

also an admirable photograph of the E. face of the Aiguille Méridionale. *La Montagne*, 1928, pp. 88-99.]

KAILAS PARBAT AND TWO PASSES OF THE
KUMAON HIMALAYA.

By R. C. WILSON.

[Mrs. Hugh Rutledge accompanied her husband on these expeditions, all of which were guideless.—*Editor*.]

KAILAS PARBAT.

ACCORDING to the map 'India and Adjacent Countries' Million Sheet No. 63 $\frac{1}{1,000,000}$ Kailas Parbat is 22,028 ft. in altitude. It stands up prominently in a massif of its own projecting S. from the Kailas range of the Himalayas, to which it is joined by the Dolma Pass ridge. The rough plan accompanying this note is an enlargement of the map, the ridges having been put in roughly by eye from a distance for

'scarcely seems difficult enough to justify the fixed rope which hangs there.' But of course everyone descends it on a rope; and the ascent is a question of danger rather than of difficulty. A slip by the leader, as Schulz said when they declined the risk, must be fatal to the whole party. In 1906 Mr. Clapham (*A.J.* 23, 583) found a fixed rope, but in 1907 M. Capdepon found none. Returning the following year, 1908, he found a "solide câble," while in 1909 he remarks on 'la minceur singulière du câble' (or was it a different rope?—C. W.). The last information I find is in M. Capdepon's paper (1910) (p. 344) and may be quoted at length.

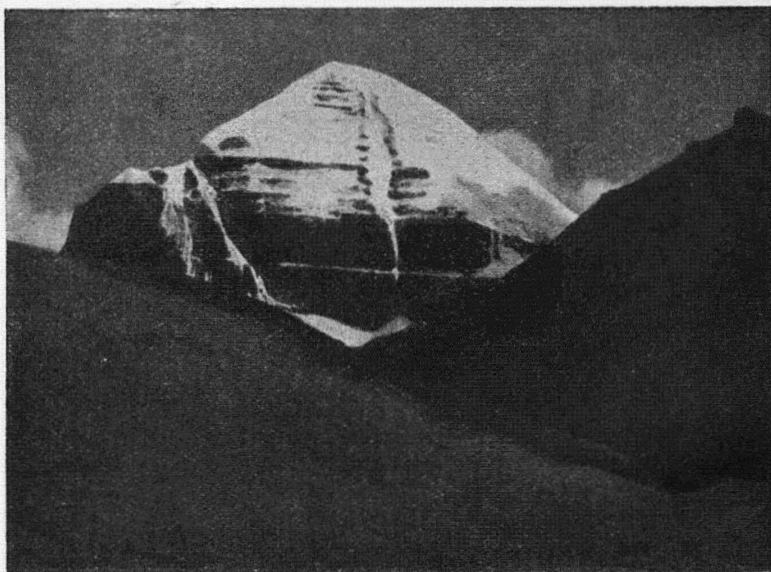
'Aujourd'hui, un gros piquet de bois, planté horizontalement dans le surplomb au-dessus de la dalle, fait une prise de début. Et, depuis deux ans un câble court tout le long du passage. Le câble est une corde d'une bonne grosseur. Il est fixé au sommet par un solide anneau scellé dans le rocher; son extrémité inférieure est libre, mais, pour l'empêcher de flotter, on l'a attachée par une cordelette à un petit anneau fixé au roc. Ce n'est pas la première corde laissée en demeure sur les rochers du Mauvais Pas; mais les précédentes avaient été rapidement enlevées par les guides.'

What may have happened since 1910 I cannot say.—C. W.

In early June 1897 there were, to the best of my recollection, a piton and short rope noose. It will be noticed that in 1899 Miss Bell makes no mention of either.—E. L. S.

the most part. It makes no pretence of accuracy, but it may be accepted that the general size and shape of the massif are as depicted and that the two main ridges running S.W. and S.E. from the summit do run roughly as shown.

As the birthplace of Shiva, the mountain takes a prominent place in Hindu and Bhuddist mythology, and an interesting account of it may be found in Sherring's 'Western Tibet and the British Borderland' (1906. *Arnold*, Chap. 14).

