	..	36: Ev.	Gone to Sola Khumbu.
57*	Gyalgen II Mikchen	1915	36: Ev. 38: Ev. 39: KK (Shipton). 46: Nun Kun. 49: Pyramid Pk. 50: Nepal (Tilman).	Excellent sirdar. Highly praised.
58 †	Gyalgen III Monjo	..	36: Ev. 37: N.P.	Killed in avalanche on Nanga Parbat 1937.
115	Gyalgen IV	..	?	Now doing business at Darjeeling.
125	Gyalgen V (Bhutia)	..	36: Ev.	Working in Sikkim.

145	Gyalgen VI	1918	38: Ev.	Gone to Yarkand.
..	Gyalgen VII	1931	49: Pyramid Pk. 49: Panch Chuli. 50: Garh (Ch-Thomas).	Very young. Promising.
..†	Gyalgen VIII	1930	50: Nepal (Madgavkar).	New man.
D. 142	Hawang Sherpa	1909	37: Sik (Hunt).	Died 1941.
D. 111	Hishey Bhutia	..	37: KK (Hunt).	Died 1941.
159†	Ila Namgyal	1923	45: Sik (Tilley).	Not much experience.
18	Ila Kitar	..	29: Kanch. 30: Kanch. 31: Kanch. 33: Ev. 35: Ev. 36: Ev.	Now at Sola Khumbu.
D. 85	Ila Tenzing	1916	36: Ev.	Died, date uncertain.
D. 97	Injung Bhutia	1911	36: KK (French).	Died, date uncertain.
D. 22	Jayung Nakpa	1904	29: Kanch. 36: Ev.	Died 1941.
23†	Jigmi	..	29: Kanch. 30: Kanch. 31: Kanch. 33: Ev. 34: N.P. 35: Ev. 35: Kabru. 36: Ev. 37: N.P.	Killed in avalanche on Nanga Parbat 1937.
52†	Jigmay Tsering	1911	34: N.P. 36: KK (French).	Ten years as cook at Bellevue Hotel, now available again.
117†	Karmi	..	36: Ev. 37: N.P.	Killed in avalanche on Nanga Parbat 1937.
156†	Karsang	1928	49: Pyramid Pk. 50: Nepal.	New man.
83	Kijaipa	..	36: Ev.	?
63	Kirken	..	36: Ev.	Gone to Sola Khumbu.
35†	Kitar	1905	24: Ev. 31: Kamet. 32: Kumaon (Ruttledge). 33: Ev. 34: N.P. 35: Kabru. 36: Gurla M. (Tichy). 36: Nanda Devi.	Died on Nanda Devi in 1936.
120	Kitar II	..	36: Ev.	?
D. 9	Kusang Namgay	..	33: Ev. 34: Nanda Devi. 36: Ev. 38: Ev.	Died at Sola Kumbu 1950. <i>Tiger's Badge.</i>
20†	Kusang Siter	1906	31: Kamet. 33: Ev. 34: N.P. 35: Ev.	Drowned on returning from Everest 1935.
126	Kusang Temba	..	36: Ev.	Gone to Sola Khumbu.
34	Lhakpa Chedi	1903	24: Ev. 33: Ev.	Now in Calcutta.

<i>Himalayan Cl. No.</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Date of Birth</i>	<i>Expeditions</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
30	Lhakpa Tenzing	1915	33: Ev. 35: Kabru. 36: KK (French). 37: Shaksgam. 38: Ev.	Gone to Yarkand. <i>Tiger's Badge.</i>
D. 46†	Lewa	1902	33: Ev. 34: N.P. 31: Kamet. 35-37: Tibet (Kaulback). 38: Kaulback.	Died in 1948. <i>Tiger's Badge.</i>
64	Lobsang Sherpa	1903	29: Kanch. 33: Ev. 34: N.P.	?
D. 144	Lobsang Sherpa II	1909	38: Ev.	Died 1945. <i>Tiger's Badge.</i>
D. 21	Lobsang Tenzing	1904	33: Ev. 34: N.P.	Died 1935.
132	Manbahadur Sherpa	1901	36: Sik (Bauer). 37: N.P. 38: Tibet (Shepherd).	Works with P.W.D., Gangtok.
D. 96	Mapchi Topgay	1906	36: KK (French). 37: Kolahoi.	Died, date uncertain.
128	Mingma	..	36: Ev.	?
69	Mingma Gyalgen	1915	36: Ev.	Now at Sola Khumbu.
112	Mingma Kaprak	..	36: KK (French).	?
D. 87	Mingma Neithen	1903	36: KK (French).	Died, date unknown.
D. 31	Mingma Thu Thu ('Alice')	1900	22: Ev. 24: Ev. 31: Kanch. 32: Sik (Osmaston). 39: Kumaon. 47: Rakaposhi.	Disappeared on the return journey from Srinagar to Darjeeling.
68‡	Mingma Tsering	..	36: Ev. 37: N.P.	Died in the avalanche on Nanga Parbat 1937.
D. 62	Namgyal	..	33: Ev. 34: N.P. 35: Ev. 36: Ev.	Died 1938.
D. 5	Narsang ('Policy')	1891	22: Ev. 24: Ev. 29: Kanch. 30: Kanch. 31: Kanch. 32: Sik (Osmaston). 33: Ev. 36: Ev.	Died 1942.
D. ..	Nima	1914	33: Ev. 34: N.P. 39: Garh (Roch).	Died, date unknown.
D.	Nima Dorje I	1903	24: Ev. 29: Kanch. 30: Kanch. 31: Kamet. 32: Nanda Devi. 33: Ev. 33: Sik (Gourley). 34: N.P. 34: Sik (Auden). 35: Tibet (Kaulb).	Died on the way back from Gyansste in 1938.

