EVEREST, 1953

(2) SIR JOHN HUNT'S DIARY[1]

March 3.

Today was the date fixed for departure of the Expedition. All of us went out to Bhatgaon (10 miles east of Kathmandu) whither the loads had been ferried by lorry direct from the rope-way. Charles Evans and Charles Wylie had spent the night there, after sorting the loads and organizing the coolies respectively. I went out early to prepare the money boxes, which had produced unexpected difficulties the previous day. By 10 a.m. the parade ground presented a scene of intense activity with hundreds of coolies taking possession of their loads, party members checking their personal kit, pressmen importuning Europeans and Sherpas, and various friends moving among the crowd collecting autographs and taking snaps. It was hot and sunny. The coolies and our main party got away by 11.45 a.m. after which I returned to Kathmandu with Ward, Pugh and Wylie, who are the rear party, leaving tomorrow. P.m. I slept, making up for several short nights. Evening to the Palace to be presented to the King.

March 11.

Charles Wylie had returned to Bhatgaon overnight ; the rest of us went out with H. E., leaving rather late (10.10 a.m.). After discussing financial problems and giving last minute instructions to Wylie, I went on with Pasang Phutar and H. E. to catch up the others. We were able to get to Banepa by car. It had been cloudy early but when we started walking it was beautifully clear and cool. H. E. came along with me. The early part of the walk was most pleasant, over a pass with views of the snows to the North. The sky clear, with a few cotton wool clouds. Lots of folk on the move, the girls colourful with their big ear-rings, glass bangles and red bead necklaces, but they are shy before the camera ! We saw some interesting spinning in the villages. At 2.45 p.m., H. E. left me to return to Kathmandu. I went on and caught up Pasang who had gone ahead of us. Down to a flat, thickly cultivated valley where they were ploughing the red earth with cows, and then up over a high pass ; a long and weary plod this, the sun on our backs and no breeze. I asked the way and distance to Dolalghat where the main party are camping, and was told 3 miles. An hour later I asked again and was told 4 miles ; about ½ hour later I asked Pasang, who said—6½ miles ! And his was probably an underestimate ; indeed the long descent from this col became increasingly wearisome

[1] The diary is printed here with very few omissions and only minor alterations ; but Christian names or nicknames, proper to a private diary, have been changed to surnames. As identical familiar names were used in the cases of four different pairs of climbers, the record would have been confusing to most readers had this not been done.—*Editor*.

It grew dark before I got down to the junction of the rivers (main one is the Sun Kosi) where the village is located. Charles Evans met me on the path and kindly took my load—I was getting tired. I was soon being plied with a huge meal—tea, soup, rice and salmon, curried potatoes, cauliflower, peas, tinned peaches and coffee. I then had an all-over wash in the river and joined the others in the Dome tent, feeling better. The stars are very bright above me, and the river is making restful music nearby. Life is good. (Birds seen—purple sunbird : crested bunting.)

March 12.

We got away by 6 a.m. and had a steep pull up-hill for 4,500 ft. to a hamlet called Chyabas. The first half of the walk was cool until the sun got up, then it was really hot work. A clear and beautiful day with long views over the blue ridges to the south. We had a long pause for breakfast as the distance of the stage was short. Most of us have been wearing masks today, quite successfully—I wore mine for the second 2,000 ft. and found it by no means intolerable. It did not slow me down or spoil enjoyment of the view, etc. Towards the end we came out into some rhododendrons in blossom and then open grassy uplands between 6–7,000 feet, where the air was deliciously cool. We have camped just below a big ridge, from which this p.m. we had fine views of the Himalaya to the north and east. Did some butterflying with Ward and caught a European Swallowtail. A rather birdless day.

March 13, 1953.

We got away punctually before 6 a.m., and had a delightful walk for some miles east along a high ridge, through rhododendrons in bloom and oak, with views of a snow range to the north. Breakfasted shortly after dropping down on the northern flank and, in leisurely time, we descended to a valley where most of us had a delicious bathe in a clear stream—for it was by now very hot. Ward and I were busy after butterflies most of the day, but not conspicuously successful. After leaving the stream we climbed up to the end of a spur, on which is situated the small monastery of Risingo. This made the stage for the day. The loads were assembled in the courtyard, around which fluttered many prayer flags, and later the tent was also erected there, but not long after getting all loads in, a violent storm broke, accompanied by high wind. While we hastily shifted boxes to comparative shelter around the monastery, and used others to anchor our tent, the Sherpas took up residence within the monastery itself. Torrential rain fell, which soon proved too much for the tent walls ; the floor was awash and many leaks appeared. This has continued for about $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours ; at this moment (8.15 p.m.) there is a lull. We are thinking of our second party on the exposed camp site at Chyabas. We are also aware that it is Friday, the 13th ! This p.m., I looked through the Sherpas' books and discussed plans with Tenzing. Birds seen

today :—grey chat, shrike, tree pie. Also saw two large stone martens crossing the path 10 yards away—lovely creatures.

March 14.

The storm died down about 9 p.m. and we had a quiet night. There was some doubt whether it might delay our start this morning, but the coolies turned up punctually and, despite the confusion of loads, all were away by 6.30 p.m., bar one or two who had made merry overnight. This morning was beautifully fresh and clear. We had a pleasant descent to a stream for about 2 hours and breakfasted at the foot of a spur up which our route led. Some of us had a refreshing bathe in the river while waiting for breakfast. Butterflies were good at this place ; I also saw plumbeous and white capped redstarts and a verditer flycatcher. There followed a steady climb up to a pass at 8,000 ft., with a stupendous view to the north, with Gauri Sanker and Menlungtse the outstanding peaks on the horizon. We have halted at a spring a few hundred feet below the col on the east, from which we can see a vast expanse of country down to and beyond the valley of the Bhote Kosi, which we descend to and cross tomorrow. Everyone is getting fit and is in good form.

March 15.

We started by descending steeply to the Charna Khola river, which is spanned by a chain and plank suspension bridge. Shortly before arriving at river level, we entered a belt of pine trees, the first we have seen in this country. A leisurely halt was made for breakfast, washing and bathing in the river. This provided, too, some grand opportunities for photographing the coolies as they cautiously crossed the rickety bridge above the roaring torrent. The second part of the walk led us across the southern flanks of the next ridge, until we reached the hamlet of Kirantechap, situated on its spur. This is a wonderful situation, about 1,000 ft. above the deep glen of the Bhote Kosi, its flanks clothed with pine. At the head of this valley is Gauri Sankar and its neighbour Melungtse, both well over 23,000 ft.—a stupendous sight. The march was a short one and we had arrived by 12.30 p.m., but it has been a busy afternoon for we are sending a mail runner tomorrow. There have been letters to write, also a dispatch for the Times. We have paid the coolies today and are anxious about their timely appearance tomorrow. It has been interesting to notice the differing styles of houses as we go along. Yesterday the roofs were alpine, shallow roofs with wooden slats, weighted by boulders. In this country, however, they are attractively thatched.

March 16.

Again a peerless morning. Gauri Sankar and Menlungtse at the head of the Bhote Kosi were just paling with the dawn as we started at 6 a.m. Our path plunged steeply down to the River through pine woods and as steeply up through woods on the eastern bank. A fine

steel suspension bridge spanned it, constructed in England and evidently transported all this way from the valley by coolies, including the foundation brickwork. After climbing some 1,800 feet we breakfasted by a stream ; thereafter the tract pursued a steady upward traverse across open hillside, as intensely cultivated here in terraces as it has been all along our route. The houses in this region are neat, and the roofing alternately wooden slats weighted with stones, and thatching braced by vertical poles. Hay ricks are sited in tree forks ; all tilling is done by hand. At 2.30 we arrived at a hamlet named Yarsa, height 6,100 ft., on a big spur some 1,500 feet below the main ridge, which we cross tomorrow. We have camped beyond it beside a powerful torrent, reminiscent of Mesapotamos.

Few butterflies today. Birds seen were kite ; a pair of Himalayan tree pies with astonishingly long tails : a pair of whistling thrushes, the cock a deep Prussian blue : plumbeous and white capped redstarts ; brown dipper.

Everyone seems happy and settling in well. We are beginning to give thought to the acclimatisation problem.

A note from Charles Wylie brings news of a panther which visited their camp at Banepa, and a fight between a Sherpa and a coolie. The former used his kukri on the coolie's head, which gave Ward his first job, stitching the wound.

March 17.

We started today with a climb of nearly 2,000 feet to the ridge above camp. Nearly all of us were wearing masks for this period. Hillary and George Lowe and I managed the climb from 6,000 to 8,000 feet in one hour, despite the masks. At the crest we were just in time to see the distant view before clouds obscured it. The thrill of the day—and the march so far—was our first sight of Everest to the N.E. behind and above the intervening ridges. I last saw it from Tiger Hill on 1 October, 1938. . . . We breakfasted a few hundred feet lower, and then dropped down to a pleasant stream, its banks fringed with pine. We were making for a major river—the Khimte Khola—of which this is a tributary ; but before the junction our path left the stream and led us steeply up for 1,500 feet over the dividing spur. It was hot work in the middle part of the day, but the slopes were clad with rhododendrons and pines, the former in full flower. An equally steep drop on the east side brought us to the big river, and after a walk upstream of about 2 miles we arrived at the village of Those at 5,600 feet. It is much the largest village—indeed the only one—we have passed since leaving Bhatgaon 7 days ago. We are now camped $\frac{1}{2}$ mile beyond it, by the river bank. Most of us enjoyed a bathe this p.m. Among many birds today were some blackheaded shrikes ; red headed tits and a green backed tit.

I talked to a local fisherman tonight and found he had served in 10th Gurkhas in the war. He had caught a few small mahseer—the equivalent of salmon. It looked like rain again tonight, after several gloriously fine days.

March 18.

The storm broke last night higher up the valley, but we were spared. Our path today followed the river upstream for over a mile, and then climbed up the right bank of a nalah for 3,000 feet to the centre of the three main ridges which we originally saw from Manga Deorali at the top of the pass which is 9,500 feet. There were no less than 7 mane walls and about $\frac{1}{4}$ mile south along the ridge is an interesting monastery surrounded by a group of houses. We paid a visit to this colony and watched a sheep shearing, a crude process with a large butcher's knife. We also watched a woman weaving a blanket. It was interesting to note that the villagers had ploughed the ground on the very crest of the ridge and had planted potatoes. Manuring is done simply by burning local scrub and turning it in.

On the way up to the pass the rhododendrons were magnificent; as we were above 8,000 feet the colour of the flowers changed from scarlet to pink. A feature of this hillside were numerous beautiful magnolia trees in full bloom. We have descended some 1,500 feet on the east side to a broad grassy shelf at about 7,000 feet, partly cultivated, and are camped beside a pleasant stream; this terrace is some 2,000 feet above the next big river, the Likhu Khola, which we cross tomorrow. We are now in Sherpa country, in the region known as Sola, and the different appearance of the people is most marked. Today has been hazy, but still fine. Birds seen to-day: Verditer flycatcher; a pair of minivets; a pair of eastern grey wagtails.

March 19.

We first descended 2,000 feet to the Likhu Khola and followed this fine river upstream for about 2 miles between towering walls until a wonderful view of Numbur (22,800 feet) appeared at the head of the valley. Some very beautiful big white orchids were growing in bunches from trees along our path. The remainder of this short stage has been a steep pull uphill on the right of a big spur, which is thrown off from the ridge which we cross tomorrow—the highest we have traversed so far—12,000 feet. We are in a shelf at over 8,000 feet with really rugged scenery all round—for the first time the impression is unmistakably that of the high Himalaya.

Hillary and I have spent a happy afternoon zeroing the two rifles, in anticipation of shooting some game. But Tenzing thinks it might be a bad omen before we go for Everest.

