

slope and only stopped when far out on the level glacier. Here in spite of drizzling rain we sat down on our rucksacks for a rest, the first for 10 hours, and looked back at the S. face. We were half pleased by the successful issue of our expedition and half disgusted by the fact that we had let ourselves be misled by an old rope ring! For now we could see the gully through which Mr. Hasler must have ascended in 1906 and which lay to the E. of our route. Later on I found out that Herren W. Klingler and A. Mottet (A.A.C.B.) had left that seductive rope ring when making this descent in 1913 under quite similar conditions.

We are once again indebted to Herr O. Fahrni for his admirable sketch. The routes marked thereon are as follows:—

1. Mr. F. W. Bourdillon with Adolf Müller and A. Stoller, Aug. 3, 1907.
2. Messrs. H. A. Cohen, E. F. M. Benecke and H. V. Reade with A. Müller, sen., and Joh. Ogi-Müller, Aug. 13, 1892.
3. Dr. Th. Thomas and M. J. Susse with A. Blanc, Aug. 2, 1909.
4. Messrs. A. Müller and H. Schneider, Aug. 10, 1933.
5. Messrs. W. Gerber and A. Müller, Sept. 8, 1933.
6. Mr. A. Aegerter with Joh. Ogi-Müller, Sept. 1, 1895.
7. Messrs. W. Klingler and A. Mottet, 1913.
8. Mr. and Mrs. G. Hasler with Fr. Kaufmann, July 18, 1906.

THE GERMAN ASSAULT ON NANGA PARBAT (1934).

BY ERWIN SCHNEIDER.

(*Translated.*)

NANGA PARBAT, the western corner-stone of the Himalaya and probably the tenth highest peak of the world, has a comparatively ancient history. In 1895 Mummery's party,¹ composed of some of the best and most active mountaineers of the time, made the first attempt—an attack worthy of the party's reputation. Mummery, coming from the Rupal Nullah over the Mazeno Pass to the Diamirai Glacier with two Gurkhas, attained a height of over 20,000 ft. on the W. flank of the mountain. But passing over the Dima Pass to the N. face of the mountain, he disappeared there with his two companions.²

Willy Welzenbach first, then Willy Merkl, began preparations for another assault many years later. In 1932 Merkl led a party of prominent German mountaineers to the peak.³ He tried to find

¹ Messrs. J. N. Collie, G. Hastings and Captain the Hon. C. G. Bruce.—*Editor.*

² *A.J.* 18, 18–32.

³ *Ibid.* 44, 192–200.

a way over the N. flank from the Rakhiot Glacier. With his companions he succeeded, after overcoming great difficulties, in reaching a height of nearly 23,000 ft., the expedition failing through snowstorms and porter troubles.⁴ The party was nevertheless certain that Nanga Parbat was definitely accessible by this—in all probability the *sole*—route.⁵ In 1934 Merkl wished to complete his unfinished task, but fate was once more against him ; the mountain has prevailed again.

The Sports Clubs of the German State Railways provided the necessary funds. Towards the scientific aims of the expedition the *Notgemeinschaft* of German science and the D. u. Œ.A.-V. contributed generously. After months of intensive labour Merkl completed the necessary preparations. The members of the expedition started for India in two parties at the end of March and beginning of April respectively. Merkl was, of course, the leader : as members of the climbing party came Peter Aschenbrenner, who on off days in the Base Camp was able to supply us with ibex, thanks to his skill with the rifle ; Fritz Bechtold was the official photographer ; Alfred Drexel was in charge of the wireless for quick transmission of reports between the different high camps as far as Camp IV ; Peter Müllritter was another photographer, while Willy Welzenbach was second in command of the party ; Ulrich Wieland, together with myself, looked after the high-altitude porters. Dr. W. Bernard was medical officer and Hans Hieronimus commanded the Base. The two transport officers, Captain Frier—who had been in charge of the same in 1932—and Captain Sangster, gave us great assistance, as did the Swiss, Kuhn, who with the German Consul, Kapp, joined the Base Camp a month later, coming from Rawal Pindi. The scientific side, to study topographical, geological, and geographical questions concerning the region, was composed of Doctors Finsterwalder, Misch and Raechl. One of their most important functions was to produce a good map on photogrammetrical methods to illustrate the terrain traversed by the expedition. The map, moreover, should prove a basis for scientific study of the vast mountain range and the solution of all sorts of further problems. We trust that the far-reaching results in these respects—results obtained with great labour—will prove of scientific value.

