

**THE PIONEER  
ALLAHABAD, INDIA  
20 SEPTEMBER 1905  
(pages 3-4)**

**"ON THE KINCHIN LAY."**

**THE MARCH.**

We left Talut after a welcome day of rest; the weather itself seemed to have got tired, or perhaps mountain-sick, and it merely drizzled as I went down to Chabanjong, where I found de Righi, whom I had sent ahead to hurry on Mr. White's coolies, amusing himself by watching an Italian flag which he had brought and hoisted. If I had known, I would have brought him a clockwork crow. The coolies had, however, left, and it was with a few words of gentle admonition that I persuaded our men to follow me up the steep path to the ridge. The coolie if he sees a place fit to sleep in, thinks it is a shame not to do so. However, my kind words, which I have every reason to believe will never die, prevailed. The ridge beyond Chabanjong is heavily forested, and I spent a good deal of time blazing the trees. In the words of a great American poet and gentleman,

"His sinuous path, by blazes, wound  
Among trunks grouped in myriads round."

As Poe justly remarks: " 'By blazes' is not intended for an oath.

The weather, all the fresher for its repose, came down heavier than ever, and it was a miserably soaked Crowley that squatted, in spite of the arthritis in his left knee, under a rock, and prayed for the tents. I don't know where this camp was, they called it Chuaktanko. The road is everywhere an unexpectedly excellent mountain track, right from Chabanjong to the end of this article.

On Monday, the 14th, we went miserably on, though it cleared for a short time at midday, and on the 15th we reached what I believe to have been the Negro [sic] Cave. I refrain from harrowing my readers by vivid descriptions of the beastly condition of body and mind in which one remained. The 16th was too wet to make a start; it came down in sheets; and there

wasn't a dry blanket in the party, so the sheets had to do. We were somewhat cheered in the afternoon though, for what we at first supposed to be a drowned marmot turned out to be a Head Constable from Darjeeling with a letter from the Deputy Commissioner informing us that the Nepal authorities consented to our invasion, and would send a responsible guide to conduct us to Klunza and other places to which we did not want to go. However, we will guide him instead.

On the 17th the weather was again mountain-sick, the symptoms being those described by Sir Martin Conway, perhaps the finest stylist of his age, as "an extreme disinclination for any form of exertion." Anyhow, it did not rain till eight o'clock. I took advantage of this to climb a viewpoint in the neighbourhood, but it availed me little. I got down into the valley of Gamotanj at a quarter to 5 after 9 hours' walking and three hours' sitting in the rain arguing with Mr. White's coolies, over whose proceedings I will draw a veil. As to the scenery, it was exactly like average Welsh mountain scenery, in every detail but the flora and the fauna. The Valley of Gamotanja is, however, worth seeing; I recommend everybody to go there. Closely skirted on all sides, one gets the whole sweep of the richly forested vale up to the bare grey rocks, and behind one may catch a glimpse of the snows. If one could only see crooked one could see much more. Things are badly arranged after all, as Buddha pointed out, though the fact of his having been a voluptuary for twenty-two years and an ascetic for six may to some minds detract from the value of his opinion.

From Gamotanj the road mounts to a lovely scene. Of lakes in these jurnies one soon becomes blasé, and passes with scarce a glance dozens of places, the most commonplace of which would make the fortune of any European resort, and thence goes steeply to the Chumbab by a steep yet excellent track. On the far Nepalese side one slogs along over the stony track for a long way, until a great block of quartz stuck up squarely in a valley with a very inadequate space of level grass around it bade us halt for the night. The doctor, who was rear-guard, did not arrive until long after dark; we sent up lamps to light him to his happy home. Several of the coolies did not arrive at all, preferring to curl themselves up under rocks and sit out the night, but the next morning all turned up as brisk and lively as ever. I decided to go on with the doctor to Tseram, an outlying village—if three huts make a village in Nepal—to save the messenger of the Maharaja the trouble of ascending to the Kang La to meet us, and ourselves a similar misery. We con-