(The only bird of interest seen today was a bronze-fronted pied woodpecker.)

March 20.

Hillary and Tenzing and I stayed on at Seter today to wait for the 2nd party. We worked on figures for acclimatization and build up and discussed with Tenzing the personalities required. Discussions continued with Evans on his arrival. I told the party something about the future intentions as I see them at present. No serious deviations from

the original ' Basis for Planning ' but a good deal of detail filled in. The crisis is likely to centre round the ' lift ' to the South Col and, of course, to the top camp on the S.E. Ridge. But from my calculations and discussions with Tenzing, the thing begins to look logistically feasible—that is, three successive attempts on the top, should this prove necessary. Oxygen naturally provides the main headache.

The second party seemed in good shape, though they've had more trouble with their coolies than we have, both drunkenness and illness. We spent the night with them, and set off at 6 a.m. today (Tenzing, Hillary, self, with Pemba and Ang Nima) to double march to catch up the first party ; it has proved a strenuous job. We had first a 4,000 feet climb to the highest ridge we shall cross on this trip—there was still some snow about near the col. Hillary and I got up in 2 hours—not bad going to achieve 2,000 feet an hour with some 30 lbs. each in our sacks. The rhododendrons were not yet out at that height, but instead we were treated to a wonderful display of mauve primulas ; they have carpeted the slopes throughout the march. Lower down on the far side, as we descended a lovely pine-filled valley towards Junbesi, we came upon pink and whitish rhododendrons, typical of the growth between 9,000 and 11,000 feet. Also some glorious magnolia trees. Junbesi is a charming village in an open valley with Numbur (22,800 feet) and satellite peaks at its head ; they looked very close. We crossed this valley and made an ascending traverse across the opposite hillside ; in fact we contoured it for some hours at over 9,000 feet to search for another valley. From there a final ridge had to be crossed ; not very high, but it proved a struggle for we had been going hard. We caught up a good number of coolies of the first party and were down at their camp on the far side by 3 p.m. We are camped at 9,500 feet in a Gompa (or Tibetan temple) compound, as rain was feared. I brought up some mail from the rear and a runner leaves tomorrow.

March 22.

Sleeping out last night, we found hoar frost on our sleeping bags this morning. But the New Zealand bags are so warm that one bag is ample, wearing minimum clothes.

The route today led down some thousands of feet to the Dudh Kosi, the big river (comparable with the upper Teesta) draining from the vicinity of Everest. In the early part of the descent, white magnolias and pink rhododendrons predominated, making a most beautiful colour contrast against the sky. We crossed the river by a rickety bamboo structure—clearly temporary, for this route is unusable in the monsoon. Then, for the first time, we were heading north along the east flank of this tremendous gorse rising about 1,500 feet above the torrent. The scenery was unmistakably Himalayan for the first time—the mountain sides rise from 4,000 to 18,000 feet. We have camped at a scattered settlement named Karia Khola, about 6,700 feet up in a shallow gorge draining into the main river. It has clouded over, but we look across to ridge after ridge up to probably 20,000 feet. The

local villagers seem fascinated by us and our style of living ; they sit closely round us and discuss points of interest.

March 23.

Today we have been traversing the tremendous left flank of the Dudh Kosi, at about 9,000 to 10,000 feet. As we move northwards up this deep gorge, the scenery becomes more and more imposing ; it is at last unmistakably Himalayan in scale and architecture. From our tent at this little alp called Puiyan, the ground falls precipitously for about 5,000 feet to the river; above us as many thousand feet of craggy mountainside. The true nature of this awe-inspiring country is well seen across the gorge. At this level, oak, rhododendron and giant firs clothe the hillside, with a sprinkling of these unbelievably lovely magnolia. The rhododendrons today have been better than any we've seen so far, ranging mainly from deep rose to palest pink and, outside this colour bracket, some crimson and some white. The path was bordered with mauve primula, just like our primroses except for colour, and there has been a lot of another fragrant pink flowering shrub, whose wood is said to be used for making paper which is manufactured at Namche ; we have seen great bundles of it being carried down, during earlier marches.

While we breakfasted this morning a herd of Zo's (male yak/cow cross—the female is Zum) was driven up to graze at our alp. One had a bell similar to a Swiss cow bell.

From the highest point reached today we had a view up-valley to Cho Oyo and Gya Chunkang, both in the 25,000 to 26,000 feet class, and lesser but marvellously shapely peaks—Numbur (22,900), Kwangde (20,300), Khumbila (19,200).

March 24.

We had rain last night—the first since Risingo—and we had to sleep in the Dome tent. Most of us found it stifflingly hot. All day today it's remained cloudy and drizzle has set in since our arrival at this final camp before Namche. We are beside the Dudh Kosi, about a mile beyond the hamlet of Ghat ; the height is about 9,000 feet. This evening we have discussed the programme to complete while we are at Thyangboche ; Tenzing has also been in with us to decide numerous problems of equipment instruction and distribution, food, engagement of additional Sherpas, coolies and Dāk runners.

My party for the first acclimatization period will be : Gregory, Lowe, Tenzing, plus Stobart and 6 of our High Altitude Sherpas.

March 25.

We have had a wonderfully clear morning for our walk up to Namche ; and it has been, perhaps, the best day of all from the scenic point of view. For some time we followed the river, which runs throughout in a narrow gorge, crossing frequently from bank to bank by solid wooden bridges. Soon some of the nearby peaks came into

view, each unbelievably high and inaccessible. Then, as we started to climb steeply up from the river, we had a fine glimpse of Taweche and Everest itself, the latter towering above the ridge of Nuptse. As we approached Namche, the mother of one of the Sherpas met us on the path with a pot of Tibetan tea, the pot decorated with coloured paper ; it was a charming greeting. We have camped on a saddle above the village, with Kangtega (22,300 ft.) and Kwangde across the valleys on either side ; both of them looking beautiful but inaccessible on this side. We have been visited by some Indian officials who are watching frontier crossings (presumably to guard against Communist infiltration). They operate a wireless to the Indian Embassy at Kathmandu and have been told to help us ; it may prove useful later on.

The Sherpas have mostly gone off to visit friends and relations, so the camp seems unusually quiet tonight.

March 26.

The mists cleared soon after dark and we had a fine moonlight view of the big peaks standing above us. Sleeping was not easy—the first night at 12,000 feet—but as usual I was warm enough in a single New Zealand bag. We woke to a cloudless morning : going up at 6 a.m. to the top of the hill above Namche, we had a grand view of Everest, the wind blowing clouds of snow off its profile ridge. I was astonished at my first sight of Ama Dablam up the valley on the right hand side. I've never seen a more inaccessible mountain, out-rivalling the Matterhorn and even the Mustagh Tower as an awe-inspiring spectacle.

Some way along this path to Thyangboche we were greeted by the father and mother of my Sherpa Pemba and by the mother of ? The former had brought a pony for me to ride up to the monastery ; the latter a huge wooden jug of Chang (a brew made from rice). We were made welcome by these good people in their very best clothes and I had to ride the pony from the foot of the hill, where our path crossed the Dudh Kosi. The ride up was sheer joy ; indescribably fine scenery and clear sparkling air. I reached this monastery at noon and was welcomed by some of the lamas. In every direction grand mountains formed a perfect background to the picturesque buildings of the monastery itself and its satellites ; Kwangde ; Kangtega ; Thonsigo ; Ama Dablam and at the end of the valley, Everest itself behind the huge 25,000 foot barrier of the Nuptse-Lhotse ridge.

We have camped on a delightful grassy clearing some 200 yards from the monastery, surrounded by rhododendrons and firs, at over 12,000 feet. The acting Abbot, a grand old man in red robes, came to greet me, as also did the mother of the Head Lama, a small boy who is absent in Lhasa.

We have paid off and dismissed our coolies, who have done us well ; I have sent a message to The Times announcing our arrival at Base Camp. Others have been busy sorting loads and handing out kit ; everyone seems well pleased with their equipment.

Today I saw several dwarf purple irises. Flocks of red-billed

choughs fly around us and I was told by the Abbot that musk deer come into the clearing ; he begged me not to shoot any game around here.

Have again worked out the load problem for the assault.

March 27.

With the arrival today of the 2nd Party, we have been able to complete the sorting of our loads and to issue clothing and personal climbing gear ; camp has been a hive of activity. This p.m. Band has held a wireless class and trials of the Walkie-Talkies, in which I joined. Bourdillon has been sorting out his oxygen, assisted by Ward. Over all this business Evans has reigned supreme, while Wylie paid off the coolies and I wrote a dispatch for The Times. A serious hitch has occurred as regards the oxygen. Bourdillon has found 50% of his R.A.F. cylinders ' flat'. This will have important repercussions on our training, and/or the operations. We have sent a request to Roberts to check the state of the second consignment. Depending on his reply, we may have to try to get more out, but the time factor is very short for this.

Several people saw the musk deer close to camp today and others numerous pheasants and chikor. It is very right and proper that the Lamas should keep their beautiful site as a sanctuary.

Saw today a pair of rose finches and an Indian Bluechat.

We ate a sheep purchased this morning. Tonight I summarised the immediate future for everybody.

Another glorious day till late afternoon.

March 28.

This has been another busy day of instruction and handing out of gear. We had some useful tests of oxygen in the morning ; Westmacott built his ladder and we and the Sherpas practised crossing it. At 12.30 we paid an official visit to the monastery. We removed our boots to enter the sanctuary, where I laid a scarf, with some money, on the chair of the absent boy Abbot (he is in Lhasa) and another on the seat reserved for the Abbot of Rongbuk. I then presented the Lamas with the Expedition flag. After showing us one of their ancient books and explaining the main effigies, we were led to an upper room where refreshments were served—tea, curried potatoes and chappaties —also some evil-tasting arak. I sat next to the acting Abbot, Tenzing opposite. I asked the old man why the Everest Range was called Maha Langur Himal, and whether there was not some connection with the Yeti ? He said he did not think so, but went on at once to tell us how a Yeti had been seen about once each year at Thyangboche. Looking out of the window he described its route during a visitation four years ago in winter and went into detail of what it did—scratching and playing in the snow and so on. It was so naturally told that it was impossible not to be convinced that he had seen it. He then told us other circumstantial and less probable tales of Yeti. He insisted they

are meat-eating. The old man was at Rongbuk in 1921, when the Everest reconnaissance party was there; he sent for an old oxygen cylinder used probably by the 1922 (Finch) party. We asked if we could be shown a dance on our return (memories of Gangtok in 1937) and this was promised. After the meal we were taken to a room where the masks and robes are kept.

Altogether it was a most interesting visit. I was busy on finances most of the afternoon—we then received an invitation to tea with the mother of the absent boy Head Lama. Five of us went, and were plied with Tibetan tea and chappatis, etc., and of course more arak.

The weather had turned windy and stormy in the afternoon, but as we returned to camp this evening the full moon had risen and the last light was resting on Everest and Lhotse. Truly this is a beautiful spot.

This morning early I at last saw a musk deer—a graceful creature—just above camp.

March 29.

Charles Evans and party got away this morning before breakfast. Most of the remainder went up a fine looking subsidiary shoulder above Thyangboche (height about 16,000 feet). We took Sherpas carrying 3 Walkie-Talkie wireless sets and arranged with Stobart to be in control with a fourth set in camp. Except for the first call at 10 a.m. this was most successful. Even from a screened position beyond the summit I had clear communication with Stobart, some 2,500 feet below. We had stupendous views, seeing Pumori and Lingtren to the left of the Nuptse shoulder and, for the first time, the S. col of Everest through a nick on the Lhotse-Nuptse ridge. On the way back, passing through the forest, I saw a cock Monal pheasant, an utterly lovely bird.

