CENTRAL LAHUL[1]

By HAMISH McARTHUR

It is possible today, given good organisation and some fortune with the weather, for a man to lock his desk one Saturday in London and the following Saturday to stand on ground in the Himalayas where no man has stood before. Although we did not aim at such celerity, some members of our party were two days on the march and already beyond the last habitation on their seventh day out of London. It was the A.B.C. World Airways Guide that persuaded us that we could take a small part in the exploration of the Himalayas before the Golden Age was over, and before we were ourselves too old. It was a very small part indeed, but we enjoyed it ; and if our expedition had no great importance in itself, we discovered something about an area that will soon be a popular climbing ground as mountaineering develops among the people of India.

With only four or five weeks to spend in the mountains, and at the time of the monsoon, we had to find an area that was accessible and dry. Our mountaineering abilities were modest, we were not young, and had no Himalayan experience. Although we thought we could do enough to satisfy ourselves, we could make no promises to financial backers and we decided to finance the trip as best we could from our own resources until we had some achievement to our credit. These limitations, of time, of place, ability and money, ruled out an attempt on giants ; but there is much else in the Himalayas, and our interests were as much in exploration as in climbing. We wanted to see the mountains, to travel in unfrequented country, to see something of the nomadic peoples of Central Asia, to try our hands at mapping and, if we were fortunate, to climb a mountain of 20,000 ft.

I had heard somehow of Lahul before I had thought of going there, but the name stayed in my mind, and the more I learned of the area, the more suitable it seemed for our purpose. Lying between the giants of Nepal on the one hand and the Karakorum on the other, for long it had little attention from mountaineers, and even two years ago large tracts of it were unknown. The map was surveyed in 1851 and we were pleased to note how vague and speculative it appeared to be. Experience proved that we were lucky in our choice, for our area provided everything we could have asked. The climate of Lahul is good. It is trans-Himalayan country, more akin to Tibet than India. Although

[1] The three forms *Lahul*, *Lahoul* and *Lahaul* are currently in use. The Alpine Journal has expressed a preference for *Lahoul* (*A.J.* 61. 45) but the author prefers *Lahul*—see note on place-names.

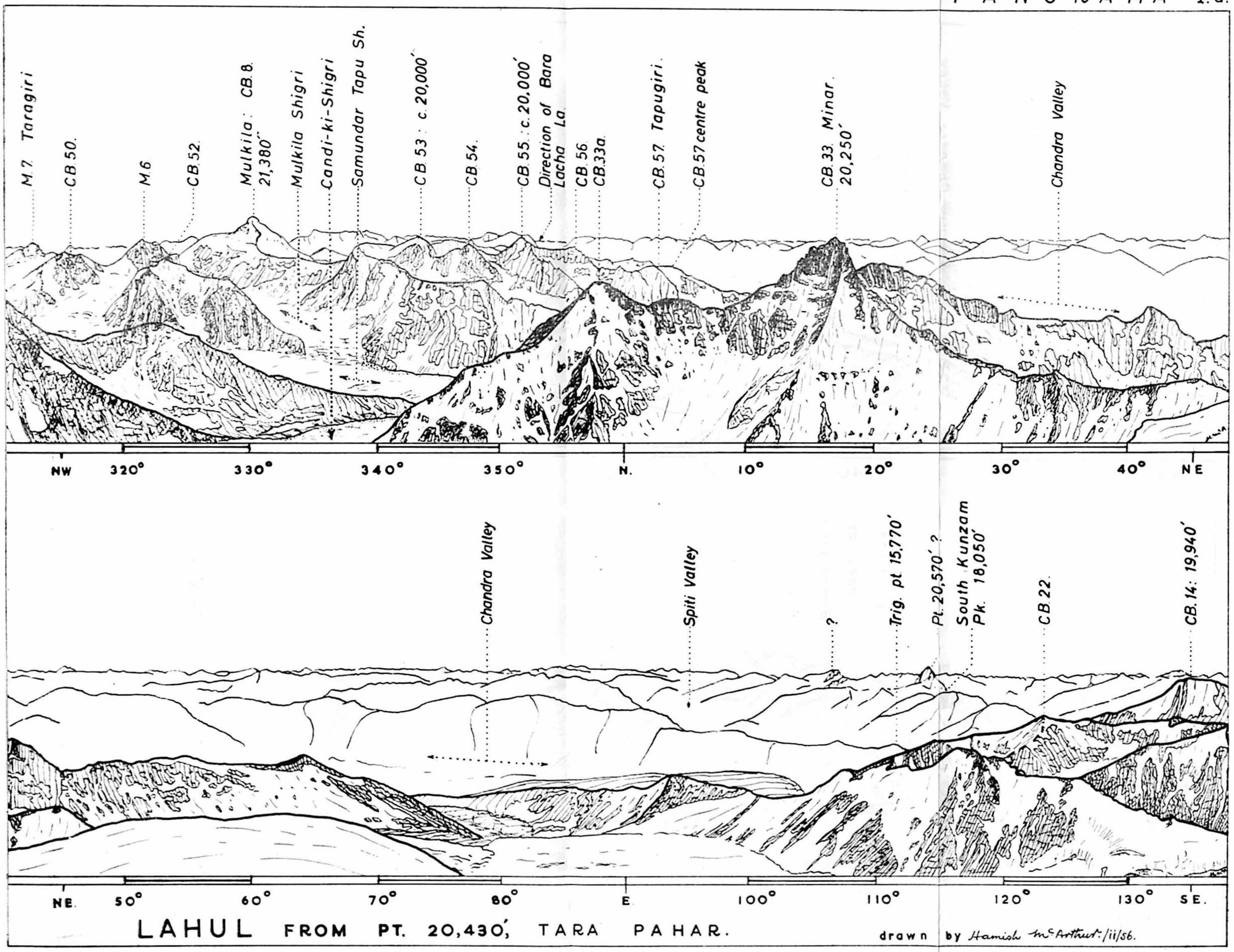
the main valleys have been well known for a century, our particular area proved to have new mountains and glaciers by the score ; as far as we can discover, much of it had never been visited, parts of it were never before seen, and it had previously been traversed only by the map-maker's pen. Its fringes had been touched by two previous expeditions ; one was in 1939 [2] and the other was the R.A.F. Mountaineering Association expedition just a month before we were there.[3]

At first we thought our trip hardly justified being called an expedition, but official bodies—in India particularly—were willing to listen to an ' organised expedition ' when they were deaf to individuals, so we became the ' Central Lahul Expedition 1955,' a name that committed us to no more than approaching the middle of Lahul before the year was out. Even a small expedition is an education in logistics and international diplomacy and the work does not fall in proportion to the expedition's size and cost. When haunting junk-shops hoping for bargains in camp equipment, or patching kit-bags from the First World War, I sometimes envied the organisers of large expeditions, for I was convinced that they had only to write out order forms and cheques and give instructions for delivery to their packers.

At last all this was over and the party assembled in Manali in the Kulu Valley on July 12, 1955, at the house of Major H. M. Banon, who has done so much for climbing parties in Kulu and Lahul. There were four of us from the United Kingdom—Frank Solari and his wife, Babs ; my wife, Millicent, and myself. We had invited the Indian authorities to send an army officer with us, but it was only when I was already in Bombay that we heard we were to be joined by Capt. Kailash Goswami of the Bengal Engineers, and, surprisingly, by his wife, Tara. The Bengal Sappers have been building up a mountaineering tradition and a party of them climbed Kamet in 1955, but I believe that Tara Goswami is the only Indian woman ever to have taken part in a climbing expedition in the Himalayas. I confess to having had some doubts when I heard that she was coming, but we were not a day on the march before we were delighted that she was with us. Kailash and Tara Goswami were invaluable, and their company added greatly to the pleasure of our holiday. I think they enjoyed it too.