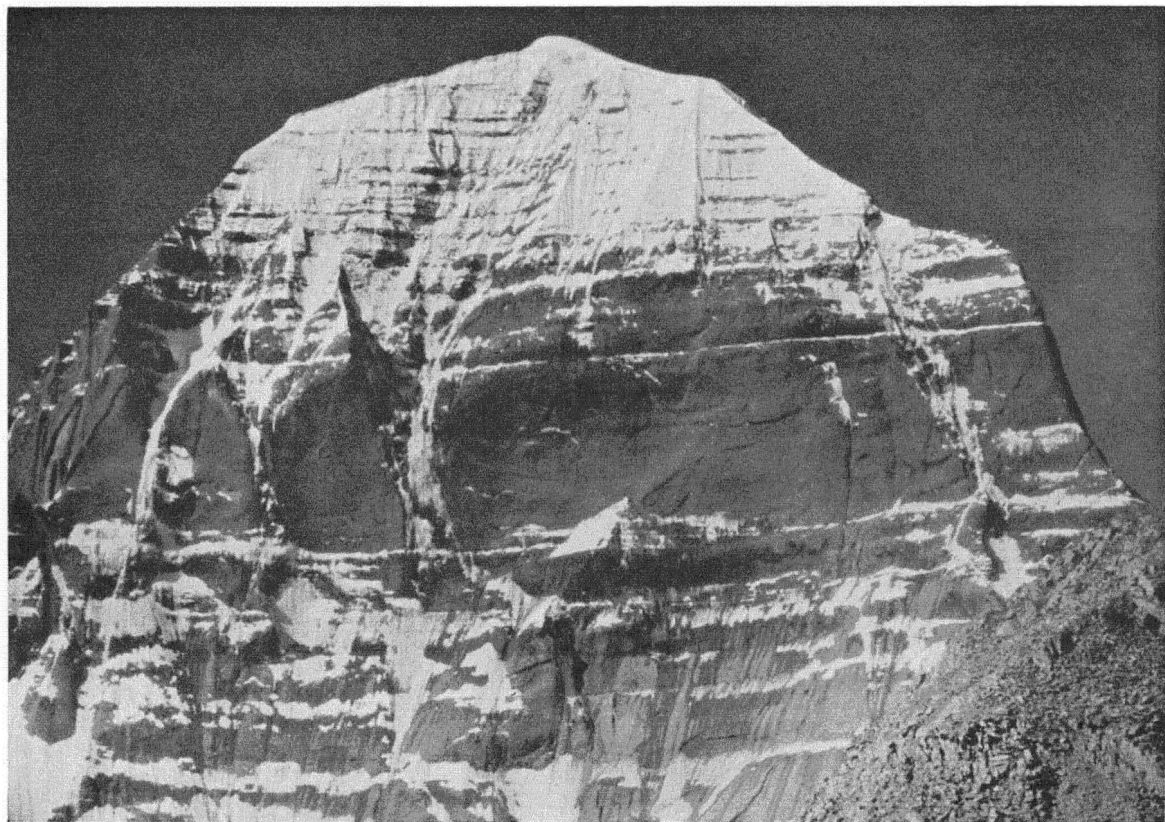


Photo, R. C. Wilson.]

SUMMIT OF KAILAS FROM THE S.

The mountain is best seen from a distance, and has the appearance of a somewhat lopsided white bowl or a square plinth of considerable steepness. As one approaches (from the S.) the summit is more and more concealed until one can only get an occasional glimpse of it between the ridges running down from the snow cap. This cap ends abruptly at the plinth and forms little or no glacier.

In July 1926, in company with Hugh Ruttledge, Mrs. Ruttledge and a party of Indian Bhotia traders, I arrived at Torchen, and after spending a day or two at that place awaiting the arrival of a dilatory Tibetan official we were ready on July 22 to start on the tour of Kailas—the normal



Phot. H. Rutledge.

NORTH FACE OF KAILAS.

pilgrimage of those with sins to be forgiven. I was not much attracted by the prospect of a long march to Diriphu Monastery, our first halt, and enquired of a local priest as to the possibility of taking a short cut over the W. shoulder. He informed me that the plan was quite a possible one, and I consequently arranged to start next morning with Satan, an Everest porter of some experience. The Ruttledges were unfortunately tied down to the usual route. In the evening the lama returned to say that at our previous interview he had been drunk and that there was no possibility of taking the line I wished. My experience of lamas being strictly limited, it seemed quite possible that his information when drunk was as likely to be accurate as when sober, and I made no change in my plan.

Next morning, therefore, Satan and I started for Kyangda Monastery, intending to find our way from there to the foot of the plinth and, skirting this between a very prominent gendarme and the main peak, to drop down as near as possible on to Diriphu Monastery at the W. base of the mountain.

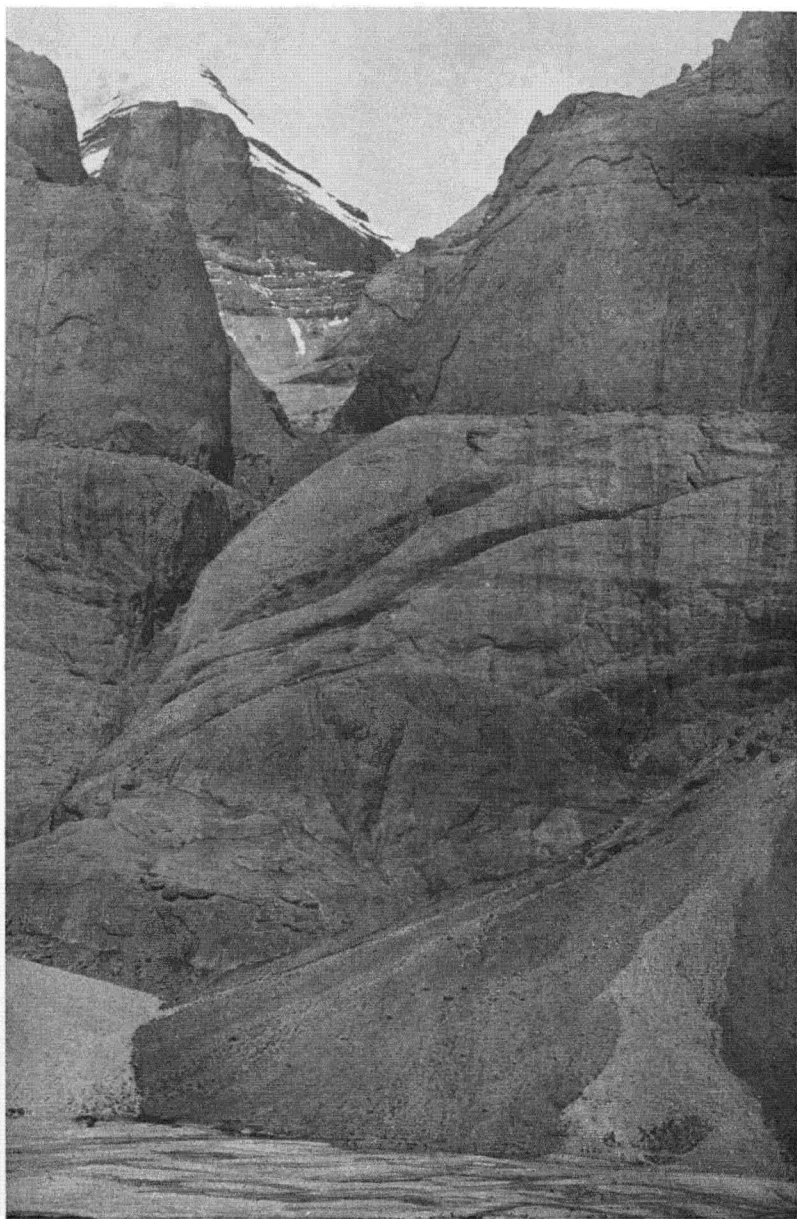
We passed close to Kyangda, and escaped from the basin in which it stands by a col to the N., whence we reached the foot of B (see Plan) without loss of altitude and made up the valley towards the mountain, leaving the ridge HB on our right.