This p.m. we have been getting ready for departure, concentrating the loads and tidying up camp.

Hillary is laid up with a bad throat and may not be starting to-morrow.

At breakfast today a Kasturi (musk deer) appeared a few yards from the cookhouse, quite unconcerned by our presence.

This a.m. the lamas held a prayer ceremony for our Expedition. It was attended by Wylie and Stobart.

March 30.

Both remaining parties got away today, leaving camp about 8 a.m. Hillary is down with a temperature and very bad throat and so I had to hand over his part to Noyce. Stobart has gone to film Sherpa life in a village near Namche. Pugh is staying in Base Camp for 2–3 days to organize his equipment. The latter two plan to follow my party up, as far as Chukhung, in a few days' time.

We have come up the Imja Khola to Dingboche on our way to the foot of Lhotse. This is a summer farming area, and a very considerable one, the fields are well marked by stone walls, with a little farmstead every so often. Barley is grown for tsampa, and the potatoes

are said to be particularly good. The farmers have only come up today to start their ploughing and planting and a blessing will be given to their work tomorrow before they start. Apparently many inhabitants of Khumbu have no less than 3 abodes ; a main home at Namche or villages lower down the Dudh Kosi ; a farmstead at Pangboche this side of Tyangboche, where they pasture their yaks ; and a third one here.

We are at nearly 15,000 feet and tomorrow go up another 2,000 feet to a camp up a nalah beneath the great wall of Nuptse, where we can carry out our acclimatization programme. This somewhat barren-looking valley of the Imja is dominated by this terrific east face of Ama Dablam. Opposite it, flanking the Chola Khola (where Noyce's party have gone) is Taweche, which looks remarkably like Ama Dablam as seen from Tyangboche—a fantastic tower of ice and rock.

I have carried nearly forty pounds today, without undue fatigue, and have not felt the height.

March 31.

We are camped in a fold of the right lateral moraine of a glacier springing directly from the foot of the 10,000 foot Nuptse wall ; the height is 17,400 feet.

As we climbed a grassy spur coming down from the left, beyond Chukhung, we were at first sorry we had not elected to turn right at the head of the Imja valley, for opposite us was a fine glacier coming down from a long ice wall. By contrast the glacier we were following (and of which the grassy spur was an ancient moraine) was boulder strewn and unattractive. However, I made a reconnaissance this evening up the moraine which is distinctly encouraging. There is a pass at the head of the left branch of this glacier, which according to local confirmation at Dingboche, leads over to the Khumbu valley flowing from the western cwm ice-fall. Moreover, just opposite our camp, across the glacier, is a 20,000 ft. peak which has a delightful snow ridge on its far (Nuptse) side ; just the ideal '*acclimatizer*'. An easy, shaly peak at the junction of the two glaciers should provide an ideal ' run ' for our oxygen trial.

Ama Dablam soars skywards on the far side of the Imja valley ; over the head of the latter we see Makalu for the first time. Most impressive of all is the Nuptse wall, rising nearly 10,000 ft. from its base beyond our 20,000 ft. peak (' Little Lhotse ') ; it is simply gigantic, comparable with the east face of Kangch above the Zemu glacier. The lower half is composed of a beautiful white granite, which has pushed up beneath a darker, igneous rock ; the latter forms the summit layer of both Nuptse and Lhotse.

We have sent back the 4 coolies—three of them Sherpas—and also Pasang Phutar 1 who seems either unwell or unhappy ; it is difficult to tell which.

We are all rather pleased at our ' form ' in coming so high so quickly —on the recce this evening I went up to close on 18,000 feet.

April 1, 53.

After breakfast we carried the oxygen sets up the moraine to the 'junction' (18,000 ft.) and decided to make our first oxygen trial up the peak standing at the junction of the two glaciers; its height is about 19,700 feet. Gregory and Tenzing went first. About a third of the way up Tenzing's set started leaking and he came down; Gregory continued to the top. This breakdown is a nuisance, as we can now only use one set and must therefore use it singly. When Gregory came down, therefore, Lowe went up, doing the 1,700 feet in 1 hour exactly. My turn came at 2 p.m. I got up in 50 minutes using only 3 litres a minute all the way. This little peak was a very fine viewpoint. Through the gap on the Nuptse ridge to the north I had a perfect view of Pumori and Gya Chungkang, and eastwards, of course, Makalu showed up well. Right above me, separated as I was only by the narrow span of the glacier head by which we have camped, the great wall of Nuptse rose a further 6,000 ft. higher than my position.

We have been looking at another peak standing upon a ridge which is thrown off by Nuptse and which contains our glacier on the left; its height is something over 19,400 ft. We propose to camp on the glacier beneath it tomorrow and, if the snow face leading to its summit on the north side proves feasible at our present state of fitness, to climb it.

In any case, we shall be able to reach the col on the ridge connecting it with Nuptse, and inspect the valley on the far side, flanking the Nuptse-Lhotse ridge.

There should also be a chance to give our Sherpas some practice on ice.

April 2.

We decided to make a two day trip, going first up to the foot of 'Oxygen Peak' (19,700) where Tenzing would carry out his oxygen run as we had done yesterday. Gregory wanted to try the same route without oxygen.

Meanwhile Lowe and I would escort our Sherpas across the glacier at that point, and establish a light camp beneath our 'Little Lhotse' (later named Chukhung Peak—19,500 ft.). This would give us a chance to see our Sherpas' performance on a steep glacier. The next day (3rd April) we would climb Chukhung Peak, either traversing it or returning by the same route. And so it has been. We had reached a good site for the two tents (1 Meade; 1 Assault) by midday, just beaneth the steep North face of Chukhung Peak, at about 19,000 ft. The glacier route proved most interesting, and a good test for the Sherpas.

Gregory and Tenzing arrived at 2.15 p.m., after we had sent the five Sherpas down with orders to return next morning. This evening it clouded up more than usual, and a change of weather seemed very possible.

The situation on the little glacier shelf is wonderful, with the giant South face of Nuptse right above us.

Lowe and I went up for some 250 feet on the West ridge of Chukhung Peak, by way of reconnaissance. This turned out to be an interesting climb, and at the point where we turned the ridge had become steep narrow ice. We thought it might take some time, although only another 300 feet remained ; on return I thought a more straightforward route might be well up the steep North face, further to the left.

April 3.

Not a very good night for me—breathing trouble. I took some dope (have done so each night on this trip) and woke with a slight sore throat. We decided to try both routes, I taking Tenzing up the face, while Gregory and Lowe followed up the west ridge. Our route went well, though it was steep—nearly 50 degrees, and I had a tiring time cutting steps. But we reached the N.E. ridge in 50 minutes and were on top in an hour from camp. Not bad going. The others gave up their ridge, which became very insecure in its upper part, and came round to ours ; they came up quickly in my steps. We were all together on top by 11.30. A wonderful view, and we were rather pleased to have achieved our first Himalayan peak in good style.

The Sherpas had now reached our camp, so Tenzing shouted to them to take everything back ; we saw an easy route down the shaly east face and back to our main camp by crossing from the foot of the Nuptse-Lhotse ridge. We have named them respectively the Nuptse and Lhotse glaciers.

We followed this route and were back in camp at 1.40 p.m. very well satisfied with our day two trip. This evening the weather has broken ; as expected, it is snowing.

April 4.

We sent down three of our five Sherpas and set off with the other two, Annullu and Pasang Dawa, to cross the col at the head of the left fork glacier, which we expected would lead us over to the Lubujya Khola (Khumbu). The bad weather had dispersed and it was a glorious morning. We reached the col at midday, after a $2\frac{1}{2}$ hour climb and at once found that it was impassable—a vertical face some 2,000 ft. high on the west side. But the view amply repaid our visit. We stood on the S.W. ridge of Nuptse and looked across the Khumbu glacier to Pumori and Lingtren at its bend. We reckoned our col to be about 20,000 ft., it was a superb viewpoint.

As there was no possibility of crossing, we turned back and have come down to Chukhung. Superb views of Ama Dablam with clouds beneath it, blowing up the Imja Khola. We descended into the mist and have camped beside Pugh and Stobart's tents.

April 5.

My party has returned to Base Camp. We left Chukhung at about 8 a.m. and had a pleasant walk down valley, with the night frost still on the ground during the first hour. At Dingboche a number of

families have come up to till their fields during the past few days ; we photographed potato and barley sowing behind ploughs drawn by pairs of Zo's. Spring, too, has made some stride in our brief absence ; we passed some pussy willow and a dwarf iris or two had pushed through the turf. On a small crag beside the path, not far from Pangboche, we had the luck to see a pair of tār (wild mountain goats) only 100 yards away ; they were almost indifferent to our presence. Further on I watched a pair of pheasants, I think a species of Koklas, the cock a very handsome short-tailed bird with silvery back, greenish breast feathers, white broad tail and much red on his head.

Since coming in Evan's party has also turned up (less Charles himself, who is mapping). It is very nice to have a wash and change of clothes.

April 6.

We have all returned safe and sound to Base after the first acclimatization period, and everyone is in fine fettle. A remarkable fact is that each party seems to have achieved very similar performance and all individuals are equally acclimatized and fit. We have lost no weight, despite the fairly strenuous programmes, and one or two (including me !) have actually added a few pounds. There is an air of real comradeship and confidence, which I felt specially when I talked to them yesterday about the future. . . .

Well, we are very busy getting ready for the next outing. Hillary's job is the most vital—the ice-fall reconnaissance. Charles Evans, Wylie, Gregory and Tenzing have the important task of training our best Sherpas in oxygen and, at the end of the period (9th–16th April) of winding up here and moving Base to the foot of the ice-fall. They are going to train up at the head of the Imja Khola, behind (North of) Ama Dablam. My party (Bourdillon, Ward and Noyce) is first going to the same area, to test the C.C. oxygen—later all but Bourdillon are going straight up to the foot of the icefall to assist in making the route up it, following the reconnaissance. Roberts is expected here on 16th April ; the oxygen report from Kathmandu is encouraging.

Tonight, round the fire, Tenzing has been regaling me with local stories of the Yeti : there seems to be a fairly good circumstantial case for it. All equipment seems to have come through its tests well, . . . a few unexpected crampon breakages too.

April 8.

I had been expecting trouble from Pasang Phutar. He had been constantly different from the others and was a slinker, unfriendly and almost surly. Tonight there was a row, the outcome of which was that P.P. asked to leave the expedition. I immediately agreed—we had discussed getting rid of him before and this was a clear opportunity. Unfortunately his influence on one or two of the others came to light, and Ang Dawa started causing trouble over the weights of load Sherpas should carry. The upshot of this has been that I have agreed to a

figure of 50 lbs.—it remains to be seen how they all behave tomorrow; I am hopeful that the departure of P.P. will have the desired effect.

One must be philosophical over this contretemps; things have been very smooth indeed so far.

We leave on the 2nd acclimatization run tomorrow.

April 9.

Here we are back at Dingboche, but with a difference. It started snowing about 3 p.m. and now (6.45 p.m.) it is quite thick; a storm has been rumbling overhead for some hours. Both Evans' party and mine are camped here, our ways divide beyond Chukhung tomorrow. This weather seems to be a feature of the season. Tenzing tells me it is called Chamman or some such name, after a certain bird which is habitually seen in flocks, flying high in formation, heading North towards Siberia. They are also seen on their return journey in the autumn. From his description these must be cranes or storks. Curiously enough, Stobart and I watched a big flock which we took to be geese, flying North up the Imja Khola only yesterday.

This p.m., while waiting at this camp site for the others to arrive, a raven came into this field and walked to within 10 yards, then several times made his familiar Honk Honk cry. Later this evening I heard a cry which is very much like a curlew, just up the hillside—could Tenzing's birds be curlew? (No.)