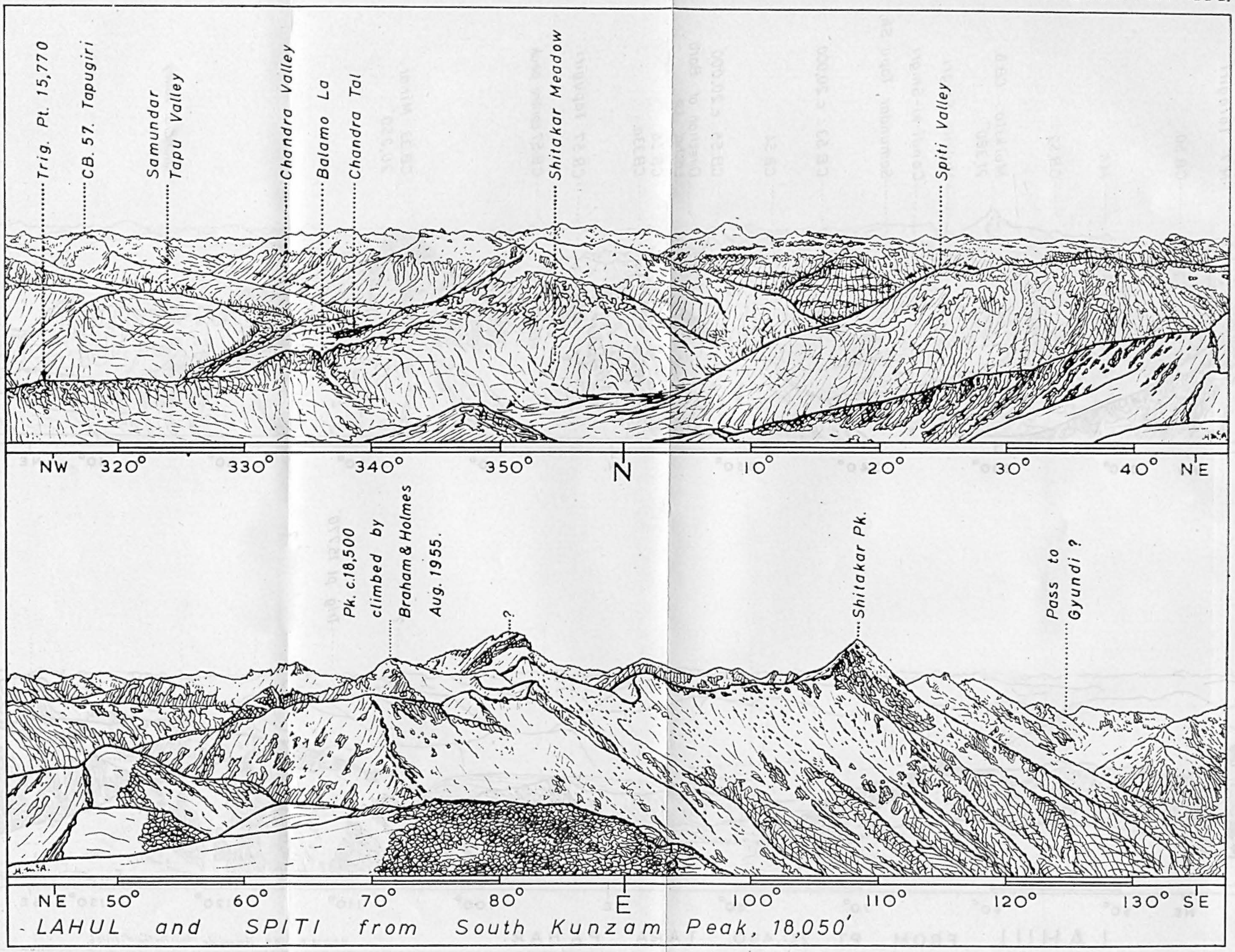
We had arranged for two Sherpas, Ourkien and Nambe, to join us in Manali. They had been in the area with the R.A.F. Mountaineering Association expedition until a few days before we came.[4] With Major Banon's help we engaged two Ladakhis, Sonam and Rigzin,[5] and an

[2] Bibl. 30, 29. (The references are to the bibliography on page 294.)
[3] Bibl. 41. [4] Bibl. 41.
[5] The Cambridge University Spiti Expedition, with whom he afterwards served, had an entirely different spelling for his name. They may have been right ; he is a fine lad under any name.



LAHUL FROM PT. 20,430′, TARA PAHAR.

drawn by Hamish McArthur. /ii/56.



LAHUL and SPITI from South Kunzam Peak, 18,050′

drawn by Hamish McArthur. 1956.

assorted troop of twenty-one horses, mules and donkeys with three men and a boy to look after them.

We left Manali on July 14 and stayed the first night at Kothi. The next morning was wet and the top of the Rohtang Pass at 13,000 ft. was thick in slushy snow. There was no view, but once down the northern side, the weather miracle worked as we had been promised, and we were in sunshine. The monsoon clouds were pouring over the pass to vanish in the dry air of Lahul. We camped almost at the level of the Chandra River, here about 10,000 ft.

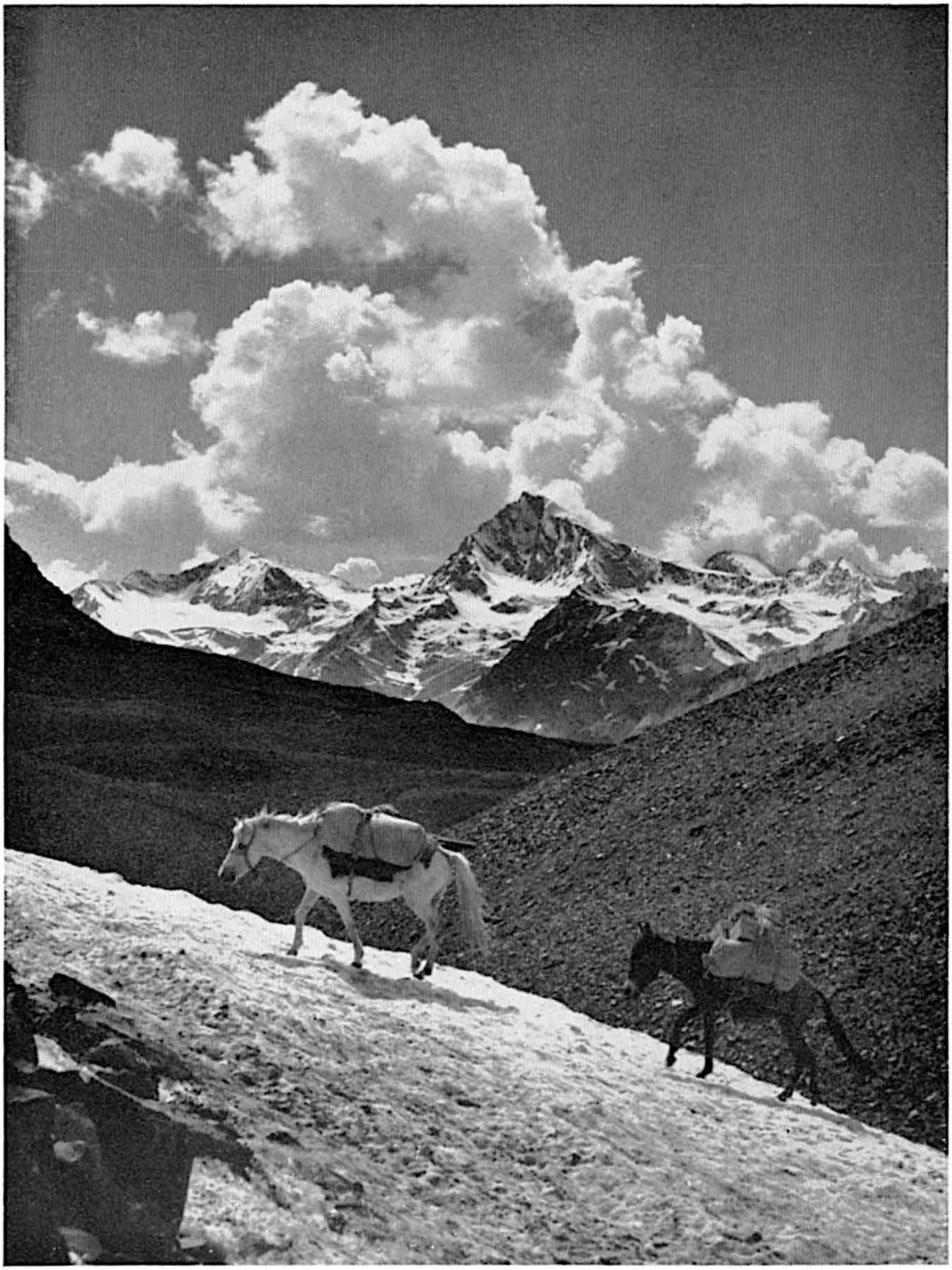
Central Lahul is a rough triangle with its apex in the north at the Bara Lacha pass. The triangle is bounded on two sides by the Chandra and on the third side by the Bhaga River. The upper Chandra is uninhabited and almost without vegetation other than some grass and many alpine flowers. In summer nomadic shepherds drive flocks from one meadow to the next. The highest village is Khoksar just below the Rohtang, and when we were there it was the site of the highest bridge, although another was being built upstream at Chatru.[6] Almost from its source, the Chandra is unfordable in summer, and cliffs block the north bank between Khoksar and Chatru. The long isolation of the east side of the triangle had been preserved by this sixty miles of torrent between the Bara Lacha and the Khoksar bridge. It was our intention to go up the Chandra to about a day's march north of Shigri and there cross to the true right bank of the river ; we hoped then to explore one of the glaciated side valleys roughly indicated by the map. If we could not ford the river we should have to change our plans.

