

TOWARDS KANGCHENJUNGA

BY DOUGLAS SIDE

I SEE no reason why an expedition to the Himalayas, under the auspices of the Alpine Club, should not succeed, even if an attempt were made to scale Kinchinjunga ; altitude 28,156 ft.' These are not adventurous words used by our President in Committee, but those used in a Paper read before this Club on June 6, 1882. It is also stated there that, 'One of its northern spurs, at any rate, seems to present no insuperable obstacles.'¹ We shall refer to Paul Bauer's achievements on this spur later.

How was it that its height (which differs from the present Indian Survey figure by only 10 ft.) and the accessibility of its spurs were known in 1882? Enquirers cannot do better than start with D. W. Freshfield's *Round Kangchenjunga*, published in 1903. It is a thrilling account of a complete circuit of the Kangchenjunga Group made in September and October, 1899, with Professor E. J. Garwood and Signor Vittorio Sella. It contains a list of Books, Government Reports, Magazine Articles and Maps consulted. Mr. Freshfield's book and the works therein referred to form the basis of this article.

The Himalayas were first crossed by Europeans in 1624, when the Portuguese Jesuit Missionaries, Antonio Andrade and Manuel Marques went to establish a mission in Western Tibet. Also about this time, two more Portuguese Jesuits, Cabral and Cacella, reached Shigatse after traversing Bhutan, thus making the first recorded eastern crossing. Other missionaries, savants and explorers reached Tibet by way of Kashmir or Nepal.² It seems that the English had their first close view of the Himalayas in 1767 when the East India Company sent a military expedition under Captain Kinloch against the Gurkhas in Nepal.

Although these journeys were known in Europe, the story that most excited the imagination was Samuel Turner's *An account of a Mission to the Court of the Teshoo Lama in Tibet* during 1783-4 and published in 1806. His project was similar to that which George Bogle and Alexander Hamilton undertook in 1774-5, but details of this equally important journey were not published until 1876.

Samuel Turner's book is of interest here because it leads us to the next great explorer in the Himalayas. Sir Joseph Dalton Hooker says in the Preface to his *Himalayan Journals*, 'My earliest recollections in reading are of Turner's *Travels in Tibet* and of Cook's *Voyages*. The possibility of visiting Tibet and of ascertaining particulars respecting the great mountain, Chumulari, which was only known from Turner's

¹ *A. J.* II. 215.

² C. Wessels, *Early Jesuit Travellers in Central Asia*, 1603-1701.



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Aerial photo by A. W. Wood.]

KANGCHENJUNGA FROM THE SOUTH-WEST.

account, were additional inducements to a student of Physical geography (to explore Sikkim), but it was not then known that Kinchinjunga, the highest known mountain on the globe, was situated on my route.'

Dr. Hooker's record of his two journeys of exploration during 1848 and 1849 in Sikkim merit study because of his vast achievements during autumn and winter in an area almost wholly new to Europeans, with only peasant assistants, and in spite of much opposition from the factual head of Sikkim. His meticulous recordings at great altitudes and often under bitter conditions, and his primitive sleeping arrangements excite our admiration and wonder. The description of his remarkable travels is summarised here.

While waiting for permission to enter Sikkim, he obtained it to enter Nepal. Leaving Darjeeling on October 27, 1848, he travelled roughly west-south-west across and along ridges, and across rivers, until he reached the River Tamur where it is joined by the Khawa (Hima). Thence north along the Tamur to Mwya Guola where he learned he could return through any part of Sikkim. He reached Wallanchoon (Walungchung), just above the junction of the Tamur and Yangma, in six marches by November 23. Here the headman tried to place numerous obstacles in the way of his continuing to Wallanchoon Pass. After many conferences and some forceful action he was allowed to proceed. On November 26 he climbed to it with a small party and a guide, finding perpetual snow at 15,000 ft. and three feet of new snow on the path. Three reached the top, 16,740 ft., but camped exhausted in the dark at 13,500 ft. on the way back.

On November 29, he set out to explore the Yangma Valley and reached the head at about 1,000 ft. below the pass (*c.* 17,000 ft.). Deep snow had closed the pass since October. From Yangma Village he went east to the River Kangbachen along the flank of Mount Nango and over a pass 15,770 ft., and later to the village of Ghunsa. Here he notes that the rise from the valley bottom to Jannu (13,932 ft.), five miles away, was 1 in 1.8.