With the departure of Pasang Phutar I am now nursed by a delightful chap named Gyalzen.

April 10.

It snowed a good three inches at our level in the night. This morning we were unable to move on as planned, as our coolies were without snow goggles, or proper footgear. Evans therefore started his oxygen class for the selected Sherpas (9) and started them up the hillside West of Dingboche, wearing and using oxygen. I decided that we would carry a camp up to the East side of Ama Dablam, sufficient to enable us four to have a day on the oxygen closed circuit apparatus tomorrow; the Sherpas, plus 2 (?) coolies would then return to Dingboche and bring our remaining needs up next day. This plan has been carried out, and we are now camped at about 16,500 feet, beneath a 4,500 outlier of Ama Dablam, and in the moraine trough of the glaciers descending from the Imja-Hongu watershed. The weather has been cloudy, with a snowy look—the wind direction being from the west. With snow covering the boulders, we have had a tiresome journey up the moraine to reach this place.

Very noticeable how much less we have all felt the height this time.

April 11.

We woke this morning to find ourselves surrounded by a thick mist. This gradually cleared until by 8 a.m. we were enjoying the most wonderful views of our surroundings, giving unique opportunities for

photography. I was naturally interested in the panorama westwards, into the area where Gregory and Lowe and I had spent our 4 days together. The top of Everest was visible through a depression in the Lhotse-Nuptse ridge, giving us a new angle on the final section of ridge. We were encouraged to think that the day would be fine, but mists were creeping up from the West, and these few moments were the only real views we had all day.

Bourdillon and I went up a 4,500 ft. peak standing beneath Ama Dablam, which I had spotted a week ago from the other side. There was only one closed circuit apparatus available, so we used it in turns, I taking the first hour. I found its heat pretty objectionable, but having got over the early part, I found myself moving fairly well and Bourdillon climbing without could not keep up. We followed a broken granite ridge which maintains a remarkably uniform angle the whole way up from the glacier trough. One big step occurred where a band of broken, dark rock supervened over the white granite, but we found it possible to climb this and enter a couloir which we followed for some time, finally getting back to the ridge to reach the top. A very definite summit it proved to be, only about 3 ft. square, with awesome ridges southwards to Ama Dablam and northwards—a terriffic, vertical face fell westwards towards Dingboche. But all summits, from the nearby Ama Dablam, were mistbound. There was no wind, and although snow fell heavily during our 45 minutes stay, it was very hot. We had left the oxygen about 1,000 ft. down. (I think we each used it for 1 hour and in that time climbed 1,000 ft.) Back in camp, in fairly heavy snow, about $\frac{1}{4}$ to 3, followed closely by Noyce and Ward ; the latter had tried out a long day on open circuit using oxygen continuously for 5–6 hours. They had crossed the glacier beside which we are camped, and moved up the far side to set foot on the wide expanse of glacier coming down from the Imja-Hongu watershed. Our idea has been to camp high on that glacier tomorrow and attempt to reach the ridge, and a peak next day.

The Sherpas had arrived when we returned and we settled down in our tents with the snow coming down outside. We thought we heard shouts during the afternoon, some $\frac{1}{2}$ mile off or so. But hardly crediting them we did nothing. Later it occurred to us that Evans might have sent someone to locate us. An alternative theory—Gyalzen's—is that it might have been a Yeti.

A very nice little Himalayan summit and my second this trip.

April 12.

The bad weather—a westerly disturbance—has evidently dispersed for the time being. Today has been superb nearly all day, when mists crept up about 4 p.m. Our programme has been a second ascent of the Ama Dablam rock peak by Noyce and Ward, partly using closed circuit oxygen ; Bourdillon and I have separately taken 2 each of our Sherpas for a day's practice on ice. I crossed the Imja glacier and went up the steep slopes of snow and ice coming from the Hongu-Imja watershed. I had with me Gyalzen and Pasang Phutar and we had an

interesting day working up through seracs to the foot of the final steep slopes below the summit ridge—it runs at about 20,000 ft. We finally stopped at about 19,200 ft. with the goal attainable, but with several obstacles ahead. It was 12.45 p.m. and we had had a fairly strenouus time. Both the Sherpas have done well. Back in camp by 3 p.m.—the others seem to have had as enjoyable a day as I.

April 13.

Packed up camp this morning and carried very heavy loads down to Chukhung—Sahibs 55–60 lbs and Sherpas 80 lbs. On arrival we rearranged loads, sending our oxygen load back to Tyangboche and leaving all but things required for one night to be brought up tomorrow. We ourselves, with two Sherpas and one local coolie, have come up to about 16,500 feet on the way to the Yak route over to the Khumbu valley—the four remaining Sherpas and 3 coolies are to follow tomorrow.

This camp site is a very delightful grassy alp in the valley leading to the pass. We propose to climb a peak on the left of the pass tomorrow, while waiting for the 2nd party to arrive. It's been another lovely day, and our panorama has been virtually monopolized by the colossus, Ama Dablam. But we have felt a natural bias for our rock peak which looks most imposing from this western side, and towers magnificently above Chukhung. Its local name is Umbu Gyabjen.

We amused ourselves with some mild rock climbing this afternoon near camp. Beneath the crag are the droppings of hundreds of Ram Chikor.

April 14.

We are down beside the Khumbu glacier, at about 16,000 feet. Leaving yesterday a beautiful camp site above Chukhung at 5 a.m., we reached the pass said to be used for yak herds about 11 a.m. Here Ward, Noyce, and Bourdillon set off to climb a peak which stands to the left of the pass, known locally as Pokalde ; its height is about 20,000 ft. I should have been with them, but felt unaccountably strained and decided it would be unwise to make the extra effort—perhaps a slight chill plus a bad night—breathing trouble.

So I went down on the far side, while they climbed the peak. The camp site is immediately beneath the pass ; a grassy space beneath the left glacial moraine, with rhododendron scrub for firewood, water and plenty of shelter under boulders.

Pumori and Lingtren (?) are now close by, on the far side of the glacier and upstream. Tawechi, below us, steals the limelight as completely here as Ama Dablam does on the other side.

The other three made a successful ascent of their peak.

Feeling better tonight.

April 15.

This morning we set out to follow the Khumbu ice stream upwards, with the Lake camp on the opposite side to ourselves and beneath

Pumori, as our destination. This has been a short and delightful walk, mainly along the crest of the left lateral moraine, until we arrived opposite Pumori. Here we found a route across the glacier which proved not too tiresome, and reached the lake soon after mid-day. Throughout the views have been both fine and, to Noyce and myself, interesting in their novelty. From our tents in the moraine trough, which also contains the lake, we have Pumori immediately above us, looking at once inaccessibly high and very climbable—foreshortening is, of course, very extreme. Opposite Nuptse now looks pyramidal in shape, quite a different view from its southern façade. Most intriguing of all, we can see the Khumbu icefall coming down between the west ridges of Nuptse and Everest, only about 2 miles upstream. The Lho La and beyond it Changtse (or the North Peak of pre-war expeditions) at last cease to be photographs and become realities. We are, in fact, entering the phase of realities in the great challenge of Everest.

It was interesting to see, first, in a glacier lake beside the left moraine, a pair of Brahmini duck ; then on this lake near camp a pair of pochard. These, with a few pinkish linnet-like birds on the grassy slopes here—and of course the Ram Chikor and red-billed choughs, are the only birds hereabouts.

Yesterday we saw a very lovely bird the colour of a mature (male) crossbill, not far from the pass by which we came over to the valley. I have also been watching numerous tailless Tibetan rats, friendly little fellows, the size and shape of our guinea pigs, colour mouse grey.

This, the Swiss pre-mountain Base Camp, is really a beautiful spot, and this evening it has stayed fine, exceptionally, all day long. I am writing this outside my tent in hot sun at 4.45 p.m.

April 16.

Noyce and Ward went up to the foot of the ice-fall this morning to find out the result of Hillary's reconnaissance. I was advised to have a quiet day here. This suited well enough as there was the Times dispatch and letters to write, which we must get back to Tyangboche in time to catch the next mail run.

Balu, whom I'd sent up to Hillary yesterday, returned this a.m. with a somewhat pessimistic report of the icefall, which he described as far worse than 1951. When I'd finished my writing I walked up the hill behind camp for about $\frac{3}{4}$ hour (1,000 ft. or so) and had an astonishing view of Everest's N. face contained between the N.E. and West ridges—very nearly snowless. Details of the face, the couloir and the steps were very clearly visible. All terribly interesting to see these things at long last. I could also see well up the icefall, which appeared to be in chaotic condition. I could also look well over the ridge between the Khumbu and the Nuptse glacier where I'd spent the first acclimatization week. It was an unforgettable experience and I spent 20 minutes there drinking it in and taking photos, despite a bitter wind.

Noyce returned soon after I got back, with a rather more encouraging story of the icefall. Unfortunately 3 of their party and 2 Sherpas

have been sick in turn. Westmacott, the most recently affected, returned here shortly after, with Ward and one of the Hillary porters.

Sent down Balu and Ang Phutar with mail. Spent a nice lazy afternoon, sleeping and reading. Am going up to see Hillary in the icefall tomorrow.

April 17.

Weather not so good as usual, blowing up from South and looking like snowfall. I have arranged to see the icefall party, so left at 8 a.m. and went up to Base in 2 hours. . . . I took on Ang Namgyal and went up the icefall, followed for some distance by Stobart and his Sherpa. I was up at Camp II, midway on the icefall, by 12.30, going up in pretty trying, windy weather. Hillary and his party have made a grand job of the route. The fall is *chaotic*, steep and dangerous ; I would not dream of tackling such conditions, at least by day, in the Alps. Yet they've found a way whose technical difficulties are no longer very great, thanks to excellent icecraft.

The tents were empty when we arrived, and we rested in them for some 20 minutes, sheltering from terrific wind gusts. Then started on up, for Hillary and party were inspecting a route upwards into the cwm. Met them coming down, 300 feet or so higher. Hillary changed ropes and came up another 200 feet to show me as much as possible of the route upwards. He pronounced it as even more dangerous than the lower half ! Back at Camp II we had a meal, then I hurried down as I wanted to get back to Lake Camp—although equipped to spend the night. Found Ang Norbu had arrived with the longed-for mail—a great event. I had some tea and hurried back, arriving at 5.45 p.m.—a long but fascinating day.

April 18.

This has been a very restful and quiet day. I've spent it writing numerous letters and, in particular, planning the next moves ahead. On paper, at least, it works out admirably ! And seems to satisfy those with whom I've discussed it. The main principles are those on which the London build-up plan was written—but with the all important reconnaissance of the route above the cwm thrown in, and two periods when we withdraw from the mountain—the second period being prior to an assualt.

Hillary's party came down for a rest and Pugh and Stobart arrived for the inside of the day. I discussed at length with the latter the plan in relation to his work. We have the wireless here and got the News from London tonight.

April 19.

It snowed lightly overnight and was much colder, even than usual. The weather is certainly not yet in a mood to let us try for the top.

Ward, Westmacott, and Noyce set off for Base after breakfast, their job today being to re-site the camp and lay it out suitably for a long

stay. The Swiss site is insanitary and too constricted. Then this party is to work on the lower part of the icefall (20th–21st). I join them on the second day and spend the night at Camp II.

About 11 a.m. I started down to meet Evans on his way up with part of our stores from Tyangboche. Reached the camp site at Lobuje at the same time as they—a tiresome journey owing to the bitter wind blowing up-valley. In addition to Evans, Gregory was there and also James Morris of the Times . . ., who seems to have taken to the trek exceedingly well. We chatted over plans and exchanged views ; then I started back about 3 p.m. Evans with me a part of the way. Back at 4.30 p.m. a bit tired.