This valley is narrow, dark and steep; there are occasional signs of a shepherd's track. The photo was taken from farther up than the entrance to this valley.

In due course we arrived at the head of the valley and found a *cul de sac*. In front towered the almost perpendicular 'plinth,' black and forbidding. On our right, at H, the point at which ridge HF springs from the 'plinth,' was a small glacier which reached the valley in the form of fragments of ice and snow. On the left leading up to the gendarme G was a shale slope as steep as any I have met. At the foot of the plinth to our front was the fan of snow, which had fallen from the snow gully which is such a prominent mark on the centre of the summit cap. To the right of this fan and between it and the débris of the tiny glacier was a niche, attainable by a scramble over these débris and probably partly natural and partly artificial. This niche contained a row of clay votive tablets, no doubt placed there by the lamas of Kyangda.

It was from there that we first noticed the very marked flattening of the S.E. ridge of the snow cap, the difference of the angle being very clearly shown in the photograph.

It was also apparent that the flat continuation of this ridge



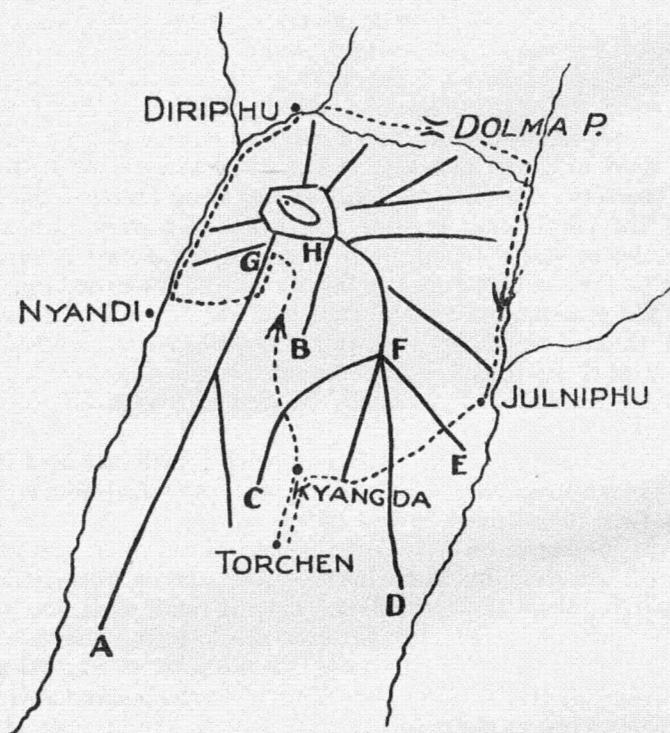
Phot. H. Rutledge.

BASE OF KAILAS FROM WEST.

could be attained by a short if steep and not too simple climb at H.

The result of these observations was sufficiently obvious to

KAILAS



Scale $\frac{1}{250,000}$

Dotted lines indicate the writer's routes.

cause Satan to exclaim 'Sahib, we can climb that'—meaning the whole ridge to the summit.

He was right, but unfortunately time was lacking.

We turned left therefore and tackled the shale slope leading to the gendarme. We tried it at every angle, but no sooner did one place a foot on the treacherous surface than it began to move, and our progress was desperately slow and tiring.

To make matters worse it began to snow, and suddenly without preliminary warning of any sort came a brilliant flash of lightning and a shattering crash of thunder immediately over our heads. Truly the gods were resenting our intrusion, and in the hopes of escaping their further attentions we placed our ice-axes at a safe distance and sat down to await the passing of the storm.

It was probably an hour and a half later that we achieved the col between the gendarme and the plinth.

Above us the mountain was almost perpendicular, while below was a pitch-black abyss of incredible depth and steepness, quite the most awesome place I have ever looked into. The sides were partly slaty black shale and partly snow—black with the dust and débris of the plinth above: I think that neither of us would have placed a foot on the treacherous surface for all the precious metal and stones of which the mountain is said to be made. Some other way down had to be found, however, and, apart from the way we had come up, the S.W. ridge offered the only solution.

We had attained this ridge up steep shale from the E. and had found the other side perpendicular or almost so. Looking back along the ridge there was, about a mile off, a spot at which it made a slight bend: at once our side became perpendicular and its summit assumed a cap of snow with overhanging cornice on our side. In the hopes that this indicated a more reasonable slope on the W. side we made for it, poked a hole in the overhang and pushed and pulled each other up. The surmise was correct, and we had an easy descent for many hundred feet. The final drop into the valley was sensational in appearance, but straightforward in actual practice.

