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MOUNT EVEREST : THE SIXTH EXPEDITION¹

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ALTHOUGH this year's expedition to Mount Everest resulted in complete failure to climb the mountain, or indeed to set foot above the N. Col, it is hoped that the experience gained will be not without value to future expeditions. In organizing the expedition no avenue opened by previous attempts was left unexplored, and particular attention was paid to the selection of personnel; I think it would be difficult to find a stronger party, from every point of view, than that which set out in the spring of this year to make a sixth journey to Mount Everest.

As is well known, it was thought desirable on this occasion to collect a party of which the members had climbed together before and therefore knew each other's form, who had some experience of high-altitude conditions, and had given proofs of the capacity to acclimatize well. The reconnaissance led by Shipton last year to Everest and the work done by Smythe in the Alps at the same time gave the Mount Everest Committee and the leader of the expedition more data to guide them than had been previously available; the Committee gave the leader very full discretion as to the use of this data and, after exhaustive discussion with both Smythe and Shipton, a party of twelve men was decided upon, of whom eight were considered to be potentially capable of reaching the summit. Of these eight, six had been to Everest before; a seventh, Oliver, had climbed Trisul; and one only, Gavin, had not been to the Himalaya. Gavin owed his place

¹ The names of the members of the party appear on p. 185 and on the illustration accompanying this paper.

not only to sound mountaineering ability but to the fact that the extremely rigorous medical test of the Royal Air Force Medical Board had placed him in a class by himself. I may say here that their verdict was thoroughly borne out on the mountain. Of the four men not expected to go very high, one only—Humphreys—had not been to Everest before, but his record of expeditions indicated that he was capable of almost infinite endurance.

The party was brought out to India in echelon, to obviate waste of time and money; the work of selection of porters, organization of transport and other preliminaries being done by Morris, Shipton, Wyn Harris and the leader at Darjeeling while the others were still at sea. At home the whole organization of the expedition was carried through by Shipton, Smythe and the leader, with the generous assistance of very many willing helpers, of whom I may specially mention Mr. C. Scott Lindsay, to whom we are indebted for the quite exceptional rationing which was a feature this year.

A good deal of trouble was taken to improve equipment in the light of past experience, and a new type of Arctic tent was provided with the particular object of rendering conditions more tolerable than before at Camp V, where much misery has been endured in the past. One cannot expect men to give of their best in the final assaults if already, at comparatively low altitude, 25,700 ft., their vitality has been lowered by extreme discomfort.

The oxygen problem was again considered, not only in view of the already well-known opinions of distinguished physiologists, but as a result of conversations with the expert staff at the Royal Air Force factory at Farnborough. Although some of our best men are still convinced that the mountain can be climbed without the use of oxygen, and argue that the dangers and transport difficulties inseparable from its employment outweigh any possible benefits, one did not feel justified in a refusal to have this aid available and, after many tests, an apparatus lighter than that taken in 1933 was adopted. Throughout the expedition Warren took a great deal of trouble to make experiments and collect data as to its value.

Experience gained in 1933 enabled Smijth-Windham, though working single-handed, to make most effective wireless arrangements, among which may be specially mentioned here the provision of very light high-altitude sets which there is every reason to suppose could have been used up to the highest camp. Owing to these it was possible to dispense with telephone wire, and communication could be established not only between Darjeeling and the Base Camp, but along the whole of our lines of communication. Gavin well upheld the reputation of the Corps of Royal

Engineers for versatility by learning the Morse code in record time and by making himself master of the transmitting and receiving apparatus at Camp III.

So much work is now being done in the Himalaya that the Sherpa community has become thoroughly imbued with the spirit of high-altitude mountaineering ; but the quality of the porters obtained for the expedition this year surprised even those of us who had already experienced the value of these men. News that an Everest expedition is again in being is broadcasted with that mysterious efficiency which the East invented long before the B.B.C. was thought of, and candidates good, bad and indifferent converged from all points of the compass upon Darjeeling during the winter. Fortunately Morris was already out there, and his exceptional knowledge of Nepali and his capacity for dealing with these men saved much time. The whole of his first selection was taken without hesitation and within two days we had 65 first-class porters. A number of these possessing experience and character were appointed as sardars and under-sardars and given non-commissioned officers' stripes and special equipment ; they were employed not only to keep discipline amongst the men but also to make themselves responsible for specified collections of equipment and stores during the march, an arrangement which worked so well that our total losses on the way to Everest amounted to only two or three tins of soup which must have fallen out of a disintegrated box. In every way the conduct and bearing of this year's porter corps were superb. In order to minimize expense and transport difficulties, two recruiters were sent out to Sola Khombu in Nepal to select 100 porters who should join at Rongbuk on our arrival there. In consequence we had at our disposal for the operations on the mountain an additional corps of men of whom it might be said that although many of them looked as if they had come ' straight off the trees ' and had certainly never been on an ice slope, they showed a strength, endurance and natural mountaineering ability beyond all expectation.

