

had just enough petrol left to carry us on to Nanortalik, and so to Juliannehaab. Here we were able to get a ship back to Europe.

As the sole tribute we can pay to the memory of a great explorer, mountaineer and still greater leader of men, we print the covering letter to the above paper received after the writer's lamented death.

s.s. *Gertrud Rask*,

July 31 [1932].

ANGMAGSSALIK.

DEAR COLONEL STRUTT,—I enclose the account for the 'A.J.' I hope it is not too late.

The ice is bad this year, and this ship has taken longer to get here than I had expected. If you want any maps for the account you can get them at the R.G.S. I am afraid the account is almost word for word the same as for the R.G.S. *Journal*, but this was unavoidable.

Yours sincerely,

GINO WATKINS.

THE GERMAN-AMERICAN HIMALAYAN EXPEDITION, 1932.

BY HERBERT KUNIGK.

(*Translated.*)

AFTER long and difficult preparations, our expedition sailed on April 28, 1932, from Genoa in the s.s. *Victoria* of the Lloyd-Triestino line. All, especially our leader, were happy to get off after all our hard work and tiresome delays.

Thirty-seven years ago another man had taken the same road to the East, intending with unequalled zeal and a few companions to attempt Nanga Parbat, one of the giants of the Himalaya. After a splendid attempt on the mountain from the N.W. over the Diamarai Glacier, in which he reached a height of about 19,800 ft., he was obliged to turn back

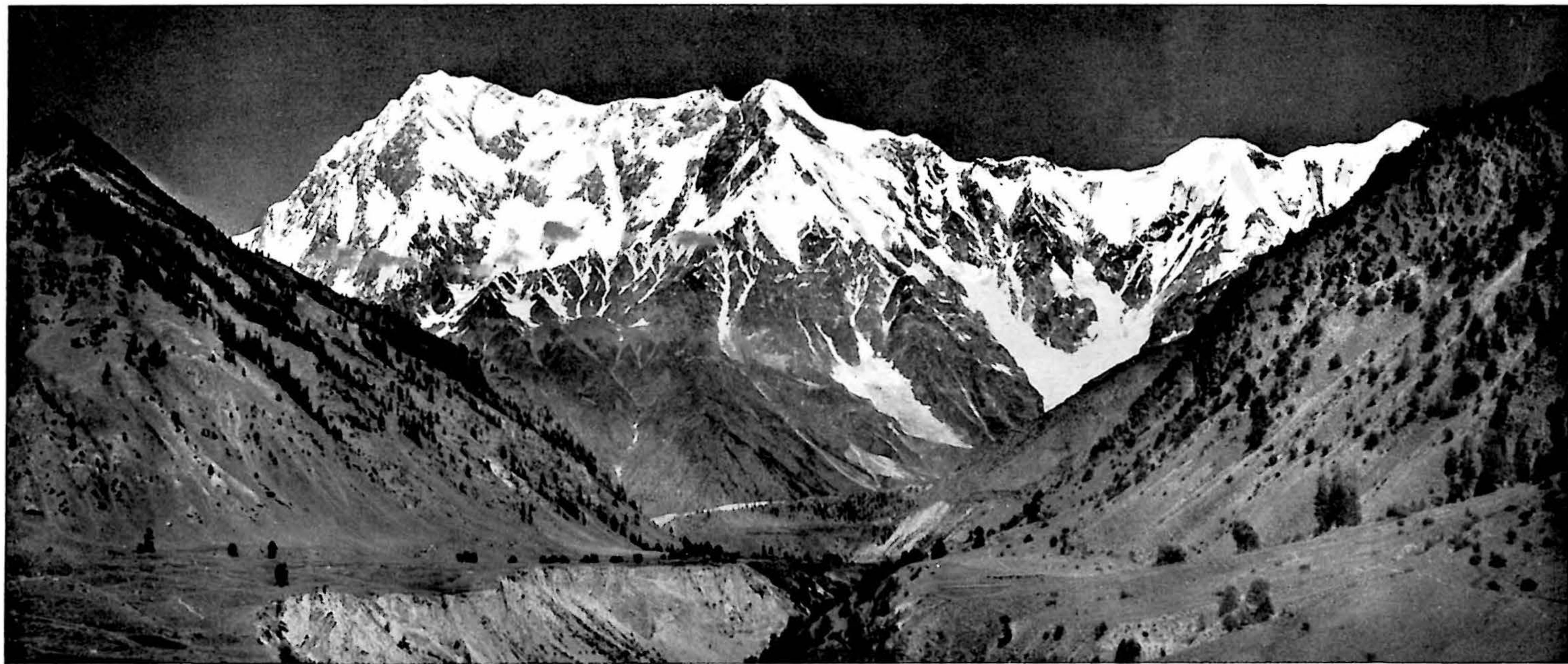
Nanga Parbat.