That night we rejoined the Ruttledges and slept at Diriphu, and the next night at Julniphu, whence we returned to Torchen via Kyangda.

As one follows the track round the mountain it is difficult to see anything of the approaches thereto except on the N.W. I did, however, see enough to obtain a pretty good idea as to the best line of advance to the summit. Should fate again take me to Torchen with a couple of days to spare, I should make for the ridge HF, moving either round the foot of D or via Kyangda and over the ridge FD. I should expect to get on to the ridge HF about point F and to have an easy passage to the foot of the final ascent. A reasonably comfortable camp could be made here and the carriers sent down again to the foot of F for the night.

Next day the carriers could return to H and remove the camp to the foot of F, whilst the climbers went to the top and back. As regards altitudes, Torchen is probably about 15,500 ft., point H about 20,000, and the summit 22,028.

The photograph shows the final slope to be reasonable, though the snow might be found powdery and treacherous.

Should the route suggested above prove impracticable, an alternative line to point H would be to leave C and the ridge HB on one's right and to trust to finding a way up on to H from near the foot of the mountain where the small glacier falls into the valley and the niche with images has been made.

In this event one would have to be content with a light camp, as the climb to H might prove too much for laden carriers.

Finally, there remains a third possible route: to get on to the long N. ridge somewhere near the Dolma Pass.

[Mr. and Mrs. Rutledge are the first Europeans to make the *parikarma* or traditional pilgrimage round this very celebrated mountain. Colonel Commandant Wilson is the first European actually to set foot on the mountain, and we are fortunate to have his very complete and valuable reconnaissance on record in this JOURNAL.—T. G. L.]

TWO PASSES OF THE KUMAON HIMALAYA.

[The altitudes given in this account cannot be guaranteed. They are based on the reports of earlier climbers, the figures given in the G.T.S. maps, the readings of a pocket aneroid and calculations made with an Abney level. The Ralam Pass is probably 18,500 ft. (Smyth gave 19,000) and Traill's Pass rather lower, possibly 18,000.]

The Himalayan frontier of India from Kashmir to Assam is, except in one or two stretches, occupied by Indian States. Of the British territory the most easily accessible, as well as the most interesting to the mountaineer, is Kumaon, which lies N.E. of Delhi. Kumaon comprises two Himalayan districts, Garhwal and Almora, and contains some of the finest peaks in the world. The Garhwal Peaks from Kamet (25,447) to Trisul (23,360) have been explored and described by Doctor T. G. Longstaff¹ and others,² as has Nanda Devi (25,660) on the dividing line between the two districts, the highest moun-

¹ *A.J.* 23, 202-223; 24, 107-133.

² Graham, *A.J.* 12, 25-60.

POINT SHOWN AS RALAM PASS
ON G.T.S. MAP

20,980

SECOND PASS



Phot. R. C. Wilson.

VIEW FROM FIRST PASS SHOWING THE SECOND PASS.



Phot. R. C. Wilson.

THE SECOND OR "INTERMEDIATE" PASS.

tain of the British Empire and one of the least accessible in the world, by reason of its encircling rampart of peaks, nowhere less than 19,000 ft., with but one passage through it, and that an impassable river gorge.

The peaks of Almora, except Nandakot, are less well known, but no less worthy of notice. As the passes which form the subject of this paper lie wholly within the Almora district, a word as to the geography of this area would not be amiss. The N. boundary is the Zaskar Range of the Himalaya, beyond which lies Tibet. This range throws off subsidiary ridges which get higher as they progress southward and finally fall again to the foothills and plains of India. It is with the two highest of these ridges that we are concerned. The most westerly forms the right bank of the Milam glacier and attains its maximum elevation at Nanda Devi (25,660), from where it divides into two arms, one terminating at Trisul (23,360) and the other at Nanda Kot (22,530). Between these two arms lies the Pindari glacier. Flowing from the Milam glacier and draining the E. face of this ridge runs the Gori Ganga river, whose E. or left bank is bounded by the second of our two ridges. This ridge, starting at the Unthadhura Pass, culminates in the group of peaks known as Panch Chulha, 22,661—the Five Fire-places (of the Gods).

Communications between the Gori Ganga valley and the outside world are confined to the river itself; upstream over the Unthadhura-Jainti and Kungri-Bingri Passes into Tibet; and downstream, by way of the river gorge, to India. There are no apparent passes to the E. or W. over the formidable barriers presented by the two ridges described above, but local tradition backed by the meagre records left by early climbers proves that at least one in each direction does, in fact, exist. It was to test the reliability of these statements that a climbing party, consisting of Mr. H. Rutledge of the Indian Civil Service, Mrs. Rutledge, Major T. C. Carfrae, R.F.A., and the writer, visited these parts in May 1925. Their ignorance of Himalayan conditions turned the expedition of that year into a reconnaissance, but the time was not entirely wasted, and it was the knowledge thus gained which enabled them to repeat their visit in 1926 with sufficient confidence to ensure the successful crossing of both passes.

In the early summer, 1926, the party, consisting of Mr. and Mrs. Rutledge and the writer, was bound for Tibet on Government service and intended to use one of the main trade routes to that country. These routes follow the valleys running S.

from the frontier, and the party was faced with a long march from the W. of the district along the foothills to the E. valley they had selected for their route. It will be seen from the map that if the Pindari glacier could be reached and a route found from there into the Gori Ganga valley and thence into the Darma valley, a great deal of the tedious approach march would be avoided, and an opportunity afforded of exploring the passes which had excited their curiosity the year before.