Hitherto, all expeditions outward-bound have travelled *via* the Phari plain, partly because the services of the Tibetan Government trade agent are available for transport, and partly because it was considered too risky to attempt crossing early in the year the two 17,000-ft. passes dividing Northern Sikkim from Tibet. After much inquiry and consideration it was decided this year to try the Sikkim route. Not only does this save the expedition the great rigours of the Phari plain in the early spring, but it is shorter by at least five marches than the old route. The Sebu La and Kongra La are neither steep, narrow nor difficult ; there is no risk whatever

from avalanches and it is extremely unlikely that even an unseasonable, heavy fall of snow would cause more than a few days' delay. Adequate transport is available from Lachen, and we have in the Maharaja of Sikkim a firm friend and ally who put the whole resources of his staff at our disposal for the collection of transport animals, assembly of provisions, and the necessary repair of roads and bridges. In addition, the expedition received most valuable help from Mr. B. J. Gould, the Political Officer in Sikkim, to whose diplomatic resource we owe the punctual arrival of our passport from the Tibetan Government, and whose hospitality we shall never forget.

A strategic and technical plan had of course been discussed at great length long before the expedition left England; and in a party of such wide experience the methods of discussion and consultation were likely to produce better results than the *ex parte* decisions of a *Führer*. With a view, however, to raising such discussions and consultations above the level of mere *ad hoc* camp arguments, a kind of staff was formed consisting of the most experienced men—Smythe, Shipton, Wyn Harris and Kempson—and at a meeting of this staff at Gangtok on March 17 the whole of our problem was reviewed and definite plans were made. I may say that at this and all subsequent meetings of the staff a most excellent spirit prevailed. Argument was subordinated to reasonable discussion, and even the most ardently held personal opinions were modified to obtain the greatest possible measure of common consent. The principal matters settled at the meeting of March 17 were :

1. Arrival at Base Camp somewhere about April 24.
2. The establishment of Camp IV on the N. Col about May 22.
3. The formation of *three* camps above the N. Col instead of two as in the past.
4. The inclusion of a definite oxygen attempt.
5. The reliance upon picked porters to find their own way down from high camps in any but the very worst conditions.
6. A deliberate stay of several days at Thangu, the highest rest-house in Sikkim, with a view to a partial preliminary acclimatization of party.

The real march began on March 19, when the expedition left Gangtok. At Lachen, Morris went down with a very bad attack of malaria and nothing but his own resolution to carry on, together with the most careful medical attention, prevented his summary return to India. At Thangu a height limit of 18,000 ft. was fixed in order to prevent premature enthusiasm and subsequent

staleness. A few days spent there resulted in a successful crossing of the passes on April 2 without a sign of distress in anyone—a great contrast to the scenes of misery witnessed there last year.

A full description of the journey across the Tibetan plateau would be redundant; suffice it to say that at no time was any serious hardship experienced, the weather being unusually warm although there was the usual amount of dust and a fairly strong N.W. wind at times. It should be noted, however, that a good deal of cloud and the appearance of generally disturbed weather conditions were observed over the Everest region at various times during the march. The Base Camp was reached on April 26—that is to say, thirty-seven days after leaving Gangtok. Owing to cloud, we had not seen Everest from the Pang La, but from the Base Camp it appeared to be in absolutely perfect condition, and this state of things continued for another four days, during which time we were establishing Camp I. On April 30 Smijth-Windham opened wireless communication with Darjeeling and was at once informed that a disturbance might be expected. Simultaneously we had a moderate fall of snow, which incidentally turned the mountain white, and never again did we see Everest as we wanted to see her.