Rakhiot Peak.



? Chongra Peak.



Photo, Marcel Kurz.]

NANGA PARBAT FROM PIRIROT ABOVE JUNCTION OF RUPAL AND KAMRI TORRENTS. JULY 27, 1932.

[To face p. 193.]

through the illness of his two accompanying Gurkhas. He then determined to cross into the Rakhiot valley by the Diama Pass and try his luck there. He and his Gurkha companions were never seen again : it was the Englishman, A. F. Mummery, one of the greatest figures in the History of Mountaineering.¹

Our intentions were to make another attempt on this proud summit. Nine of us had joined up for the undertaking : P. Aschenbrenner of Kufstein (Tyrol) ; F. Bechtold of Traunstein (Bavaria) ; Dr. H. Hamberger of Rosenheim (Bavaria), as medical officer ; E. Rand Herron² (New York) ; H. Kunigk of Munich ; W. Merkl of Munich, the Leader ; F. Simon of Leipzig ; F. Wiessner of Dresden ; and Miss Elizabeth Knowlton as press-correspondent.

We wished to try the ascent of Nanga Parbat from the N.E., although hardly anything was known of this slope. We hoped, however, to find the mountain less steep on that side. The S. slope falls at a fearful angle, some 20,000 ft. high, into the Rupal nullah, the W. arête leaves little hope and even the N.W. flank is, in its upper portions, distinctly steeper than is generally considered. Accordingly our hopes were centred on the N.E. slope and E. arête.

We landed in Bombay on May 9, where we had lots to do. In three days' time we left by rail towards Kashmir and the North-west. We were *en route* for Jammu, which lies in the territory of H.H. the Maharajah of Kashmir and is the rail-head of a branch-line bifurcating at Wazirabad from the main Bombay-Peshawar line. Thence a two days' journey by motor car over a wonderful mountain road, crossing two passes, brought us to Srinagar, the capital of Kashmir. The road far surpasses any of those in the Alps. We arrived at Srinagar on Whitsunday, May 15. As soon as we had landed we were at once surrounded by crowds of natives who knew of our arrival, many of whom had been awaiting us for days. Some offered themselves as porters, others as servants or

¹ The party consisted of Messrs. J. Norman Collie, G. Hastings and Captain (now Brigadier-General) the Hon. C. G. Bruce, *A.J.* 18, 18-32.—*Editor*.