We left Khoksar for Chatru, and then went on to Puti Runi where we rested a day in rain—almost the only rain of our whole journey. Next we camped at Shigri near the end of the Bara Shigri glacier and under the splendid ice and granite peaks which here form the Kulu-Lahul divide. Each day the track became rougher and we were astonished how the horses could find their way through fields of boulders and loose scree. There were still snow bridges over the worst torrents, but at Shigri we had to cross the glacier itself, coaxing the horses among the debris of a glacier in retreat. There is talk locally of a jeep track to the Kunzam La, and stretches of a new track have actually been built, but by and large the jeep track is a myth and much of the road seems to have become worse in recent years.[7]

There was always variety on the march, unusual flowers among the stones, new views to photograph, and in this empty country all travellers stop and talk to each other ; we could exchange friendly smiles and cigarettes. We met a party of Tibetans with yaks and gave them letters

[6] Reported to have been finished late in August 1955.

[7] See, for instance, an account of its state ninety-three years ago in Bibl. 3.



Photo, H. McArthur]

IN THE BHAGA VALLEY, APPROACHING ZINGZINGBAR.

which safely arrived in Scotland ; another day we heard the piping of shepherd-boys as they meandered with their flocks in which sheep were mixed with mohair goats of insufferable pride and beauty. One hot day we were running down a path through scree, the air filled with dust and the scent of broken sage brush, when rounding a corner we suddenly came on Ourkien, who had collected cups of ice-cold water from a spring to hand to each of us as we came by. Babs used to say, 'Ourkien is a honey.' Sometimes we would camp early and the Sherpas would gather flowers for our table. Tara would have the urge to produce a special dinner and would spend hours with Ourkien, who was our normal cook, turning tinned steak into the finest curry.

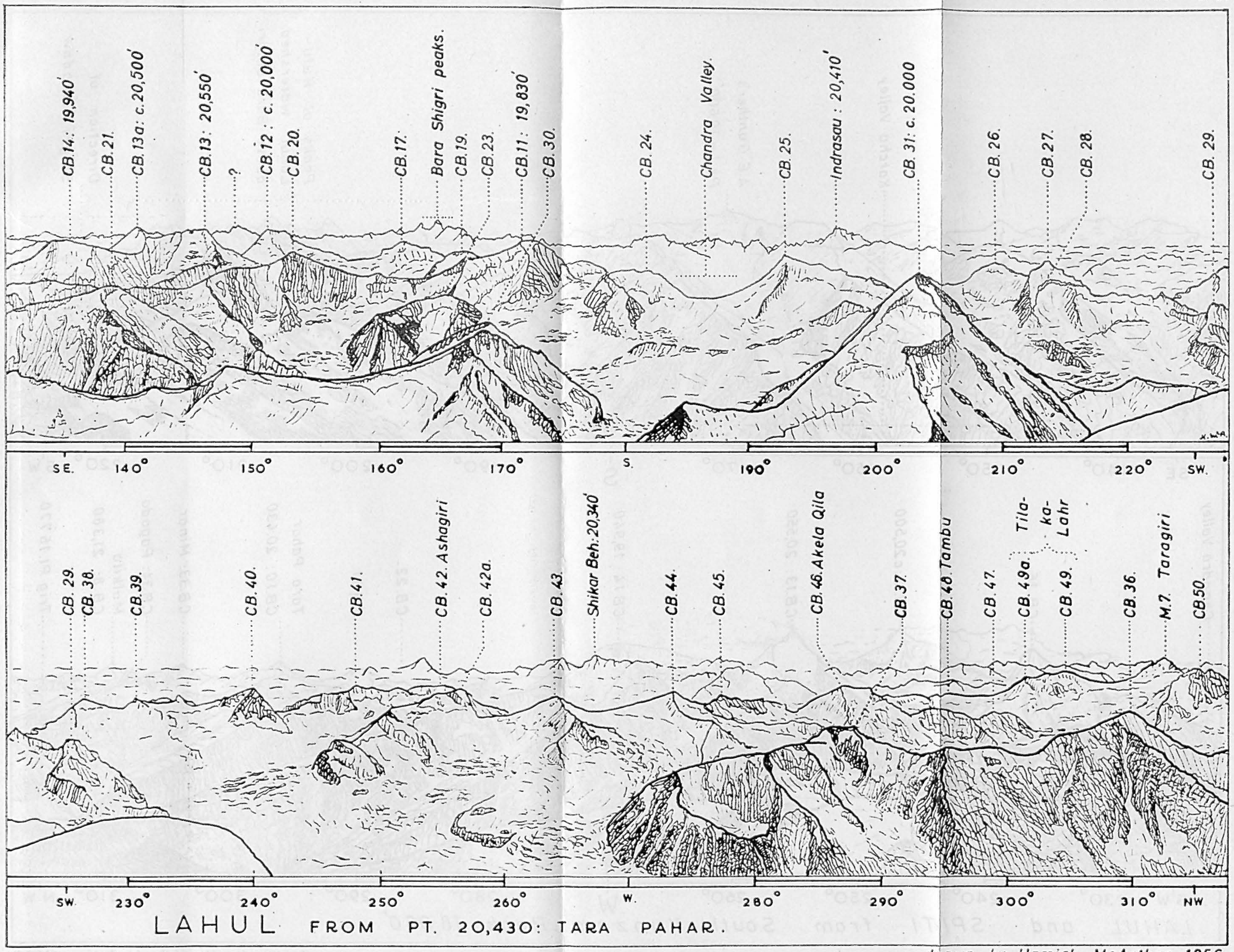
In modest expeditions like ours, discomfort is entirely out of place and should be a court-martial offence. We took no radios, typewriters, gramophones or ballast of that sort, but we were comfortable. On a trip with horses, the difference in cost between misery and ample comfort may be no more than £1 a head. The main advantage of horses is that they find their own food as they go : to travel as we did for a month in uninhabited country, would be impossible with porters, unless elaborate supply trains were arranged, for they could not carry even their own food for so long. One of the beauties of our expedition was that we were on our own, self-supporting and dependent on each other, for five weeks without contact with our base. This gave the party a unity it might otherwise have lacked. On leaving camp after dark, I think all of us used to look with affection at our little community of lighted tents encompassed by the wilderness.

On leaving Shigri we crossed the Kunzam La and camped at about 14,500 ft. on the beautiful Shitakar meadow on the Spiti side of the pass. This meadow was covered with great drifts of forget-me-nots and the biggest edelweiss we had ever seen. We decided to spend a day or two resting the horses and ourselves, and doing some surveying for we had good views of our intended area. Frank, Kailash and I with the two Sherpas climbed what we called the South Kunzam Peak, whose height we calculated from our clino. readings at 18,050 ft. Although easy, the climb was excellent for our training and gave us splendid views [8] ; as far as we know, the point had not been climbed before.[9]

We left Shitakar on July 26, and descended to the Chandra near the lake called the Chandra Tal. The river here is fast though fairly shallow ; it splits into several channels as it crosses stony flats, to give the only semblance of a ford throughout its length. We did not have much difficulty in crossing, but it would have been so easy for something