Thanks to the co-operation and help of the British and Indian officials, as well as that of many friends, our work in India was completed speedily and, by May 2, a start with 500 loads could be

⁴ *A.J.* 46, 347 and footnote 1.

⁵ It is extremely interesting to recall that Lord Conway in 1892 noted this route as the correct one to the summit : see *Climbing in the Himalayas*, p. 132 ; Major-General Sir Herbert Powell, a great authority on the mountain's topography, has also drawn attention to it, but neither of these mountaineers made any reconnaissance.—*Editor.*

made from Srinagar. Accompanying us were thirty-five of the best Sherpa and Bhutia porters, together with their *sirdar*, Lewa, from Darjeeling. These men had all proved their worth on many previous expeditions on difficult ground and at great heights.

Our route from Srinagar to the Base Camp in the Rakhiot glen was well over 100 miles in length. It leads over the Tragbal and Burzil Passes of 11,580 ft. and 13,775 ft. respectively. Both these passes at this season of the year were still lying deep under winter snow. It was not altogether easy, with our large party and in bad weather, to cross them without loss of time. After Astor, one of the smaller resorts on the way to Gilgit, we did not take, as in 1932, the weary route *via* the ridges, but, having the necessary permits, proceeded by the Indus valley to the Rakhiot. At Rakhiot bridge the Indus flows at a height of only 1100 m.; 7000 metres of sheer height separated us from the summit of Nanga Parbat. Nowhere else in the world is there a similar difference of altitude. At the bridge we took in the Indus our last bathe for a long time, reached Tato after a long and steep climb, and attained our former camp in the high forest two days later; seventeen days after our departure from Srinagar we pitched our tents there. At this high altitude the thick snow carpet began; to reach the Base Camp, situated at the same spot as in 1932, we had to break a trail. We sent our Darjeeling and Balti porters, of whom we had collected twenty, up and down in succession with our kit and stores from the above-mentioned camp to the permanent Base. The latter, situated at 3850 m., was now—middle of May—still buried under 7 ft. of snow, its appearance being anything but prepossessing. Camp was pitched in a scooped-out hollow in the snow; the luggage was piled alongside in sorted heaps. Later, on the snow melting, it was a wonderful experience to rest here on off days; the camp gave the impression of a middle-ages town in the midst of modernity.

The first advance to the upper camps was made by Bechtold, Müllritter and Wieland, accompanied by some porters. Camp I was pitched behind the top of the great moraine at the base of Nanga Parbat's N. face, at a height of 4200 m. The object of this reconnaissance was to ascertain snow conditions for a further advance and to enable Bechtold to film the great ice avalanches falling continuously day and night and sweeping the entire 13,000 ft. face. The party returned with the cheering information that snow conditions were very good. One day later Aschenbrenner, Drexel, Welzenbach and I, with sixteen porters, left the Base Camp with the intention of pushing on to Camp IV and inaugurating it. Our route was the same as in 1932, the weather being changeable and mostly bad. With intensive labour we forced our way up to Camp II, but on the first day had to pitch an intermediate camp in the icefall owing to deep snow and difficult terrain. Camp II was in the most magnificent situation amidst the wildest icefalls that we had ever seen. In the evening especially, the view towards the W.

over the immeasurable chain of the Hindu Kush was of surpassing splendour. The quick movements of the glacier in this part made, however, life anything but pleasant in Camp II. As time went on, great crevasses formed under the tents, while during the night avalanches thundered and the ice burst all round in the vicinity. Finally the site was abandoned after some thousands of tons of ice had fallen one night just in front of the tents. The further route towards Camp III led also through icefalls; we were again compelled to pitch an intermediate camp owing to the difficulties. From this spot we tried vainly for half a day to find a route through the great, sheer walls of ice. Camp III was inaugurated on a névé ridge at the end of the difficulties: from this spot more or less gentle snow slopes led towards the watershed between the E. peak [of Nanga Parbat], the Rakhiot, and the Chongra peaks.