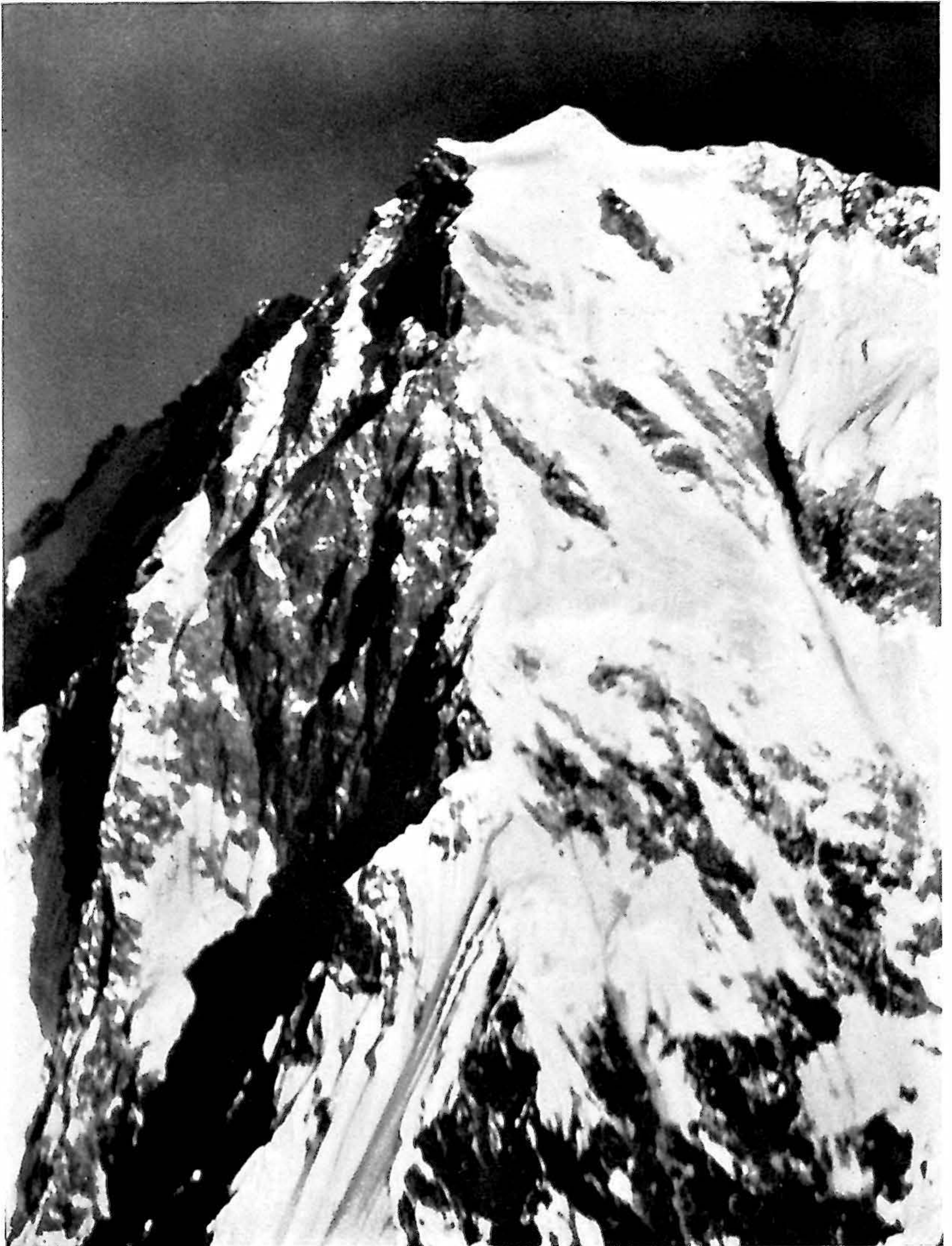
² While returning to Europe, Mr. Herron landed in Egypt and proceeded to climb the Pyramids on October 13. Descending the second pyramid of Giza, Mr. Herron lost his footing and was, most unfortunately, killed on the spot. He was well known for his Caucasus expedition in 1929 (*A.J.* 42, 278-88), and for several brilliant exploits on the S. side of the Mont Blanc group and other parts of the Alps.—*Editor*.

cooks armed with genuine, borrowed or forged characters; others urged us to visit their shops where they hoped with increased prices to score off the silly Europeans.

Srinagar is a beautifully situated town placed in the midst of water and verdure in the great plain of Kashmir, surrounded by the mountains of Pir Panjal and the Himalaya. Owing to its height, 5200 ft., the climate is very agreeable. We were obliged to stay a week in Srinagar, so as to sort out our heavy luggage into smaller packages, inspect our food, as well as arrange for the entire provisioning, payment and equipment of the porters. Moreover another matter detained us; we had already received leave for Nanga Parbat but only for the Rupal nullah, or S. side. But the thought even of attacking the mountain from this side was mere futility. We were at first unable to obtain leave for the N. side because the Chilas country is so poor that it can hardly feed itself, leave alone provide and supply provisions or transport for an expedition like ours. However, after an audience with the British Resident of Kashmir, in which after explaining that we were taking all our provisions with us from Srinagar and likewise only porters from Srinagar or the Astor valley, we went on to state that we merely intended visiting the higher, uninhabited valleys of Chilas after crossing the range from the Astor valley to the Rakhiot nullah. Permission was then readily forthcoming, the road lay open to the Rakhiot Glacier and a great weight was removed from our minds.

After sending off our entire luggage by boat for Bandipur by the water route on the day before, we left Srinagar on the morning of May 28. On arrival at Bandipur, we found the horses waiting and in the incredible time of half an hour—from an Oriental point of view—the 225 articles were loaded up and on the march. Our way lay over the military road to Gilgit and Astor *via* the Tragbal and Burzil Passes. The Tragbal Pass (11,580 ft.), still deep in snow, gave some trouble as the ponies broke in, while a hailstorm delayed the drivers, causing them difficulty in finding the way. The Burzil Pass (13,775 ft.) gave still more trouble owing to its greater height. It was not yet open for traffic owing to the depth of the snow. Our big column was the first to cross it this year. However, this pass also was traversed without incident. After 8 days' march we attained Astor, 150 miles N. of Srinagar.