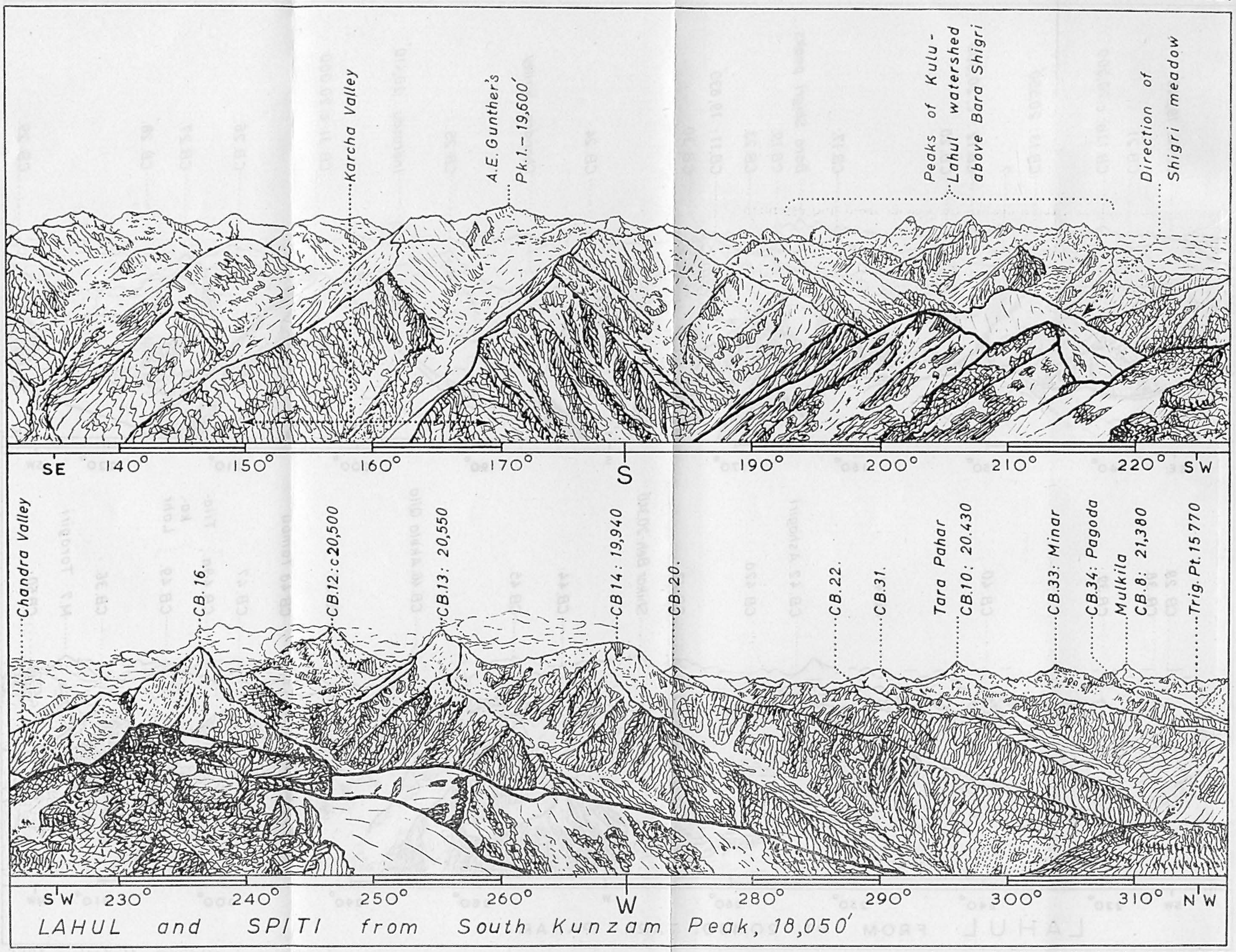
[8] Panorama II gives this view, but makes it flatter and duller than it looked to our eyes.

[9] The Cambridge University party climbed a nearby and slightly higher point on their way to Spiti about a month later.



LAHUL FROM PT. 20,430: TARA PAHAR.

drawn by Hamish McArthur, 1956.



LAHUL and SPITI from South Kunzam Peak, 18,050′

drawn by Hamish McArthur, 1956.

to have gone wrong that I felt relieved when the last horse had stumbled from the water and we were safely on the other side.[10]

We set up our base camp on a meadow partly surrounded by water, which the shepherds call Samundar Tapu, meaning 'sea-island.' The big glacier about four miles from our camp they called 'shigri,' which just means 'glacier.' They distinguished it from other shigris by saying, 'the shigri near Samundar Tapu,' so we called it the Samundar Tapu Shigri.[11] We found access to this glacier to be so easy that we were able to take horses three miles up the glacier itself and establish an advanced base camp at about 15,000 ft. on the lateral moraine. Frank and I and the two Sherpas made this our base for exploring the area. The others were sometimes in this camp and sometimes below. A regular post service of horses was arranged between the camps. Opposite advanced base was the 19,000-ft. rock tower we called the Pagoda, because it looked like one, and rising above it the graceful peak we called Minar, the minaret, which we afterwards found to exceed 20,000 ft. Neither peak was on the map.

The day after we established the advanced base, Frank and I and the Sherpas set off to explore the glacier and found it to be comparable in size with the Aletsch and its tributaries. About an hour above our camp we were able to look up a tributary glacier, a mile or more wide, coming in gently from the south. This glacier and the mountains around it were entirely unexpected as they were incompatible with the map. The main glacier was dirty at this point, but the new glacier was shining white, so we later called it the Candi ki Shigri, or Silver Glacier.

The next two days we spent surveying, and then we climbed the mountain nearest to our camp. We called it Tapugiri, the mountain of the 'island,' and thought it was just over 19,000 ft. We climbed it directly from the camp and found that 4,000 ft. of ascent was too much for us at that altitude. The upper part was steep snow, soft and doubtfully stable, and when we struggled along a narrow ridge to the centre summit, we had to admit that the western summit might be slightly higher ; but we were too tired to go along the ridge to make sure.

We now felt ready to try a twenty-thousander and we had only a few days left. The only mountain we could identify was Mulkila (21,380), but even if it had not been climbed already from the other side [12] it was too difficult for us. We decided to try a fine-looking mountain on

[10] This ford is uncertain and dangerous. It can now be avoided by using the new bridge at Chatru and going up the right bank of the Chandra.

[11] Khosla, in his book just published (Bibl. 18), refers to what appears to be this glacier as the Sumandari glacier, a name that would seem to have at least one parent in common with our name.

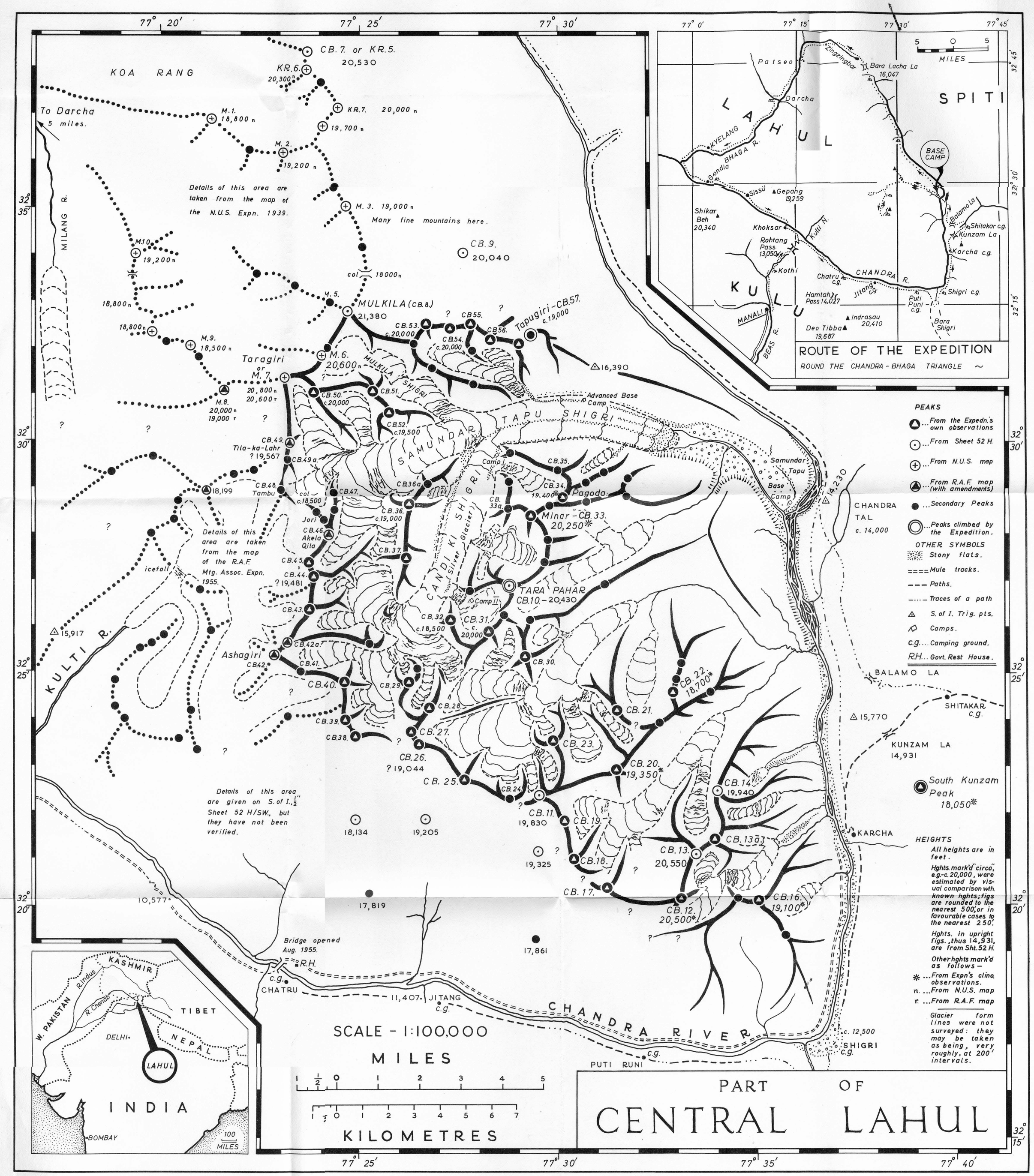
[12] Bibl. 30.