About 10 a.m. a huge avalanche broke from the W. ridge of Nuptse immediately above Base Camp—very sudden and awe-inspiring—makes one think about that icefall of ours.

April 20.

Charles Evans' party turned up early this morning, which enabled me to discuss future plans at length with him. I also had a useful talk with James Morris (Times) about reporting ; he is a charming chap and fits in perfectly. After lunch, I set off for Base, followed by Hillary, Lowe, and Band, this time as the first reconnaissance party which is to straighten out and prepare the icefall route above Camp II, starting tomorrow. I join the 2nd Recce party (Westmacott : Noyce : Ward) who are working on the lower part of the route ; they have had a good day today, laying two bridges and chopping away a lot of ice.

This party has also done a fine job in re-siting Base Camp, on a moraine platform some ten minutes' time nearer Lake Camp. There is still much to do in making store walls, etc., but this is an excellent beginning.

Sending off mail via Morris' runner tomorrow. Am spending tomorrow night at Camp II joining Hillary's party there to help them next day.

April 21.

Snow fell fairly thickly last night ; I went out of my tent at 11 p.m. and found everything fairylike with a half moon causing all the ice pinnacles to glitter and shine under the fresh powdering.

But it was a handicap today. The coolies coming up may well have been in difficulties, and of course there was no sign of the well-trodden route on the icefall. Noyce, Ward, Westmacott, and I set off soon after nine a.m.—it was a cloudless and still morning—our task being to remake the route as far as Camp II. We thickened up the flags, fixed ropes at two vertical steps (' Mike's Horror ' and ' Hillary's Horror ') and laid a third ladder bridge over the big crevasse just before Camp 2 ; two had been laid yesterday, one of them being particularly sensational. In all it was hard work, and I think we were all rather glad to reach camp. There had been a huge subsidence in the ice in the corridor below the terrace ; rather terrifying to have been

there at the time. We quickly put up the tents (Hillary's party with 9 Sherpas had jusy caught us up). It was beginning to snow hard again. Ward and Noyce then started down, with 4 of the 9 men—the rest are to carry loads to establish Camp IV tomorrow. I have kept Westmacott up here to partner Hillary, as Lowe has stayed down with bad diarrhoea.

As we fixed the tents, an enormous slice of ice cliff came away above the left edge of the icefall. We had vaguely thought of the simplicity of a route skirting this left edge but the menace of those cliffs constituted too great a risk. In fact, the whole route and, I fear, the camp site, can hardly be called safe.

April 22.

We started off for the top of the icefall in two parties—Hillary and Band going ahead to choose the route and make the track, while Westmacott and I started later with the 5 Sherpas. We found the going pretty bad and dangerous in places ; particularly a long upwards traverse left handed across slopes dominated by ice cliffs, and bestrewn with ice boulders of all sizes, mostly recently fallen and abominably loose—like new moraine. As with the lower half of the icefall, I was left wondering when these falls occur, and what the chances may be of our avoiding a fall during the long period of the build up. By midday, we had reached the foot of a definite line of ice-cliffs, which seemed to mark the top of the icefall. After casting round for a weakness, we were able to climb an ice crack some 40 feet high, which landed us on a level block with a clear view up the cwm. The loads were handed up, the Sherpas (less Da Namgyal) waiting below while we chose a site for Camp III about 150 feet higher and in the centre of the glacier. Hillary, Band, and I then went on to seek a connected route through the immense, gaping chasms which mark the change of angle at this lower edge of the cwm. Towards the left we found what seems to be a clear route, with a gap which, at its narrowest, is only some 15 feet. This was a heartening discovery, as it is well within the capacity of our ladder.

April 23.

A day of activity in preparing for the initial carry of our stores up to the cwm. Most unfortunately though it has been marred by snowfall from about 11 a.m. onwards, following a windy night. It is depressing that this should occur just when we have so laboriously prepared a track to Camp III, and don't look forward to remaking it all tomorrow.

Sherpas have been issued with their full kit and divided into the ' ferry service ' parties for work in the icefall and the cwm. Spoke to them this morning and explained the programme and its purpose. I then had an oxygen conference with Evans, Bourdillon, and Ward, resulting from a talk I gave to everyone last evening on future plans. We have arranged what training and experiments are to be undertaken in this first period of the build up, and roughly on what lines the reconnaissance of the Lhotse Face is to be conducted early next month.

Roberts, who had come up, after delivering the oxygen at Tyangboche, left this morning for his peak in the Hongu valley. He has rendered us an enormous service. It was nice to see him again : the first time since Easter 1945 at the P.-y-G. (SAC Meet).

An interesting development here has been the cutting of two ice caves in the ice pinnacles which surround Base Camp. These, the inspiration of Stobart, will be invaluable as our tentage gets moved upwards.

April 24.

The build up period is under way ; albeit under very trying circumstances. It snowed overnight about 6 inches at Base Camp level, increasing to some 9 inches at Camp II. The carefully prepared track was completely obliterated and a very trying time was had by all, particularly by those of us in the lead.

I was attacked by some ' bug ' in the night, getting violent diarrhoea and feeling very sick. As a result, felt as weak as a kitten today, but thought it worth trying to get up to Camp III for the reconnaissance of the cwm. In the event, we have stopped at Camp II. After about one hour only the weather closed in rapidly and the light became atrocious—it snowed heavily and continuously for the rest of the day. Our recce party (Evans, Tenzing, self plus 3 Sherpas) got up to Camp II at 1 p.m. and decided to stop there and send back the 3 porters. We quickly erected 6 tents and settled in. Noyce's High Altitude Team and Gregory with his Low Altitude team turned up at 3 p.m. after a weary $4\frac{1}{2}$ hours journey, mainly due to the inexperience of the new local Sherpas. It has cleared tonight and spirits have risen. Moreover, our wireless communications have been working admirably ; we have had long and most satisfactory conversations with Camp III and Base—these ' Walky Talkies ' are a tremendous boon.

April 25.

It was a doubtful looking morning with wind coming from the west ; in fact it started snowing for a time. We had no luck with our wireless, which was unfortunate as there were several important messages. As we were waiting for our 3 Sherpas, (Pemba : Ang Temba and Topke) to return from Base, Evans and I led on to remake the track leaving Tenzing to bring on these three with the ladders. Gregory and party followed, as his Sherpas were to return to Base the same day. The going was fairly difficult with at least 9 inches of new snow. We placed two fixed ropes and a log at awkward places, and Hillary had fixed the rope ladder and improved the dangerous passage known as the ' Nutcracker.' Nevertheless, the very ' green ' porters in Gregory's party caused him a great deal of trouble. It was a glorious morning, but snow clouds were building up as usual.

On reaching Camp III Westmacott took down Gregory's men. Noyce's party turned up late—nearly 3 p.m. They had carried the ladder sections, which proved very awkward indeed in the icefall. By then it was snowing hard.

At about 4 p.m. we started out (less Gregory) to put the ladder over the big crevasse, in improving weather. It went over (3 sections) quite easily and then Evans, Hillary, and I decided to continue up the cwm. There were several anxious moments with huge chasms which seemed to block all progress, but eventually to our delight we were clearly through, moving over towards the right side of the cwm.

We went on till 5.30 p.m., when we could see right up the cwm—the whole of Lhotse, the South Col, the Eperon des Genevois—all as we'd seen it in photos—a wonderful sight. Then back to camp in high spirits, for we'd won through !

April 26.

This has been a memorable day indeed. A glorious clear morning and we set out for the important Cwm Reconnaissance at 9 a.m., after satisfactory wireless communications with both Base and Camp II. Evans and I on one rope, Hillary and Tenzing on the other. The H.A. team with Noyce and Gregory followed later. Evans and I got ahead soon after the start by dodging my gully route under the ice cliffs on the left. Hillary and Tenzing diverged from the route a little later, to inspect the dump at the Swiss Camp III, which we had noticed last evening. After passing our furthest point of yesterday we moved steadily to the right (true left) edge of the cwm, having to make many diversions in avoiding the crevasses. The new snow, at least 1 foot deep in places, made the going tedious. Hillary and Tenzing, moving faster, forged ahead. As we reached the smooth upper part of the Cwm, crevasses ceased to trouble us and we reached the Swiss Camp IV site at 12.30. Unfortunately the usual snow clouds had blown up and we were too late to get good photos of the Lhotse Face, now close at hand. We were able to examine it critically, however, and are all very hopeful of the route up the Lhotse glacier followed by the long traverse to the left to reach the Col. It was quite exciting digging up the Swiss stores. A big tent and masses of food of all sorts—some oxygen and medical stores. The tent and food will be specially helpful to us. Hillary and Tenzing left before us as they are going straight down to Base Camp ; Evans and I started down at 2.30 and arrived at Camp III, a bit tired but very happy, at 4 p.m.

Good wireless communications with Base and Camp II again tonight.

April 27.

Evans and I went up to secure the ladder bridge this morning and to photograph the H.A. team crossing on their way to Camp IV. When we returned to Camp III, Lowe had already arrived from II—his party (L.L.I.) had come up in the remarkably good time of 1¼ hours. We went down together to Base Camp without incident, in considerable heat ; I noticed still further changes in the trough below Camp II.

It started snowing before we got in (1.30 p.m.). We met teams II and III on their way up under Wylie and Band. The former had many

Sherpa problems arising from a protest meeting with which he had had to cope that morning. These appeared to have been resolved satisfactorily, but one realizes more and more that the crux of our problem on Everest is the willingness or otherwise of the Sherpas to play their part.

Heavy snowfall again this p.m., but it has cleared tonight. I have had long discussions on the Lhotse Face reconnaissance, firstly with Hillary, Evans, and Tenzing and later with the others. This is to start on 2nd May and last 48 hours, from the future Camp IV (or Advanced Base). Evans ; Bourdillon ; Wylie ; Ward and the seven best Sherpas, all using oxygen up the Lhotse Face—it will provide the information on which the plan will be made and will give valuable practice in both types of oxygen apparatus. (Evans and Bourdillon on C.C. Wylie and Ward on O.C.)

April 28.

Slept badly—too many problems on my mind. It was a still, hot morning with a haze, little wind high up, for a change. There was general business of getting loads arranged for the next few days—curse this pen—I was occupied with financial matters most of the morning, but managed a hair cut and hairwash :—Evans obliging most efficiently as barber. We are trying to tighten up hygiene as so many of us keep going down with diarrhoea—it must be in the kitchen. Ward and Pugh are busy about this and I have spoken severely to the cooks.

Arrangements for the reconnaissance of Lhotse Face are well ahead. We are still having failures with local men as icefall Sherpas and keep changing them. The most anxious question is whether we'll have enough for the assault plan in a few weeks' time. (We need 6–7 for Camp IV : 10–12 for S. Col : 5–7 for Camp VIII.)

Snowing as usual tonight—alas.

April 29.

An uneventful day. Snowfall started early, but has not prevented the ' ferries ' working, either from Base Camp or from Camp III. I was able to talk to Gregory and Noyce again this evening, after having interrupted communications for 2 days. We have been busy preparing for the important reconnaissance of the Lhotse Face ; I go up tomorrow with the special Sherpas ; Bourdillon and Evans likewise.

Wrote a Dispatch for the Times and finished a good deal of correspondence in anticipation of arrival of another Dāk runner tomorrow.

Several Sherpas are sick which slows down our build up ; but things are not going too badly on the whole, and there is no sign of lowering of morale among the party.

I'm holding on all right but I hope the mountain won't keep us waiting after 15th May.

In answering letters from well-wishers today, I was again struck by the relevance of mountains to spiritual things ; so many have written me in this sense. Certainly this thing we are doing is a great test of

Faith on the part of myself, the team and all those who believe in the outcome of what we are endeavouring to do.

Noyce is a splendid help in his quiet way and Charles Evans is outstanding. I told the party the other night that I wanted Evans to take over if I fell by the wayside.