On December 6, he left with a guide for 'Choonjerma Pass' (Sinon La and Mirgin La) via the Yalung River. He met a party of natives who said the village was deserted, and that Kang La, leading eastwards into Sikkim, was impracticable after October. Reluctantly he turned south to Sablakhu by the route which will probably be used by the 1955 Reconnaissance Party; then east across the Singalila into Sikkim. Here he learned that Dr. Campbell had already left Darjeeling to meet the Raja of Sikkim at Bhomsong (Samdong) and after visiting several monasteries and temples, where he was well received, Hooker met his friend Campbell there on December 22; this being the first visit of a European after years of striving to effect it. After waiting several days they met the Raja but the interview was cut short in a most unsatisfactory manner by the Dewan, whose influence with the Raja was paramount and who was 'the head and front of all Sikkim difficulties.'

At Neongong, the Lamas prayed for Hooker, the first Englishman who had visited 'the snows of Kangchenjunga; the holiest spot in

Sikkim,' and he went to many other monasteries in this region on his way to Yoksam and the spur known as Mon Lepcha. From there, he notes that the western of the three near tops of Kangchenjunga is 320 ft. lower than the highest. This is the only reference found for the height of this summit, and knowing how careful he was with his measurements, this relative height can be confidently accepted. He ascended to Jongri (Dzongri) and walked towards Kabur, but was compelled by fog and intense cold to return. This was January 10. Two feet of snow fell during the night and the temperature went down to 3° F. He was back in Darjeeling on January 19, 1849.

Hooker left Darjeeling on May 30, 1849, for his second journey. He ascended the Tista via Bhomsong to Gorh (Gar) where a Lama tried to prevent his progress by damaging the paths and bridges. At Singtam, he was told of a race of wild men called 'Harrum-mo' inhabiting the head of Ranghep (?) Valley beyond Bah towards the slopes of Pandim. They were said to have more hair on their faces than Lepchas, to shun habitations, to speak an unintelligible tongue and to eat snakes and vermin. Is this an early reference to the 'Abominable Snowman'?

He continued up the valley of Lachen in search of the Kongra Lama Pass in spite of the difficulties caused by the Dewan's agents here and throughout this journey. After going high on Tukcham (Lamgebo) he went to Zemu Samdong, then up the River Zemu, where he saw the head of the Zemu Glacier and Siniolchu. He made various unsuccessful attempts to ascend the Zemu and the Lhonak and returned after reaching 13,300 ft. in one valley and 14,914 ft. in the other.

On July 11, he continued to Talam on his way to Kangchenjau. The local ruler said it was more holy than even Chomolhari or Kangchenjunga. He reached the Tibetan frontier at Kongra Lama, 15,745 ft. from Thanggu, where he returned at night. Next day, he ascended the Chacoo (Jha Chu) to a Tibetan camp at 16,150 ft. on the plains of Phalung. Here an annual festival in honour of Kangchenjau was being held at which a Lama officiated. From Phalung, he ascended to 17,000 ft. and to the source of the Chacoo, 16,522 ft., during a snow-storm. He later reached 16,754 ft. on a spur of Chomiomo; descended the River Lachen to Chuntang and ascended the River Lachung to Tangkar La, 16,080 ft., which leads to Chumbi in Tibet. From Lachung on the river of the same name, he went north to Yumtang and Mome Samdong.³ On September 9 he reached Donkhy La, 18,131 ft., where he sketched the country to the north. He ascended to about 19,300 ft. to the east of the pass. He writes, 'I repeatedly attempted to ascend Kinchinjow and Donkia, but never got much higher than 19,000'—i.e. 19,300 ft.

He made frequent visits to the glacier of Kangchenjau and says, 'An elevation of 20,000 feet and perhaps 22,000 feet, might, I should think, easily be attained by practice in Tibet, north of Sikkim,' thus anticipating later ideas on acclimatisation.

³ For references and photograph of Himalayan Club Hut here: *H. J.* 9. 174-5 and 16. 149.

After reaching Sebu La he went south again to meet Dr. Campbell at Chungtang on October 2. He paid another visit to Thanggu and Phalung before reaching the Kongra Lama again. He went off alone east to the Cholamo Lakes, 17,000 ft., and made other ascents in the area including 'Bhomtso,' 18,590 ft. on October 17. He calculated the height by barometer and boiling point thermometer and reascended the following day for verification. After ascending over 19,000 ft. on Donkhy again he crossed the pass southwards but was prevented from reaching the Donkhy Glacier by a bad storm. However, he again visited the Kangchenjau Glacier before descending to Chuntang which he reached for the fourth time on October 26, thus completing a round tour.