the true right bank of the Silver Glacier. We packed up camp and, groaning under our loads, we set out southwards, camping the first night on the Silver Glacier's right moraine. Next morning we had a good look at the mountain. It was high and impressive. Having considered, and rejected, a route leading from the Northern corrie, we noticed the upper part of the W.S.W ridge coming towards the summit at a very reasonable angle ; if the lower part were possible, that seemed a likely route. We went up the glacier as far as the exit from the South-west corrie and could now see enough of the ridge to be encouraged. The W.S.W. ridge seemed accessible only from the South-west corrie, and the corrie was guarded by a steep and broken ice-fall littered with fallen séracs, but we saw a way up close to the rocks on the true right bank. This way did not seem difficult and it was little menaced from above. We decided to go up. We found some danger from crevasses in the lower part, but no technical difficulty—just the difficulty of raising our burdens, step by step, up the slope in the blazing sun. Had there been a place to camp on the way, we should probably have stopped and left ourselves too far to go the following day.

It took us six hours to climb the fall, which was no more than 1,500 ft. high, and even the Sherpas looked tired when we reached the top. It was my birthday, August 4, the hardest worked of all my forty-two. We found that there was an upper ice-fall and we were merely on a shelf, but the shape of the fall was such that we were reasonably safe. After tea we felt restored. The evening was still, with stars showing before the sky was dark. We were in a wonderful situation, alone on our shelf, perched high among the glaciers and mountains where no one had ever been.

The next morning, August 5, my alarm watch went off at 2 A.M. and Ourkien soon had the primus going. It was freezing in the tent and I took my boots into my sleeping-bag, but we enjoyed a warm breakfast. I was struck with the contrast between the comfort of this breakfast and the squalor of early mornings in Swiss huts. It was after 4 o'clock before we were away. The morning was perfect. It was cold and windless. There was still an hour till dawn, but the full moon was shining and we had no need of other light. The first part of the climb was a steep snow slope leading to a little col on the W.S.W. ridge about 1,000 ft. above the camp. The snow was just right for crampons and we climbed steadily to reach the ridge within an hour. By then we could see the whole length of the ridge. The first part was obviously easy, but it became steeper higher up and finally lost itself on the face of the mountain not far below the summit.[13] I felt

[13] The ridge is well shown on the photograph taken by the R.A.F. expedition from Akela Qila. The ridge we climbed is the thin snow and rock ridge to



MAP of the CENTRAL LAHUL EXPEDITION 1955.

Drawn by HAMISH McARTHUR, Feb.: June, 1956.

This sketch map is drawn from plane table & photographic observations by F. Solari, K. Goswami, & H. McArthur in 1955. The survey is based on the assumption that the following pts. are correctly shown on Survey of India map, Sheet 52 H: 21,380'; 20,430'; and 15,770'.

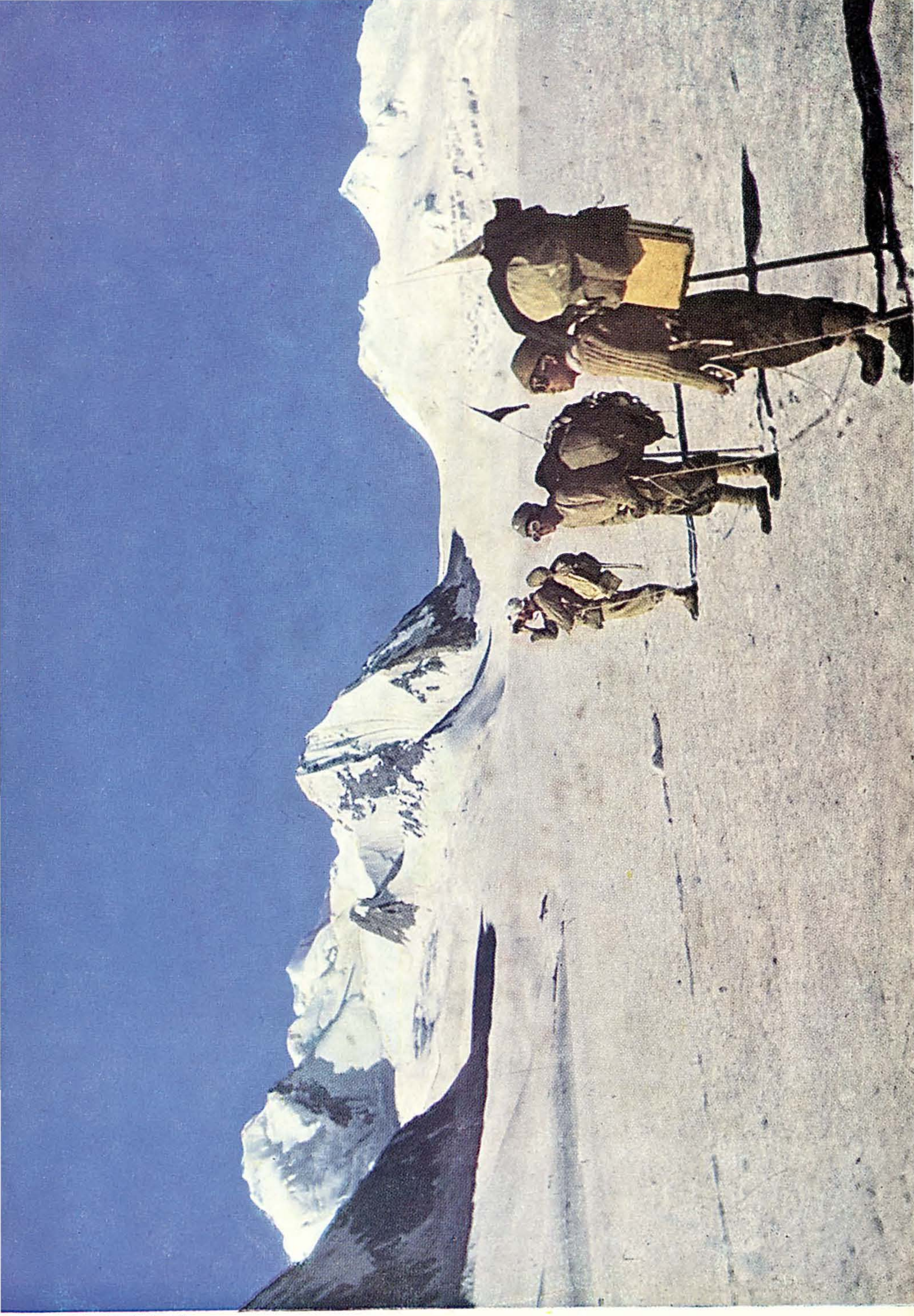
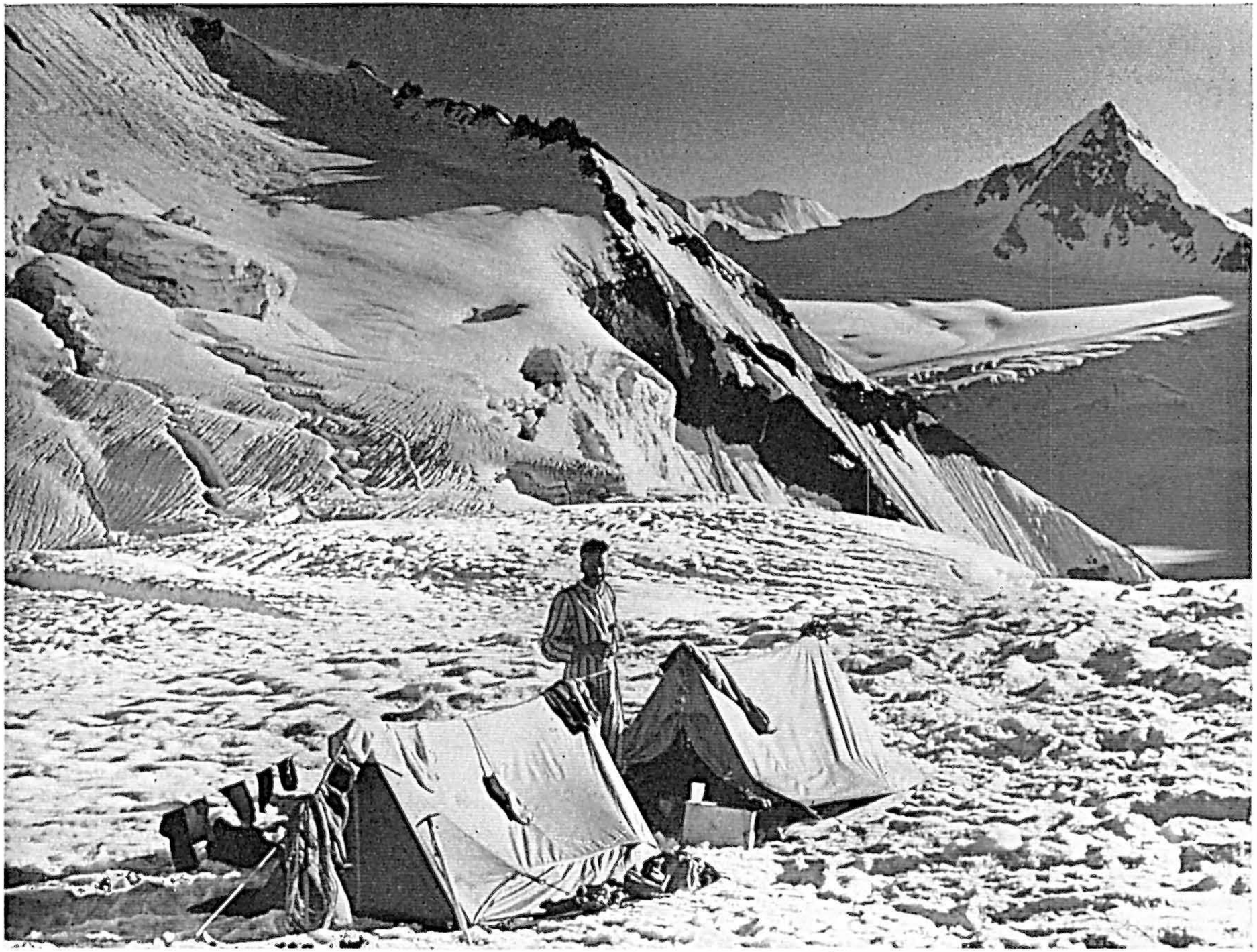


