

THE EXPEDITION TO CHOGO RI.—VI.

LEAVES FROM THE NOTEBOOK OF ALEISTER CROWLEY.

ON August 1st the storm was more violent than ever.

We heard from the Austrians, who were now at Bdokass, that cholera had broken out in the Braldub Valley, and that it had consequently been closed by order of the Government. This was a very serious piece of news, as for all we knew it might imply difficulty (if not with regard to ourselves with regard to our baggage) in getting back to the Indus Valley.

After a long council on the subject it was unanimously decided that we had no option but to go down. Even had the weather cleared up at once the vast snow plateaux of Chogo Ri would have been impossible to traverse for at least a week. We had only a bare fortnight's provision remaining, and some of that was necessary for the return journey.



CHOGO RI.

So the next fairly decent morning we finished the packing and struck camp. As, however, there were a good many more loads than we had coolies, we were obliged to resort to the sleigh, which was all right for a down-hill journey. We got off in the course of the morning and went down to Camp 9, stopping for half an hour or so at Camp Misery to extract sugar, milk and chocolate, together with a few of our permanent goods from the kilts there. At Camp 9 we found our dakwale and got a very welcome mail.

The sleigh had broken down shortly below Camp Misery, as there was little or no snow on the ice here. The slope was much steeper than above, and the constant furious valley winds had blown all the new snow up to the big plateau outside Camp Despair. The sleigh had consequently gone to pieces, and the extra loads had been dumped. We sent men up to fetch them, and spent the day in idleness.

The following day we marched to Camp 7, Doksum: a very long march and much more tedious than the ascent had been, as there was now no snow whatever on the ice. The crevasses were large, and had occasionally to be circumvented; while the surface of the ice itself was honey-combed and consequently rather bad going. We had not expected this state of affairs, and got pretty hungry before we arrived.

We then sent men back for the extra loads, while two men went down to Bdokass for more coolies and flour. The last two days had been fine as far as we were concerned, but we could see the eternal storm still raging on the high peaks. This 7th of August was a very red-letter

day. I washed, a thing I had not done for exactly nine weeks.

The following day I found myself very ill with a cold in my head from my imprudent conduct, and my digestive organs had again gone out of order. The Doctor was bitter. I forgot to mention that he had been suffering severely from influenza for a week.

On August 10th we arrived at Camp 5. It was a long march, and I barely managed to arrive. We found the sandy glacier bed on which this camp is situated almost entirely covered with water. In the afternoon a violent rain storm arose.

I had another very bad attack of sickness; but managed to start, the Doctor keeping with me till after mid-day, when I got a good deal better and was able to go down to Bdokass in comparative comfort. The route was entirely different to that I had taken in the ascent, as the old road from Camp 3 to Camp 4 was now a roaring torrent. In any case I should recommend this march, though a double one, to a future party. For quite a long way the glacier was reasonably level, and made walking quite a pleasure. This level part was almost bare ice, covered only with a thin layer of sores, which is of lovely rainbow hues. At Bdokass we found the Austrians waiting, and another mail; but there were no sheep, the Austrians having managed to eat eight in sixteen days, in addition to fowls, etc.! This is the more remarkable, as Pfannl had eaten but little owing to his illness.

We held a durbar in the rain to investigate the cause of the disappearance of our emergency rations; a large number of our self-cooking tins having disappeared from Camp Despair at a time when that camp was already short of food. A more mean and contemptible theft it was difficult to imagine. At night I had another bad attack of sickness. I am ashamed to say that it was largely my own fault. The taste of bread and fresh meat, revolting as it would have been to a civilised person, was so delicious



STRIKING CAMP.

after two months or more on tins that I over-ate myself. I had been very foolish staying out in the wet to attend the durbar, but the occasion was so serious that there was no alternative.

The Austrians left for good. They had some wild idea of going off to Darjeeling at that late date, and climbing Kinchinjanga; for which purpose they bought from the expedition a Munnerly tent, their sleeping bags, valises, and other necessities. Of course such a scheme was totally absurd. The weather was still very wet, and the Doctor kept me in bed all day.

On August 14th we marched to Liligo, which took us ten hours. Below Chorbutsé the marching was terribly bad. In coming up I had kept nearly all the way between the glacier and the hillside, which was good walking; but the stream had much increased, and quite half of the march lay