Aschenbrenner and Bechtold with 4 porters started off at once to find a route over the mountain chain. The rest of us stayed 3 days in Astor to obtain animal transport to Doian



Telephoto, Marcel Kurz.]

SUMMIT OF NANGA PARBAT.

[To face p. 194.

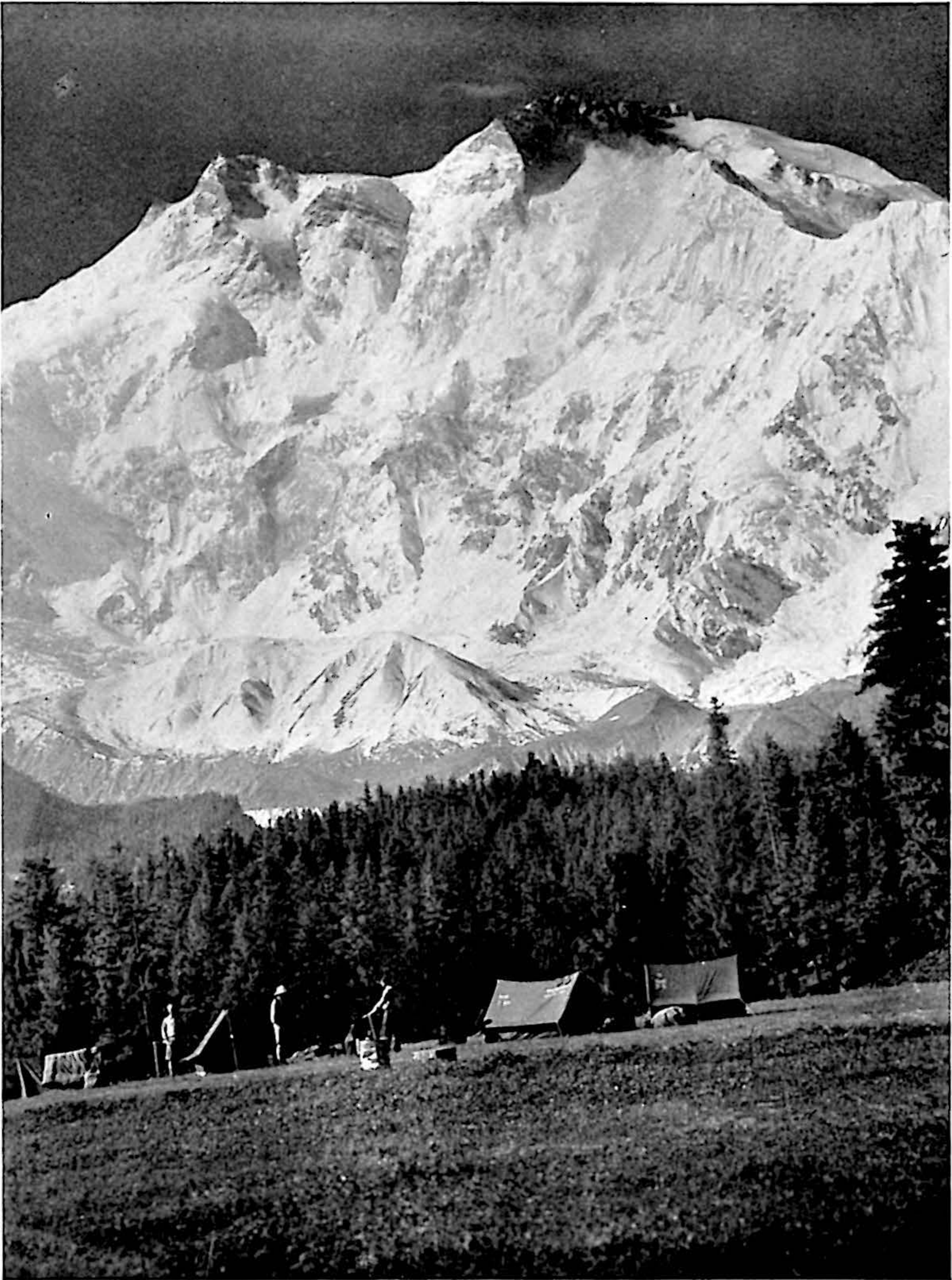
← E. Peak.