April 30.

Camp III. Here I am again at the brink of the Cwm, having escorted up the Special Sherpa team. We have come up in $3\frac{3}{4}$ hours, with a full $\frac{1}{2}$ hour pause at Camp II. A lovely morning, and very hot indeed.

There had been a heavy fall of new snow last night, which made the retracing of the track a hard job. Above Camp II we met Gregory and Bourdillon, descending with two Sherpas, and two strings of unescorted Sherpas, who should have been under the wing of one of the party as they were inexperienced, local men.

Bourdillon and Evans arrived about 3 p.m. We spent some time sorting out the H.A. boots and crampons, which are to be used from now onwards by everyone working in the Cwm. Comfortably settled in by 5 p.m. and have had very clear wireless conversations with Base Camp and with Pugh, at Camp II on his way up to take part in the Lhotse Face Reconnaissance.

It is good to be up here again and on the job. Noyce still here and descends tomorrow with the L.A. Sherpas.

May 1 & 2.

Two very important and memorable days. Bourdillon, Evans, and I went up the Cwm to Camp IV in $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours on May 1st, using C.C. oxygen. It was a fine morning as usual and we suffered a good deal from the heat, but on the whole it was a useful test and demonstration of its capabilities. Our special Sherpas were, unfortunately, not all in good shape. Gyalzen and Da Namgyal, two of the last, were going indifferently. We had issued them all with H.A. boots and crampons the day before, changing into these ourselves, as I've decided that our ordinary boots are not good enough for higher work, and we have had so many breakages among the light crampons.

The Sherpa team, less Topke, who fell out low down on the ice fall yesterday, did all start off, however, & went up lightly laden as far as the dump of stores left by our Low Level Teams (led by Ward) a few days previously. They were ahead of us, and when we reached the dump we took over our kit which they were carrying. We were now loaded to 50 lbs. ourselves. Da Namgyal stayed behind, and only 5 were able to go on. These 5, however, very heavily laden, came on in splendid time. We set up camp just in time before snow started heavily, and sent the Sherpas back to Camp III.

No luck with wireless that evening.

Next day (2nd) we got away at 9.30 a.m. intending to climb as high as possible on the Lhotse Face, in order to prepare a route and to

enable me to be certain of the extent and objects of the reconnaissance. We had thought of doing so in the previous day, but weather prevented it. Using C.C. oxygen, we again made good progress, despite fairly deep new snow. We reached the Swiss Autumn Camp V, at the foot of the Lhotse Face, and at 23,000 feet,[2] at 11.30 and spent about ½ hour resting there. As at Camp IV, there is plenty of excellent food. Unfortunately the weather was already fast closing in even at that early hour (11.30) and when we started on soon after 12 noon, it was snowing hard. I was determined to see the going on the Face, however, and to reach a certain point where we hoped to make a route through the succession of ice steps, or cliffs, so as to reach a central broad band of snow up the Lhotse Glacier. So on we went in filthy weather. We reached this point by 1.30 p.m., by which time Evans and I, due to mask leaks, were nearly out of oxygen. Taking off masks at 23,500 feet,[3] having used oxygen for all movement from 20,000 feet on, left us feeling pretty feeble and anoxic. When we started down (2.10 p.m.) I discarded my oxygen and found even descending, less oxygen cylinder and canister, a great effort.

We again had a good rest at the Swiss Camp V, and then returned in heavy snow to Camp IV, arriving 4.30 p.m. Evans and I, without oxygen, were fairly done up. Ward and Wylie and the Special Sherpas were there and had set up camp. So also were Tenzing and Hillary who had made a very successful trial run all the way up from Base to Camp IV, using O.C. oxygen, in the excellent time of 5 hours. They had waited to return to Base with me, but I was too done up and decided to stay at IV.

One point emerges already from the Recce. We cannot make our assault from IV—it must be from V. I am therefore starting the recce off from this latter camp and giving them an extra day if need be.

May 3.

The morning was brilliantly fine, and promised to be hot—a grave disadvantage for the using of oxygen. When we came to look into the loads after breakfast, it was clear that the Sherpas and Sahibs would be loaded to the limit, even without giving oxygen to the Sherpas, as had been originally intended ; they carried at least 60 lbs. each, and the Sahibs over 50 lbs. I decided to accompany the party, leading a string of not-so-fit Sherpas who were to return to Base after carrying to Camp V. We eventually set out after 11 a.m. and ploughed up through last night's heavy new snow to Camp V in under two hours. The oxygen wearers, and of course especially Bourdillon and Evans (using C.C.) suffered considerably. I was amazed to find I moved without any trouble, and with far greater enjoyment, without oxygen, despite carrying part of the loads of the other 4.

We set up camp and unearthed the Swiss food. I waited until tea had been brewed, and took a large number of photos, before starting down at 2.20 p.m. with Dawa Tenzing, Gyalzen and Ang Dawa II.

[2] Probably only 22,000 ft.

[3] Probably 22,500 ft.

We moved fast, and were at Camp IV in 25 minutes. A brew of tea there, while the weather looked menacing, and then off again down the long cwm in atrocious light and on a foul, breakable crust—very wearying to the temper. It cleared, however, into a beautiful evening about 5 p.m. and, but for my tiredness, I should have appreciated more fully the really glorious views—back to Lhotse and Everest, and down glacier to Pumori and Lingtren, swathed in mists.

We must have reached Camp III at 5.15 p.m., and hastened there to change our H.A. boots and crampons for the normal types.

The descent to Camp II was made difficult by the new snow and the failing light; when we got there at 10 to 7, there was no choice but to stop at once before complete darkness set in.

I dozed off almost at once and was woken by Gyalzen bringing a mug of tea and, later, a plate of porridge!

May 4, 1953.

We started off at 6.50 a.m. after a cup of tea, on a gusty cloudy morning, and continued our journey to Base, arriving about 8.15. Nearly everyone has gone down to Lobuje as I'd asked them. Morris, Pugh and Band are here—the first mentioned had gone up to, and beyond Camp III before the break—a remarkably good show on his part.

Later this morning, the long-awaited third mail runner turned up.

May 5.

An uneventful day spent at Base Camp. The second period of the build up has started, with Band and Tenzing going up to Camp II this morning, leading respectively a High Altitude and a Low Altitude Team. I have put Lowe in charge of the Cwm build up, with the task of setting up Advance Base and stocking Camp V for the Assault. Westmacott and Band are to assist. Pugh went down to Lobuje today to see the invalids, and on return reported that Stobart was recovering from pneumonia; I am going down to see him tomorrow.

Sherpas still suffering from coughs, etc.—3 sick down at Lobuje. I am waiting anxiously for the return of the Lhotse Face recce party, which will determine the plan.

We are now getting weather bulletins and have successfully picked up the broadcasts from All-India radio and the B.B.C.—so far only local weather reports and no news of the Monsoon. The weather continues to be fair only in the mornings with these tiresome snow showers in the afternoons, and brilliantly clear nights. The scene around camp in the moonlight is really glorious—Pumori especially shining white above the ice pinnacles surrounding us.

This p.m. I helped excavate one of the ice grottoes which we are cutting in these glacier pinnacles, to serve as accommodation when the tents will have been moved up into the cwm. One of them, hitherto used by Stobart, is capacious and comfortable. The temperature is permanently — 6° C.

May 6.

A lovely morning, clear and windless with light clouds hanging around the tops. I decided to go down to Lobuje to see Stobart and set off down glacier after breakfast. Met Hillary and Noyce at the Lake Camp on their way up from a holiday. It was a pleasant change to get down to grass, although the hillsides can hardly be said to have changed colour from their winter brownness. A few things are blossoming—the tiny azaleas have a few mauve flowers, and various primulas are out. It was nice seeing more birds, too, chats and starts and snow pigeon, in addition to the inevitable choughs and one raven which haunt Base Camp. I found Stobart cheerful and on the mend. Spent an hour with him, discussing the film problem in relation to the assault and left soon after 2.30 p.m. The return journey proved tiring. Got back, through the usual snow storm, at 5.30 p.m. and found the Lhotse Face Recce party safely back. They had done well in the face of considerable difficulties, having spent a night at the Swiss Camp VI and made their way up to almost 24,000 feet.

The outcome of this recce is that we are going for our Plan ' B,' the closed circuit followed by the open circuit assault. A good deal of preliminary work must be done to prepare the Face and to set up Camp VI (Swiss Camp VII) and everyone in the event will have a full and vital part to play. Roles in the assault as follows :—

1. *Preparation of Lhotse Face and Establishment of Camp VI :*
   Lowe ; Westmacott ; Band ; and 4 Special Sherpas.
2. *The South Col Lift.*
   Wylie ; Noyce ; and 12 H.A. Sherpas.
3. *The First Assault Party.*
   Evans & Bourdillon on Closed Circuit.
4. *The Second Assault Party :*
   Hillary and Tenzing, on Open Circuit.
5. *The Support Party :*
   Hunt and Gregory, with 4 Special Sherpas.
6. *Reserve*—Ward.

We are now going ahead to put this plan ' B ' into effect after 15th, *if necessary*. There is a lot to do in the next few days. Hillary and I go up on 9th to relieve Lowe and his party in the build up in the cwm.

May 7.

We have had a busy day of calculations to meet the plan in poor weather, but the work goes. Wylie and Ward went down to Lobuje for their rest. We've been eating fresh meat—the third beast we've had since starting—a good sheep. Last time it was a yak, which was eventually shot with my ·22 Rifle, after baffling many efforts to slay it, poor beast.

I am now installed in the big ice cave, formerly used by Stobart. It gives so much more freedom than the little tent, and the cold throughout the 24 hours is constant.

May 8.

This has been a bad day indeed. It has snowed heavily in the Cwm all day and this evening Lowe reported on the wireless that Band is ill. We had had a first report about this from Noyce on his return from a ferry trip—and that Lowe and the Sherpas were pretty exhausted after ploughing through deep new snow all day.

Accordingly Band is to come down and Lowe is to stop the H.L. carry for one day.

It begins to look as if we shall hardly have enough people to carry through the plan, at any rate unless we pause again before going into the assault.

Hillary and one Sherpa spent the morning between Base and Camp II improving the track ; the icefall is undergoing very marked changes and there are certain places which give us cause for constant anxiety. The sooner we finish this carry and get on up, the better.

Wrote a further ' Times ' dispatch today, but wonder if it will be published before we go up the mountain ; a Dāk runner is due tomorrow.

May 9.

I have moved up to Camp III with Hillary, Westmacott and a few Sherpas. Hillary and I are to replace Lowe and his party in the Cwm ferry, so that they can go up to Camp V and prepare the Lhotse face. Camp III is a busy spot, with 19 Sherpas and 4 of us. Tomorrow, Lowe and Westmacott with 4 men go straight up to V, I with 4 men go to IV (in order to start the lift of assault stores to camp V) ; Hillary works between here and IV on the lower lift.

We came up as far as Camp II in fine weather—the icefall was very hot. From II to III, it was already snowing and cold, and ever since arriving here the snow has continued steadily. How depressing it is and when will it change ?

We passed Band and Tenzing on their way down. The former is obviously sick and may well not be able to take any part in the assault.

I am worried lest Westmacott may also not be up to the work on the Lhotse Face. He has a wretched cough and was not going well on the way up. The track is getting increasingly dangerous and at one place there has been a huge fall of seracs across the track.

May 10.