Photo., H. McArthur.]

CENTRAL LAHUL EXPEDITION, 1955. APPROACHING CAMP II.



Photo, F. Solari]

CAMP II, ABOUT 17,500 FT. THE PEAK ON THE RIGHT IS CB40.

hopeful. We were now about 19,000 ft., going more slowly, but still with plenty of time and energy.

The ridge never proved difficult and we found the part on the face steep and loose, but just a scramble. At last we were on the main Western ridge and in the sunshine. I thought we were now approaching 20,000 ft. in spite of Nambe's assurance that we were at 21,000. We still did not know which mountain we were on. It was only a little further up, when for the first time we could see well to the east, that I realised we were on the point shown on the map as 20,430 ft. When we had seen this point from near the Kunzam La we had decided that its position was correctly given on the map, but the surrounding details were altogether misleading. We were glad to find we were on a recognised mountain whose height was accurately known.[14] We were then 400 or 500 ft. from the top. The ridge above was made of snow and ice bulges, sometimes nearly level, sometimes steep. Slowly we made our way upwards with crampons on again, hoping each bulge would be the last. There seemed an endless series, and then suddenly we were there. We felt splendid, and the Sherpas produced bunting and we photographed each other and the distant views into Kashmir and Tibet.

There was no doubt that we were on 20,430, but it was not till later that we decided on a name. Our name is Tara Pahar, which means star mountain, a name not too fanciful in itself, for its ridges run out like a star's points and we had seen it shining among the stars the night before our climb. But the name is chosen to have a double meaning, for it can also be Tara's mountain. However reprehensible personal names may be for mountains, we feel that this half attachment is well justified in honour of the first Indian woman to go on an expedition. In theory it is Star Peak ; in practice it is what you please. Tara herself had nothing to do with this choice and I can only hope we have got the translation right.[15]

The descent was made without trouble although the snow was soft and needed care. We stayed in the ice-fall camp that night, and early next morning we descended the fall in just over half an hour and were back in base camp fourteen miles away in time for lunch, having picked up a horse at advanced base. The next day was given over to camp

the right of centre. The two corries can be seen and the upper part of our ice-fall, but the site of the camp and the lower ice-fall are hidden by the mountains in the middle distance.

[14] Our own measurement of its height from the Kunzam trig. point was 20,416 ft. on the assumption that the trig. point's height was correct ; the loss of 14 ft. is well within the margin of error of our readings.

[15] There is some possibility of confusion with the R.A.F.'s Taragiri, which means much the same, but there are many cases in the Alps where two neighbouring peaks have similar names and no one would wish them otherwise.

Photo, D. Bennet]

TARA PAHAR, 20,430 FT., AS SEEN BY R.A.F.M.A. EXPEDITION FROM AKELA QILA.

[*To face p. 292.*

sports and relaxation and on August 8 we set out for home. When we reached the crossing place at the Chandra none of us liked the appearance of the river. It had risen after a fortnight's good weather to melt the glaciers, and was deeper and faster than it had been before. However, we tried it, and Nambe and I were nearly drowned. Stefansson said that, in exploration, adventures are a sign of incompetence, so I shall not dwell on the adventure we had that day, but it was only the prompt and courageous action of the horsemen that saved us. It had its element of farce, for Nambe and I both had our trousers torn off by the river. Our only alternatives were to wait indefinitely where we were with diminishing stocks of food, or to go home north-about round the Bara Lacha and down the Bhaga ; this detour would add some sixty miles to our journey. We decided to go north. Later we had difficulties with the Indian authorities because the Inner Line runs down the Bhaga River as far as Darcha and at times the track is on the wrong bank, but we really had little choice. One of the horses had a foal which suffered from altitude at the Bara Lacha, 300 ft. higher than Mont Blanc. The journey through Zingzingbar and Patseo and inhabited Lahul was full of interest and surprises, and we delighted in the more fertile ground after our weeks of desert. We re-crossed the Rohtang Pass, again in rain, on August 16, eight days' march from base camp, and were in Manali in time for tea. We had been away thirty-four days and had walked about 200 miles.

The health of the party was excellent. The horses, in spite of their arduous journey, returned with one foal more than at the start. Rigzin and Sonam were raw lads when we left, but Ourkien soon had them trained and they were invaluable. The Sherpas were everything Sherpas should be. We had been told that Sherpas are now spoiled, but ours were not. We had been told that they would demand fancy equipment, and this may be true in a big expedition ; for if the Europeans are lavishly equipped, the Sherpas rightly expect to be well dressed too. We were not lavishly equipped, and they seemed happy with what we gave them. We had been told that they would not do coolies' work, but I made a point to be the first to tackle coolies' jobs myself although I do not think they needed an example. In short, we were delighted with our Sherpas ; and Ourkien we regarded with the greatest affection and respect. Just before we left Manali, when everyone was paid and various presents given, Ourkien came up to Millicent and asked if he could give her a present ; Nambe said he wanted to give one too. They each produced a fine woollen shawl of the kind made in the Kulu Valley and with many smiles draped them round her shoulders. These were no token presents, for the selling price of a shawl in the bazaar was about five days' wages for a Sherpa.

We had done everything we had hoped to do and had enjoyed it. Our survey was not as rigorously made as we should have liked, but it covered 150 square miles, an area more than the range of Mont Blanc and scarcely less complicated. We had added thirty-eight new mountains to the map, six of them probably over 20,000 ft. The first ascent of only one mountain like Tara Pahar counts for little in the Himalayas, but at least we had the satisfaction of leaving the list of unclimbed twenty-thousanders longer than we found it.