At Tumloong (Yumtang) the Raja refused to see Hooker and Campbell so they continued south to Rangpo and then east to Cho La (14,500 ft.), which they reached on November 7. Here, their troubles, which had been considerable for some months, came to a head. At Chumanako below the pass, they met Singtam Soubah, an agent of the Dewan. He arrested and maltreated Campbell, and Hooker was forced into a hut by about twenty-five men. They were taken back to Tumloong; Campbell, a prisoner, and Hooker a voluntary prisoner so as to accompany his friend. It was not until December 24, after much unpleasant treatment, that they were released near Darjeeling by a frightened Dewan.

These remarkable journeys had taken Hooker three-quarters of the way round Kangchenjunga, and had he been successful in crossing the head of the Lhonak Chu, which he ascended to over 13,300 ft., he might well have travelled right round the mountain. Yet the results of his exploration around Kangchenjunga, telling also of his geological and botanical work were published before our Club was formed. Later he was to be one of the Club's most distinguished Honorary Members.⁴

As already mentioned, Dr. Hooker was indebted to his friend Dr. Campbell in many ways and not least in providing rough descriptions and directions of distant journeys to and from Darjeeling, including Phari, Lhasa, Shigatzi, and Choongtam. These had been compiled from discussions with traders and Lamas who had done the journeys, such accounts being cross-checked as far as possible. Hooker states that he found the *Routes or Itineraries from Darjeeling to Lassa* most valuable. These were subsequently published in the *Bengal Asiatic Journal* for November, 1848, and in the Asiatic Society's *Journal* for April and November, 1848,⁵ and they were illustrated by a chart of a portion of Colonel A. S. Waugh's Great Trigonometrical Survey, 1847. So far as Sikkim is concerned, Colonel Waugh's Survey was completed from Darjeeling. Hooker includes in his own map many of Waugh's peaks, and there acknowledges his indebtedness.

In 1852, Captain W. S. Sherwill, a Revenue Surveyor, then doing geological work, went via the Kulhait (Kalet) River and the Kotang

⁴ *A. J.* 14. 414.

⁵ Copy in A.C. Library.

Pokhari district to survey the Nepal frontier west of Jongri and Kabur, and made a map of the headwaters of the Ringbi, Yunga and Yalung, which Hooker incorporated in his map as being more correct than his own. Sherwill was unable to progress further north than Kabur and returned to Darjeeling via Yoksam and Pemayangtse.⁶

During April to August, 1855, Hermann von Schlagintweit, while in charge of the Magnetic Survey of India, visited Sikkim. In *Reisen in Indien und Hoch-Asien*, vol. 2 (1871), the story is told of his journey to Darjeeling, where he waited for permission to travel to come from Yumtang. During this period he explored the nearby deep valleys, including that of the Rangit. When permission to travel was refused, Dr. Campbell, still Superintendent of Darjeeling and the Governor-General's Agent, advised Schlagintweit to follow the Singalila ridge to the north until stopped.

On May 7 he set out with a party of Lepchas and reached the top of Tonglo Peak two days later. After staying several days in the area, they reached the summit ridge of Phalut. From here Schlagintweit measured the height of Everest as 29,200 ft. and also made panorama paintings of Everest and Kangchenjunga. A little further north the party was stopped by Nepalese troops and then returned to Darjeeling.

The Kangchenjunga panorama was in our Club rooms in 1872,⁷ probably much earlier, and it hangs, at present, in the Committee Room behind Mr. Blakeney's chair.

Further north, Lieut. T. T. Carter, R.E., added to previous knowledge of the district between Darjeeling and Yumtang by his survey sketches made during the march of Colonel J. C. Gawler's force in 1861.

Major J. L. Sherwill with Dr. B. Simpson, Capt. E. Macpherson and W. Kemble in November, 1861, reached the Guicha La for the first time via Yoksam and Jongri. They also ascended the Kabur ridge to a height stated to be 16,500 ft. An account is given in an article entitled 'Journal of a trip undertaken to explore the Glaciers of the Kanchunjingah Group.'⁸

Captain H. J. Harman, R.E., resumed the survey of Sikkim in 1878 and made serious attempts to climb some of the high mountains. He attempted Chomiomo, but failed through the refusal of his men to continue. He reached the Donkhy Pass (18,400 ft.) where he spent the night without much protection in order to measure, in the morning, the high mountains to the north. He was badly frost-bitten.

He tried to reach the Talung Monastery, but the people, fearing his intrusion, forced him to turn back. He also surveyed other unmapped valleys and the results of the work done at this time were embodied in the map compiled by him (1 in. = 16 miles) and published in 1882. Harman died in Florence shortly after being invalided home in 1881. His survey was completed by Mr. W. Robert, an Assistant Surveyor,

⁶ 'Notes of a Journey in the Sikkim Himalayas' in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, vol. 22, 1854.