.. ‡	Nima Dorje II	..	33: Ev. 34: N.P.	Died on Nanga Parbat.
.. ‡	Nima Nurbu	..	33: Ev. 34: N.P.	Died on Nanga Parbat 1934.
65	Nima Sherpa	1909	31: Kamet, 33: Ev. 34: N.P.	?
D. ..	Nima Sherpa II	1912	38: N.P.	Died 1942.
.. ‡	Nima Tashi	..	29: Kanch. 33: Ev. 34: N.P.	Died on Nanga Parbat 1934.
149†	Nima Tenzing	1921	49: Pyramid Pk. 50: Garh (Tichy).	Reliable sirdar.
D. 67	Nima Thondup	1894	21: Ev. 22: Ev. 24: Ev. 29: Kanch. 30: Kanch. 31: Kanch. 33: Ev. 34: N.P. 35: Tibet (Kaulb).	Died in 1949.
17‡	Nima Tsering I	1908	33: Ev. 35: Ev. 36: KK (French). 37: N.P.	Killed in avalanche on Nanga Parbat 1937.
110‡	Nima Tsering II	..	36: KK (French). 37: N.P.	Killed in avalanche on Nanga Parbat 1937.
D. 129	Nima Tsering III	1907	36: Nanda Devi. 37: Sik (Grob). 38: Masherbrum.	Died in 1939.
70‡	Nukku	1910	36: Ev. 37: Shaksgam. 38: Ev. 39: Assam (Tilman).	Died of malaria in Bhutan in 1939.
D. 27	Nullu	1894	24: Ev. 31: Kamet. 34: N.P. 36: KK (French).	Died at Sola Khumbu in 1938.
D. 71	Nutbu Bhutia	..	36: Ev. 37: Garh (Smythe). 38: Ev.	Died 1941.
124	Nurbu II	..	36: Ev.	Now in Kurseong.
D. ..	Nurbu Sonam	1912	33: Ev. 34: N.P.	Died in 1935.
..	Nuri	1917	36: Ev. 39: Garh (Roch).	?
..	Nuri Sikkimi	..	44: Trisul (Good-fellow).	?
81	Oocheri	..	36: Ev.	Now at Sola Khumbu.
121	Ongyal	..	36: Ev.	?
D. 7	Pasang Anju	1910	29: Kanch. 30: Kanch. 31: Kanch. 32: Sik (Osmaston). 33: Ev. 33: Sik (Gourley). 34: Sik (Auden). 35: Garh (Auden).	Died in 1936.
D. 86	Pasang Chikadi	1903	36: KK (French). 37: Kolahoi. 38: N.P.	Died May 1950.
.. ‡	Pasang	..	31: Kanch.	Killed on Kanch. 1931.

<i>Himalayan Cl. No.</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Date of birth</i>	<i>Expeditions</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
D. 39	Pasang Bhutia	..	33: Ev. 34: Nanda Devi. 35: Ev. 36: Ev. 38: Ev.	Died in 1948.
..	Pasang Dawa	1925	50: Nepal (Tilman).	New man.
139*	Pasang Dawa Lama (or Pasang Sherpa)	1911	38: Masherbrum. 37: Chomolhari. 39: K.2. 37: Sik (Cook). 49: Pyramid Pk. 50: Garh (Snelsen). 44: Nanda Ghunti.	Reached 24,450 feet on K.2. Able organizer and very good climber. <i>Tiger's Badge.</i>
D. 28*	Pasang Dorji	1894	31: Kanch. 33: Ev. 34: N.P.	Died 1947.
11	Pasang Gaken	1908	30: Kanch.	Too old now.
8‡	Pasang Kikuli	1911	29: Kanch. 30: Kanch. 31: Kanch. 33: Ev. 34: N.P. 36: Nanda Devi. 38: K.2. 39: K.2.	Excellent reports throughout. Died on K.2. in 1939. <i>Tiger's Badge.</i>
..‡	Pasang Kitar	..	39: K.2.	Killed on K.2. 1939.
2	Pasang Lama	1892	24: Ev. 34: N. P.	Too old now.
29‡	Pasang Nurbu (Picture)	1907	29: Kanch. 31: Kanch. 34: N.P. 36: Ev. 37: N.P.	Killed in avalanche on Nanga Parbat 1937.
79	Pasang Phuttar	1910	29: Kanch. 33: Ev. 35: Sik (Stoddart). 35: Kabru. 36: Nanda Devi. 38: Masherbrum.	No longer fit. Lost 7 fingers on Masherbrum, now has heart trouble.
D. 127	Pasang Sherpa	..	36: Ev. 38: Gangotri (Austr).	Died, date unknown.
D. 78	Pasang Tsering (Okaraya)	1906	29: Kanch. 30: Kanch. 33: Ev. 34: N.P.	Died in 1936.
98†	Pasang Urgen	1908	36: KK (French). 38: Gangotri (Austr). 47: Garh (Roch).	Now working as rickshaw coolie.
54	Palden	1903	33: Ev. 34: N.P. 35: K.36. 36: Sik (Heim).	Now working at Kurseong. <i>Tiger's Badge.</i>
D. 146	Pemba Bhutia	1910	38: N.P.	Died, date unknown.
D. 147	Pemba Kitar (Sherpa)	1915	38: K.2.	Died in 1946.
150†	Pemba Nurbu	..	38: Gangotri (Austr). 38: Garh (White). 49: Nepal (Tilman).	Quite satisfactory.
D. 90	Pemba Sherpa	..	26: KK (French).	Died, date unknown.
72	Pemba Sundar	..	36: Ev.	Gone to Sola Khumbu.

158	Penuri	1928	47: Garh (Roch). 49: Pyramid Pk. 49: Panch Chuli (Thomas). 50: Garh (Dittert).	Strong, reliable, and slowly gain- ing experience.
45	Phurba Tashi	..	36: Ev.	Business at Lhasa.
D. 66	Phurba Tenzing	..	33: Ev. 35: Ev. 36: Ev. 38: Ev.	Died during the war.
131	Phur Temba	..	36: Ev.	Gone to Sola Khumbu.
155†	Phu Tharkey	1922	45: Pauhunri. 47: Rakap. 49: Nepal (Tilman). 50: An- nap.	Very satisfactory.
..‡	Pintso Nurbu	..	33: Ev. 34: N.P.	Killed on Nanga Parbat 1937.
141‡	Pintso Sherpa	1913	38: K.2. 39: K.2.	Killed on K.2 1939.
D. 32	Ringsing Bhutia	..	33: Ev. 35: Ev. 36: Ev. 36: Garh (Os- maston). 38: Ev.	Died in 1947. <i>Tiger's Badge.</i>
119	Rinsing II	..	36: Ev.	?
D. 74	Samden	..	36: Ev.	Died in Simla 1948.
93	Samdup	..	36: KK (French).	Gone to Tibet.
D. 77	San Dorji	..	35: Ev.	Died, Sola Khum- bu, 1945.
D. 37	Sanglu Sirdar	1885	20: Kanga La (Kellas). 21: Ev. 22: Ev. 24: Ev. 29: Kashmir (Noel). 31: Kanch. 36: KK (French).	Died in 1941.
80	Santu	..	36: Ev.	?
D. 88	Sanu Pasang	1913	36: KK (French).	Died, date un- known.
151*	Sarki	1920	46: Nun Kun. 46: Chomo Yummo (Braham). 50: An- nap. 50: Nepal (Madgavkar).	Reached Camp V on Annapurna. Possibly the most promising of the younger Sher- pas.
82	Sona(m)	1915	36: Ev.	Now Police Dept., Calcutta.
D. 94	Sonam Bhutia	1909	36: KK (French).	Died, date un- known.
143	Sonam Sherpa	..	39: K.2.	Now too frail.
75	Sonam Tenzing	..	35: Ev. 36: Ev. 36: Garh (Osmaston). 37: Shaksgam. 38: Ev (Tilman).	Gone to Sola Khumbu.
D. ..	Sonam Topgay I	1903	34: N.P.	Died in 1935.
102	Sonam Topgay II	..	36: KK (French).	?
106	Sonam Tsering	1917	36: KK (French). 46: Sasir (Roberts).	Left Darjeeling.