The spring of 1926 was a very late one, and reports showed that in May, when the start was made, the Pindari valley was under deep snow as low as 11,000 ft. The programme was therefore modified and the ordinary route to the Gori Ganga was followed. June 13 found the party still too early at Martoli, their immediate work finished, and their next objective the Darma valley. The opportunity was too good to be missed, and in spite of the late snow it was decided to have a cut at the Ralam Pass.

I. The Ralam Pass (ca. 18,500 ft.).

This pass is not unknown, though it has been so seldom used as almost to merit this description. History, as written by Colonel Edmund Smyth,³ describes a crossing by that officer about 1861. Smyth's account of his adventures, chiefly due to avalanches, falling stones, and bad weather, as given to General Macintyre and related in 'The Hindu Koh,' is vivid if sketchy. Local tradition affirms that the pass was formerly used by the local Bhotias, and there are many who remember a climber, La Touche⁴ by name, who accomplished the passage some fifteen years ago. La Touche is said to have been a soldier or a geologist, but the evidence is strongly in favour of the latter theory, as he is chiefly remembered for his habit of smelling specimens of rock, a custom which is quite foreign to the Army. These crossings took place late in the year, and there was little enthusiasm among the local people to volunteer as porters as early as June.

It is clear from the map that between Martoli in the Gori valley and Sipu in the Darma there are three ridges to be crossed by three passes. The first is found behind the forbidding crags of the Haseling and Ralam Peaks and stands up clearly above Martoli; on the E. the ridge drops down steeply

³ Colonel Edmund Smyth was in the first ascent of Monte Rosa, Höchstespitze, 1855.

⁴ Mr. T. D. La Touche, Geological Survey of India.—*T. G. L.*

LOWER SLOPES OF 21,360



Phot. H. R. Rutledge.

MRS. RUTLEDGE AND COLONEL WILSON
at Thercher Glacier bivouac.

SHOULDER OF 21,366
POSITION OF MAIN
PASS

SLOPE OF 21,360



Phot. R. C. Wilson.

THE FINAL BEND OF THE THERCHER GLACIER.

to the Ralam valley. This pass stands some 5000 ft. above the Gori Ganga river bed, or rather over 15,000 ft. in altitude. At the time of our start the last 2000 ft. or so was under deep snow.

We started on June 14 and camped that night on the edge of the snow below the first pass, at about 13,000 ft. Next day we were early on top in the hopes of a view of the subsequent route, about which we knew little or nothing at this stage. The view was very fine as a spectacle and sufficient could be seen to establish two points. Firstly, that the second or intermediate ridge could be crossed by either of two passes of about 16,000 ft.; and secondly, that the main or Ralam Pass itself was not to be found in the position in which marked on the map. We were left guessing as to the actual situation of this main pass which was invisible.

At Ralam village we were so very lucky as to find a Bhotia who claimed to have crossed the pass some fourteen years before, who was ready with a little persuasion to go again and who had a sufficiency of 'nephews' to act as porters. He gave the following information in reply to our questions: The second pass, of which we had had a glimpse, was the best one to follow. The drop on the far side to the Thercher glacier was short but 'khara' (steep). The Thercher glacier was 'maidan' (flat), at first, after which it became very 'khara' and finally 'salámi' (moderate) to the foot of the pass, which was itself 'khara' but short. He was distinctly vague as to the way down on the far side, except that it was long and subject to falling stones.

The arrangements at Ralam had delayed us for a day, and it was not until June 17 that we got off. That night we camped at the foot of the snow line on the second pass at an altitude of 13,000 ft. or thereabouts. As some 3000 ft. remained to the second pass, an early start was made on the morning of June 18 and the first 1000 ft. quickly overcome. Next the snout of a small but steep glacier was crossed and the hill-side again reached. Here the choice lay between snow couloirs and loathsome arêtes of rotten rock and shale. As the former had all the appearance of stone chutes, the latter were preferred, and after much tedious scrambling these led on to a fairly steep snow slope which occupied the final 800 ft. to the pass. The climbing party made the necessary steps up this slope and sent down one member to help bring up the porter's rope. The top was reached at 10.30 without incident.

Immediately below, perhaps 400 ft. down, was the gently sloping Thercher glacier running N. and S. until hidden

towards the S. by an arête running down from the shoulder of 20,980 on the opposite bank; from this arête to the lower slopes of 21,360 stretched an icefall which blocked the view farther up the glacier. To reach the pass, which, although still invisible, it was assumed would be found round the S. bend of the glacier, it would be necessary to circumvent this icefall. The arête from the shoulder of 20,980 offered a possible solution of the problem.

After a meal on top of the pass, the party glissaded or rolled, according to their skill or inclination, down to the glacier, up which they made their way for a couple of easy miles to the foot of the icefall. As time was getting on and the weather threatening, advantage was taken of a small dry patch of medial moraine on which to pitch the tents at an altitude of about 16,000 ft.

It snowed that evening, sufficiently to make a reconnaissance of to-morrow's route too unprofitable a job, and we turned in without having succeeded in getting a view of our pass and with no exact idea as to where it was. The more immediate problem, however, was how to circumvent the icefall which, as described above, appeared to cut off access to the upper reaches of the glacier. The most obvious route skirted under an ice cliff and across some fair rocks, and this made an early start advisable, a plan which proved successful and which brought us on the morning of June 19, before sunrise, to the top of the icefall and at long last within sight of our pass. In front of us was three-quarters of a mile of easy glacier, followed by a rise to the pass of some 800 ft. of pretty steep snow cut off by a bergschrund. On the right, the débris of many avalanches from the shoulder of 21,360 had filled this sufficiently to make a safe passage if used before the sun reached that mountain, and so the party moved without delay across the glacier and halted the porters in safety whilst the climbers made the necessary steps. A few stretches of ice made progress slow, and it was with a feeling of relief that the party reached a sheltered rib of rock where the porters could join them without being delayed *en route*. The rest of the way to the top was plain sailing over snow at a reasonable angle and in good condition.