⁷ *A.J.* 6. 45.

⁸ *Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal*, vol. 31, 1862 (Map 1 in. = 4 miles).

during the winter of 1883. He made his way for a considerable distance up the streams which drain the Eastern face of the Kangchenjunga Group experiencing the same difficulties and hardships which Hooker had in that locality. His explorations included the Zemu river and in 1881 he had published a manuscript sketch map of East Nepal (1 in. = 2 miles). This map was highly praised by W. W. Graham⁹ who also reported in November, 1883, that W. Robert had just climbed Donkia (*sic*) (23,180 ft.).¹⁰

Three very able natives were trained by the Indian Survey for work in Sikkim and East Nepal. Known by various names, initials, or as 'Pundits,' they completed remarkable journeys and produced maps of their routes. While the full story is told in the Survey of India Reports, the parts that increase our knowledge of Kangchenjunga are conveniently reproduced in Freshfield's *Round Kangchenjunga*, except for Ugyen Gya-Tsho's third journey.

Lama Ugyen Gya-Tsho of Pemayangtse Monastery, a Tibetan teacher at Darjeeling and Babu Sarat Chandra Das, Headmaster of the Tibetan Boarding School at Darjeeling, went together in 1879 to Tashi-lhumpo via Jongri, Kang La, Yalung, 'Chunjerma,' Ghunsa, Kangbachen, Ramtang, the Chabuk La and Chorten Nyima La. In 1881, they travelled to Lhasa, entering Nepal by Chumbab La, just south of Kang La Peak, later joining the 1879 track and then by Yalung, 'Chunjerma,' Ghunsa, the Yangma and Pabuk valleys, and the Kanglachen Pass (Khang La) into Tibet.

In 1883, Lama Ugyen Gya made a third journey from Darjeeling to Lhasa and back by another route. He left Darjeeling in June via the Lachen Valley and crossed the frontier at the Donkhy Pass. The map produced of the Sikkim portion was 1 in. = 16 miles.

During the winter of 1883, Rinsing or Rinzin Namgyal, a Bhutia and cousin of Lama Ugyen-Gya, assisted W. Robert by exploring the Talung valley. He established the position of the Talung Monastery. In October, 1884, he crossed into Nepal and was the first to explore the Yalung Glacier. He reached 19,000 ft. and surveyed the area.

He followed the route of Chandra Das north to the Jongsong La which he crossed on November 16, turned north to visit the Chorten Nyima La and returning descended by the Lhonak Chu and the Lachen route back to Darjeeling, thus completing the first near circuit of our mountain and later making a map on the scale of 1 in. = 4 miles.¹¹

Captain F. W. O'Connor and Mr. Claude White also explored extensively in this area, but it is necessary now to proceed with accounts of actual climbing on Kangchenjunga and the surrounding summits. Before doing so, however, mention must be made of one other journey as it is the first recorded of a woman traveller in these parts.

The story published anonymously in 1876 as *The Indian Alps and*

⁹ *A. J.* 12. 52.

¹⁰ *A. J.* 11. 404. (Report is doubtful.)

¹¹ Reports of these and other surveys can be found well set out in *Records of the Survey of India*, vol. 8 of the 1915 edition in the Club Library.

For further details see *Reports of Survey of India*, 1881-2, 1882-3, 1883-4.

how we crossed them is difficult to follow either with an old, or with a recent map. The journey was made in winter, along and across the Singalila ridge. On the map published with the book, the route is shown as terminating above the snowline on the southern slopes of 'Junnoo.' The descent to Tseram was made from or near Kang La. It has not been possible to discover the lady's name, but the writer has a hunch from reading contemporary writing that it was a Mrs. Brandis (? wife of Dr. Brandis, Inspector of Forests). Messrs. Longmans, Green & Co. Ltd. very kindly searched their surviving records and state that negotiations for publishing the book were conducted by a Mrs. Mazuchetti.*

The first climbs in the near vicinity of Kangchenjunga were made by W. W. Graham in October, 1883. He relates how he ascended Kabru (24,015 ft.), the highest point ascended at that time. He climbed another peak in the Kabru Group (20,000 ft.), and also Jubonu (19,528 ft.), and also crossed the Guicha La from the south. His Kabru ascent caused considerable controversy at the time and since. Forked Peak was probably the mountain climbed.¹²

Another exploration with the intention of climbing mountains was that of D. W. Freshfield and his party, excellently recorded in his *Round Kangchenjunga*. They were the first Europeans to complete the circuit of the mountain. He had with him about fifty porters and, as guide, Rinsing, who, as already mentioned, had himself travelled round the mountain in 1883 taking a clockwise route, whereas Freshfield, in 1899, went in the opposite direction. In addition to crossing the Jongsong La from east to west for the first time, Freshfield climbed Kabru, reached the Guicha La, and explored the Zemu Glacier to the base of the eastern buttress of Kangchenjunga. Ideas of climbing Kabru and other mountains had to be abandoned because of bad weather and early winter conditions. The map produced on the expedition by Professor Garwood and the fine pictures brought back by Vittorio Sella added greatly to our knowledge of the region.