<i>Himalayan Cl. No.</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Date of Birth</i>	<i>Expeditions</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
107 D. 47	Tarke Tashi Thondup	.. 1897	36: KK (French). 22: Ev. 24: Ev. 29: Kanch. 30: Kanch. 31: Kanch 33: Tibet (K. Ward). 34: N.P. 35: Tibet (K. Ward).	? Died in 1944.
6	Tehley (Socogem)	1888	27: Gyantse (Gour- ley). 29: Kanch. 32: Chomo Yummo (Spence). 34: Sik.	Too old now.
48*	Tenzing Bhutia	1917	36: Ev. 36: Garh (Os- maston). 38: Ev. 38: Garh (Osmaston). 39: Chitral (Mid- ar?). 46: Sik (Kir- sopp). 47: Ev (Den- man). 47: Gangotri (Roch). 48: Lhasa (Tucci). 49: Nepal (Tilman). 50: Ban- darpunch (Gibson). 50/51: KK. (March).	Technically prob- ably the best of all the Sherpas now working. Is qualified to lead in difficult ter- rain. <i>Tiger's</i> <i>Badge.</i>
108 D. 12	Tenzing (Lhakpa) Tewang	.. ..	36: KK (French). 24: Ev. 29: Kanch. 33: Ev. 34: Ev (Wilson). 35: Ev. 36: Ev.	? Went mad, died 1942.
60	Thundu Bhutia	..	33: Ev. 34: N.P.	Too old now.
154†	Thundu Sherpa	1915	45-50 Many Sikkim tours.	Excellent cook.
95	Thupden	..	36: KK (French).	?
..	Tillye	1918	39: Garh (Roch).	?
..	Tsering	..	39: K.2.	?
D. 50	Tsering Tarke	1908	29: Kanch. 33: Ev. 35: Ev. 36: Ev.	Died in 1936.
38	Tse Tendrup	1909	36: KK (French). 38: K.2. 39: K.2.	Too old now.
109 D. 59	Tsinge Temba Tsong Dumdu	.. ..	36: KK (French). 29: Kanch. 34: Tibet.	? Died in 1936.
D. 148	Tuthin Bhutia	1912	38: N.P.	Died in 1942.
123	Wangdi	..	36: Ev.	?
25	Wangdi Nurbu (Ongdi)	..	29: Kanch. 30: Kanch. 31: Kamet. 33: Ev. 34: N.P. 36: Ev. 37: Garh (Smythe). 38: Ev. 38: Garh (Austr). 39: Assam (Tilman). 47: Gan- gotri (Roch).	No longer avail- able. Broke ankle, Gangotri, 1947. <i>Tiger's</i> <i>Badge.</i>



NOTES ON SOME OF THE HIGH-ALTITUDE PORTERS  
NOW AVAILABLE

The following three have the highest reputation among the sirdars now available:

ANGTHARKAY, aged 41. He gained a high reputation on the Everest Expeditions of 1936 and 1938. Since then he has lost nothing of his mountaineering ability but gained considerably in experience. On many minor expeditions in Sikkim he has acted as a 'guide', in the Swiss sense of the word, finding the route and leading to the top. His great experience enables him to smooth out difficulties with local coolies and make the utmost use of local resources. He is, according to many testimonies, a most pleasant and interesting companion. Angtharkay normally supplies porters and sirdars for the various expeditions.

PASANG DAWA LAMA, or Pasang Dawa Sherpa, aged 39. He reached the summit of Chomolhari with Spencer Chapman in 1937. In 1939 he reached 27,450 feet on K.2, which, if the figures are correct, is the greatest altitude reached by any Sherpa. He has not taken part in any of the big expeditions lately: it is difficult therefore to judge of his present mountaineering ability, though he reached the summit of Chomo Yummo in 1950, together with J. P. Lucas. A word of caution: he is not above trying to get as much money as he can from his employers.

TENZING BHUTIA, or Tenzing Khumjung, aged 33. He is the most accomplished of the three, and speaks English quite well. In the winter of 1949/50 he was employed as a ski-ing instructor with the Indian Army in Kashmir. He is a very good climber, well qualified to act as a 'guide'. His work on Bandarpunch in 1950 was highly praised. As he is the youngest of the three a great future is before him.

Of the other Sherpas DAWA THONDUP, aged 43, should be especially mentioned. In spite of his age he is still first class. He reached the summit of Abi Gamin in 1950. He is very modest—possibly the reason why he has not acted as sirdar up till now.

Among the younger generation of porters Sarki deserves special mention. His work on Nun Kun was highly praised, and he reached Camp V on Annapurna carrying a heavy load. Several others are also gaining a good reputation. The gap caused by the war seems to be slowly filling up again. Much credit for the training of the younger men goes to the Swiss expeditions. It is to be hoped that future expeditions will always employ one or two of the younger

porters (they are normally better at load-carrying) so that they may gain experience.

All the Sherpas and Bhutias of Darjeeling have suffered greatly in the overwhelming landslides of June 1950. Many houses were destroyed, and a great number of them are still living in temporary quarters, or, having found accommodation, are having to pay exorbitant rents.

#### RULES FOR THE EMPLOYMENT OF SHERPA PORTERS

The following rules have no official authority, but they have been prepared in the light of conditions obtaining at present, and the rates given are based on those now prevailing; as such, they are intended to serve merely as a guide to members.