← N. Peak.

← Summit.

← Diama Gap.

← Base
Camp.



Photo, F. Bechtold.]

NANGA PARBAT, 26,620 FT.

and coolies for the further portorage. Here also we were joined by Captain R. N. D. Frier, sent to help us by the Political Agent in Gilgit. He was of great assistance to us with the porters, who very often proved troublesome, and he developed later no mean mountaineering skill. On June 6 we broke ground and pitched camp above the hamlet of Doyan in a little meadow amidst beautiful forests. On the opposite side of the valley rose the Dichil Peak, a sharp and lofty rocky point, while above the deep-cut Indus valley to the N.E., Rakaposhi, Domani, Haramosh, immense white mountains of overwhelming splendour, reared themselves into the sky. On June 8 Bechtold returned with tidings of the route. On the same day arrived also 120 Astor porters, who, however, at once refused to shoulder the 23 kilos. [= *ca.* 50 lbs.] loads. We dismissed them immediately, but on the following day they returned and volunteered their services, whereupon we started straightaway with them and 40 Baltis. We went direct up from our camp towards the ridge and then down the other side to the uppermost portion of the Leychar nullah, a deep-cut glen plunging steeply towards the Indus valley. Already on this first day we obtained a foretaste of the coolie troubles that were to beset us. The porters went very slowly, straggled much, many arriving late at night in the camp at Leychar.

From Leychar, Aschenbrenner and I led the advance guard of porters to reconnoitre the further route to the Rakhiot Glacier. We descended a bit into the valley, climbing and crossing the next ridge, and pitched a new camp in the Buldar nullah. From there we descended on the following day to the floor of the glen just where it divides into two arms, when we turned again upwards to a little green plateau on the ridge between the Buldar and Rakhiot nullahs; finally, seeking out water and the best way, we entered the Rakhiot glen where we pitched camp opposite Nanga Parbat. This camp was christened later 'Fly Camp'—for obvious reasons. On the far side of the deep-cut torrent a small track was discernible, enabling us two days later to pitch our intermediate Base Camp in a little moraine-covered glen close to the Rakhiot Glacier. An exploration showed us for the first time the entire torn mass of the glacier and the tremendous, ice-clad N.E. face of Nanga Parbat, plunging nearly 12,000 ft. downwards from the N. peak to the glacier.

Here we received news from the main body, who had in the meanwhile attained the Buldar nullah. Thirty Hunza

porters whom Major Gillan, the Political Agent, had obtained for us had joined the expedition, and the Astor porters were dismissed. Following the tracing in the new unpublished map of Nanga Parbat, which the Survey of India had provided us with, Bechtold, Hamberger and Herron set out to prospect the possibility of an ascent to the main ridge *via* the Buldar Glacier. They could obtain no view however and were obliged to return. The further transport to the Rakhiot nullah was then organized by relays of the 30 Hunzas and 40 Baltis. Unfortunately at this spot the greater part of our porter equipment was looted—a terrible loss to us and one which we felt only too deeply later on. All search for it proved useless. Aschenbrenner and I had in the meanwhile made the ascent of a 16,500 ft. peak on the ridge between the Rakhiot and Buldar nullahs, which gave us a good view over the Buldar and especially the Rakhiot Glacier. We were confident that this much-crevassed glacier was easier higher up and that, from the uppermost snow terrace beneath the lowest depression in the main ridge, the ascent of the Rakhiot Peak, or, through a great hollow to the N.E. arête, the attainment of Nanga Parbat itself, must be possible.

On June 22 all Sahibs and porters were assembled in the standing camp. Two rainy and snowy days followed. Then Herron and I set off to find a way through the steep icefalls to the first terrace situated behind a rocky tooth in the middle of the glacier. This tooth we named the 'Riff.' After camping in a moraine surrounded by ice, we forced a way under the Ganalo Peak through a crevassed side glacier, over a medial moraine and across gigantic crevasses, to a great plateau in the main glacier at the base of the principal icefall. We had started too late; the heat grew ever greater, the snow softened and our pace became slower and slower. Leaving our packs we pushed on further. We could not get through however and, returning to our packs, we bivouacked. It was a bitterly cold night in our light tent without a sleeping-bag. Having no porters with us, we had naturally marched as light as possible. On the following day we found the way on to the terrace at a height of about 16,700 ft. Now began the assault on Nanga Parbat.