We had short light ski with us fitted with skins. They proved useful, and we had already employed them in the approach march over the snowy passes. On the mountain we took them to Camp IV, whence they lightened the labour of an ascent of the western Chongra peak. From Camp IV to the Base we accomplished most of the journey, even portions of the icefalls, with their aid. Quick descents were often possible with decent snow. Thus we once accomplished the 3000 ft. descent from Camp IV to Camp II in ten minutes. The 'slalom' through the icefalls and over the narrow snow-bridges below Camp III was quite unique. Moreover, the employment of ski was justified since in the final stage they provided admirable fuel for camp fires!

Bechtold and Müllritter had arrived at Camp II and assured the upwards transport of kits. We were in wireless communication with the Base and could quickly transmit our observations and wishes. The small apparatus communicated only at short distances, while later on connexion failed between Camp IV and the Base. Nevertheless, one afternoon Captain Sangster got into touch with a military instrument which informed him that various unknown British officers of the Indian Army had been granted leave. But what was the use of that when we could not even 'get' our own operator in the Base Camp? . . .

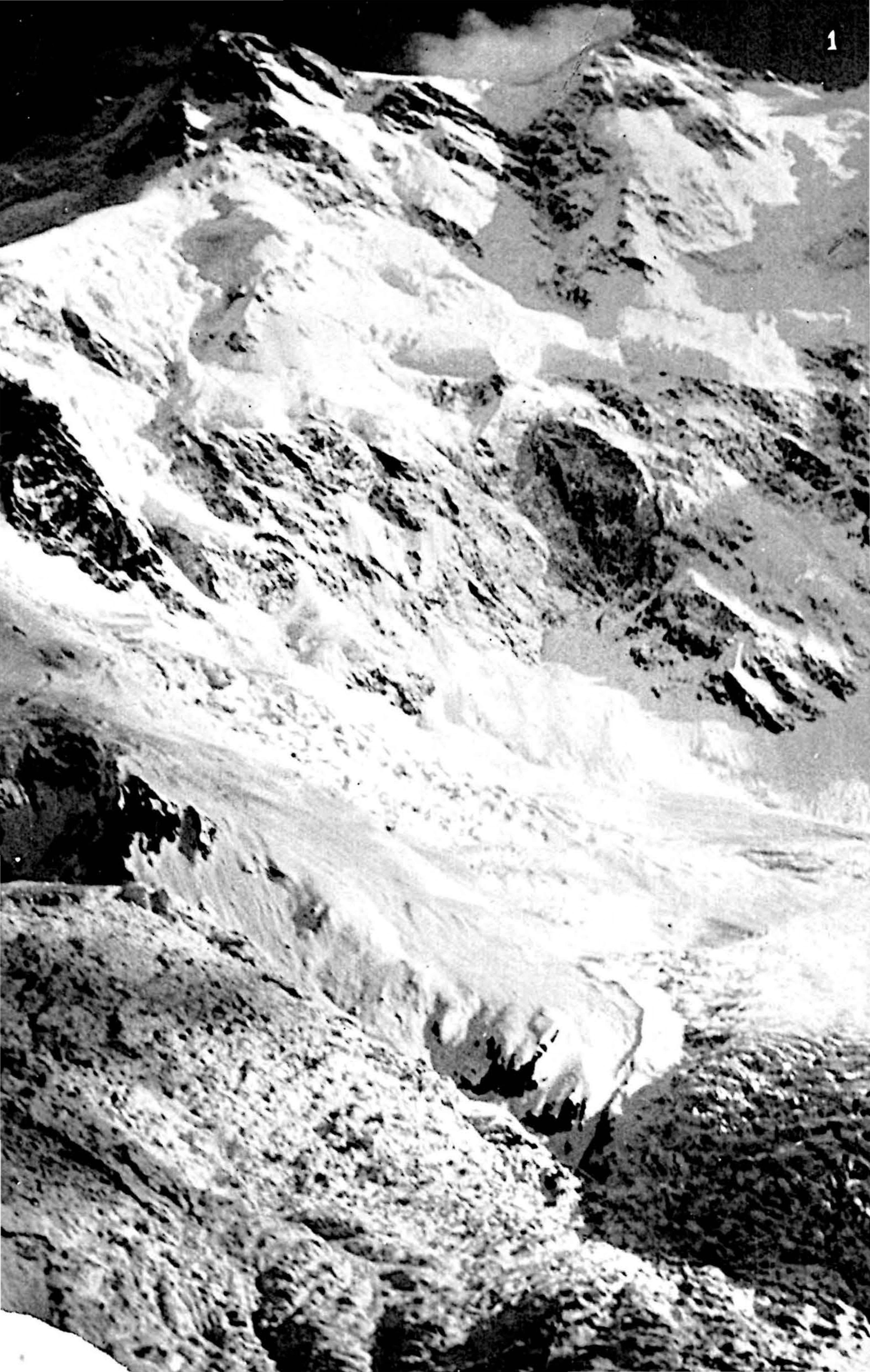
[The remainder of Herr Schneider's narrative has been published in 'A.J.' 46, 423-7. We owe him our best thanks.—*Editor.*]

