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## THE TOUR OF KANCHINJINGA.

By DOUGLAS W. FRESHFIELD.

**T**HIS excursion, which had never been previously accomplished by Europeans, was successfully carried out last autumn by Mr. Douglas Freshfield and Mr. E. J. Garwood, and the Signori V. and E. Sella, who were invited by Mr. Freshfield to join his party as guests. D. Maquignaz, of Val Tournanche, and a photographic assistant of Signor V. Sella's were taken out from Europe. In India the services of Mr. Dover, superintendent of roads, Sikkim, and of Rinsin Ningyal, a Bhootanese surveyor, the only educated man who had made the tour of the mountain, were put at Mr. Freshfield's disposal by the local officials, to whom, and particularly to Mr. Earle, deputy commissioner at Darjeeling, and Captain Le Mesurier, political resident in Sikkim, the party are under the greatest obligations. But for the energetic support and assistance of Captain Le Mesurier, who himself went up to Lachen and stayed there ten days, to keep open communications and prevent the coolies from bolting, the tour could hardly have been carried through successfully, while Mr. Earle sent up fresh provisions under a police escort to Jongri to meet the travellers on their return.

Mr. Freshfield sends us the following brief sketch of his route :—

' Leaving Darjeeling on September 5 we rode in four days to Gantok, the capital of Sikkim, where the resident has a charming country house and garden, where we were most hospitably entertained. Thence another four days' ride brought us to Lachen, on the road to the Donkia pass, where our horses were left. The ascent up the almost pathless gorge of the Zemu to the head of the glacier which flows from

the N.E. base of Kanchinjinga took five days with laden coolies, after our pioneers had cut a track through the rhododendron jungle. An unladen messenger can cover the distance in half the time. Here, at a camp at 16,000 ft., the famous storm that did so much harm at Darjeeling overtook us. It snowed quietly for nearly forty hours, leaving a mantle more than three feet deep over everything above 14,000 ft., and necessarily put a stop to any attempt at high ascents.

After two days spent in mapping and photographing we started N., crossing two passes of over 17,000 ft.—the Jongsong La and Thé La—to Llhonak, a very lofty pasture valley which drains to the Turte, but is Tibetan in its physical features and wholly uninhabited. From its head I, with Signor E. Sella, visited the Chorten Niyma Pass (19,000 ft.), leading into Tibet, before we began the long but, under ordinary conditions, easy climb to the Jongsong La (21,500 ft.), which is the only known pass over the ridge that runs N. from Kanchinjinga, separating Sikkim from Nepal. We found that the descent on the W. lies over a great glacier which, after running first S., turns under Kanchinjinga due W., and flows into one of the heads of the Khangba-chen valley, receiving at its lower end a great tributary from Jannu. From the stream of the Llhonak valley to the point where the ice was left in Nepal we spent five days, our two highest camps being about 20,000 ft.

Here we touched Sir Joseph Hooker's track in his explorations in 1848. Owing to the difficulty of penetrating Nepal no traveller had visited this side of Kanchinjinga in the interval. We were fairly well received at Gunza, the first inhabited spot reached after leaving Lachen, a flourishing and most picturesque village, where we met no Nepalese officials capable of giving real trouble. From our next pass we had a superb view over Nepal to the peak designated on English maps as Mount Everest and its neighbours. We regained Sikkim by the Kangla pass, and spent 5 days (October 10–15) at or near Jongri, a high (19,000 ft.) yak pasture on a spur of Kabru. Thence we climbed a Riffelhorn, the height of Mont Blanc, called Kabur, and visited the Guicha La, the pass S.W. of Kanchinjinga, thus practically completing the high-level tour of the group. The "19,000-ft. gap," which would lead from it to the Zemu glacier, looks exceedingly steep and difficult on the S. side.

After the storm the weather was continuously fine, and the photographer had a good time, as the mountains were

generally clear. After our arrival at Jongri it turned very cold, and even in the valleys at 12,000 ft. all the lesser streams were frozen, and the boulders in the main torrent hung with icicles all day.

'We returned to Darjeeling *via* Pemionchie on October 25, after a seven weeks' tour. I will only add here that the scenery of the Sikkim Himalaya far surpassed my wildest anticipations. The scale of mountains, which rise over 27,000 ft. in less than forty miles, is necessarily prodigious, and their variety is extraordinary. The tropical luxuriance of the lower forests is succeeded by abrupt gorges clothed in superb pine, larch, and rhododendron woods. Above these are open pastures of Alpine flowers, and slopes bright with autumn tints and the varied greens of the rhododendrons. And above all soar the great peaks. Bold in form, with fluted sides and ridges built up into snowy crests and cornices, they despise the buttresses that other mountains lean upon. In the Kangbechen valley there are two or three nameless Weissorns which rise in one icy cliff of at least 10,000 ft. from the valley to their summit; and on one side only is the slope of Kanchinjinga gentle enough to allow névé and hanging glaciers to drape it continuously from base to summit.'

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#### TWO PIONEER ASCENSIONS IN BALTISTAN.

By MRS. BULLOCK-WORKMAN, F.R.S.G.S.

OUR trip into Baltistan was one of those journeys upon which one enters not absolutely equipped for high climbing, or expecting to do very much, but which result in as fair an amount being accomplished as can be expected in one short season. We had passed the summer of 1898 marching in Ladakh, Nubra, and Suru, where seventeen or more passes, from 14,000 to 18,000 ft., were traversed and several third-rate mountains climbed; but we bitterly felt the need of a good guide on occasions when we wished to explore an unknown corner or attack a peak of more than average importance.

For the season of 1899, owing to the prompt and kind assistance of the Hon. Secretary of the Alpine Club, this necessity was provided for.

We left Srinagar for Skardu on July 1, the party consisting of W. H. Workman, M.D. the writer of this paper, and Mattia Zurbriggen.

The usual reasons for not crossing the Dessai Plains, the