Some of the younger porters suffered badly from mountain sickness on the way up, which surprised us, as the maximum altitude was about 18,500 ft. and they are accustomed to live permanently at over 11,000 and must attain 18,000 ft. every year when crossing into Tibet. We ascribed their trouble to

the snow, to which they are unaccustomed. All recovered when 2000 ft. of the descent had been accomplished.

The E. side of the ridge was either heavily corniced or very steep for the first few feet of the descent, and this combined with the sickness and general clumsiness of Indian hillmen on snow, and their unfamiliarity with the use of the rope, caused the first 200 ft. of the descent to be fraught with excitement, many of the porters arriving at an outcrop of rock at the foot completely out of control. Luckily no damage was done, but the experience rather cramped the style of the party and led to considerable *détours* to avoid any further adventures on steep snow.

We kept to the left bank of the Nipchungkang glacier to avoid two icefalls which were just discernible through the mist at a considerably lower altitude; and after crossing innumerable ridges and ribs of rotten rock finally found one of sound material which led on to the dry ice at the foot of the lowest icefall. A flat-topped medial moraine carried on the good work for another mile or more, after which a scramble over the stone-covered junction of the two glaciers brought us to the left bank of the combined stream, where we camped for the night. A couple of inches of snow during the night added to nobody's comfort, and this was followed next morning by a tramp to Sipu, where the inhabitants received us with considerable surprise and hospitality, to say nothing of an entirely correct action in offering a drink.

II. Traill's Pass (ca. 18,000 ft.).

This pass lies W. of Martoli in the Gori Ganga valley and between Nanda Devi (25,660) and Nanda Kot (22,530); it has an interesting history.

The first Commissioner of Kumaon, Mr. Traill, conceived the idea in 1830 of opening communications between the Pindari valley and that of the Gori Ganga by using the pass, which even in those early days had for long been in disuse and whose existence was little more than a local tradition. Equipped with tools and planks and an army of workmen, he built over the grass slopes on the right bank of the Pindari glacier a three-foot track, of which signs remain to this day at infrequent intervals.

Higher up he took to the glacier, and his subsequent adventures are wrapped in mystery, except that he found the glacier flat and easy. He was followed in 1855 by Adolph

Schlagintweit ⁵ and in 1861 by Colonel (then Captain) Edmund Smyth. In 1883 T. S. Kennedy set out with the intention of trying the pass, but gave up the attempt, and in 1893 Dr. K. Boeck also gave up the attempt on hearing that the retreat of the glacier had made the way impracticable. All these crossings were from W. to E., and there is no record of any passage in the opposite direction. They have other points in common ; all followed the right bank of the Pindari glacier—in every case the last camp was probably a certain cave said by Schlagintweit to be 14,180 ft.—from here all followed a side glacier and from it crossed a col (Schlagintweit 17,770) and so into the upper névé basin of the Pindari glacier, whence the pass was reached without difficulty. All seem to have found the E. side of the pass steep, and Smyth, in particular, had considerable difficulty in descending to the Lwanl glacier.

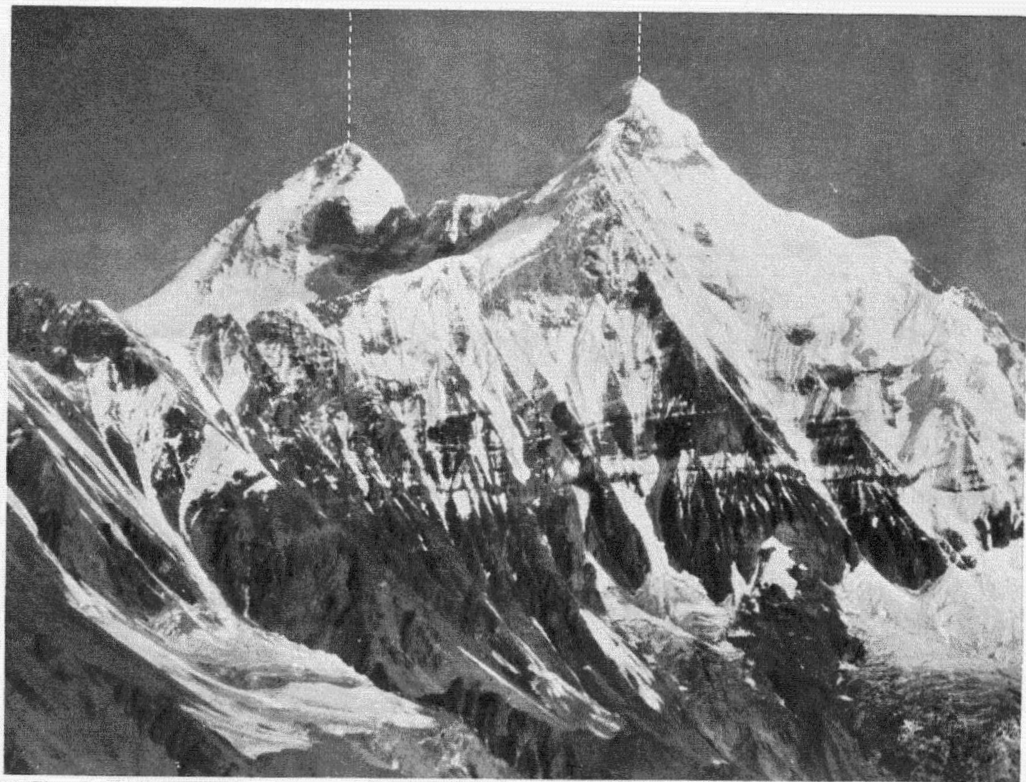
As related above, our intention was to follow in the footsteps of these early pioneers. In 1925 (64 years after the last crossing) we arrived at the Pindari in May, crossed the glacier about a mile from the snout, found Schlagintweit's cave and signs of Traill's path and reached the col, from which our predecessors had attained the névé basin. Here our successes ended in bad weather, but it was quite obvious that the glacier could no longer be joined at the col. To do so would have involved a nasty descent to the glacier, which would have been met at a point in the middle of the icefall and several hundred feet below the 'almost flat' névé basin. The only alternative would have been to go very much higher over a ridge running due E. from 21,624, in the hopes that, at the altitude thus attained, the glacier would be found more accommodating. In the same year we managed to get our first glimpse of the pass from the Lwanl, sufficient to enable a route over the lower slopes to be chosen and to confirm the previous reports of its steepness.