*Rates.* For small expeditions and expeditions working mainly below the snow-line: Sirdar, Rs. 5 per day; Porter, Rs. 3 per day. Half-rates for porters returning unladen during the course of small expeditions. For expeditions of longer duration: Sirdar, Rs. 150 to Rs. 175 per month; Porters, Rs. 100 to Rs. 120 per month.

*Advances.* Rs. 20 to Rs. 25 per month; e.g. for an expedition lasting three months, Rs. 60 to Rs. 75 is the usual advance, which should be paid at least a month beforehand. The amount will not be refunded if the expedition is cancelled within a fortnight of the start. The Hon. Local Secretary in Darjeeling would be prepared to assist leaders of expeditions, but he would require ample notice.

*Food.* For tours in Sikkim porters provide their own food along bungalow routes, but food must be provided for them off the main routes and above the snow-line. It is customary, also, to provide them with cigarettes.

*Equipment.* Must be provided by the employer, especially in the case of mountaineering parties. Some small expeditions have found it cheaper to pay porters a hire charge for supplying their own equipment, which is generally good and mainly acquired from large foreign expeditions. The usual hire charge in this case is Rs. 20 per month, payable to each fully-equipped man.

*Fares.* Third-class railway fares from and to Darjeeling should be paid, plus Rs. 2 per day for food.

It should be noted that members resident in India often complain that foreign expeditions tend to spoil porters by paying enhanced rates, e.g. Rs. 210 per month was paid in 1950 to a sirdar; or by giving them a large 'bakshish' at the end, although this should never be more than 15 per cent. of their wages; or by presenting them with wrist-watches and other such gifts; or by offering them horses to ride during the early marches. The other extreme, however, was recorded when one party expected their porters to carry loads of 70 lb. in addition to their own kit of 10 to 20 lb. Prodigious feats of load-carrying by Sherpa porters have been recorded on occasion, but they are not to be emulated. A porter's normal load should not exceed 50 to 60 lb. and on difficult ground and above the snow-line it should be rather less.

The following revised rates of compensation payable for injury or death to porters were introduced in August 1950 by the Political Officer in Sikkim:

*Undertaking to pay Compensation*

I hereby undertake to pay any porter, sirdar, or other servant hired by me for the purpose of my tour, or to his dependants, or failing that to his nearest living relative, compensation on the under-mentioned scale, in the event of his meeting death or suffering injury while in my employ:

(a) Injury: Partial or whole loss of finger or toe: Rs. 10 per joint or part of a joint lost or damaged, except on the index finger, thumb, or great toe, when the amount shall be doubled.

Partial or total loss of a limb . . . . .	Rs. 150
Loss of sight of both eyes . . . . .	Rs. 500
Loss of sight of one eye . . . . .	Rs. 300

In addition to such compensation a subsistence allowance of Rs. 15 per month will be paid to any porter who is incapacitated from work through accident or frost-bite on an expedition, for a period up to a maximum of twelve months.

(b) Death: Married man . . . . .	Rs. 1,000
Single man . . . . .	Rs. 500
Female porter (whether married or single) . . . . .	Rs. 500

## NOTES

NANGA PARBAT, DECEMBER 1950

THE following account of the tragedy last December has been given by the sole survivor, R. M. W. Marsh.

J. W. Thornley, W. H. Grace, and I decided to attempt a winter reconnaissance of Nanga Parbat when, in October 1950, after we had been out in the field for three weeks, our plans for spending a year in the north Karakoram were unexpectedly shattered. It was our only alternative to returning home. We did not intend to go high; our object was to see what winter temperatures, snow, and avalanche conditions would be like.

Base Camp at 12,500 feet was fully established by 11th November, and on the 12th we occupied Camp I at 14,650 feet. Our four Sherpas were unwilling to sleep above Base Camp and we carried on alone, relaying food and equipment. On the 16th I returned to base with frost-bitten toes. Grace and Thornley were going on for a short way, and we saw them on most days until 1st December, when they were moving up strongly, carrying loads at about 18,000 feet. We saw them stop and pitch a tent, but did not see them again. For the next three days the tent was visible: then there was a heavy storm, and that, too, had disappeared. Two of the Sherpas and I went up after them but we were unable to reach the place where they had last been seen. Later, planes searched the mountain-side without spotting anything. Their food-supplies were sufficient to last until 19th December, and on 26th December we gave up hope and left the mountain.

Thornley and Grace were both extremely determined. Thornley, for instance, marched 165 miles to Nanga Parbat over the Babusarr pass, wearing a pair of gym shoes, in six days, and was in no way fatigued at the end. They were a fine pair of friends and it took an expedition of this sort, where we lived close, in difficult conditions, to bring out fully the great qualities of endurance, patience, and kindness which were so characteristic of them.

I am sure they wish for no better tribute than that when they were last seen they were still going up and still going strong.

R. M. W. MARSH

(In a fuller account of the expedition's doings, which will appear in vol. xvii, Captain Marsh refers with gratitude to the whole-hearted efforts of a party of ground troops sent by the Pakistani Commander at Gilgit, and to persistent searches by aircraft sent from Pakistan.)

## MEMORIES OF A HIMALAYAN PEAK

WE watched them plodding steadily up the long, sharp crest of the ridge, while the wind, that terror from the north-west, tore away the snow in clouds, spreading a veil of sparkling vapour before the tremendous scene.

To me, watching these two tiny dots toiling upwards, it seemed an age since our two porters, Pasang Kikuli and Dawa Thondup, had left us here, to descend to our Camp III—the ice-cave beneath the cornice at the head of the great couloir in the south face, by which we had reached the ridge. Yet during the short space of thirty-six hours we had drunk our fill of unforgettable experience—two of us alone on a great mountain.

What do I remember now, as I think back across the gap of thirteen years to those moments of great living in a distant land?

I remember the stillness and the majesty of the scene, on the evening of our arrival at Camp IV—the little platform of wind-crusted snow beneath an ice-cliff, set in the south face of the mountain, a balcony looking out on a vast arena of Himalayan giants. Kangchenjunga, third highest mountain on the earth's crust, seemed scarcely higher than ourselves, the razor-sharpness of its north ridge blunted and foreshortened to give a deceptive appearance of ease; Simvu, the silver 'rateau' of the Himalaya: Siniolchu, that ethereal ice-needle which has no counterpart in the world of mountains: Chomolhari, a solid ogre, yellowed by distance in his brown fastness of Tibet. These, and a host of satellites.