In view of the subsequent tragedy, as also of certain ill-natured, inaccurate, but irresponsible articles in the Press, we publish statements by three of the surviving porters as attested by Mr. George Wood-Johnson, who acted as transport officer to the 1930 Kangchenjunga and 1933 Everest expeditions. The narrative of the last phase by Herr Schneider has been given in 'A.J.' 46, 426-7; that by Herr Aschenbrenner will be found on pp. 167-8 of this number.

The sole discrepancy between the four narratives will be noted in the statement by Kitar and Parsang Ki Kuli that Herr Wieland was very ill on the departure of the expedition from Camp VIII on July 8, and that the porter Nima Nurbu had died in camp during the night. Herren Schneider and Aschenbrenner both state distinctly that no one was in bad condition and that there were no complaints as to illness by any of the party. The matter is of small importance, but in consequence of the terrible experience undergone subsequently by the two porters, and also owing to the fact of Angtsering not mentioning it, we must consider the German version to be the correct one.

Angtsering's Statement, October 27, 1934.

' On the morning of the 9th, after sleeping between Camps VIII and VII—on the descent—the party left: myself, Gay Lay and Dakshi. I was snow-blind and the other two weak. We three spent a further two nights without moving, after which my eyes improved. Dakshi was alive, but too weak to move, and so with Gay Lay I proceeded down, leaving Dakshi. Before reaching Camp VII we saw Wieland's body. At Camp VII we met Merkl and Welzenbach. Merkl said, "Stay with us until food and help arrive." The Europeans had no sleeping-bags and sheltered in the only two-man tent. We two porters had sleeping-bags and no tent. We all stayed at this camp for another two nights. On the second night Welzenbach died, after which I said to Merkl, "We must go on down, as no help will come up to us." So myself, carrying two sleeping-bags, Merkl's rucksack and ground-sheet, made the track down, Gay Lay and Merkl following. After covering three-quarters of the distance to Camp VI Merkl could not go on, and at this point we spent the night. The next morning, from our position above Camp VI, I saw three Europeans and four porters coming up from Camp III to Camp IV, but no movement was made upwards from Camp IV. I pressed the Sahib to continue on down. His hands and feet were very badly frost-bitten, also his face, and he was absolutely helpless. He then ordered Gay Lay down to Camp IV with orders to the Sahibs to bring up brandy, food and every assistance. Gay Lay was unable to proceed, and I undertook to go down carrying my ice axe only and leaving at 5 A.M. As my hands and feet were frost-bitten, progress was very slow. Below Camp V I called out for assistance to Camp IV. It was a long time before anyone heard me. At last Pasang Dorji and Nurbu Sonam came out with tea laced with brandy, and assisted me in to Camp IV. I told Lewa that Merkl [and Gay Lay] were above Camp VI and wanted immediate help in the way of stimulants, food and porters to carry them down. A rescue party was fixed for the following day. This party was unable to venture upwards, as conditions were too bad. I had not eaten from the day we left Camp VIII. In Camp









IV there were six Europeans and four porters, the former fit, but the latter unfit for further work.'

This statement was taken in the Native Hospital, Darjeeling, where Angtsering is still under treatment for frost-bitten hands and feet.⁶

(Signed) GEO. WOOD-JOHNSON.

October 27, 1934.

Statement made by Kitar and Parsang Ki Kuli, October 27, 1934.