The first attempt to climb Kangchenjunga was made by a Swiss party from the Yalung Glacier in 1905, and ended in disaster. The party was under the leadership of Aleister Crowley and included Dr. J. Jacot-Guillarmod, C. A. Reymond, Lieut. A. A. Pache, and an Italian, A. de Righi. The expedition reached the Yalung Valley via the Singalila ridge and Chumbab La and established a camp at 20,300 ft. in about the same place as the 1954 Reconnaissance Expedition. They climbed a further 1,000 ft., but while descending during the afternoon of September 1, a party was caught by an avalanche and Lieut. Pache and three natives were killed. The story of the expedition is told by Dr. Jacot-Guillarmod in *Jahrbuch des S.A.C.*¹³ and elsewhere, and those further interested may see pictures of six camps in an article entitled 'Au

* The book is listed in British Museum under Nina Elizabeth Mazuchelli.—T. S. B.

¹² *A.J.* 11. 402-6 and 12. 25-52; *Geographical Journal*, vol. 3 N.S.

¹³ Vol. 41 (1906), pp. 190-205.

Kangchinjunga' in *L'Echo des Alpes*¹⁴; the scene of two accidents in the *Jahrbuch*, and a 'Panorama of the Yalung Glacier' in the *Beilagen zum Jahrbuch*.¹⁵

The story of the behaviour of Crowley need not be enlarged upon here, except to say that he refused to assist with the rescue operations. A biography of Crowley, published in 1951, justifies its unusual title, *The Great Beast*.¹⁶

An attempt on Kabru was made by two Norwegian climbers, C. W. Rubenson and I. Monrad-Aas,¹⁷ the latter a complete novice in mountaineering, who reached within 50 ft. of the summit in October, 1907, having started from the East Ratong and Kabur Glaciers on the south of the mountain. They spent thirteen days at or over 19,500 ft.

Another and successful climb on this mountain was made twenty-eight years later in November, 1935, by C. R. Cooke with G. Schoberth, following Rubenson's route. Cooke made the final ascent to the north summit alone. Photographs of 'The Dome' from Kabru taken by the two expeditions are almost identical.¹⁸ Cooke also reached with a porter the Ratong La and saw the Yalung Glacier.

Dr. A. M. Kellas made five important expeditions into Sikkim in the years 1907, 1909, 1910, 1911 and 1912.¹⁹ So much new ground was covered and so many passes reached or crossed that it is impossible to give more than the briefest summary of his successful explorations around Kangchenjunga. He attempted Simvu three times and crossed the Jongsong La to Pangperma to examine the West face of Kangchenjunga. He ascended the Langpo Peak and reached the Langpo La and a col at the head of the Lhonak Glacier. He also reached the Zemu Gap, the Simvu Saddle, Nepal Gap, and crossed Tent Peak Pass and Longridge Pass and examined, from distant heights, the upper portion of the North and North-west faces of Kangchenjunga. His panoramas, pictures and accounts further extended our knowledge of this area.

Harold Raeburn made two expeditions into Sikkim in 1920, the second of which was with C. G. Crawford during September and October. They reached Tseram via the Semo La. They ascended the Yalung Glacier, their fifth camp being near the rocks of Kangchenjunga at 20,000 ft. They subsequently climbed a further 1,000 ft., but through lack of supplies made no further attempt on the mountain. The account in the *ALPINE JOURNAL*²⁰ is well illustrated. On the return the party made the first recorded crossing of the Ratong La on their way back to Darjeeling.

A reference must be made to N. A. Tombazi's photographic expedition to the Southern glaciers of Kangchenjunga. The tour included the crossing of the Guicha La and the first climb to the Zemu Gap from the Tongshyong Glacier.²¹ The photographs are superb and may be

¹⁴ No. 8 (1914), pp. 390-406.

¹⁵ Vol. 41 (1906); *Sphere*, Nov. 18, 1905.

¹⁶ By John Symonds.

¹⁷ *A.J.* 24. 63-67 and 310-21.

¹⁸ *A.J.* 48. 182-3 and *H.J.* 8. 107-17.