Incredibly far below, the great ice-stream of the Zemu twisted towards the mist-filled glens of Sikkim.

I remember the wind, that mighty intangible force of the Himalayan winter, as it buffeted and roared against the ridge later that November night, furious in its impotence to burst through the bastion of rock and ice which protected our frail fabric shelter.

I remember it again next morning, as I balanced in ice-steps on the sheltered side of the ridge, and vainly tried my strength against it, in order to gain a footing on the crest.

I remember it later that day when, clinging for dear life with axe and crampons to the hard snow, I crouched upon the south-west summit of Nepal peak, and prayed that it would not tear me bodily away and deposit my remains on the Nepal Gap glacier, many thousands of feet below. As I remained thus I watched with wonder a bird, a l ammergeier, supremely master of this same wind, as he, with steady wings, circled the summit below me, at over 23,000 feet.

I remember pausing on an immense white slope sweeping upwards to the summit ridge, gasping as the wind snatched away my laboured breath, to gaze first to the trinity of the Everest peaks in the west, then to the snow at my feet. Here some old, wind-raised footprints ceased, not far below a point where a great horizontal line of cleavage divided the slope—the breaking-point of a windslab avalanche. There it was, then, that a few weeks earlier a German party had stopped and turned back, defeated in their attempt on the summit by this impending avalanche. The snow was now safe, and as I gazed upwards towards the still distant summit ridge, blinding white against the deep blue of the sky, I realized with full conviction that it would be given to me to succeed where they had failed.

But I remember most, and shall ever evoke, that sense of peace, transcending human care and the violence of the wind, which reigns in those lonely places. A peace whose element is Beauty, raising the spirit of man above his baser self towards the Eternal.

JOHN HUNT

## REVIEWS

THIS IS MY VOYAGE. By TOM LONGSTAFF. London: John Murray.  
324 pages; 23 illustrations, 15 maps. 21s.

Before the foreword the author quotes from the *Hymn to Artemis*, by Callemachus of Cyrene, the prayer of Artemis to Zeus for an inheritance: 'Give me for mine own all mountain lands . . . the high places shall be my home.' The foreword itself begins: "'Voyaging is Victory" said the Arabs.' These two motifs dominate the book, for in the course of a voyage which is by no means completed Dr. Longstaff has grasped a goodly part of the inheritance for which Artemis prayed and has carried out many victorious explorations, especially in High Asia.

Doctor Longstaff has wisely arranged his fascinating story in topographical rather than chronological order, from the Alps to the Caucasus and—in 1905—to the Central Himalaya. There he and his two Swiss guides, the brothers Brocherel, were the first human beings to look into the inner sanctuary of Nanda Devi. In 1907 he was chosen to join the first reconnaissance of Everest, which was intended to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the Alpine Club. All arrangements were well in hand and the auspices favourable when 'the Olympian Lord Morley put down an illiberal foot', apparently not wishing to awake suspicion in the, then Imperial, Russian Bear. So the author hurried west to Garhwal and tackled Trisul, second only to Nanda Devi in that group. Rush tactics, involving an ascent of 6,000 feet in one day, with Alexis Brocherel leading for ten hours, were crowned with success and established, though it was not claimed as such, an altitude record of 23,360 feet.

Doctor Longstaff turns back the clock to 1905 to tell of a thousand-mile walk across the Himalaya which included exploration of the vast mass of Gurla Mandhata, 23,340 feet, just south of Lake Mansarowar. Here he and the Brocherels together created another record by avalanching down 3,000 feet in a couple of minutes: miraculously the only damage done consisted of a few cuts and bruises, two broken crampons, and lost hats and ice-axes.

In a short chapter on the 1922 Everest Expedition, where he was doctor and naturalist, he describes the mountain as forbidding—'the brutal mass of the all-in wrestler, murderous and threatening'.

Harking back to 1909 again he tells the story of his great exploration in the Karakoram, when the main axis of the range was found to be miles farther north than the Survey of India had shown so the then kingdom of Kashmir gained 500 square miles from Chinese Turkistan.

During the First World War Dr. Longstaff served with the Gilgit Scouts, and this gift from heaven enabled him to see with his own eyes much of the wild region between the Western Himalaya and the Eastern Hindu Kush.

In the West he found other fields of interest in the Canadian Rockies, Spitzbergen, and Greenland, and his last chapter is a short, vivid survey of the mountains of Britain, concluding with those especially delectable ones in and about Coigach, the extreme north-west corner of Ross-shire—that enchanted land to which he ‘has come back to live’.

The fourteen maps drawn by the author’s wife are clear and easy to follow, and there are many delightful photographs. In fact the only complaint that could be lodged against this book is that there is not enough of it, and it is to be hoped that one of these days Dr. Longstaff’s outstanding success with this volume will impel him to give us a second.

H. W. T.

BERGE DER WELT. 4 Band. 1949. Herausgegeben von der Schweizerischen Stiftung für Alpine Forschungen. Buchverlag Verbandsdruckerei AG Bern.

Every year the Swiss Association for Alpine Research produces a fine volume of the mountain expeditions of Swiss travellers, as well as of other journeys, and the present volume for 1949 is well worthy of its three predecessors.

What, however, makes this particular number of peculiar interest to all wanderers in the Himalayas is the account of Herr Hans Gyr’s visit to the Karakoram in 1947. Many members of the Himalayan Club know Hans Gyr personally, and indeed anyone will find himself anxious to congratulate him both on his achievements and on the admirable account which Herr Gyr has given, after a perusal of the book. In ‘Karakoram 1947’, which occupies the first ninety-five pages of *Berge der Welt*, the writer has given all lovers of the mountains a delightful account.

The production of this work, with its charming photographs, is a model to all. The illustrations alone hold one fast and recall poignantly the days spent amongst these wonderful mountains; and looking at them makes the heart ache as one recalls the happy days which seem to have gone for ever.