Nevertheless, there was no reason to suppose that we were experiencing anything different from the occasional disturbances usual at this time of year, and the work of establishing camps up the glacier was proceeded with expeditiously. While retaining the old names of camps, in order to avoid confusion, it had been decided to make our real base this time at Camp I, where Smijth-Windham would have his wireless headquarters. The reconnaissance of last year had found a more suitable position for Camp II in the main trough of the glacier at a height of about 19,900 ft. There was no difficulty whatever in reaching this, and it made the carry to Camp III comparatively simple. The condition of the party was so good (we had all arrived at Base Camp free from the abominable sore throats which affected us in 1933) that it was not found necessary to insist rigidly upon four days' acclimatization at each camp. Camp III was fully established on May 7 and 8—that is to say, within twelve days of reaching the base. Meanwhile considerations of our general fitness and of the prevailing mild weather had persuaded us to advance our programme by a week, so that we now aimed at establishing the N. Col by May 15. This programme was actually adhered to. Camp III was placed about 500 ft. higher and at least half a mile nearer the N. Col than on previous occasions, in a position which rendered a carry to the top of the N. Col not

too exacting. The character of the slopes had changed obviously since 1933 but was not dissimilar to that of last year. The ice wall which gave so much trouble on the last expedition seemed to have doubled in height, and there were avalanche débris below it ; accordingly it seemed preferable, after a reconnaissance by Smythe, Shipton and Warren on the 9th, to make a direct ascent of about 500 ft. away to the right, N.W., and then traverse along apparently easy slopes about half-way up, finishing with the steep climb direct to the crest.

Snow prevented a resumption of work until the 13th, when Smythe, Oliver, Gavin and Wigram, with 10 selected porters, made the whole route up to the crest ; having to cut steps afresh and fix ropes where necessary. This was an extremely hard day's work, but was so successful that next day Wyn Harris and Kempson were able with very little difficulty to escort 46 porters, half of whom had never been on an ice slope before, and establish Camp IV on the crest.

Everybody returned to Camp III the same evening, but on the morning of May 15 Smythe and Shipton occupied Camp IV with 56 men, of whom 42 remained to establish the higher camps. Thus the first part of our work had been accomplished with no set-back and with nothing like the hardship of 1933, and on exactly the same date as in that year we were in position to commence the assaults on the summit.

Unhappily the weather now became completely unfavourable. We had not to contend with the violent gales of 1933 : indeed, there was a complete absence of the N.W. wind which alone could remove the snow from the N. face. Day after day was unhealthily warm, what slight wind there was coming from an easterly direction. Snow and yet more snow continued to accumulate. Morning and evening Smythe telephoned down to me by wireless that conditions were getting worse and it would be quite unprofitable to tire out the porters in an attempt to establish Camp V. On the morning of the 18th Smythe gave his opinion, supported by Shipton, that it would be useless to hold the camp any longer for the present ; there would be no benefit in acclimatization from staying any longer at such an altitude, and some of the less experienced porters were showing signs of strain. He thought it better to come down that very evening. This he proceeded to do, using every mountaineering precaution to ensure safe descent, especially on the dangerous slopes of the traverse ; and it was an immense relief to have the whole party down safe.

Clearly the mountain would be out of condition for at least



Expedition Photo.]

TRAVERSE BELOW N. COL, 1936.

[To face p. 226.]



Expedition Photo.]

N. FACE CAMP, *ca.* 19,000 FT., MAIN RONGBUK GLACIER;
EVEREST WITH W. ARÊTE.

several days, and it was necessary to decide whether the expedition should be kept in the comparative discomfort of Camp III or taken down for a change of scenery and occupation at Camp I. Next morning orders were given for the descent, and it became at once evident that everybody's condition and spirits improved.

But the arrival at Camp I was not an unalloyed pleasure. On the 20th the wholly unexpected news came through on the wireless that conditions favourable for the formation of the monsoon in the S. of the Bay of Bengal were evident. This was a frightful shock, because up to this time there had not been the slightest reason to suppose that the monsoon was going to arrive earlier than its normal time, say about June 15 ; indeed, the very cautious and tentative forecast made at Alipore in February had indicated that we might even expect a fairly late monsoon. After considerable discussion we decided that there was just a chance of forestalling the arrival of bad weather by returning up the glacier at once and making an assault. There was always the possibility that what is called the *Choti Barsat* might expend its first fury on the Darjeeling foothills and never reach Everest at all. Everything was ready on the N. Col, and at least one party might have time to attempt the summit.

We were back in Camp III by the 24th, only to find ourselves completely weather-bound there. In fact, the monsoon rushed up from the S. of India to the Everest region in four days, a phenomenon, I believe, never experienced before and one which can be attributed only to the failure of the N.W. wind to stem it.