NOTES ON THE MAP. PANORAMAS AND PLACE-NAMES

Previous Maps

In the summer of 1851 three survey parties visited Lahul, one going from Spiti across the Kunzam La, another from Kulu up the Bhaga, and a third south from Leh to meet at the Bara Lacha. The Spiti-Upper Chandra party under Captain du Vernet, Madras Infantry, consisted of only nine men. They marched 500 miles that summer, measured almost 500 triangles and mapped 9,000 square miles of country. The area they covered in eastern Lahul has never been re-surveyed and the modern map (Survey of India, quarter inch to the mile, Sheet 52H) depends in this region almost wholly on their work. In the mountains, the map contains many errors, much conjecture, and some pure fancy, but in the time available the surveyors could record only the most important features. Their work should be regarded with respect ; it was entirely adequate for their day, and few of us are likely to do anything that will stand unchallenged for a hundred years. An account is given in the great Synopsis of 1879 (Bibl. 54). The faults of the map lie not so much with the surveyors as with the draughtsmen who abhorred empty paper. The work of the theodolite parties is shown in its purity in the Degree Sheets published with the Synopsis. These sheets show the survey stations, triangulated points, main rivers and little else. Lahul is on Degree Sheet 24, and we discovered no faults in our area with the possible exception of pt. 20,570 on the Lahul-Spiti watershed. One important mountain (CB 12) is shown correctly but has disappeared from modern editions of the map.

In 1921 the Kulu Valley was re-surveyed and the results published on the half-inch sheet 52H/SW. This survey just spilled into the lower Chandra and the Kulti Nala. More peaks are shown than in the previous map, but my impression from a distance is that the work was hurried in the mountains and is less reliable there than the triangulations of 1851.

The N.U.S. Expedition's area marched with ours from Mulkila to M7 and their positions of the common points are consistent with our observations. I have added all but the northern part of their map made in 1939 (Bibl. 30) in dotted lines to ours, tying it in on Mulkila. I have moved M8 about half a mile south-east of its position on the original N.U.S. map on information given to me by the R.A.F. Expedition.

In May and June 1955, the R.A.F. Expedition found many errors in the 1921 map of the Kulti Nala. Their area marched with ours along part of the main Chandra-Bhaga watershed, and I am indebted to Holton of that expedition for information on the geography of the watershed. I have added the R.A.F. map in dotted lines to ours, tying it in on trig. pt. 15,917, assuming that point to be correct on 52H. The R.A.F. map as here reproduced contains a few amendments given to me by Holton after its publication (Bibl. 41).

Maffi gives a sketch map of the country from Mulkila westwards and another of the Deo Tibba region (Bibl. 36). Gunther's map (Bibl. 27 and 28) shows the area to the south-east of the Chandra bend at Shigri, and Wollaston's sketch map shows Gepang and the Sissu Nala (Bibl. 43), but these areas are off our map.

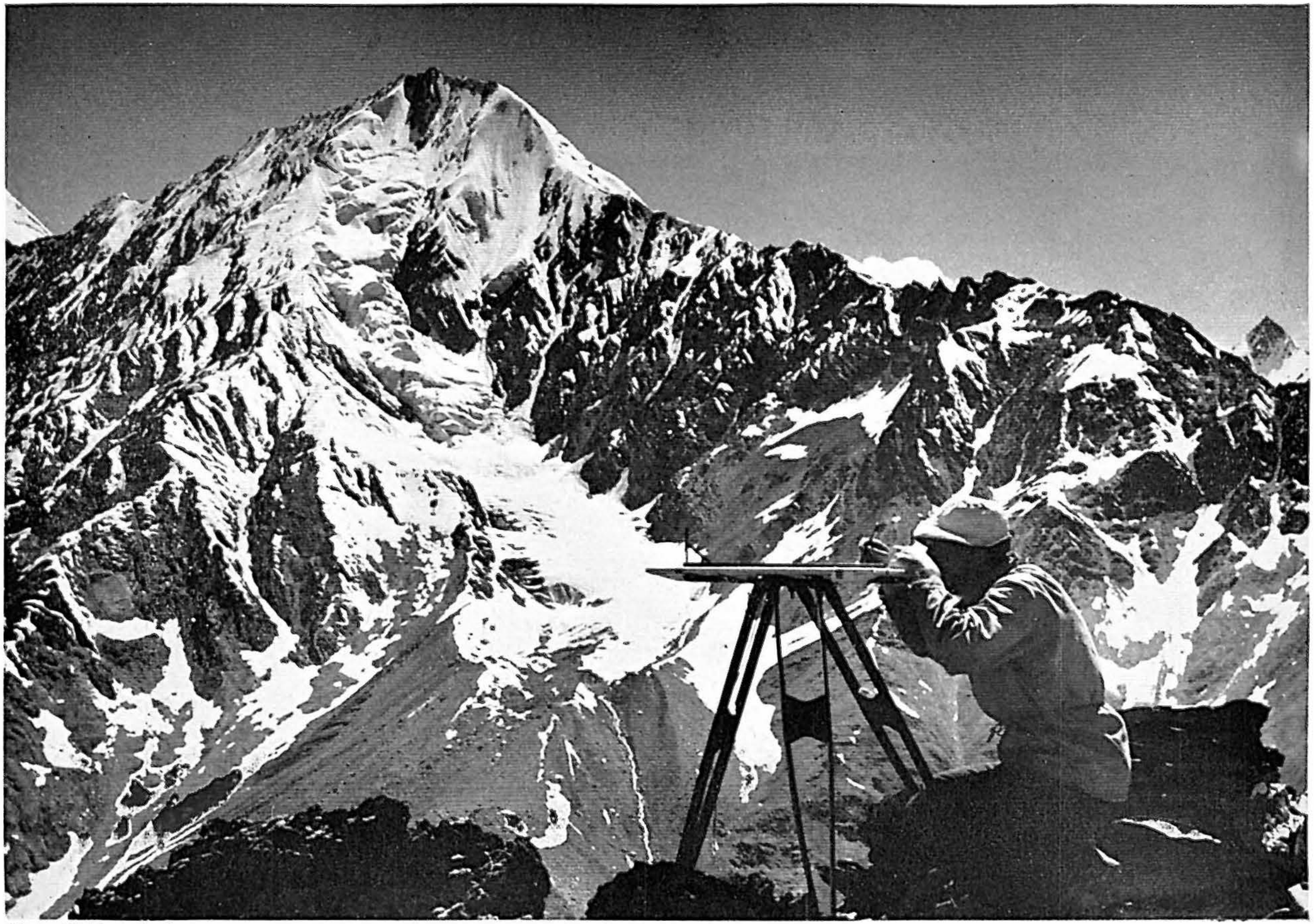
The Expedition's Map

Although the borders of our area had been touched by the N.U.S. and R.A.F. surveys, no attempt had been made to survey the area itself since 1851. We assumed that 52H shows correctly the points 21,380, 20,430 and 15,770 and the general course of the Chandra river. Our survey was made by plane tabling and rounds of levelled photographs. (An 80-cm. rangefinder would have been a most useful instrument ; I should certainly try to take one on another occasion.) If we had done more plane tabling and placed less reliance on photographs taken with the camera doubtfully level, the accuracy of the map would have been greater and its area smaller. It would be surprising if there were no errors, and I can only hope that there are few to be seen at the first sight of the actual country. I think mistakes are most likely to be found around the points CB 53–55, and north-west of CB 12.

Comparison with Previous Maps

In general, the country is more mountainous, glaciated, complicated and interesting than it appears on 52H, which has so many errors that at first sight it appeared all wrong. Later we found, as I have said above, that the points shown on Degree Sheet 24 are generally right. Modern parties should not readily assume that the old surveyors did not know their job. Unless a modern climbing party includes a surveyor of professional competence with adequate time and assistance, it is unlikely that they will improve upon the old triangulations of the main points. The last-minute acquisition of a theodolite is a serious handicap to an amateur expedition.

The lower part of the Samundar Tapu glacier is roughly correct on 52H, but the upper parts and most other glaciated areas are wrong. The point shown near Mulkila as 21,000 is presumably M7, although it is two miles from the actual position of that mountain. The N.U.S. point M7 and the R.A.F.'s Taragiri are the same. The R.A.F. found that the main Chandra-Bhaga watershed, which forms the eastern wall of the Kulti Nala and the border between our areas, was about a mile west of its position on 52H/SW. We have bearings from Tara Pahar



Photo, H. McArthur]

AT THE KUNZAM TRIG. POINT, 15,770 FT. THE MOUNTAIN IS CB14 (19,940 FT.)

(20,430) of the points on the watershed, but no distances. There would not be room for everything unless the R.A.F. were right and I have gladly accepted their view, but Holton and I do not altogether agree about the ridge between Ashagiri and Akela Quila and I have put in the points CB43, 44 and 45 on bearings alone, guessing the distances. When someone goes again, the map can be checked ; until then it hardly matters.

The Panoramas

The panoramas have been drawn from rounds of photographs taken by Frank Solari. The angular scales are intended to give approximate bearings in degrees from true north. No photographer likes taking panoramas. They are a nuisance, and there is no way more certain of making exciting country look flat and dull, but in mountain exploration they are invaluable.

