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KANCHENJUNGA

AN INTERNATIONAL EXPEDITION

THE UNSCALED PEAK

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 Times* has arranged to publish a series of exclusive dispatches describing the adventure and will have a Special Correspondent with the climbers.

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 cinematographic 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. Maps of the higher regions of the mountain are by no means exact.



A TEAM OF EXPERTS

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.

The party may indeed be regarded as the hardiest 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 ft. 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. Herr Duvanel has taken many cinematograph films in the Alps, and Mr. Smythe's pictures have often been reproduced in *The Times*.

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.

MOUNTAIN MASSIF

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 recompacked 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. Rising from the great main ridge of the Himalaya, Kanchen-

junga 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 leader of the present party, Professor Günter Dyhrenfurth, is professor of geology at Zurich. He has ascended more than 700 peaks in the Alps and Hohe Tatra, mostly without guides, including 56 new routes and first ascents. His climbs include such great ascents as his traverse of the Aletschorn in the Bernese Oberland by the north-east, and south-west ridges and traverses of the Matterhorn by the Zmatt ridge and of Castor, Pollux, and the Lyskanum in one day and the Anderson ridge of the Schreckhorn. He has also made a large number of rock climbs in the Eastern Alps on little-known but, difficult peaks.

He is 44 years of age, and his father, Dr. Oskar Dyhrenfurth, now 80 years old, has been a wonderful mountaineer. He climbed the Jungfrau at the age of 69, and at the age of 74 made a solitary climb on the Dachstein, in which he fell badly,

but recovered. His son, Professor Dyhrenfurth, made his first climb at the age of nine, and at the age of 13 climbed the Rosengartenspitze, one of the best-known peaks in the Dolomites. He was severely injured in 1921, when he fell 21 ft. owing to a rope breaking, while descending the Drusenfluh. He is a most active man and an all-round sportsman. During the War he was in command of a corps of mountain guides on the Italian front, where he spent winter and summer at heights of over 10,000 ft. in redoubts among the Ortler mountains and in dug-outs cut in the solid ice of glaciers. He has written several monographs on Alpine mountaineering and on geology, and is a keen photographer.

THE ONLY WOMAN

Frau Dyhrenfurth is perhaps best known as an international lawn tennis player—she is one of the very best players in mixed doubles in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland—but she is also an experienced mountaineer and expert ski-runner. She has accompanied her husband on many expeditions, but few women have taken part in great climbs in the high Himalayas. She will share that distinction with Mrs. Bullock Workman and Mrs. Rutledge.

Herren Hoerlin and Schneider are the most brilliant pair of Continental climbers without guides of the present day. Their record of ascents rivals that of the famous Swiss pair, Dr. W. Anstutz and Herr Schumacher. Recently they carried out a series of climbs on the range of Mont Blanc which included the first winter ascents of the Aiguille Noire de Pétéret and the Aiguille Blanche de Pétéret, as well as a ski traverse of Mont Blanc. They are an extraordinarily fast pair; their time for their winter ascent of the Aiguille Blanche de Pétéret, one of the most dangerous climbs in the Alps, was a record and was even faster than that for the summer ascent of the peak by Mr. Eustace Thomas (the Manchester climber) and Josef Kumbel, Mr. Winthrop Young's famous guide, who are reckoned the fastest pair in the Alps. Herr Schneider comes from Hall, in Tirol, and is a geologist as well as one of the best-known mountaineers in the Eastern Alps. In 1928 he took part in the Alai Pamir expedition led by Herr Rickmez Rickmers. He has made a number of new ascents in winter and summer in the Alps. In spite of his youth he has climbed over 1,000 peaks, including over 200 peaks in one year, which is probably a record. Herr Hoerlin is a student of medicine. Though he only started to climb in 1922,

he is recognized as the leading young German mountaineer and is the president of the Academic Alpine Club, Berlin.

Dr. Richter is acting as surgeon to the expedition. He is well known as an authority on the physiological effects of high altitudes and as an author. He is a good ski-runner.

Herr Ulrich Wieland is a Swabian and has lived since childhood on the mountains near the Austrian and Swiss border. As a boy he accompanied his parents on climbing excursions. After the War, in 1919 and 1920, when it was forbidden to cross the neighbouring borders by the ordinary routes, he used with friends to make long excursions over high and unknown passes to reach the mountains they longed to climb, now inaccessible by train. He has since learnt all the Western Alps by heart. In 1927 and 1928 he worked his way across the United States as a "student labourer," and in the summer toured for pleasure, climbing three of the great American peaks, Long's Peak, in the Rocky Mountains, Grand Teton, the "American Matterhorn," south of Yellowstone Park, and Mount Ranier, near Seattle.

WINTER CLIMBING EXPERT

Herr Marcel Kurz is the greatest living Continental authority on winter mountaineering. He lives in Neuchatel and is an engineer by profession. His record of first ascents and difficult climbs is most remarkable. Recently he made the first winter ascents of the Ober Gebelhorn and Taschhorn in the Zermatt district, the last two great peaks in the Alps of Valais to be unclimbed. He is a great expert on snowcraft and avalanches, particularly from the point of view of ski-running. When climbing with Mr. H. E. L. Porter in the Southern Alps of New Zealand in 1927 he made a new route up Mount Tasman by the east ridge and also ascended Mount Cook, the highest peak in the New Zealand Alps (12, 349 ft.), by a long and difficult route. He is a cartographer and has revised and brought up to date the famous Kurz guide books on Mont Blanc and the Pennine Alps written by his father, and has also written *Alpinisme Hivernal* and a guide to the Alps of Valais. He has mapped Mount Olympus for the Greek Government.

Herr Duvanel is, as well as an expert cinematographer, a fine all-round sportsman. Though he has had comparatively little experience in mountaineering, he is an expert ski-runner. He has made a number of films of climbs in the Alps, many of them for the instruction of novices.

The Italian member of the party, Mr. Enrico Gaspari, who lives in London, is 36 years old. He was born at Cortino d'Ampezzo. Before the War he was an Austrian, but since he has been an Italian citizen. He is a member of the Club Alpino Italiano. All his climbing has been done in the Dolomites, and until recently he was reckoned as second only to Angelo Dibona among rock-climbing guides. His greater climbs include the first winter ascents of Moute Cristallo and Croda do Lago, and also a 12-hour excursion over the Campanilo di Val, the Di Rola (by the west chimney), and the Cima di Val Roda. He has taken part in the making of various Alpine film stories.

Mr. F. S. Smythe, the British member of the party and a member of the Alpine Club, is 29 years old. He started climbing on the British hills when a boy, and went to the Alps in 1921, where he lived for two years, and during that time carried out a large number of expeditions in the Central and Eastern Alps, in winter and summer, both on foot and on ski. He has climbed in most districts between Mont Blanc and the Gross Glockner, and has never climbed with guides. His greatest climbs have been made on the range of Mont Blanc climbs, including a terrible retreat from the Pétéret Ridge in a storm, the Col de la Brenva, and the ascent of the very difficult east face of the Aiguille du Plan. His best climbs were the two new routes up the south side of Mont Blanc up the great Brenva face, made in company with Professor T. Graham Brown, F.R.S., in 1927 and 1928. He recently published "Climbs and Ski Runs."

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 10,000 ft., 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.