The N. Col slopes were obviously out of commission, and I find from my diary that it was their uncompromising appearance which induced me at this period to throw out the tentative suggestion that we might examine the W. side of the N. Col. We all knew that Mallory had condemned this approach in 1921, and those members of last year's reconnaissance who saw it thought that little could be done there, so the matter was dropped for the present. But a wireless report that a severe storm might be expected, and the already sufficiently unpleasant conditions, resulted in the second retirement to Camp I on the 28th, on which day a moderate blizzard accelerated our descent. The next morning, however, we woke to find for the first time a strong N.W. wind blowing. This was on May 29. Hope at once revived, and an excursion on to the main Rongbuk Glacier below Camp I revealed the very pleasant spectacle of the snow being blown in great sheets off the N. face of the mountain. At the same time the daily weather report indicated that the monsoon was weakening and also showing a tendency to drive off eastwards towards

Assam. There could hardly be two opinions as to the inference to be drawn : the party welcomed with delight the proposal to go up the glacier again at once, and on the 30th we reached Camp II. Our optimism was short-lived : the N.W. wind showed every sign of weakening and of veering to the E. ; heavy snow fell at Camp II ; the mountain resumed its mantle of white, and we were unable to make any progress until the morning of June 3, on which day the wireless completed its tale of woe by announcing considerable activity not only in the Bay of Bengal but also in the Arabian Sea. For the moment, however, the N.W. wind resumed its activities and it was decided at least to see what was happening on the N. Col. Smythe, Shipton and Kempson made a cautious examination of the lower slopes on the morning of the 4th, finding conditions apparently very much better than might have been expected : so much so that it was thought justifiable, if the utmost precautions were taken, to attempt to reoccupy Camp IV with an assaulting party next day.

This plan was very carefully organized with a view to avoiding danger from avalanches. The whole climbing strength of the party was to be employed, the climbers working in pairs for fixed periods of time and the porters being divided into small parties which were to be moved in succession as the route was made. Smythe would accompany each party of climbers and would use his discretion throughout the operations as to the advisability of further progress. Shipton would control the advance of the porters. After a cold night the advance began very early on the morning of June 5. Wyn Harris and Kempson tackled the first 500 ft. straight up, but before long came upon the débris of a small avalanche which must have fallen some days before. After careful discussion with Smythe they completed their section and were succeeded by Warren and Wigram, who with Smythe reached a crevasse which marked the beginning of the traverse. Oliver and Gavin halted the leading porters a little further down, and Shipton was still further below with the remainder. The ascent up the first 500 ft. had been fairly straightforward in spite of the warning conveyed by the avalanche débris, but an examination at close quarters of the slopes of the traverse left no doubt that further progress along this route would be suicidal. Smythe, now thoroughly roused, made the bold decision to attempt a route straight up to the crest. From his position he could not clearly see the difficulties ahead : two very steep bands of ice separated by an unpleasant snow slope, and equally unpleasant snow under the crest—altogether some 400 ft., possibly more, of extremely difficult going.

Fortunately a realization of the impracticability of this route came after a few steps only had been cut, and Smythe quite rightly gave up the attempt. It is certain that, even had the climbers reached the crest, porters could not possibly have been taken up by that way. Things looked so bad that Shipton from his place lower down anticipated Smythe's order to start the porters downwards. The descent was conducted with great skill, with a safe return to Camp III.

All that evening and next day the N.W. wind blew with tremendous force, our one really violent gale this year. Inside the shaking tents argument, that certain by-product of such conditions, raged upon the question of advance or retreat. Smythe, despite the anxious time he had been through, was convinced that this wind would remove the snow and give us a chance. The upshot was that on the morning of June 6 Wyn Harris asked me to let him and Shipton have a final look at the slopes, just to see what the actual effect of the wind had been. Nothing could be done during the fury of the morning, but during a temporary lull just after lunch the two men set off. We did not suppose that they would get far, but they made unexpectedly rapid progress up to the crevasse at the beginning of the traverse, finding this part of the slope swept fairly clear. After a short pause during which they roped up, Shipton led out on to the traverse across what seemed to be good, hard and safe snow. Wyn Harris behind him had just left the crevasse when there came a crack some 200 ft. up and the snow on which they were standing began to slide towards the 400-ft. ice precipice not far below them. Shipton was immediately upset on to his back as the slope began to split up into ice blocks, and was carried down helplessly among them. Wyn Harris made a desperate effort and jumped back to the lower lip of the crevasse, jamming in his axe as he did so. He had to let go the coils of the rope, as his left hand was crushed against the axe-head, and he was upset in his turn; but he instantly recovered his footing, rammed the haft of the axe into the snow with the rope round it, and managed to hold his ground at the extreme edge of the avalanche. Just when it seemed that the straining rope must pull the axe out of the snow, the avalanche slowed down and stopped close to the edge of the precipice. That Wyn Harris could by his action alone have stopped the fall of many hundreds of tons of ice is unthinkable, but there may have been a slight easing off of the slope just before the final drop and it is possible that Wyn Harris, by taking his own weight and to some extent that of Shipton and the surrounding blocks of ice from the avalanche, contributed to arrest its motion. Certainly