In 1926, after crossing the Ralam Pass in mid-June, we spent four weeks in Tibet, and arrived once more at Martoli in the Gori Ganga valley on our way back to India on August 8. Having been frustrated by the snow earlier in the year, we had decided to make another attempt, this time from the E., should the monsoon prove amenable. The party consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Hugh Rutledge and the writer. On August 9 the weather was by no means good, but was voted good enough, and we slept that night at the snout of the Lwanl glacier at

⁵ *A.J.* 12, 31-32.

MAIN PEAK
25,660

E. PEAK
24,379



Phot. R. C. Wilson.

NANDA DEVI
from Traill's Pass.



Phot. R. C. Wilson.

THE PINDARI ICE-FALL FROM BELOW.

14,100 ft. Sufficient rain fell during the afternoon and night to make us somewhat apprehensive for the next day.

Our next camp on August 10 was at 16,700, some 2000 ft. below the ridge joining the N.W. shoulder of Nanda Kot (20,740) and the pass and about mid-way between these two points. To reach this spot we had followed the left bank of the Lwanl glacier for two and a half miles, crossed the flat valley and stream which flows E. from the foot of Nanda Devi E. peak 24,379, and climbed the centre one of three ridges running down from between the N.W. shoulder 20,740 and the pass. This glacier flows N.W., and before reaching the pass falls rapidly for 1000 ft.

There were three courses open to us :

(a) To follow the small glacier N.W., descend to 15,700 ft. at the foot of the pass, and then climb 2000 ft. to the pass.

(b) To cross the glacier at our level and traverse to the right along the face of the ridge, rising 1000 ft. in the half-mile which separated us from the pass.

(c) To cross the glacier and reach the ridge joining 20,740 and the pass at a point immediately above us ; a climb of some 2000 ft.

After due deliberation (a) and (b) were ruled out, the former as being too long and the latter too uncertain, and we concentrated on the selection of the most suitable line of attack on the 2000 ft. of ridge in front of us. There were two suitable ribs running down on the far side of the glacier ; both were steep and consisted of shale for a third of the distance, after which the one on the left became snow-covered, and that on the right a firmer looking species of shale. The right-hand rib was selected, not because it was the easier—indeed the way up the last 200 ft. was by no means clear, as the strata became very definitely against the climber—but by reason of the very indifferent performances previously put up by the porters on steep snow, they were more likely to be at home on rock however constituted.

On the morning of August 11, therefore, we made our way across the glacier and started up the ridge, keeping to the snow until the porters showed signs of distress. We then took to our rib, and a tedious scramble followed until the strata became very definitely against us. About this time an alternative presented itself, consisting of a level traverse of 300 yds. to the right to meet the top of the ridge, where it began to fall towards the pass. It was not easy going, as the slabs of slatelike material were superimposed on each other with the

higher one overlapping the lower. It was found, however, that at the junction the lower slabs had somewhat disintegrated, and by chipping away the soft material an edge was produced with the appearance of the pages of a closed book which afforded a reasonably secure foothold.