After our return Simon and Wiessner, starting off with 9 Hunzas, brought up tents and food and established Camp I at 15,000 ft. and Camp II at 16,700 ft. In the meantime the loads from the original standing camp were brought to the one on the moraine which was now inaugurated as the

Base. On June 30 Aschenbrenner and Wiessner set off with 4 porters and Captain Frier's bearer. They slept in Camp I where during the night a tremendous ice avalanche fell from Nanga Parbat, whose outlying spurs lie close to the camp. The tent was caved in and the inmates covered with snow. The porters started a fearful row, they thought their end was imminent and, consequently, could not be quieted throughout the entire night. On the following morning they demanded to be led back to the base and only Frier's bearer continued with Aschenbrenner to Camp II. In the Base Camp all the Hunza porters went on strike and declared their intention of returning home. We had now only 21 there since 7 others had already bolted. They all appeared strong and in very good condition, at least in the Base Camp. Higher up they seemed poorly and were mostly ill, or said they were. At all events, they appeared useless for higher altitudes and we had to put up with much unpleasantness from them. They well understood the trouble we were in and demanded ridiculously high wages, which we had to submit to short of being left entirely porterless.

On July 3 Herron and I were again able to start with 4 porters. Our intention was not to sleep in Camp I; we attained Camp II in one day where we met Aschenbrenner who had meanwhile constructed an ice-cave and installed the camp. On the following day we attained the second terrace where we arranged Camp III and built an ice-cave (18,000 ft.). The kits were meanwhile brought up by Sahibs and porters. On July 8 Bechtold and Merkl brought up loads to the third terrace where we pitched Camp IV at 18,980 ft. We were progressing.

The serious question was still that of the coolies. After the looting of nearly everything we had, only 9 complete porters' kits remained, a factor which of course delayed us much. Moreover the porters never stayed long high up, but descended after a few days to the Base Camp where the men were changed. We needed badly just one or two of the men who had been on Everest or Kangchenjunga. Still, we managed to make progress and were already on the uppermost glacier-terrace below the lowest depression in the main ridge running N.E. from Nanga Parbat over the Rakhiot to the Chongra Peak. The Rakhiot Peak towered above us, connected thence by a finely shaped arête with the two eastern tops of Nanga Parbat. We were able to attain this ridge and, by means of this and a final steep slope, the plateau commencing between

the two eastern summits and which continues thence towards the N. peak and summit (S. peak). The summit (26,620 ft.) appears to sit farther back, while a snow arête leads up to it from that spot. These facts we had ascertained already from several view-points. The route did not appear to present great difficulties. Full of confidence and happy hopes we proceeded upwards. During this time Aschenbrenner ascended the Chongra Peak from the camp, by turning the uppermost névé fields to the base of the mountain and reaching the summit by a steep slope between séracs. On the same day, July 14, Herron and I brought up 4 coolies with loads to Camp IV. To reconnoitre further towards Nanga Parbat, Aschenbrenner and I set off on the following day accompanied by Hamberger and Herron carrying loads, as the porters had gone back already. The great recessed hollow, rising to the ridge between the Rakhiot Peak and Nanga Parbat, and which can be reached over a terrace and by turning a steep névé slope, did not at all appeal to us. Its ascent must be fatiguing and very warm. Moreover, with fresh snow it must certainly be dangerous from avalanches, a risk we were—if possible—determined to avoid. It was perhaps feasible to climb some way up the Rakhiot Peak then, turning the upper part of the hollow to the W., so attain the ridge between the Rakhiot Peak and Nanga Parbat. We camped at a height of about 21,000 ft. below the main ridge, whence our companions could return to Camp IV.

On the following day Aschenbrenner and I climbed up towards the ridge, reaching in 1 hour the foot of the Rakhiot Peak, whose steep snowy flank was now opposite, and from which a snow slope leads up to the N. arête. We went up part of the snow, then turned to the right, reaching the rocks after conquering the overhanging bergschrund. These rocks were much worse than they appeared, smooth slabs and ice all covered with powdery snow. The traverse across this rocky slope, some 330 ft. long, was difficult enough and we took 3 hours over it. On attaining the N. arête conditions proved much better, and we made rapid progress. Nowhere was it possible to traverse into the recessed hollow. Higher up we encountered more difficult rocks, followed by a snow arête leading to the summit, 23,170 ft., which we attained in 9 hours from our departure.