sequently started at about half-past ten, and crossed a pass—perhaps the Semo La—which took us into the Tseram valley. We crossed the stream by a native bridge, at least I did; the doctor, sailing along an hour behind everybody, preferred to wade up to his waist. It is related by Sir Martin Conway, perhaps the finest mountaineer that the world has ever seen, that his balance is so perfect that he never crossed one of these native bridges without first attaching to himself by a stout rope two other men, preferably Alpine guides, one on each side of him, thus securing their safety on the dangerous passage. I can make no claim to rival this exploit, and walked over tamely, allowing my men to take their own chance. We camped just below Tseram in the wettest weather we had yet experienced, and, hearing that there was a Customs House at Tseram, I sent to bid the man to my presence, so as to get in touch at once with Nepalese authority. But I was fated to do a "Marvana in the Moated Grange" stunt, and when, in the morning, I went off up the Yalung Valley, I found nobody but an aged and very goitrous couple, and higher still a solitary shepherd. I left a man at Tesram to explain matters to the Maharaja's "guide" and went on up the valley, which now took on the truly mountainous character, by a delightful path. I was rewarded by a fine day; and the tremendous ridge of Kabra, with its splendid masses of ice, made a magnificent background to the glacier with its morains of quartz glistening silver-grey in the sunlight. Before eleven o'clock I reached what in Norway would be called a Saeter—an upland farm with nobody in it. The height, as nearly as I could judge, was from 14 to 15 thousand feet—until calculations are properly worked out, we do not care to specify more closely. I was immensely struck by the imagination shown by Mr. Garwood in his charming effort to depict the physical features of this glacier, which neither he nor any other European had seen. Surely of him it was written: "Blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed." I can hardly bless him though, for his trifling omission to mark as a summit the great rounded peak, second or third in length to Kinchinjanga, caused me at first considerable trouble. A boy at school who made a similar blunder would probably have remarked in his next day's "Essay on Pleasure" that of all pleasures sung by poets, those of sitting down were the most overrated.

Never mind, I may see the mountain itself tomorrow, and in the meantime here I am lying lazily on the grass in the sunshine—the march ended and the glacier to begin; feeling exactly like the famous spadger at the superb moment in his career

when he sat on the grass, and gave the thunderstorm to understand that he felt nothing but contempt for it. So I muse on Kubla Khan and the Ancient Mariner, most appropriate fragments from which come floating into my consciousness every other minute, until the night falls, and I slide into delicious dreams, while Venus, Jupiter, and the moon watch over me. In the morning I wake from dreaming that Government have employed me to survey the entire continent (probably suggested by my struggles with the map), and that, having successfully completed my task, I am about to be invested with three and perhaps four letters to my name, to the far gladder feelings that today I may walk into sight of my long-wished for goal.

### **THE GLACIER.**

On Tuesday, 22nd August, the Doctor and I went up the right bank of the glacier to a small grassy spur jutting from one of the buttresses of Jannu,\* where we established our Camp I. The last hour was over moraine as bad as only virgin Himalayan moraine can be. On the 24th we went on to Camp II, a mere ledge under an overhanging rock; the road was good, save for some short passages, where we were obliged to take to the moraine.

The 25th was a more eventful day, for, having carefully pointed out to the Doctor and Reymond, who had joined us at Camp II, the route to be followed, I thought I was safe in going ahead and finding a good spot for a camp. I did so, by a large square boulder, which I solemnly climbed, and proposed to call Pioneer Boulder, in delicate compliment to Sir Martin Conway's Pioneer Peak. The points of analogy are salient; nobody ever saw it before nor probably will ever see it again. There is, however, this point of difference, that I certainly saw it at the time, and there is no doubt whatever that it is there to be seen. It is open to anyone who has been on the Baltoro Glacier to doubt the existence of Pioneer Peak.

Well, at Pioneer Boulder I waited all day, while the Doctor led his coolies in a circular direction round the head of the valley, letting them camp at the foot of the ridge (Pioneer Ridge), so that I had to run down and join them, in a mood to ice-axe the lot. I said little, however, having to bewail the fact that the rearguard was already becoming slack in the matter of sending supplies up. The Doctor's excuse for stopping on his ridiculous glacier was the rumour that I had broken my leg on the moraine.

It may yet take generations to teach people that mountain accidents are always the results of incompetence. A man who breaks his leg on a moraine is only fit to walk up Ludgate Hill between steady guides. On the 26th we went slowly up to the Pioneer Boulder, Camp III.

On the 27th, I awoke at 3 a.m., and by stupendous efforts got off the men by six o'clock. The Doctor strongly opposed me, urging that the men should be allowed to warm themselves thoroughly before starting; in other words, to go at about 11 o'clock, when it is too hot, and the snow too soft, to make any progress worth speaking of. We went on to the glacier ice at once, and soon began to mount the actual slopes of this ridgetop of Kinchinjunga. The men were much afraid of falling, but a short exhibition of glissading on my part soon convinced them there was nothing to fear. Unfortunately, both the Doctor and Reymond were a little out of sorts, and contributed by their evident fear of the perfectly easy slope to the demoralization of the coolies. However, we at last reached Camp IV by a somewhat nasty slope of rock. The camp itself is perched on a little ledge, and is highly inconvenient. The next day we were obliged to rest, the Doctor being very ill. In the afternoon Pache arrived unexpectedly, and without orders. It was becoming increasingly evident that my comrades were too ignorant to understand that any instructions I gave were for the good of all, and they consequently began the practice of finding ingenious excuses for disobedience. Immediate result: one of Pache's men went off somewhere on his own account, fell, and was killed.