It was in the Gilgit area that Hans Gyr did his work. It is true that the party he was with failed to climb Rakaposhi (known locally as Diyomir), but the mountain is far more difficult than is supposed, and, indeed, deceives the casual spectator. It certainly took in the



writer of this review, who went all round it only to find that he was too late to attempt an ascent. The local experts say that the only time to try the climb is the first fortnight in August, as then alone there is no wind, and it is the wind that will defeat anyone who attempts to climb the mountain. Years ago the well-known Swiss guide Lochmatter, when he was travelling with Dr. and Mrs. Visser, declared that the mountain could be climbed. No doubt it can be, but this view was based on a very superficial examination, and the many grave difficulties were overlooked. Diyomir is a sublime peak, and it is one which we hope will retain its virgin summit untrod by man.

The account of the Kukuay glacier is extremely interesting. The glacier is one of the many ice-rivers which fill the valleys of the Western Karakoram, and which have, incidentally, caused so much destruction to cultivation. Little is really known of any of these glaciers. They have been visited, explored, and mapped, but their history remains a mystery. Yet they are of the greatest interest, for they lie in the middle of a settled and inhabited area. No one who has contemplated the havoc made, for instance, by the Bar glacier, can fail to wonder what causes the ebb and flow of these capricious streams of ice. There are many theories but there is as yet no explanation.

Perhaps one criticism may be made of this admirable account. Possibly it is a superfluous criticism. But the inclusion of a general map of the region visited would be of help. The small sketches in the text, as well as the full-page diagram, for it cannot be called a map (i.e. the one on p. 9), are inadequate.

The thanks of all who love mountains, and those especially who treasure memories of the Karakoram and value the secrets of that strange ice-world, will thank Herr Hans Gyr for an admirable account and congratulate him on his exploits. May he again visit those wonderful peaks, and attain his heart's desire.

R. C. F. S.

SCHOLAR MOUNTAINEERS. By WILFRID NOYCE. *London: Dennis Dobson Ltd.* 1950. 8vo. 164 pages and 12 plates. Price 12s. 6d. net.

It needs a skilful hand, discerning judgement, and good taste to make an attractive and readable book out of a well-worn subject, but that is what Mr. Wilfrid Noyce has done in his *Scholar Mountaineers*. There have been many learned disquisitions on the battle of ideologies and the eventual victory of romanticism over classicism in the evolution of mountain feeling, but this book is constructed on very different lines.

It is a short sequence of pen-pictures of real live men whose song, like an orpheic chorus, gradually builds the edifice of mountain fascination. There is Dante, with his very creditable vertical-distance performance; Petrarch, on Mont Ventoux; Rousseau, with his sentimental inconsistencies; de Saussure, the scientist with the pen of a poet; Goethe, the self-centred romantic; the Wordsworths, Keats, Ruskin, and Leslie Stephen; Nietzsche, the prophet of North faces, Pius XI, and Captain Scott. In a book on scholar mountaineers I should have liked to see a chapter devoted to one of the most important of them all, Allbrecht von Haller, the 'Pliny' of Switzerland, veritable citadel of scholarship, administrator, statesman, educationalist, bibliographer, great anatomist, encyclopaedic botanist, and founder of modern physiology. Haller loved the mountains and there were few years when he did not go to the Alps, the Jura, the Hartz, or the Black Forest, to collect their flowers or study their topography. And, if Keats is included among scholar mountaineers, I should also have liked to see Senancour. But these are matters of opinion. As regards matters of fact, de Saussure's ascent of Mont Blanc was the third, his sojourn on the Col du Geant took place in 1788; the famous description of Leslie Stephen should run 'fleetest of foot of the whole Alpine brotherhood'; trivia which detract little from the welcome due to this enjoyable book.

G. R. DE BEER

CLIMBER'S TESTAMENT. By KENNETH RICHARDS. *London: Alvin Richards Ltd.* 246 pages; 36 illustrations. Price 12s. 6d.

The title of this book is an apt one, because Mr. Richards delves with a great measure of success into the minds of mountaineers in order to find out what climbing means to them and what mountains hold for them. He does not go outside Great Britain and he addresses 'those thousands who have only scaled the Matterhorn in their dreams and never in actuality reached the snow-line' and 'any of us who have felt the call of the high places, and answered it, fair weather or foul'.

He deals in a chapter headed 'Sport or Religion' with that recurring question—why do we climb? And though the answers are many and diverse he weaves them into a distinct pattern. 'The Personality of Mountains', which follows in logical sequence, will appeal to most of us. To another much-debated question—when is a mountain not a mountain?—he finds it hard to give a definite reply, and he observes that on no other problem are mountaineers so hotly divided as that of 'Solitary Climbing, Virtue or Vice?', and discusses the pros and cons, the whens, wheres, and hows, with illuminating

examples. He quotes from Whympers: 'Remember that courage and strength are nought without prudence', capping this himself with: 'He has not only his own safety to consider but the feelings of others.'

The chapter titled 'Fauna and Folks' explains itself, and the last sentence surely applies to mountain-dwellers the world over, from the Rockies to the Kuen Lun—'quiet folk, not greatly given to speech, but they are the salt of the earth'.

The concluding chapter, on 'Weather', begins: 'It had to be. A book on climbing without it would be like bread without yeast.' In a final 'Codicil' the author says that *Climber's Testament* is written in the firm conviction that the mountain trail is a way to a good life, and that it can be followed in Great Britain as profitably as anywhere else.

In a supplementary section he then outlines the possibilities open to climbers in this country, taking a quick look in turn at Wales, the Lake District, and of course Scotland, from Galloway and the Cheviots to Skye and the Cuellins. Although cursory it does constitute an inventory, showing how very considerable is the extent of our mountain heritage. Kenneth Richards has given us a valuable contribution to mountaineering literature.

H. W. T.

THE BREAKING STRAIN. A novel by HUGH MERRICK. *London: Constable, 1950. 10s.*

When I was handed this book to review and glanced at the publisher's note on the inside of the dust-cover, my immediate reaction was hardly favourable, for I read: 'Ronald allows his infatuation for Cynthia to cloud mountaineering judgement. He ignores the local guide's advice to wait for better weather and the climb begins. Jealous of Michael and therefore desperately anxious to impress Cynthia with his skill and daring as a leader, Ronald is guilty of a series of minor errors . . .' Getting down to rock-bottom, that was indeed the stark reality beneath the gripping and authentic exterior of the story that I finally read with eagerness, after a preliminary dawdling over the first pages occasioned by the discouraging blandishments of the publisher.

