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“The Conquest of Kinchenjunga.”

**Preparations at Darjeeling.
(From our own correspondent.)**

Darjeeling, Aug. 5.

Kangchenjunga, "the five store houses of the Gods," as the name denotes in Tibetan, that mighty giant of Sikkim, whose highest peak rises 28,156 feet above the sea, that is the road which is drawing us, five puny men to its icy foot intent on its conquest.

The work required in fitting out our small party, which must store up enough to support itself for nearly three months, 15 marches from the only base of supplies one may rely on, Darjeeling, is no small matter, taking into account the weather we shall be likely to experience. No load must exceed one maund as the Darjeeling coolie is an expert in judging what a maund should be. The stores for the European members of the party are quite a small matter, compared with the supplies for the coolie. The experience gained by Mr. Crowley and Dr. Jacot-Guillardmod during their 1902 expedition to Chogo Ri in Baltistan, the next highest mountain to Everest, stands them in good stead, as they know exactly what quality and quantity is required for each individual member, although it entails a good deal of work in listing, numbering and sealing. Each unit consists of what we shall require during three days. This does away with the troublesome necessity of opening up five or six loads to find salt or sugar or whatever should be wanted. When one of these units is empty it can be returned with its porter to the base, making one less mouth to feed as we proceed up the glacier.

The preparation of rations for the coolies is much more troublesome owing to their number. Taking for example one hundred coolies who will daily consume 100 seers of food, it becomes a nice problem to be worked out to find how much rice, dhal, etc., will be required for them for so many given days and how much should be sent abroad to our first main camp.

Tsamba, a mixture of barley, flour and grain, ready cooked, which the Tibetans use when not able to boil rice at great altitudes as all it needs to be fit for human consumption is to lie wetted with hot, or failing that, cold water will be the staple food with tea for the men who will come on the glacier. It gave us some trouble to procure a sufficient quantity. The whole bazaar was searched, and only a maund or so was available and this at a higher rate. We had then to order it to be made in dlibs and drabs, as it requires a good deal of attention in the making, and it takes time. Some was made at Ghoom, some at Josepokri and some even at Bhagalpur.

After nearly three weeks of fairly hard work the advance native stores were ready to be despatched on to Jongru, our first camp, which we did easily enough thanks to the kindness of Mr. C. White, the Political Officer of Sikkim, who came to our aid in having coolies "Jamma Karo'd" at Chakung, two days' marches from here, 110 maund loads being sent off in charge of two chowkidars. This was done under the direction of Mr. Crowley. We are now "tout assemblé," but four days behind time owing to our Swiss companions being delayed in the Red Sea. No! not by the Russian cruisers, but by their steamer having had to put back to Suez for repairs from whence, to our disgust, Le Docteur cabled us informing of the mishap.

The engaging of our coolies is another task of which I was rather afraid owing to the superstition of the Tibetans that the higher the peak the worse the devil that lives thereon, but to my great surprise more than four times the number required appeared on the day the Doctor arrived, to be examined and engaged if found fit.

The selection of a sirdar which was the first thing Mr. Crowley wanted done was rather difficult, as the only man I thought capable of undertaking the work was in "prison!" I am glad to say that Mr. Crowley took a sensible view of the matter, remarking that a good many innocent men do get into the lock up, so that when Nangar was let out, in spite of several letters from other applicants painting him as black as bazaar English and ink could, he was engaged.

Practically everything being now ready, except a few details, we hope in a couple of days to be able to make a start. The route we have decided on is by the Singalela Spur via Toongloo Sandakphu, Phallut to Tseram some of us going to Jongri to push along our stores over the Kang La (16,313) if the permission of the Nepal Durbar is granted; if not the other more difficult route will have to be taken over the Guicha La, 16,430,

across the Talung Glacier up the Jongshion glacier, on through the Zemu Gap, if it can be forced. We may have to descend on to the Zemu Glacier and by gradually working up to the foot of the North-Eastern buttress of Kangchenjunga, which according to Mrs. Freshfield, does not offer unsurmountable difficulties. On the contrary, it is her opinion that given good weather, experienced mountaineers a way can be found to the summit. [Sic] Will we with our limited time be able to get our coolies there? That remains to be seen.

If the success of the expedition depends on the outfit we surely ought to succeed as no expense and forethought has been spared for food, instruments, tents and the hundred and one things civilization has invented to carry modern man with some comfort to out-of-way corners of our sphere.