The morning was again fine and we made a reasonably early start (20 to 8) after clear wireless communications with Base. It was a long string of Sherpas and Sahibs which started up the Cwm—4 and 19. The track had hardened well and was not unduly overlaid with new snow. In these circumstances we made very good progress, although the heat became terriffic as we made height. The leading parties reached Camp IV at 10.45—3 hours going from Camp III, which was reasonably good going. Unfortunately Westmacott was going badly and arrived pretty done up. There could be no question of his

continuing to Camp V with Lowe to start work on the Lhotse Face. This was a severe setback. From this, the most vital job in the assault. Westmacott and Band have now both fallen out. Lowe is carrying on with 4 Sherpas ; luckily these latter are first class chaps.

Here at Camp IV I've been making an inventory of stores arrived to date. It started snowing soon after 1 p.m. and has continued—violently at times—ever since. It is difficult not to get depressed by such abominable conditions.

Lowe and his party started off soon after 2 p.m. and I was able to speak on the air to him at 5 p.m.—and through him to Base Camp ; a bitter job, standing on a hillock near camp with snow driving up the Cwm.

It is nice to have Dawa Thondup with me, together with 3 other good Sherpas, to do the daily carry from Camp IV to V.

May 11.

Westmacott seemed better today, after a good night's rest, so it was decided that he should come up to Camp V. We started at 8.25 a.m. in glorious weather and my rope of Sherpas got there in 1 hour and 25 minutes, which is excellent going. I was feeling completely fresh despite a 30 lb. load. We saw Lowe and Ang Nima on the upper terrace, beneath the steep part, as we approached V and also the Meade at Camp VI very clear on its glacier terrace above us. Dawa Tenzing and Gyalzen and Ang Namgyal were waiting to take on loads to VI when we arrived. We got them off, sending a note up to Lowe ; brewed some tea, etc. Westmacott settled in at V, and I took my 4 Sherpas down again in quick time to IV. We got back at 12.00, seeing Hillary's camp III party not far off on their way down.

Snow continued as we arrived and continued until 4.30 p.m. Then it cleared most beautifully and gave us glorious views of the upper Cwm. I had a long and very clear wireless talk with Lowe at VI but could not hear III or below. It seemed queer talking to Lowe—I could just see his red Meade—a tiny dot at this distance, high up on the Lhotse Face.

May 12, 1953.

It is difficult not to feel bitter disappointment in these atrocious weather conditions. Today it has snowed another 7 inches or so and this evening I found the tracks both up and down the cwm obliterated, just the faintest sign only, to help the ferry parties plough their way up tomorrow. Lowe, to whom I spoke at length on wireless tonight, made a fine effort again today, but was *waist deep* in snow at times and got no further than $\frac{1}{2}$ way to Swiss VII. His hard won tracks will have been completely filled in. Westmacott failed to get to Camp VI and must now go down—one more out of the team. The Sherpas got up to VI thanks to fine leadership of Ang Namgyal.

I had a long talk to Hillary here, and have decided to get everyone into the Cwm by 15th so as to put more effort into this Lhotse Face

problem ; we've *got* to solve it and must put the best men onto this, regardless of later tasks. . . . . .

Mail came today. I suppose I'm tiring a bit already. Did the usual carry to V today but noticed we were slower—2 hours up.

May 13.

I had told Lowe over the air last evening that I might come up to VI to see him this day, and so it has been. My party got away about 8 a.m.—self carrying my usual loads of about 35 lbs.—and reached V shortly before 10 a.m. Westmacott was still there. We made up loads for the two Sherpas (Gyalzen being ill or tired) and I started up towards VI soon after 10.30—I with Ang Namgyal, Westmacott, who was moving very slowly indeed, with D. Tenzing. We could see Lowe and Ang Nima working on the steep slopes just below VI as we came up the Cwm.

Despite the two hours journey from IV and the load, I found I was going very well. We reached the foot of the steep face proper in an hour, ploughing through deep snow but with yesterday's tracks just visible. But there was no trace of the route once on the face, and work became dreadfully hard, ploughing thigh-deep in new snow, made heavy in the intense heat. The Swiss ropes, or cords, for they are no more, were a great help where found—the going is certainly very steep indeed ; either in the deep snow or on bare ice. Eventually we reached Lowe and Ang Nima and, passing them, staggered up the last few feet of ice slope—good steps and a stout rope now to help us—to reach the tent on its tiny platform beneath a vertical step. It was 1 p.m.—2½ hours from V—clouds were pouring up the Cwm but I still had glimpses which were vastly impressive up to Everest, seemingly not too distant, and the slopes leading from the Lhotse Glacier to the S. Col—these looking very close indeed. The Lhotse—Nuptse Ridge (25,000 ft. plus) now seemed but little above us as did the big snow shoulder of Everest's W. Ridge. Had Pumori been visible down valley, we surely topped it. The tents of V looked minute below us at the head of the Cwm.

After about 40 minutes rest, during which the weather blew up snow and thick cloud, A. N. and I started down, passing Lowe and A. Nima hard at work fixing ropes. Lower still, Westmacott and D. T. were also rope fixing—they went up far enough to hand over D. T's load.

Got down to V about 2.45 very tired, but after short rest picked up Ang Dorje, who had waited behind for me, and went on down to IV. A pretty strenuous day, but a memorable one. VI must be 23,500 ft.[4]

Had clear conversations with III (Hillary and Morris) and VI (Lowe) tonight.

Am resting tomorrow while Evans, Bourdillon, Noyce and Hillary come up here to stay.

[4] Now estimated to be 23,000 ft.

May 14.

This has been a wholly fine day and Lowe has made full use of it to reach the Swiss Camp VII. It took him 4 hours, which, in good conditions, might mean a 5–5½ hour carry for the S. Col party. We were able to watch Lowe's progress with Ang Nima through glasses throughout the day. Hillary, Bourdillon, Evans, and Noyce with Morris turned up—all except the latter to stay. I spent the morning tidying the Camp, making an oxygen shelter, etc.

Our latest headache is shortage of food. For some reason Compo, at least, is running out weeks ahead of schedule and threatens to influence the assault planning—local purchase is proving more extensive and expensive than I'd ever predicted. I'm going down to III tomorrow to investigate, bringing Gregory up here. Band is said to be fit again and can now help with the Cwm carry. Westmacott will have to rest.

I've decided to wind up Base as early as possible and brings up all concerned with the assault here by 18th. If this weather goes on improving, we should be able to start the S. Col carry on 20th—this should mean attempts on the top on 24th or 25th.

May 15.

I had a very poor night—the first for some time. Can this be the first sign of deterioration? But felt well enough this morning. The others got away before 7 a.m. for Camp V and beyond. Gregory, Stobart, and Ward turned up with Sherpa train about 10 a.m. and after handing over to Gregory, I went down to Camp III. There met Wylie and discussed plans for winding up Base with him, and for any 'hot' news with Morris. Time is pressing on with almost frightening speed and, if the weather holds, we shall be launched into the assault before we can realize it.

Spoke clearly to Lowe on the air, in his perch at Camp VI. Apparently Hillary took a party of Sherpas to Camp VII (he having started at Camp IV!) and back to V. A truly remarkable effort. This proves at least that it should not be too long a carry from V to VII; Hillary thinks, however, that VII is itself too low, and that we should need two camps on the Face. The Swiss reached the Col last year from this camp and so must we—to change the plan so radically at this late stage might be disastrous. Meanwhile, the weather settles more perfectly each day. We must not delay now in making our bid for the top.

May 16.

I spent the day at Camp III, writing letters and a Times Dispatch in the morning; Sherpas coming up from Base brought newspapers, which occupied the afternoon. Westmacott came down from Camp IV with returning Sherpas, very done up, poor lad. Pugh looked him over and found him in an exhausted state. He goes down for a rest at Lobuje and I do not expect he will recover in time to play a further part in our show.

I arranged times for calls to VI and IV on the one hand, and Base on the other. I was able to get VI (Noyce) and Base, and could hear III but had to use Camp VI as a relay station to IV. Today Noyce and Lowe had to turn back on their way to VII as Lowe had taken an overdose of sleeping pills and was more or less comatose. Noyce had done well to get him back safely. I fear this has been a further day lost in preparing the Face. Pugh thinks it may be due to the length of time Lowe has spent at an above 23,000 ft. and may affect his brain. Ward goes up tomorrow and, if necessary, I have told Noyce to stay up and replace Lowe.

Meanwhile Wylie and Tenzing are winding up at Base and our ' tail ' will be tucked up, as planned, at Adv. Base on 18th. Heavy snowfall at Camp III tonight : looks as if our plans may be delayed.

May 17.

I arranged with Pugh to sleep on oxygen last night, using 2 litres a minute. The result was a success ; the mask was tolerable and—perhaps partly due to a red pill—I had a good night. Pugh of course was delighted and took samples of my alveolar air last night and this morning. I also used oxygen for the carry up the Cwm, and took Pugh along with me—it certainly does make travelling at altitude a lot easier ; even the great heat we get in the Cwm was less intolerable. The snowfall proved not to be serious, thank goodness ; we did the journey in 3 hours.

On arrival, we learned that one Sherpa, Stobart's Gyalzen, was very sick. Luckily Pugh was up here—he diagnosed a haemorrhage from a stomach ulcer and he had to make hasty arrangements to carry him down the Cwm. There is some hope that—if we can get him to a low altitude quickly—he may recover.

Meanwhile, fine work has been achieved on the Face today. Lowe had recovered ; he and Noyce have gone up to VII and on up to about 25,000 feet. They reported over the air that the going is good and tomorrow—Ward having replaced Noyce—they intend to go up to the traverse and prepare a track across it. Such is their morale that they talk of reaching the S. Col the following day (19th). Ward escorted 4–5 Sherpas to Camp VII with assault loads. Tomorrow—18th—further carries are planned, escorts being Bourdillon and Band.

Evans has been sick today ; I am hoping it's not serious and that, with rest, he'll be O.K. for the first assault.

Weather splendid and forecast—over 24 hours—favourable. I pray it may hold good for another 10 days. Spirits are high here at IV—a fine state of affairs on the eve of our big effort.

May 18.

This has been an important day in the Expedition's history. Wylie arrived with Tenzing and the balance of our Sherpas, carrying the two Domes and remaining stores. We have thus set up Advanced Base at full strength. Thondup, our head cook, is also here, which means

good meals for all of us. On the Lhotse Face things have not gone so well. We watched Lowe and Ward, with D. Tenzing, go up from VII, making a late start. They got little higher than had Noyce and Lowe the previous day. Then—to our chagrin—they turned back. We were left in uncertainty as to the cause of this set back (another day without progress) until evening, when Bourdillon, who successfully led 6 Sherpas with loads to VII, came down this evening, returned to Advanced base. Apparently Ward was suffering from cold. Meanwhile, we failed to raise Lowe on the wireless, just to make things more difficult.

However, I have decided to go ahead with the South Col carry tomorrow as planned. There are yet 2 days before this first party reaches VII, by which time it seems probable that Lowe will have dealt with the traverse. If he has not, we shall at least have got another lot of loads up to VII and Noyce may manage the traverse without previous work on it. Another worry is Evans, who came back sick from V this morning. He has not eaten all day. Bourdillon is putting him on oxygen tonight.

This evening Band set out with our 4 (Ridge Camp) Special Sherpas to carry to VII. Gregory, Hillary, and I accompanied the party each carrying loads, as did Stobart to take pictures. It was very windy and cold, and we went up in just over one hour, despite the loads.

Tonight, for the first time, wind is strong here at IV. Weather forecast not so promising for next 24 hours but apparently not on account of wind.

May 19.

This has been an intensely depressing day. The Lhotse Face Party did not move from Camp VII. There had been a good deal of wind during the night and the early part of the morning. To all other appearances it was, however, a glorious day and it was exasperating to have to stay here while no progress was made towards the critical traverse.