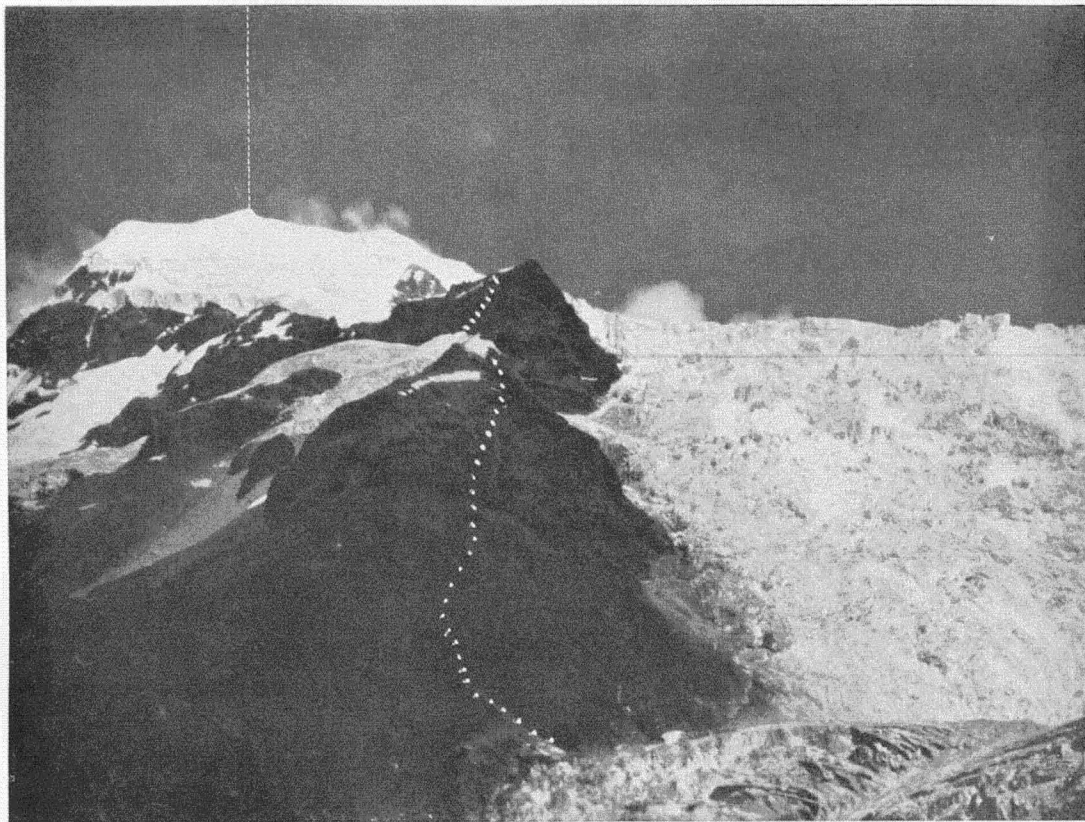
From the top of the ridge we followed the crest and descended obliquely to the W. side of the pass, whence the upper névé basin of the Pindari was easily reached. This basin is enclosed on the S. by two ridges, one long and fairly level running E. from 21,624, the other very steep, running W. from the N.W. shoulder of Nanda Kot, 20,740. Glaciers fall steeply from the two peaks on the N. side of these two ridges, and sweeping S. round their lower extremities join the main Pindari icefall, the upper edge of which overlaps both ridges.

From the pass we could see sufficient of this to realize that whereas our predecessors, coming from below, had reached the névé basin round the E. point of the ridge from 21,624, we could not now adopt their route, but must perforce cross the ridge considerably higher, at a point above the main fall and below the broken ice flowing down from 21,624. We therefore went S.W. from the pass for $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles across the névé basin, keeping well over towards the base of 21,624. The going was good and level for the first mile, after which the glacier became undulating and broken in the area between the top of the Pindari icefall and the foot of that flowing down from 21,624. In due course we arrived at the top of the ridge running down from that mountain and could look down into the cloud-filled Pindari valley.

The descent from this ridge was 800 ft. of real abomination. It is composed of rock in every stage of decay and looseness. To avoid dislodging the horrible stuff was almost an impossibility. The Bhotia porters made very heavy weather of it, and one rope had to be left at the top until the other had accomplished the 800 ft. to the glacier at the foot. Even so the porters' slowness in crossing a snow couloir at the bottom involved them in a shower of rocks and stones of all sizes, luckily without damage.

From the foot to Schlagintweit's col is a short distance, and once the col was crossed our troubles were at an end. We had reconnoitred as far as this in the opposite direction the year before, and had left a cairn to mark the correct ridge, which is the centre one of three joining at or near the col.

Having obligingly allowed us to cover the difficult part of



COL

Phot. R. C. Wilson.

PEAK 21,624 AND UPPER ICE FALL OF PINDARI GLACIER,
showing descent by central rock rib.

TRAILL'S PASS



Phot. R. C. Wilson.

ROUTE UP TRAILL'S PASS,
from N.

our journey 'unmolested, the weather now decided to turn against us, and we were glad to reach the cave of our predecessors in a steady drizzle at 6 p.m. and to settle down there for the night. On the morning of August 12 we crossed the Pindari glacier between the two icefalls and followed the track on the left moraine to Phurkia dak bungalow.

Traill's Pass, in common with most Himalayan passes, is long; it has a distinctly awkward stretch on the E. and an unpleasant ridge overlooking the Pindari glacier. I venture to prophesy, however, that the feature which will give most trouble to future climbers will be the attainment of (or exit from) the S. edge of the névé basin of the Pindari glacier. One hundred years ago it was possible to reach this basin at an altitude of 17,000 ft. or thereabouts—to-day one can only do so 1000 ft. higher. Should the Pindari glacier icefall recede still more it will connect up with the subsidiary fall from 21,624 and a way through will require careful search and considerable labour.

In this crossing, the first for 64 years and the first ever made from E. to W.,⁶ we were lucky in the weather; the climbing season in the Himalayas is normally limited to the months of June and July, between the melting of the winter snow and the monsoon rains. Traill's Pass is on the main chain of the Himalayas and gets no protection from the monsoon clouds; we had no right to expect the perfect day we experienced when high up. Had it been otherwise it might have become a matter of some difficulty to find one's way, even now, off the Pindari névé basin.

THE GODFATHERS OF FORTUNATUS.

By R. L. G. IRVING.

THIS is not an attempt to convert the ALPINE JOURNAL into a magazine of fiction. It is not one of those tall tales from the plains in which mountain adventures are viewed through glasses of the kind which enabled Dr. Cook to see himself on the top of Mt. McKinley and, later, at the North Pole. It is a plain tale from the hills of things that might happen to any member of the Club and which did happen to one.

⁶ And the first ever made by a lady.—*Editor.*