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KANCHENJUNGA

Approaching Third Attack on the Unscaled Peak

AN INTERNATIONAL EXPEDITION

Special Dispatches and Photographs.

[This is the first of a series of exclusive articles and dispatches on the forthcoming expedition for the conquest of Kanchenjunga which the "Manchester Guardian" will publish by arrangement with the "Times." Dispatches will be received from a Special Correspondent accompanying the climbers, and it is expected that there will be many interesting photographs.]

The strongest mountaineering expedition that has ever visited the Himalaya will shortly leave Europe to attempt the ascent of Kanchenjunga, the second highest peak in the world. Famous climbers of five nations—Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Italy, and Great Britain—are taking part in this expedition, which is the third to attempt the unconquered peak. Professor G. O. Dyhrenfurth, of Germany, will lead the expedition. He will be accompanied by Frau Dyhrenfurth, and by Herr H. Hoerlin, Herr U. Wieland, and Dr. H. Richter; by Herr M. Kurz and Herr C. Duvanel, of Switzerland; by Herr E. Schneider, of Austria; by Herr Enrico Gaspari, of Italy; and by Mr. F. S. Smythe, of Great Britain. It is hoped that Mr. E. O. Shebbeare, a member of the last Mount Everest expedition and forest officer for Sikkim, will be able to join the party. The advance party will sail from Venice on February 24 and will be followed by the remainder of the expedition, who will sail from Venice on March 9. The expedition will leave Darjeeling towards the end of March, and the attempt on Kanchenjunga will be made at the end of April or the beginning of May before the monsoon, which normally breaks in this district during the latter half of May.

Primarily it is a young men's adventure, with the object of conquering a great unscaled peak. However, the party will not be blind to all save the actual goal of their climb, and it is hoped that, if the conditions are reasonably favourable, the most tangible result of the expedition will be a film—the highest cinemato-

graphic pictures ever taken anywhere—and an extensive series of panoramas and "still" photographs. Two members of the party are geologists, and in the intervals of climbing they will have plenty of new material to study. No expedition of this kind would conceivably ignore the natural history of the unexplored regions through which it will pass, and one member of the party is a cartographer. All except the Nepalese side of the mountain has been mapped with some exactitude, but many of the details of the higher regions are missing, and the heads of the glaciers on the Nepalese side have never been surveyed.



EARLIER ATTEMPTS.

Two expeditions have previously attempted the ascent of Kanchenjunga. The first, a Swiss expedition, in which Mr. Aleister Crowley took part, in 1905, attacked the southern face of the mountain above the Yalung Glacier, but met with disaster, one climber and three porters being swept into a crevasse by an avalanche. The second expedition, consisting of experienced Bavarian mountaineers, assaulted the tremendous eastern face of the mountain from the Zemu Glacier in 1929, but were forced to retreat by bad weather after reaching a height of 24,600 ft. So difficult was the long lee ridge chosen as the line of ascent that the climbers took three weeks in overcoming 2,300 feet of height.

The party may indeed be regarded as the hardest and most expert team of mountaineers that has yet got together to attempt one peak. All its members are widely experienced both in winter and in summer mountaineering, many of them being Alpine climbers of international fame, and every one of them is an

expert ski-runner. Kanchenjunga is 28,150 feet high, and so great a part does physical fitness play in success or failure at this great altitude that all the party must needs be in perfect health and training and at the height of their powers. The expedition is equipped and organized with the greatest care, after a close study of the experiences of previous expeditions. At least two members are expert photographers.

Kanchenjunga, on the main watershed of the Himalaya, is 150 miles south-east of Mount Everest. Only in its great height has it anything in common with Everest. In every other respect it is incomparably the finer mountain. It is not a single, isolated peak of rock, like Everest, but a mountain massif, of several peaks only a little lower than the summit, with a host of subsidiary peaks and pinnacles. Even these lesser eminences are among the finest peaks in the world, yet none of the greater of them has been climbed. A Norwegian party in 1908 all but gained the summit of Kabru (24,000 ft.), Kanchenjunga's nearest neighbour.