Somehow I cannot imagine many of my climbing acquaintances—even those in their teens—allowing a pretty face to distract them on a climb to the extent that Ronald Seacombe did. However, the novelist must be allowed his plot, and it must be admitted that he handles a somewhat improbable situation amazingly well. Once the reader has reconciled himself to the eternal triangle being applied to a rigorous ascent in the Swiss Alps he may enjoy Hugh Merrick's

intimate delvings into the working of the minds of those taking part. A particularly fascinating series of short chapters records the last thoughts before sleep of the occupants of the Helmjoch hut, refuge of the Swiss Alpine Club, 10,000 feet high on the slopes of the mighty, fictitious Helmspitze. These examinations of conscience continue at intervals during the following day's belated climb, and though intensely interesting psychologically they tend to give the reader the impression—quite false in reality—that a lot of time is being wasted, and he finds himself thinking, 'Oh, hurry up, do! Don't just stand there, *thinking*.'

F. B. L.

## NOTES AND NEWS

THE Austrian Alpine Club, which came to new life about two years ago, has its headquarters in the Gilmstrasse at Innsbruck and is always ready to help members of the Himalayan Club, with which it also exchanges *Journals*.

It may be useful to members either on leave or permanently living in the United Kingdom to know that Austria is an inexpensive country for those who want to go to the mountains, whether to climb, walk, or ski. The exchange is favourable and, especially in the smaller and less fashionable places, the cost of living is low. If visitors are prepared to forgo some degree of luxury and to do without ski-lifts and cable-cars, a stay, even with the present sterling allowance, can be prolonged quite reasonably. Without wishing to advertise, there are Krimml in the Pinz gau of Salzburg, the Zillertal—with Mayrhofen and Zell am Ziller, the Oetztal, and the Bludenz area. Our President and also the Editor were at the first named at different seasons recently.

The Deutsche Alpenverein has also been re-established, with its headquarters at Nuremberg. It exchanges *Journals* and reciprocates gladly.

Another item which may be of interest is the existence at Biella, in Italy, of the library of photographs of the late Vittorio Sella, who specialized in the Himalaya and Karakoram. The pictures are quite unsurpassed and are not expensive.

## IN MEMORIAM

W. W. M. YEATTS, C.S.I., C.I.E.

OUR late President, William Walter Murray Yeatts, died at Edinburgh on 4th August last year at the age of 55.

Educated in Edinburgh, he took his degree there, and shortly afterwards, in 1914, joined the Royal Artillery and served with them in France and Flanders. When the war ended he joined the Civil Service in Madras, and from 1932 to 1946 he held various appointments in the Government of India, the last being that of Census Commissioner.

Owing to the war the Himalayan Club was, of course, somewhat dormant during his tenure, and Yeatts had little scope for his many talents and active tastes. Comparatively few members had the good fortune to meet him; he was also rather reserved, which is to be regretted, for he was a fine all-round sportsman and a keen naturalist. In a letter to *The Times* one of his more intimate friends wrote of his 'innumerable unrecorded acts of kindness, wisdom, and generosity. If the world somewhat misjudged his aloofness, children—and animals too—were never deceived: they adored him.'

He was decorated with the C.I.E. in 1938 and became a C.S.I. in 1946.

H. W. T.

B. E. M. GURDON, C.I.E.

Bertrand Evelyn Mellish Gurdon was of the vintage of Bruce, Manners-Smith, and Younghusband, the makers of the old North-West Frontier of India and the Keeper of the Marches. He came to his career by inheritance on both sides, for his father was a general in the old Indian Staff Corps and his mother a daughter of General Sandeman, so celebrated in early Frontier history.

From Haileybury and Sandhurst he joined the Indian Army and was soon transferred to the Foreign and Political Department for frontier duty. He served through the siege of Chitral in 1895, when he was mentioned in dispatches and was awarded the D.S.O. In 1900 he was given the C.I.E., and in 1903 he was appointed Political Agent in Gilgit, where, as at Fort Gupis, the writer of this notice heard his name on the lips of every chief and notable fifteen years later. He was given the very responsible post of the Khyber in 1908. Next he was transferred to Rajputana and was promoted Lieutenant-Colonel in 1912. Finally he was appointed Resident to the Phulkian States from 1913 to 1916.

His great influence with the tribes was due to a combination of his fighting record and the courtesy of his manners, the latter a quality even more essential in dealing with Orientals than with Europeans. Despite his high reputation he never tried to push himself forward nor sought honours; indeed, being quite certain of himself and of his own standing, he seemed to be rather of a retiring and modest disposition.

He was elected to the Alpine Club in 1917 on his record of travel and exploration in the least-known parts of the Frontier ranges. He prized his membership and in later years, when reasons of health prevented him from coming up to town from his home in Sussex, he wrote to me several times expressing his regret that he was unable to attend our meetings: I believe ours was the only club membership which he kept up to the end of his life. He can hardly have been known to the present generation, but in Gurdon we have lost an historic figure who was an ornament to the club as well as a most charming and entertaining companion.

T. G. LONGSTAFF (*By courtesy of the Alpine Club*)

Colonel Gurdon, who died at his home in Crowborough on 6th October 1949 at the age of 82, was one of the last—if not the very last—of the gallant company who took part in the defence of Chitral in 1895: a company whose exploits brought peace for over half a century to a part of the Indian Frontier whose previous history was a monotonous tale of murder and perfidy—the murder of brother by brother, of son by father.

At that time Gurdon was a young officer of the Political Department of India and, both as a political officer and as a soldier, during the bitter fighting in the defence of Chitral he displayed those qualities of dauntless courage, tenacity of purpose, sang-froid, temperate and thoughtful judgement which with his courteous manner, placid voice, and kindly smile characterized him throughout his distinguished career and made him the ideal Political Officer. For his military services in the field in the defence of Chitral he was awarded the D.S.O. (1895) and mentioned in dispatches; his political services were subsequently recognized by the award of the C.I.E. (1900). Gurdon remained in Chitral after the pacification of the country as Assistant Political Officer until the autumn of 1902 when, following a period of leave, he became Political Agent in Gilgit. He left there in 1906 and thereafter held important political posts in Peshawar, Patiala, and Rajputana, until failing health—a legacy from the Chitral campaign—obliged him to retire from the Service at a time when the highest appointments in the Political Department of the Government of India were open to him.

Gurdon was the most lovable of chiefs, the most steadfast of friends; all who served with him or under him gained from their association with him an enrichment of spirit and a sense of selfless service which time did not dull nor distance impair; he was a gentleman in whom they built an absolute trust.