¹⁹ *A.J.* 34. 408-14; 26. 52-54; 26. 113-42 and 27. 125-53.

²⁰ *A.J.* 34. 33-50.

²¹ *Geographical Journal*, No. 67 (1925).

seen in the A.C. library in a privately printed edition, limited to 152 copies.

For the sake of completeness the strange story of Edgar Francis Farmer must be mentioned. Well equipped with book knowledge but apparently with no practical knowledge of mountaineering, he went out in 1929, and after some indefinite wanderings finished up in breach of his undertaking, at the Yalung Glacier with the intention of climbing Kangchenjunga. He camped near Raeburn's site, and went off in the direction of the Talung Saddle, leaving his three ill-clad and ill-provisioned porters in camp. He was lost to the sight of his porters on May 27 and not heard of again. The porters returned to Darjeeling with some difficulty.²²

The first of the determined attempts to climb Kangchenjunga was made by a Bavarian party led by Dr. Paul Bauer, during August and September, 1929. With base camp three hours to the east of Green Lake they made an heroic attempt to surmount the North-east spur of the mountain. On August 26, Camp 4 was placed at 17,056 ft. after many strenuous efforts, including scooping out the ice-wall for a camp, but they failed several times to reach the crest above this. Eventually they established Camp 7 but a blizzard forced a retreat until September 9 when that camp was re-occupied through new snow three to five feet deep. After days of step cutting and hacking a way through and over pinnacles, the crest was reached on September 16 and Camp 8 was set up on September 21. On the way to Camp 9 at 21,646 ft., a vertical tunnel 26 ft. high took two days to construct. Camps 8, 9 and 10 were ice-caves for 6 to 8 persons and the last, at 23,288 ft., was occupied on October 2. Later they reached their highest point 24,272 ft. before being chased off the mountain by a terrific storm. Within twenty-four hours, seven feet of new snow were on their line of retreat. It is impossible to record in a few words the events of their desperate and dangerous descent. It is sufficient to say that the party slowly and painfully, yet safely, made their way back to base camp in about ten days, five of which had been on the ridge.²³

The next assault was from the north-west in May and June, 1930, by an International party led by Professor Dyhrenfurth. The late F. S. Smythe, G. W. Wood-Johnson, and J. S. Hannah were members, and Lt.-Col. H. W. Tobin was transport officer, as he had been for the 1929 Bavarian party. The climbers approached Pangperma, the base camp on the Kangchenjunga Glacier, via Kang La, Tseram and the Kangbachen Valley. Immense transport problems were presented, but were overcome by Tobin and Wood-Johnson and Hannah.

The route proposed was to the North ridge. By May 1 they were able to view the problem but discovered in front hopeless precipices of rock and ice, the latter 700 to 1,000 ft. high. Camp 2 was established at c. 19,500 ft. and another at 20,000 ft. After days of extremely

²² *A. J.* 42. 363-7; *H. J.* 2. 120-1 and 186.

²³ *A. J.* 42. 185-202; *H. J.* 2. 13-20; *Im Kampf um den Himalaja*, P. Bauer (1931).

difficult ice climbing to establish Camp 3 on the first ledge, a huge mass of the ice-wall collapsed and crossed the track used by the climbers. Schneider was at the foot of the wall as it crashed. Chetin, perhaps the finest of the Himalayan porters, was killed and it seemed a miracle that the others escaped.

It was then decided to attempt the North-west ridge, but this according to Smythe, was the most terrible ridge he had seen and an impossible approach to the summit. After great efforts and difficult rock climbing at 21,000 ft., it was agreed that there was no hope by this route. They climbed Ramthang Peak *c.* 23,000 ft. and while on it Smythe photographed an avalanche which passed over three former camp sites and covered a mile of glacier. Schneider and Wieland later reached a good crossing place on the North ridge of Kangchenjunga a little to the north-west of the Nepal Gap at 20,014 ft. and noted that the descent on the other side would not be difficult. Schneider climbed Nepal Peak alone because Wieland was unwell. Other peaks were climbed, including Jongsong Peak, and the party arrived back at Darjeeling on June 22.²⁴

The Bavarians made their second attempt on the North-east spur in 1931, again led by Paul Bauer. At the beginning of July, they were established in their base camp with the assistance of Lt.-Col. Tobin and E. O. Shebbeare, as in 1929. The climb started on July 14 and Camp 7 at 18,569 ft. was ready on July 19. Here the climbers stayed two months while eighty loads were transported to it or beyond. It was not safe to work on this part of the climb after 10 A.M. and even then they were continuously bombarded by falling boulders. They made a systematic survey of the times and directions of these stone falls so as to avoid the hazard. Above this the ice and snow ridge took on fantastic forms; towers, mushroom-shaped pinnacles, lateral ribs, ice curtains and huge icicles. It was through this terrain that a route, safe for laden porters had to be hewed as far as the 'level ridge.' The weather became warmer, the slopes melted and the path was destroyed. This had not been anticipated, and it became necessary to make a half-way camp on the crest, only a foot wide, where the advance party lived while preparing the route above. Damp brought on chills and lumbago and a rest of three days was needed.