The view towards the Hindu Kush and Karakoram was magnificent but, to the south, a sea of clouds concealed the mountains of Kashmir. The southern face of Nanga Parbat

Rakhiot Peak.

Camp VII.



← Camp VI.

← Camp V.

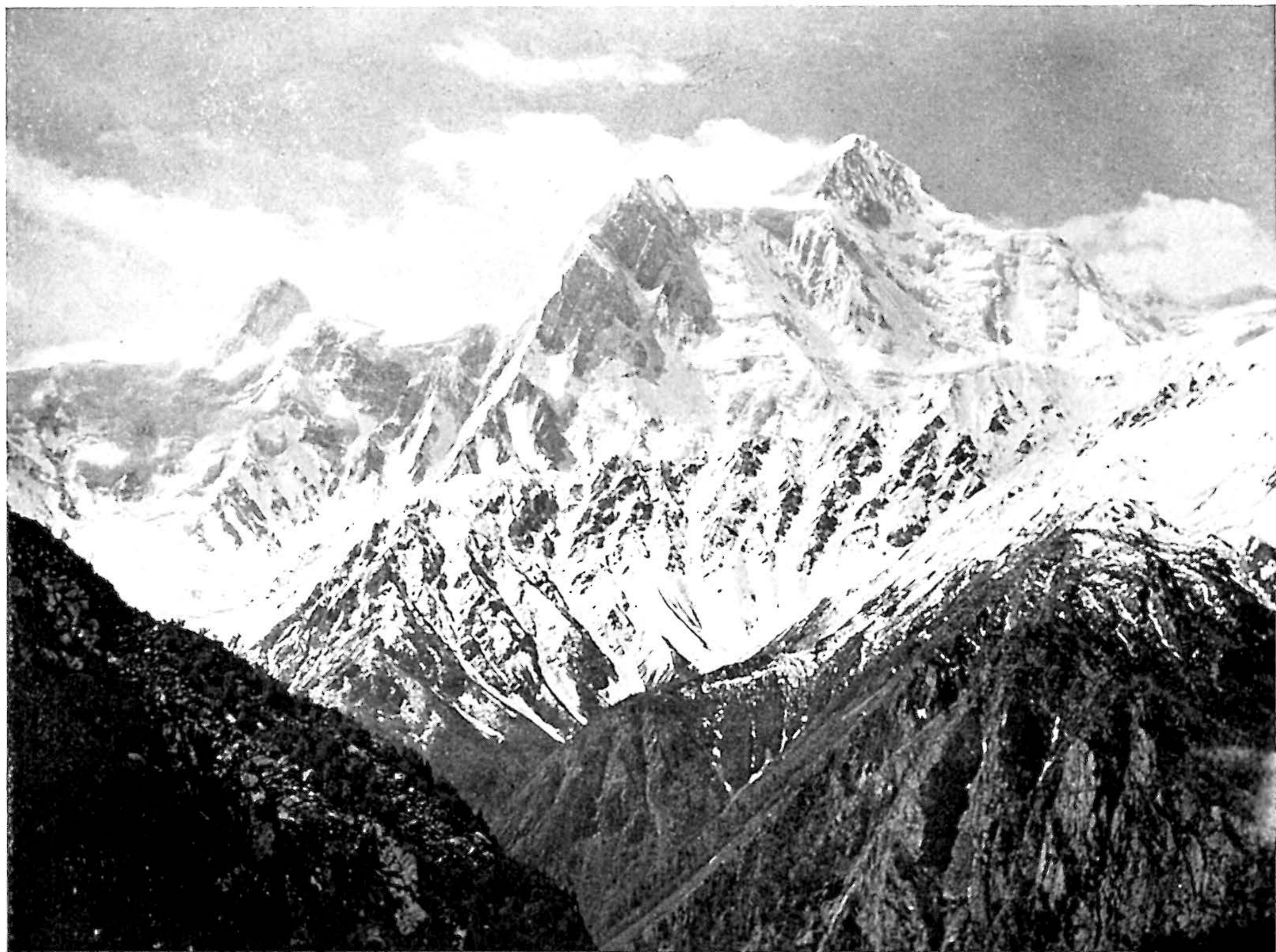
Ice Cave →

Direction of Camp III. ↙

Photo, F. Bechtold.]