he did the right thing at the critical moment. The party pulled itself together and descended without further adventure.

This was, of course, the last straw. The wind had removed a great deal of snow from the eastern slopes, but a great deal more had almost certainly come over from the W., to form wind-slabs. Clearly there was nothing more to be done on this side, and orders were at once given for evacuation and descent to Camp I. It was tacitly assumed that the attempt on Mount Everest would now have to be abandoned, but it seemed that the interval between our retreat and the arrival of transport at the Base Camp might be filled by an examination of the W. side of the N. Col, not because we thought that it was a likely line of ascent but because, in default of something better to do, a detailed inspection of the slopes might provide an interesting little piece of exploration ; and there was just the chance that an approach might be found. We lost no time and started up the main Rongbuk Glacier on June 8. Smijth-Windham, who had spent the whole time in unrelieved work at Camp I, sending out no fewer than 500 messages, was invited to take a holiday. He accepted with alacrity but refused to be parted from his beloved wireless, taking up a light set for experimental purposes. In fact, he was unexpectedly successful and was able to establish excellent communication with Darjeeling from our highest camp up the glacier, in spite of the fact that his set had a guaranteed range of 5 miles only, and that the great N. Peak was immediately over the camp. At the first camp, where there is a pleasant little lake, we found grass and flowers at a height of 18,000 ft., also a lark's nest with two eggs in it. Thence we pushed on next day to what was called N. Face Camp, at nearly 19,000 ft. Progress the whole way demanded boulder-hopping of the most virulent type, but the route is perfectly practicable for porters.

On the morning of the 10th we all went out on to the open glacier in the direction of the Lho La, and about half-way across suddenly came into full view of the western side of the N. Col.² The moment was certainly dramatic, for no one seems to have anticipated exactly what we saw : in the foreground flat and easy glacier ; in the middle distance an icefall, the ascent of which presented no obvious difficulty ; and, lastly, less than 1000 ft. of fairly steep snow and ice to the crest. To the right, S., of this slope there were outcrops and ridges of rock which would almost certainly afford a lodgment should the slope prove too difficult or dangerous. The place was well worth trying, and the climbers set out for a closer inspection without a moment's delay. Unfor-

² See illustration facing p. 6.

Unfortunately clouds were already coming up, and when they returned to camp that evening they were only able to report an easy ascent of the icefall as far as the not difficult bergschrund below the final slope. Beyond that nothing could be seen in the mist. The weather reports now indicated that the monsoon was in exceptional strength, and our own eyes showing us that the mountain was under many feet of snow, it did not seem worth while to expend the whole strength of the party in pursuing this new line of inquiry.

Shipton had always been anxious to renew the assault of the N. Peak which had been defeated by bad monsoon snow last year. It was possible that further information would be obtained as to the behaviour of snow at this period of the year above 23,000 ft., and that a good view might be obtained from the summit of the N. face of Everest. Accordingly it was arranged that Smythe and Wyn Harris should take a light camp up to the bergschrund and endeavour to explore the W. side of the N. Col ; that Smijth-Windham and I should remain in support at N. Face Camp and that the others, led by Shipton, should return up the E. Rongbuk Glacier and again attempt the N. Peak.

The mornings and afternoons were now almost invariably fine and extremely hot, but every evening there was a heavy fall of snow. Smythe and Wyn Harris made their camp not far from the bergschrund, well out of the way of the constant avalanches from the N. Peak, on the 12th. The depth of snow made further progress impossible, but their inspection from below, and a more distant one made by Kempson and Gavin from the Lho La before they started off for the N. Peak, make it practically certain that the N. Col can be reached by this way. It is almost certainly safer from avalanches than the eastern side, and there were no indications of danger from rock falls. If the route were properly made and roped where necessary, in the early stages of an expedition, it would probably afford a good line of descent should a party be caught by the monsoon while on the mountain.