I have not attempted in Panorama IIb to identify the individual peaks above the Bara Shigri. They are badly shown on 52H and I believe that most identifications have so far been wrong. The peak marked Shitakar Peak on Panorama IIa (bearing 109°) is almost where 52H shows the point 20,570. A. E. Gunther thinks that Shitakar Peak is only about 19,600 ft. and that the peak marked ' ? ' (bearing 80°) is the true 20,570. I do not know ; they looked about the same height to me.

Place Names and Numbers

Lahul, Lahoul or *Lahaul* ? The last number of the ALPINE JOURNAL came down firmly for *Lahoul* (*A.J.* 61.45 footnote). All three versions are in current use. We adopted the form *Lahul* from Sheet 52H and having incorporated it in the expedition's name we are stuck with it—right or wrong.

According to the *Imperial Gazeteer of India* (1908 Bibl. 12), the earliest name, recorded by a Chinese traveller in the seventh century A.D., was *Lo-Hu-Lo*. Azevedo in the seventeenth century refers to *Cullu* but gives no name to Lahul (Bibl. 1). By the middle of the last century, *Lahoul* was the commonest form, but other forms persisted. The *Gazeteer* of 1908 adopted *Lahul* and that remained the official spelling until the end of the British administration. Since Indian independence the spelling has again been in doubt. Banon uses *Lahoul* (Bibl. 13). The Government of India in an official announcement about the Inner Line in 1952 (reprinted in *H.J.* XVII, p. 126) used *Lahaul* ; Mason, an authority not lightly to be set aside, used *Lahul* in *Abode of Snow* (1955, Bibl. 19). A recent number of the *Himalayan Journal* in one place or another has all three forms (*H.J.* XVII), and now in August 1956 I find that Pandit Nehru himself in his foreword to Khosla's book (Bibl. 18) uses *Lahoul*. Perhaps that settles the matter ; but perhaps not, for it has been settled before. Having selected *Lahul* before we knew anything of its complexities, we are not yet convinced that we must change.

Other Names

The nomadic shepherds have names for pastures, but we could discover no local names for mountains. Although we devised names

for a few mountains and glaciers, it would have been impious to name them all, but some means of cross-referencing the map and panoramas is required. Degree Sheet 24 numbered important tops 'Chandra-Bhaga Watershed, Peaks 1–15.' I have used these numbers where the peaks fall on our map and have extended the series to CB 57. I have shown the N.U.S. and R.A.F. names and numbers. The N.U.S. party gave M and KR numbers to the peaks of the Milang and Koa Rang valleys respectively. The name *Mulkila* for the pt. 21,380 was recorded by them from local usage in Darcha, but Maffi, although himself using the name *Mulkila*, records *Sonagar* as a Lahuli name (Bibl 37). Names from 52H are shown on our map in upright letters and other names in sloping letters (this does not apply to the key maps). I have adopted the spelling of 52H, with the exception of *Kunzam La* and *Patseo*. 52H gives *Kanzam*, but the local people all call it *Kunzam*. Egerton in 1863 had *Koonsum* (Bibl. 3), Banon in 1952 had *Kunzam* (Bibl. 13). 52H gives *Patsio*, but everybody who has ever written of the place gives *Patseo*.

Indrasau. For a note on the variants see Bibl. 33, footnote to p. 217. I have preferred the form *Indrasau* for no good reason. No serious attempt seems to have been made to climb this fine mountain, the only unclimbed twenty-thousander in the world whose base can be reached in a vehicle describing itself as a taxi.

NOTE ON THE HISTORY OF EXPLORATION AND CLIMBING IN LAHUL

Already, although there are between 100 and 200 unclimbed mountains in Lahul, parties have attempted peaks without knowing they had previously been climbed. The records are scattered and not easy to follow and not all expeditions have been recorded. A synopsis is required; this note and the bibliography that follows are no more than a start.

The first European travellers were the Jesuit missionaries Azevedo and Oliveira, who went from Gya through Lahul to Kulu in November 1631, probably by the Bara Lacha and certainly by the Rohtang[16] (Bibl. 1, 10 and brief reference in 19). Moorcroft crossed the Bara Lacha in 1820 (Bibl. 7), and before many years he was followed by others. Kulu and Lahul came under British administration in 1846 and Spiti in 1849 and the surveyors arrived in 1851. Later there were fairly frequent visits by parties of young officers who came to see the country and kill animals, and later still journeys at least as far as the Rohtang Pass became *à la mode* with tourists in the Kulu Valley. By mid-Victorian times the important passes and the main Chandra and Bhaga valleys were well known, mapped and even photographed,[17] but the country is mainly

[16] But certainly not by the impossible route between these passes shown on the map in Wessels' book (Bibl. 10).

[17] Egerton (Bibl. 3) took what were probably the first photographs in the Himalayas in 1863. It is surprising that the Bara Shigri, until recently so little known, should have been among the first glaciers in the world to be photographed.

covered by mountains and glaciers and no mountaineering seems to have been attempted until General Bruce's visit in 1912 (Bibl. 23).

Bruce's party attempted Deo Tibba (on the Kulu-Lahul watershed), nearly climbed Gaphan (now called Gepang), and did climb a nearby peak which they named the Gaphan Schreckhorn. Later they did some climbing west of Patseo and on the Lahul-Zaskar watershed in the extreme north (see the map with Bruce's book : it is impossible to identify their peaks on 52H). Minchinton followed Bruce in 1914 and climbed a 17,000-ft. peak near the Shingo La (Bibl. 38). There was then little climbing on Lahul for a generation, although Shuttleworth investigated parts of the Kulu-Lahul watershed (Bibl. 21).

In 1939, Krenek led an Anglo-Austrian expedition under the auspices of the National Union of Students to the Milang Valley and made first ascents of Mulkila (21,380) and M7, and several lesser peaks (Bibl. 29, 30). The ascent of Mulkila is probably the finest climb yet made in Lahul. The expedition was cut short by a fatal accident and the outbreak of war. Roberts (Bibl. 39) attempted Deo Tibba and investigated parts of the Kulu-Lahul divide.

In 1940, Capt. Lind attempted Deo Tibba (Bibl. 25).

In 1941, Roberts climbed ' White Sail Peak ' on the Kulu-Lahul divide which he identified as the pt. 21,148 (Bibl. 40).

The years 1943–45 saw the oddest series of expeditions in Himalayan history. Italian prisoners-of-war were in a camp near Dharmsala ; little by little their privileges were extended until some were going unguarded to the mountains for a month or longer. In the end hundreds had been at large, although few reached the high mountains. Determined, but unsuccessful, attempts were made on Deo Tibba and Mulkila. ' Laluni Peak ' was climbed (the Italians are not always easy to follow on paper for their captors' indulgence did not extend to the provision of large-scale maps, but this is almost certainly the point 19,777 at 32° 26′ N, 76° 57′ E. near Shikar Beh). They also climbed a mountain near Kyelang and named it Cima Italia (probably the pt. 20,218 at 32° 45′ N., 76° 59′ E.) (Bibl. 36, 37 and 31).

In 1949, R. C. Evans' party attempted Deo Tibba (Bibl. 25).

In 1952, Snelson's party climbed Rubal Kang where Kulu, Spiti and Lahul meet (Bibl. 42). The Graaff party made the first ascent of Deo Tibba and attempted Shitakar Peak on their way to Spiti (Bibl. 26 and 33).

In 1953, T. J. Fowle attempted Shikar Beh (no published information). The Gunther-Kempe party explored the Bara Shigri and climbed two peaks (Bibl. 27, 28).

In 1954, Wollaston and Platts climbed Gepang and other Sissu Nala peaks (Bibl. 43).

In 1955, the R.A.F. Mountaineering Association expedition climbed peaks around the Kulti Nala, made the second ascent of M7 (which they named Taragiri) and the first ascent of Shikar Beh (Bibl. 41). We arrived just after the R.A.F. left, and the Cambridge University expedition to Spiti passed through Lahul as we were leaving. A German

climber, Rudi Rott of Augsburg, is briefly reported in *Die Alpen* as having made the second ascent of Deo Tibba (Bibl. 24).

In 1956, at least three parties were in Lahul. Mrs. Joyce Dunsheath led an all women's party to the upper Bara Shigri (preliminary report, *The Times*, August 20, 1956); Holmes, who was with the Cambridge party in 1955, returned to the Spiti-Lahul watershed (private information), and two Bavarian brothers, Fritz and Adolf Hieber, are reported to have climbed a 6,300-metre peak and several lesser peaks in Central Lahul but no details are yet available (*Allgäuer Heimat und Bayern Chronik*, July 30, 1956).

At a rough guess, two-thirds of Lahul has now been explored and one-tenth of the mountains climbed.

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