THE MOUNTAIN.

Kanchenjunga itself rises in a series of giant ridges to a twin summit. To the mountaineer, staring up at these ridges, they seem hopelessly long, and they are riven and torn by pinnacles and peaks that in the Alps would count as separate and formidable climbs. Huge masses of hanging glacier cling to the many faces of the mountain, and many thousands of tons of ice and snow frequently break off and thunder down the enormous precipices and lie below till they are recompacted into the glaciers that slide towards the valleys. The loveliest of the lesser peaks that cluster round the summit of Kanchenjunga is Siniolchum, which has been called the "embodiment of inaccessibility." It is perhaps the most beautiful snow mountain in the world. It is built up of knife-like ridges of ice, so thin that sometimes the sun can be seen shining through them, giving to their sweeping lines an ethereal, fairy-like brilliance and beauty.

Kanchenjunga, rising from the great main ridge of the Himalaya, Kanchenjunga is 50 miles north of Darjeeling, on the borders of Sikkim, Tibet, and Nepal. Between it and Darjeeling is range upon range of lower hills. Many of these serried ranks of mountains are themselves over 10,000 ft., but from below they appear as mere ripples against the huge snowy waves of Kanchenjunga. The traveler, moving up from Darjeeling, passes in these mountains and valleys through every range of temperature and climate. Darjeeling itself is at 8,000 ft., but he will immediately drop into valleys no more than 200 ft. or 300 ft. above sea level—deep chasms of intense tropical heat, where malaria and

dysentery are rife and the rich, exotic undergrowth breeds mosquitoes and conceals leeches. As the valleys ascend towards the snows their sides are clothed with the dwarf rhododendrons of the Himalaya, whose blossoming in May and June is a glorious spectacle. Higher still the dense vegetation gives place to more open slopes, like the slopes of the Alps, bright with gentians, primulas, and saxifrages. Higher still is a frozen land of immense glaciers and snow-peaks, where Arctic temperatures and icy winds predominate. In the three weeks' journey the mercury may have fallen through 150 degrees of the thermometer.

There is comparatively little game in Sikkim, except yaks and wild goats, but the glacier moraines above the valleys are inhabited by the little marmots common in the Alps. With the astonishing variety of the scenery goes a treacherous climate, but the winds of Kanchenjunga are not so strong as those that blow on Everest. Snowfalls, however, are often exceptionally heavy; no less than 6 ft. of snow fell during the Bavarian attempt on Kanchenjunga. The monsoon comes earlier to Kanchenjunga than to Everest, since it is the farther south.

TWO ROUTES FROM DARJEELING.

There are two routes from Darjeeling to Kanchenjunga. One goes by way of the Rathong Valley and over the Jongri and Kang La Passes, 13,140ft. and 18,300ft. respectively, to Khumza and Kangbachen in Nepal. The Kanchenjunga Glacier, which falls from the western cliffs of the mountain ends. The other route falls from the eastern face of the mountain, by way of the deep valley of the Teesta River to Lachen. The expedition will probably make its base camp, to be under the care of Frau Dyhrenfurth, at about 17,000ft. Above that there will probably be six more camps, like those made in the attempt on Mount Everest. Only by such a series of camps being pushed higher and higher up the mountain, till the last is within striking distance of the summit, can a party hope to have any secure chance in the final assault.

The success of any great expedition of this kind must rest largely with the native porters who have to carry the loads up to the great altitudes and make the camps. The Sherpa-Nepalese, born and bred in the mountains of Nepal and accustomed to living above 10,000ft., are mountaineers by nature. The three Mount Everest expeditions were manned with these men, and it is hoped that this expedition will be able to get the services of as many as can be of the porters who worked in the Everest expeditions. 200 local porters, Lepchas and Tibetans, will be engaged to carry the expedition's food from Darjeeling to the base camp.

An account of the climbers taking part in the expedition is given on page 7.