CAMP IV TOWARDS RAKHIOT PEAK AND E. RIDGE OF NANGA PARBAT.

[To face p. 198.]



Photo, F. Bechtold.]

CHONGRA PEAKS FROM BULDAR 'RIDGE.'

falling towards the Rupal nullah is terrific ; the main summit, snowy white, towers above it. On the descent we followed the steep névé on the E. flank, regaining our camp before the advent of darkness. However, we should most certainly in future ascents have to go up the hollow, as our difficult route, over the Rakhiot Peak, was quite impossible for the porters. Accordingly we descended with all the kits to the little terrace and pitched Camp V there. On returning to Camp IV we experienced some days' bad weather. I developed appendicitis here and had, after waiting 7 days, to make up my mind to descend with the doctor to the Base Camp and thence proceed to Gilgit, where there is a small hospital, for an operation. Aschenbrenner got badly frost-bitten in the toes during this time, but the others managed to work up higher, Merkl and Bechtold contriving, after two abortive attempts, to ascend the hollow and there inaugurate Camp VI, 21,650 ft. Bechtold, Merkl and Wiessner finally succeeded in reaching the ridge on July 29 and there erected Camp VII, *ca.* 22,650 ft. On the following day Merkl and Bechtold brought the kits up to Camp VII. Now at length we were really on the ridge and Nanga Parbat was distinctly nearer. All were full of hopes and expectation of victory.

Suddenly the weather, which up to then had been most remarkably fine, broke ; Merkl and Bechtold had to descend from the ridge to economize the stores up there, and this time the weather remained bad. On August 5 Herron and Simon went to Camp V, but snow continued with blizzards every day. Another attempt to proceed higher than Camp IV was made on August 10, but the snow was so deep that the party failed to get through and were obliged to dump their loads on the small terrace. On a slightly clearer day, Herron, Merkl and Wiessner climbed the Chongra Peak after much labour. For 20 days the weather remained bad, and during all that time the members of the expedition were detained in Camp IV.

It was quite impossible, owing to masses of fresh snow, either to reach the higher camps or form new ones. On August 21 all the remaining *personnel* descended to the Base Camp, Aschenbrenner, Bechtold and Simon having been obliged to leave previously through illness or professional causes. Captain Frier had also to quit the expedition on the 25th on account of his duties.

After a few days the weather improved and a last attempt was decided on for August 28. Herron, Merkl and Wiessner started with 12 porters to take their final chance for Nanga

Parbat. It was hoped that conditions would be somewhat better and that the sun might have consolidated the snow. The fresh snow commenced above Camp II and grew steadily deeper. The labour of track-making became intense; with great exertion they reached Camp IV on the 30th. Nine porters went sick on the following day. The snow was terribly unstable and the cold great: all progress was stopped, as even on the flattest parts fresh snow lay 3–4 ft. deep, attaining 4–5 ft. on the steeper slopes. This entailed, naturally, grave avalanche danger. Moreover there was always a fresh crisis with our wretched coolies; only two had ever reached Camp VI, of whom one went sick. Very few had gone further than Camp IV.

With heavy hearts our comrades determined on retreat. It was too late in the year, the sun had no more power to alter snow conditions and, in such circumstances, any further advance became impossible. We were unable to evacuate the higher camps, as fresh snow fell every day. Retreat began on September 2, which, with the exception of a bad fall into a crevasse by one of the Sahibs, was excellently carried out. I had returned one day earlier after my operation in Gilgit, just as the others came down from Nanga Parbat and informed me of the futility of any further attempt for this year. We all returned accordingly to Srinagar over the Kamri Pass.³

Once more a Himalayan giant had proved stronger than mere man.

[We must express our warmest thanks to Herr Kunigk for the interesting narrative, which he was good enough to write for the JOURNAL during the voyage home from India.—*Editor.*]

SOME GUIDELESS CLIMBS.

By J. L. LONGLAND.

(Read before the Alpine Club, April 5, 1932.)

WHEN the Honorary Secretary asked me to read a paper I was at once honoured and bothered: bothered because, on looking through the chequered record of six Alpine seasons, I could discover no one expedition which could without the

³ See in general Survey of India map, No. 43 I, *Gilgit*; 1:253,440 (or 4 miles to 1 inch).