On August 1 the advance recommenced and on August 9, porters set out to make Camp 8. During the advance, however, there was an accident, the origin of which is uncertain, but Schaller, who was leading and Pasang, second man, shot down a gully on to the glacier below and were killed. Tsin Norbu, the third man, was saved by a rock belay. After the others had buried their comrades, they determined to continue the climb, but did not reach Camp 8 until August 24. Five pinnacles, 20 to 30 feet high, had to be removed and the melting snow became dangerous. Above Camp 8, the ice difficulties increased but after eight days Camp 9 was set up and Camp 10 six

²⁴ *A.J.* 42. 202-26; *H.J.* 3. 77-91; *The Kangchenjunga Adventure*, F. S. Smythe, 1930; *Himalaya. Unsere Expedition*, 1930, G. O. Dyhrenfurth (1931).

days later. On September 12, six climbers and three porters were in Camp 10. In knee-deep snow, Camp 11 was made on September 15. Ice caves were made on these sites. The top of the North-east spur was reached two days later. On September 18, an advance was made with the intention of making an ice cave for Camp 12, but the advance was stopped as the slope forming the sole access to the North ridge was unassailable because of great risks of avalanche. There was now no prospect of improvement in the slope and, as it snowed daily the retreat was begun after having reached 25,098 ft. The story speaks for itself. The party returned to Darjeeling on October 19, Allwein and Pircher, with three porters, making the first crossing of the Simvu Saddle and descent of the Passanram Valley.²⁵

The next probing of the defences of Kangchenjunga was done during the autumn of 1937 by an expedition organised by C. R. Cooke and including John Hunt and his wife. Originally its object was an attempt to reach the most easterly summit of Kangchenjunga by climbing a prominent spur leading to the East ridge. This plan was changed, however, for one which examined the possibility of reaching the North Col, between Kangchenjunga and the Twins and the feasibility of continuing from there to the highest summit of Kangchenjunga and also to the higher summit of the Twins. It will be noted that as far back as 1937 the present Chairman of the Alpine Club Committee responsible for sponsoring this year's expedition to Kangchenjunga was already giving thought to the possibility of climbing the mountain.

First the Nepal Gap was examined and this was reached, unroped, on November 5 in such a strong wind that at one time, Hunt was lifted from his steps. A suitable place was found for two tents just below the corniced ridge. On November 7, the South-west summit of Nepal Peak was reached by Hunt; Cooke not feeling well enough to complete the climb. Later the first crossing from Nepal Gap Glacier to the Twins Glacier was made over a col in the Twins-Sugarloaf ridge.

On November 14, Cooke with two Sherpas, set off for the North Col, about 22,620 ft., or 2,500 ft. above the névé of the Twins Glacier. At the end of the second day, they camped at about 19,700 ft. during bitter weather. After a preliminary sortie, they continued with a tent and stores and for three days made good progress over a variety of difficulties, at the same time traversing towards the col. Eventually, Cooke found the step-cutting on a long ice slope so slow and exhausting that he decided to admit defeat about 600 ft. below his objective. He regrets that from the glacier, the appearance of the wall below the col deceived them into making only a brief reconnaissance when a more thorough one might well have resulted in a successful ascent to the col.²⁶

Mention should be made of the remarkable ascent of Tent Peak made by E. Grob, L. Schmaderer, and H. Paidar in 1939. This is

²⁵ *Um den Kantsch*, 1931, Paul Bauer (1933); *Himalayan Campaign*, by Paul Bauer (1937), contains a fine verbal and pictorial account of both expeditions; *A.J.* 44. 13-24; *H.J.* 4. 116-22.