On the 29th the Doctor recovered, went down to find the body, and sent up Pache's valise and some food. Pache had left his coolies half an hour from the camp, and they had, of course, run away. Nobody here will agree with me that strong measures should be taken to prevent the dastardly crime of desertion, nor back me up in any way.

With Pache and Reymond I went up the slopes to Camp V, on the next edge of the little ridge. Reymond works well, but is always annoyed that I will not go first. It is not laziness on my part, though I am as lazy as any man ever was, but the necessity of getting the coolies to go, which they will never do unless authority is behind.

On the 30th we rested and starved, and Pache shivered, no valise nor petroleum having arrived. I spent the morning screwing our shovels to the spikes provided for them, the first occasion on which I have been able to keep on making original

spades without protest from dummy. Not a sign of any relief party. O! if only I could be in the rear guard! But, unfortunately, there is nobody who can choose the route but myself, and to give orders, instructions, or explanations is becoming sheer waste of breath or paper. Nothing short of the eloquence of Sir Boyle Roche plus the aptitudes of his bird would have set things straight. Camp V, where I write this, is some 20,000 feet high, as near as I can judge.

On the 31st the men whom I had sent down to try to get some food returned, having partially succeeded, and I immediately took six of them to make a way up the slopes of the ridge of the little Subyichany peak (which I may call for the moment Peak Y), under which I am sitting. From this ridge I hope to force a passage to the ridge of Kinchinjunga, or to the column visible from Darjeeling. These slopes proved excessively bad after a while, the snow lying thin or hard blue ice at an angle of 50 degrees or more. Easy enough for me with my claws; difficult or impossible for the men. The leader in fact fell who was unroped, but, supporting him, I caught and held him safely. But the shock of the fall shook his nerves, and he began to untie himself from the rope. A sharp tap brought him to his senses, and probably saved his life; the only occasion on which I have had to strike a man. I insisted on continuing the ascent for the sake of moral; but, finding things grew worse, went back before nightfall. The men, however, all went down during the night, with wonderful stories of how they had all been swept away by an avalanche, and how the "Bara Sahib" had beaten them with axes and long sticks, and was going to shoot them, and how—But is there any limit to the Tibetan imagination?

On the 1st September I renewed the assault with the four men left me, and after a good deal of trouble, Reymond, Pache, and Salama got up the worst of the ice slopes. Again disregarding the instructions I had given, they went on with the rope out of sight and call, so that I was left sitting four hours on the slope, unable to get my three loaded men either up or down. The Doctor and De Righi arrived at Camp V, the latter full of petty personal pique, and not in the least ashamed of his failure to supply our camp with food; on the contrary, resolved to desert us, though, in the generosity of his heart, he actually offered to leave us our servants! I descended to Camp V, having with great difficulty induced the Doctor to send up a rope and a man to help down my poor coolies.

On the safe arrival of all at camp—it was later in the day, about 5 o'clock—I especially warned De Righi and Pache, neither of whom knew anything about mountains, of the folly of attempting to descend to Camp III at that time with the doctor, who, I assured them, at the best to be benighted on the mountain. But the Doctor was in great form, and insisted on taking down every man, except Salama and my personal servant, Bahadar Singh, thus leaving me perfectly helpless. My last words to him were that I should descend in the morning *en route* for Darjeeling, and to Pache that I hoped I should see again, but did not expect to. Ignorant or careless of the commonest precautions for securing the safety of the men, they started off, and I turned into my tent with the gloomiest anticipations—justified in half an hour by frantic cries for help and a shout from below that all save the Doctor and De Righi had fallen and were dead.

Reymond hastily set out to render what help he could, though it was perfectly out of the question to render effective aid. Had the Doctor possessed the common humanity or common sense to leave me a proper complement of men at Camp V instead of doing his utmost to destroy my influence, I should have been in a position to send help. As it was, I could do nothing more than send out Reymond on the forlorn hope. Not that I was over-anxious in the circumstances to render help. A mountain "accident" of the sort is one of the things for which I have no sympathy whatever.

It was night, and the finest and loveliest sunset I had ever seen in these parts; the tiny pale crescent of Astait glimmering over the mighty twin peak of Jannu,\*\* the clouds lying over the low highlands of Nepal, while the mighty masses of ice and rock behind me, lit by the last reflection of the day, stood up reproachfully, like lovers, detached as if they knew that I could do no more.

To-morrow I hope to go down and find out how things stand; but in no case shall I consent to continue a journey in which the most necessary orders are construed as brutal tyrannies, and in which the lives of the men as dear to me as my own are wantonly sacrificed to stupidity, obstinacy, and ignorance.

ALLISTER [sic] CROWLEY.

\*—Probably not Jannu throughout. Rare glimpses and a faulty map make certainty impossible for the moment.

\*\*—More probably this great peak is unnamed, Jannu lying further to the S.W.