Nothing more could now be done, and the party reassembled at the Base Camp for the march home on June 16. The attempt on the N. Peak failed in exactly the same way as it did last year, the snow being quite impossible above 23,000 ft. Morris, in spite of desperate illness at Camp II (a renewal of the malaria), which had prevented him from going any higher, had made all arrangements with the utmost efficiency, and we got off without loss of time.

I venture to hope that this expedition, though so cruelly treated by fortune, has not been entirely wasted, and I offer the following conclusions for consideration :

1. The method of selection of personnel seems to have worked well. We had a supremely happy and a supremely competent party. Whether it was of the right size is still a matter for discussion ; the general opinion seems to be that twelve men are still too large a number and that greater efficiency could be obtained with, say, six or eight men. In any case, financial considerations may in the future render smaller expeditions necessary. For my own part, I think that it is not altogether safe to employ the analogy of other mountains, for the strain of work above 25,000 ft. may cause a number of unexpected collapses, and reserves are necessary.

2. A great deal of physiological study remains to be done. Warren has collected data this year which should prove of considerable interest. I think it would not be premature to say that the impression formed this year was, in agreement with the views of distinguished physiologists, that little if any beneficial acclimatization occurs above 21,000 ft., and that any apparent improvement beyond that point is due to a partial and very temporary adaptation of the body and nerves, throwing a tremendous strain upon the climber.

3. The question of food is still almost a *casus belli*. I do not myself see how we can ever get away from the need for tinned provisions ; but it is certainly the case that climbers do weary of them, however good. The conclusion seems to be that every attempt should be made to provide fresh food during the march and as far up the mountain as possible, and postpone the use of tinned foods as long as possible.

4. A further stage has perhaps been reached in our knowledge of the use of oxygen. We had no opportunity to use it at high altitudes this year, as most unfortunately Warren was unable to try it out on the N. Peak. But it was used a good deal at lower altitudes with somewhat promising results. Against this we have the sincerely held opinion of some of our best men, that the mountain can and should be climbed without it.

5. On the rare occasions on which the mountain was observed in really good condition, very careful observation was made of the final pyramid. We thought that the approach to it by the N.E. arête was no more promising than before, but that a lodgment above the two black bands *via* Norton's route could certainly be effected if the rocks were dry and that there was a choice of three routes above that. The selection of the best of these would have to be made by a party on the spot.

6. I still do not think that an earlier arrival at the Base Camp is advisable, even were it possible. There is a great deal to be

said for some preliminary acclimatization on the peaks around Thangu, and transport is very difficult to obtain on the plateau early in the season. The excessive cold of the early spring is probably damaging to a party. As I said before, Everest was by no means free from disturbances even during the exceptionally mild spring which we experienced ; and I think that a party which allowed itself to be cajoled by a temporary spell of fine weather in April into launching an assault on the mountain might well be destroyed by a really bad N.W. gale such as is common enough at that period.

7. The E. side of the N. Col should certainly be left severely alone as soon as the monsoon arrives. It may be thought that the persistence in this year's attempts was unjustifiable, but I submit that they have provided valuable evidence. The experience of last year's reconnaissance, which generally found safely negotiable snow slopes up to 23,000 ft. except on the occasion of the single avalanche from the N. Col, might have left some lingering doubts as to whether the dangers of this place are not rather the exception than the rule. But that these *are* the rule has now, I think, been finally established.

8. The W. side of the N. Col has already been described. It may well prove a valuable ally in the future.

I think we may safely conclude that we have now seen two aspects of Mount Everest at her worst : in 1933 gales of abnormal intensity and recurrence, in 1936 exceptional snowfall. Sooner or later the luck will turn and a fortunate party will meet a season of comparative benevolence, and I am convinced that the mountain will then be climbed.

[For other illustrations of Everest and adjacent peaks, see *A. J.* vols. 33, 34, 36, 43, 45 and the present volume. See also the four 'Mt. Everest' books, *G. J.* and *H. J.*

For maps : the Survey of India, sheet *Mount Everest and Environs* (1 : 126,720), and the $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch 'approach' map, 1921.]