'On July 7 five Europeans and eleven porters established and occupied Camp VIII. On the 8th, due to bad weather, there was a general evacuation. Schneider and Aschenbrenner, taking Pinzo [Nurbu], Nima Dorji and Pasang, left very early in the morning for Camp IV. In the night Nima Nurbu had died, and Wieland was very ill. This left in our party Merkl, Welzenbach, Wieland, Da Thondrup, Nima Tashi, Parsang Ki Kuli, Angtsering, Gay Lay, Dakshi and Kitar. On this day we were unable to reach Camp VII and spent the night on the snow above it. On the morning of the 9th we moved down, leaving Gay Lay, Dakshi and Angtsering; Gay Lay and Dakshi were too weak to move and Angtsering snow-blind. He said he would follow when the sun went down. We remaining four porters reached Camp VII about 1 p.m. At 2 p.m. Merkl and Welzenbach arrived. Wieland had died on the way. At Camp VII there was a tent with accommodation for two men and no food. The two Europeans stayed in the tent that night. We porters proceeded towards Camp VI, but failed to reach. Scooping holes in the snow, we slept the night. Next morning, the 10th, we passed through Camp VI. There was no food, and on the opposite slopes of the Rhakiot Peak [we] saw the three porters who had gone on with Schneider and Aschenbrenner. I yelled to them to wait, as they were off the track. On joining forces they told me that on leaving Camp VIII with Schneider and Aschenbrenner they could not travel as fast as the Sahibs, who told them that the track was easy. They would go on, which they did, leaving the three porters above Camp VII. These three had made their way down as best they could, sleeping in the snow until we reached them. Before we reached Camp V, Nima Tashi and Nima Dorji died. Whilst resting at Camp V, Pinzo Nurbu died. We remaining four porters carried on down and reached Camp IV and safety before dark. We had nothing to eat after leaving Camp VIII until our arrival at Camp IV.'

This statement was made by Kitar and confirmed by Parsang Ki Kuli at Darjeeling.

(Signed) GEO. WOOD-JOHNSON.

October 27, 1934.

Weather: Up to the time of making Camp VII weather was good. Camp VIII was established in a high wind with some cloud.

⁶ He is stated, however, to be recovering well.—*Editor.*

On the 8th, 9th and 10th there was severe wind and snow at all points above Camp V.

Angtsering added that during his last two days' sojourn above Camp IV the weather was good, but a great depth of snow covered everything but steep rocks.

(Signed) GEO. WOOD-JOHNSON.

October 27, 1934.

Illustrations.

No. 1, U. Wieland. Nanga Parbat, N. face (greatly foreshortened).

No. 2, E. Schneider. Hindu Kush with Rakhiot Glacier.

No. 3, E. Schneider. *Silbersattel* from Camp VI.

No. 4, E. Schneider. Rakhiot Peak and Camp VII.

For other views of Nanga Parbat, see *A.J.* 18; 20, facing 307; and especially 44.

SOME GLACIERS OF UPPER CHITRAL.¹

By REGINALD SCHOMBERG.

THE valley of the Yarkhun river, which during its course is known as the Mastuj, Chitral, or Kunar, is no more than a rocky trough with many lateral streams. It rises near Wakhan, in the grassy slopes of Baroghil, but it depends for its water supply on the great glaciers that are almost wholly confined to its left side: and it is this left side, with its moraines, fans, and deposits that demonstrate the great part that glaciers have played in the present condition of the Yarkhun valley in Northern Chitral. In summer this river is a swift, turgid, black flood, while its affluents are equally unlovely.

Generally speaking, the rocky formation of the Hindu Raj and the Chitrali Hindu Kush do not lend themselves to glacier making, and in a region of great rock ranges and towering peaks, the glaciers are disappointing, for there is little chance of the snow accumulating on these perpendicular slopes, while the regular and heavy rainfall (to which I shall again refer) militates against any heavy deposits of ice and snow. The hanging glaciers are insignificant, the normal glaciers seem unusually small, and the visitor is disappointed in the somewhat non-Alpine appearance of the region. I certainly was. Perhaps I hoped for too much, but I am reluctant to think that the lack of glaciers in a country where one expects many can be wholly explained by the present era being one of glacial retreat.

At Warsum (Wassum), for instance, the fine glacier torrent flowed from a spectacularly insignificant ice and snow formation. It was only when we reached the Madod stream flowing into the left of the Yarkhun river, opposite the settlement of Shost, that I saw glaciers that would repay a visit. The stream in the early part of a July afternoon was a considerable torrent; we camped at Kand, a very

¹ See map, *A.J.* 46, facing 133.