²⁶ *H.J.* 10. 49-70; *A.J.* 50. 109-14 and 53. 194-202.

the highest peak climbed to the immediate north of Kangchenjunga. The climb began on May 24, and instead of attempting a direct route, the party started from the Nepal Gap Glacier and continued to the Nepal Gap and thence traversed Nepal Peak to their objective. They were compelled to take their porters over a difficult climb to about 22,960 ft. on Nepal Peak, about three-quarters of an hour from the summit. Here the climbers left their porters on May 28 and continued alone, taking two tents with them. At the end of a long day, they cut a platform for the tent in a crevasse on the ridge between the two mountains. All the way so far, the ridge had been very narrow and this was to continue. The second day, there was a sharp wind from Nepal. After much difficult climbing on rock and ice, they reached the summit of Tent Peak and got back to their camp, where they spent a bitterly cold night. The following day the warmth of the sun helped them to return to their porters. They were all short of food and weary, the porters uncertain in their steps because of their great anxiety during the waiting period, but they slowly overcame the difficulties and dangers on the way down and reached their Base Camp on June 2.²⁷

Some years elapsed before the idea of climbing Kangchenjunga was considered again. In September and October, 1951, Gilmour Lewis and the late Georg Frey, then Assistant Swiss Trade Commissioner in Bombay, went up the Yalung Glacier. I am indebted to Mr. Lewis for the following information. First, a peak *c.* 18,000 ft. was climbed in the Kangla Nangma Group from Upper Ramser. Then the party went to Nao Camp and while Frey and Tenzing visited Pache's grave, Lewis and Ang Dawa (IV) ascended to about 19,000 ft. on Talung Peak Rib which was used two years later for the ascent on North Kabru. Lewis was then obliged to return to Darjeeling which he did by crossing the Ratong La into Sikkim. His climbing had been limited by illness, but he had seen sufficient of Kangchenjunga to want to return. The 1953 and 1954 expeditions were due to his enthusiasm, and he has given valuable help to the 1955 Expedition in connection with the approach march. Unfortunately, Frey was killed, shortly after Lewis left, while he was climbing a 19,130 ft. peak to the south-east of Koptang.²⁸

During April and May, 1953, G. Lewis went again to the Yalung Valley, this time with J. W. R. Kempe. The account of this is so recent that it is necessary only to recall their attempt on Boktoh on the west side of the valley; their ascent of the North shoulder of Koptang, a few hundred feet below the summit and the ascent of the Northern shoulder of Kabru to just below the northern summit. Both summits were missed because of misgivings as to the state of snow on the way down. From Kabru the South face of Kangchenjunga was examined and after reconnoitring the lower defences of the mountain, Lewis considered that, in spite of Smythe's opinion to the contrary, a possible route up could be found.²⁹

²⁷ *H. J.* 13. 46-53.

²⁸ *H. J.* 17. 163; *The Mountain World*, 1954, p. 189.

²⁹ *H. J.* 7. 67-75; *A. J.* 59. 316-22.

This led to the further reconnaissance of the mountain in April and May, 1954, by J. W. R. Kempe, G. Lewis, S. R. Jackson, J. W. Tucker, T. H. Braham and Dr. D. S. Mathews. The expedition had the limited objective of finding a route which would appear to lead to the summit. Three routes were examined: Pache's Grave route, one below the Talung Saddle, and the last by the main ice-face, all with the view of reaching the large ice-shelf which runs across the mountain at about 22,000 to 23,000 ft. Valuable information was obtained and a safe route was discovered to near the top of the lower ice-fall.

The official report of the expedition³⁰ together with the photographs and reports of individual members were considered by a subcommittee appointed in April, 1954, under the Chairmanship of Sir John Hunt. Their recommendation that an expedition to the mountain should be sponsored by the Club was accepted. It was hoped that the party would be able to reconnoitre the unexplored upper portion of the mountain, and plans have been made on this basis. The Club is fortunate in that Charles Evans has agreed to lead the expedition, which sailed from Liverpool on February 12, 1955. H.R.H. the Duke of Edinburgh has consented to become its Patron.

KANGCHENJUNGA. In spelling the name of the mountain, it was decided to use the spelling which has been current in this country for about seventy years and was crystallised by Freshfield's book. Geographers and scholars unanimously report in favour of this spelling and their arguments merit study. His Highness the Maharaja of Sikkim argues strongly for this form.³¹ The glacier is spelt thus on the Indian Survey Map, but the mountain is spelt without the initial 'g.'

MAPS

The best single maps of the area :

Marcel Kurz : Massif of Kangchenjunga, 1 : 100,000 (1931) reproduced in *A. J.* 44. 176.

Dr. Karl Wien : Zemu Glacier, 1 : 33,333 (1932), reproduced in *H. J.* 7 (end) and in Paul Bauer's *Um den Kantsch*.

References have been quoted throughout this article but readers are reminded of an extensive bibliography of the mountain in Professor Dyhrenfurth's book on his International Expedition and of the numerous references in *Berge der Welt*.

³⁰ *A. J.* 59. 428-31.

³¹ *H. J.* 2. 131-3 ; 3. 152-5 and 4. 198-214.