ROBERT McCARRISON

J. W. THORNLEY, W. H. CRACE

A brief note earlier in the *Journal* tells of their tragic death while the three of us were making a winter reconnaissance of Nanga Parbat. We were the closest of friends, and as they died together perhaps it is fitting to write an appreciation under a joint heading.

A boyhood spent tramping the lonely Norfolk marshes was the seed from which Bill Crace's enjoyment of the open air grew into a deep love for mountains. He was educated at Oundle, and in 1944 left to join the 3rd/8th Gurkha Rifles. In Kashmir he was introduced to his first mountain, Kolahoi; and a little later, when he met Jim Thornley, the two of them spent their spare time climbing the hills near Quetta.

Jim had been an outstanding schoolboy both at work and games. He too joined the Army and was eventually posted to the 3rd/8th Gurkhas, where he became Adjutant. On leave in the Zemu valley he climbed alone above 22,500 feet, searching for a man who had been lost some months before.

In 1947 the three of us made an attempt on Kabru. At 20,000 feet our head Sherpa fell 70 feet into a crevasse. Jim at once climbed down after him, and Bill then spent several days alone there with the injured Sherpa, while we went down for help.

In July 1950 we again sailed for India with plans for spending a year surveying and climbing in the Karakoram. After we had been in the field three weeks the Pakistan Government withdrew the permission they had given us. Rather than return to England at once with everything lost we decided to make a recce of Nanga Parbat, and it was on this mountain that they lost their lives.

Bill's kindness, fine courage, and easy-going temperament made him an ideal travelling companion. He would happily have spent his life in exploration, and there can be few people more suited both in disposition and physique for such a career.

In Wales, Switzerland, or the Himalayas Jim was always in his element; he was ever the leader, no matter who was in the party, and he would gain that position by a combination of competence



tremendous powers of endurance, and an extraordinary strength of character.

They were very fine friends and it is indeed tragic that their lives, which were so full of promise, should have ended while both were in their middle twenties; but I am sure that the manner of their death they would not have changed.

R. M. W. MARSH

## CLUB PROCEEDINGS

THE Twenty-second Annual General Meeting of the Himalayan Club was held at Artistry House, Park Street, Calcutta, on Tuesday, 10th October 1950. The President of the Club, Mr. C. E. J. Crawford, took the chair.

The Minutes of the Twenty-first Annual General Meeting held in Calcutta on 11th October 1949 were confirmed. The Annual Report and Audited Accounts for the year ended 31st December 1949, copies of which had been duly circulated by post to all members, were confirmed and approved. Messrs. Price, Waterhouse, Peat & Co. were reappointed Auditors for the year ending 31st December 1950. The Officers, Elective Members of Committee, and Additional Members of the Balloting Committee were duly elected as follows:

### OFFICERS

*President:* C. E. J. Crawford, Esq.

*Vice-Presidents:* Dr. J. B. Auden.

Lt.-Col. H. W. Tobin.

*Honorary Treasurer:* C. I. Turcan, Esq.

*Honorary Secretary:* T. H. Braham, Esq.

*Honorary Local Secretaries:*

Delhi: Major R. E. Hotz.

Darjeeling: L. Krenek, Esq.

Bombay: A. R. Leyden, Esq.

Kulu: Major H. M. Banon.

Dehra Dun: J. A. K. Martyn, Esq.

United Kingdom: Lt.-Col. H. W. Tobin.

*Honorary Editor:* Lt.-Col. H. W. Tobin.

*Elective Members of Committee:*

W. A. Brown, Esq.

S. E. Golledge, Esq.

Major R. E. Hotz.

J. Latimer, Esq.

W. E. Murphy, Esq.

A. V. K. Murray, Esq.

V. S. Riscoe, Esq.

Dr. T. A. Schinzel.

F. H. V. Scrimgeour, Esq.

R. A. S. Thomas, Esq.

*Additional Members of Balloting Committee:*

L. Arculus, Esq.

Capt. W. B. Bakewell.

Dr. K. Biswas.

A. R. Colley, Esq.

A. J. Dash, Esq.

J. T. M. Gibson, Esq.

M. J. Hackney, Esq.

Dr. S. C. Law.

J. O. Sims, Esq.

T. D. Welby, Esq.

*Other Appointments:*

*Honorary Librarian:* V. S. Risoe, Esq.

*Honorary Equipment Officer:* A. V. K. Murray, Esq.

**Membership.** Fifty-seven new members were elected during 1950 and it is reassuring to find an increase in the number of candidates for election. There were 19 deaths, 10 resignations, and 114 members were struck off for non-payment of subscriptions, of whom 10 members were reinstated. The membership now stands at 512.

**Mountaineering in 1950.** There has been a remarkable increase in Himalayan activity during the year both on the part of small parties organized in India and of larger expeditions from abroad. Details of the more notable achievements will be found at greater length elsewhere in this *Journal*, but special mention is made here of the success of the French Expedition which made a first ascent of Dhaulagiri, 26,504 feet, in Nepal; and of the Norwegian party which made a first ascent of Tirich Mir, 25,237 feet, in Chitral. A British party, led by H. W. Tilman, carried out valuable scientific observations in Nepal and came very close to success in an attempt on Annapurna IV. A Scottish party led by W. H. Murray visited and climbed in comparatively little-known country in the Garhwal-Kumaon area. An Anglo-Swiss party, including Renè Dittert, made a first ascent of Ibi Gamin, 24,130 feet, in Garhwal. Whilst a party of young climbers organized by J. T. M. Gibson made a first ascent of Bandarpunch, 20,720 feet, in Garhwal. There is news that expeditions from France and New Zealand are planned for 1951, which will be a year of somewhat diminished activity.

**Sikkim.** The bursting of a lake east of the Sebu La below Chombu in October 1950 caused widespread damage throughout the Lachung valley and particularly in Lachung village, where several houses were destroyed. Many of the bridges on the main Gangtok-Chungthang road were washed away or destroyed, but the path is now open and repairs are fast being completed. The Club Hut at Mome Samdong was heavily damaged during a storm, and members are advised that it will not be possible to use this hut until repairs have been completed. The Club Hut at Jha Chu, north-west of the Sebu La, is reported to be in good condition at present.

**Section News.** *Delhi.* Major R. E. Hotz took over the Honorary Secretaryship in February 1950 when the new section was formed with a handful of members resident in Delhi. There has since been a remarkable increase in the membership of this section and enthusiasm seems to be on the increase. For this a lot of credit