Meanwhile Band made excellent progress to Camp VII and was there soon after midday. I went up to Camp V again in the evening to accompany Noyce's party (first to South Col carry) and met Band returning. They had done fine work. Band reported that the Lhotse Face party had stayed in because of wind, but would make a final effort next day. They understood that they must come down on this date. In anticipation of failure by them, I have briefed Noyce to take on the job of preparing the way and getting to the South Col—a tough job, but he is determined and reliable. We simply cannot wait longer in any case.

This period of waiting is a severe test for all concerned.

May 20.

Today was the last chance for Lowe's party to get up to the traverse and prepare the route. It may be imagined how anxiously we watched

the Lhotse Face for signs of them. At last, about 9.45 a.m. they appeared and moved slowly upwards. Our hopes were soon dashed, however, when they turned back after little over ½ hour. This was a severe blow for we realized that they would now be unable to finish their job.

Meanwhile, Noyce's party was making steady if slow progress upwards from Camp V. Shortly before they reached Camp VII, Lowe and party started down and met Noyce's party.

The former arrived down at Advanced Base about 4 p.m. They were very tired and spoke eloquently of the difficulties—or rather cold—above Camp VII.

This situation may require drastic treatment. In consultation with Hillary and Evans, I've decided to stand Hillary and Tenzing ready to go up to VII tomorrow, should it seem that Noyce is not making satisfactory progress. They will have to get this route through and come back as soon as possible. I chose these two as they were last in the assault programme and because they are the strongest. The influence of Tenzing on the Sherpas is also a potent factor.

The weather forecast assures us that there is yet no sign of the monsoon. Meanwhile, one glorious day succeeds another and the urge to get on with it is almost too strong to bear.

Two Sherpas turned up from Base today, with fresh food, but no mail. The runner is apparently much overdue.

May 21.

We watched anxiously this a.m. for signs of progress from Camps V and VII. Neither party got going until very late, then we saw Wylie and party on its way up from V, together with Gregory and Stobart, who had set out to take photos. Finally at 10 a.m., two figures emerged from behind the serac at Camp VII, evidently Noyce and Annullu. No Sherpas followed them and it became clear that he was adopting the alternative plan, which I had discussed with him, of leaving the Sherpas to join up with Wylie's, and he was preparing the route to the traverse. They made slow progress at first and my mind was full of anxiety about their success, the possibility that the Sherpas had refused, and so on. I therefore decided at 11 a.m. to send up Hillary and Tenzing, just to ensure that the Sherpas do get up tomorrow ; it seemed the right moment to throw in our maximum effort.

The rest of the day we watched with growing interest, indeed excitement, the progress of Noyce and Annullu. They took 2 hours to reach the Traverse—from then on they made rapid progress. It soon became apparent that Noyce was making for the S. Col itself. They got into the couloir, disappeared behind the rocks of the Eperon and then at 2.40 p.m. appeared on the skyline at the very top of the Eperon itself. Naturally everyone was very thrilled indeed—we'd conquered the Lhotse Face—and this during a reconnaissance in preparation for the carry to the South Col. Meanwhile Hillary and Tenzing reached Camp VII. Gregory, Stobart, and Band (the latter had set out for

Camp VII to fix up our wireless communications) returned to Adv. Base.

At this critical time we had complete failure with the wireless ; it is serious because the launching of the assault and its timing depend on a number of questions to which we need answers from Camp VII. I am hoping we shall contact them tomorrow morning as I feel we must strike now, at least with one assault.

Mail came up tonight, which we are very glad of indeed. I gather from Morris that the Press is already gathering down at Base Camp.

May 22.

To our delight and relief we saw no less than 17 people start from Camp VII at 8.30 a.m. 2 leading were apparently Hillary and Tenzing. As I write, this caravan has reached the level of the famous traverse, heading for the S. Col. I am therefore loosing the first assault party, with its support element (Evans and Bourdillon, with Hunt and two Sherpas) for Camp V tonight—in fact, we are off on the big adventure.

The progress of the South Col Sherpa team continued slowly throughout the day. With the arrival of Noyce and Annullu at Adv. Base, we realized that Hillary and Tenzing had decided to lead them to the Col, remaking a track, and that Wylie was with his men.

Arrangements were at once made for the first Assault Party to start this evening, accompanied by its support team. We were able to deduce the shortfall in food and oxygen which must be made good before the second assault can be made. In the absence of Hillary and Tenzing I asked Lowe to plan this ' follow-up ' and to lead the Sherpas who must be found in order to carry a second consignment to the Col. Our party set off about tea time, getting up to Camp V in an hour. By this time all the Sherpas were in sight, coming down from the Col—some of them would be very late back at Camp VII. We saw Hillary, Tenzing and 5–7 Sherpas leave VII on their way to Adv. Base. They reached us in very good spirits, but all pretty exhausted, even Hillary this time. I expect this will mean an interval longer than 24 hours before the 2nd party will be ready to turn round and start up again. The last of the Sherpas and Wylie have stayed up at Camp VII.

May 23.

We spent a cold and very windy night in Camp V. It calmed down a good deal by daylight, however. We got off soon after 8 a.m. (Dawa Tenzing and Chanchen having come up early with loads from Adv. Base and gone on ahead).

Evans and Bourdillon were using closed circuit apparatus and I the open circuit. I found this very trying indeed for the first $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours and at times wondered if I should ever get there. Things improved above Camp VI, however, and I reached VII fairly fresh.

Everest now looks ridiculously close and we are very little below the level of the Nuptse ridge—Pumori is now far below and the Cwm, with our camps V and IV, seems very remote.

We are all lying up, feeling the height I suspect, but otherwise in good shape. The weather still seems set fair. Evans and Bourdillon need a minimum of two more days !

Later. The wind has got up this evening in some force, causing our tents to belly and roar. It is a frightening noise and gives one little rest. Going out to arrange my oxygen gear for tomorrow I noticed a long plume stretching the whole length of the S.E. Ridge. But it remains brilliantly clear.

I was able to talk very clearly with Advanced Base (Lowe) at 5 p.m., so learned their plans for the second assault. They are moving up to Camp V tomorrow night, so will be 48 hours behind us. At 6.15 I called Base Camp and could just hear Morris. I sent him the news in the hope he could hear me.

Using oxygen for part of tonight, from one of the (Swiss) German-made cylinders.

May 24.

Had a reasonably good night, specially the first part on oxygen. It was very windy in our channel-like Camp site. We got away about 20 to 10—partly due to cold—and misfortune hit us early. I found movement a terrible effort and was in fact getting no oxygen while carrying a dead weight well over 50 lbs. I had to stop while Bourdillon rectified the fault ; it must have cost us a good half hour. As it was, due to a leak I had to travel on 2 litres which made me pretty slow, perhaps as well, as the Sherpas on my rope were without oxygen. We made very slow time to the top of the glacier (25,500 ft.[5])—chiefly due to lack of oxygen on the part of my rope and heavy loads carried by the C.C. party.

The long traverse and the final couloir proved to be fearfully exhausting—the worse in that I, for one, had expected easy ground and a good track. The snow was slabby and breakable at that. Bourdillon and Evans had an awful time remaking the track—and the general angle far higher than I'd anticipated. Finally, it was, or seemed, a long, long way. It was at this stage that my 2 Sherpas began seriously to flag. By the time we had entered the couloir they were both seemingly done up, and so slow that I was in danger of running out of oxygen. After a short consultation between the ropes, it was decided to leave the Sherpas to come up in their own time—the distance was now short—and I tied on to Bourdillon and Evans. I had to reduce from 4 litres to 2 again (having gone on to the higher rate for the traverse), which made those last 200 ft. or so a pretty severe effort.

In the end we breasted the Eperon and descended to the Col at 4 p.m.

The wind was terrible. My oxygen was finished, and the others had to take theirs off to help get the tents up. This was a fantastic struggle, with each of us falling about with lack of oxygen and unable to work for more than a few moments at a time. And all the time that

[5] Now estimated to be 25,000 ft.

fiendish wind—deadly cold—was tearing the tent from our hands, and blowing away anything we chanced to lay down on this desert, stony waste.

In the end we managed somehow, using rocks and oxygen bottles as weights, and dragged our gear inside. The Sherpas had turned up and we put them in the Meade while we three got into the larger Pyramid. Evans struggled with the stove, Bourdillon with the night oxygen, and I handed round the food. Between 5 and 9 p.m. we had no less than four brews—nothing very solid but all most comforting. In the end we managed to settle down amid confusion of oxygen gear, lilos and S.B.'s, food, etc., with the wind outside tearing away at the tent. Altogether an unforgettable experience.

May 25.

I slept part of the night on oxygen, the others all night. Woke feeling refreshed and ready for the big task. We discussed plans and decided that Evans and Bourdillon should wait another day, making their bid tomorrow. An early start is essential and this—owing to yesterday's exertions—has not been possible. We found Balu (Ang Tenzing) out of action, which means that I shall have to help carry the Top Camp. I shall therefore set out with Da Namgyal after the others, and between us, we will carry up a tent and an oxygen bottle, leaving the rest of the gear for Gregory's party. During the day I've walked to the edge of the col on both sides and had the most stupendous views. I only hope the photos will do them justice. Saw Kangch just as I saw Everest from Kangch (or Nepal Peak) 16 years ago.

Someone asked me the other day what was the highest flying bird. Well, here is a chough at this camp, scrounging for food at 26,000 feet ! Glad to say we are eating and drinking well, largely Swiss food (Vita-wheat ; honey ; cheese ; soup ; tunnyfish ; condensed milk), and our own assault and luxury rations (soups ; sardines ; sausage, etc., etc.). But there is a great urge to do NOTHING and this lethargy is the danger signal of deterioration. Hillary's party come up tomorrow and I'm hoping to have the camp ready for them. Bourdillon and Evans must go down, unless they are too exhausted, so as to make room.

The route to the S.E. ridge looks very steep indeed, in fact, so far from being easy, those final 3,000 feet are already a tough proposition.

May 26.

This has been the first of the Expedition's *big* days. The ' Summiters,' (Evans and Bourdillon) were due to leave at 6 a.m. but Evans' set froze up [6] and they struggled for 1½ hours and almost despaired before finally leaving at 7.30. As a result I started with Da Namgyal at 7.05. We were fairly well laden (over 40 lbs) for I had decided with Balu's defection that we two should carry the bulk of the Ridge stores, leaving Noyce's and Support party to increase the height on the morrow.

[6] Later diagnosed as a broken valve.

As a result,[7] Bourdillon and Evans passed us in the couloir leading to the ridge, as we groaned and crawled up. The world of mountains unfolded as we rose—we began to realize that we were, in fact, climbing on the roof of the world. There, to the S.W., was Kangch with its immediate satellites, The Twins, Nepal and Tent Peaks, and Simvu—the reverse view of what I'd seen from Nepal Peak nearly 16 years ago. I was getting increasingly exhausted—each spell of 8–12 steps had to be followed by 2–3 minutes rest. Gasping and moaning for breath was an experience I'll never, never forget—a real fight for life. Self control vanished as I struggled to get back into my lungs that vital element of oxygen. Never have I been put to such physical strain. We climbed the couloir which rises in steepness to 50° near its top and scrambled to the crest of the S.E. ridge at 27,300 ft., where still stand the ragged remnants of Tenzing's and Lambert's tent from last spring. We rested half an hour; the closed circuiters had forged ahead and were climbing strongly up the ridge. Da Namgyal and I struggled up another 200 feet with the weather closing in—it took us a half-hour to do so. Then D. N. packed up. I wanted to make a further 50 feet to reach a small ledge at the foot of the steep buttress, whose top—about 27,800 ft.—was my choice for the camp site. But he couldn't. After making a feeble effort to scrape out a platform, we dumped our loads (oxygen : tent : food : kerosine, etc.), and started unsteadily down, without oxygen. In the couloir we took great precautions, at the cost of great effort—the descent seemed interminable and we began to sit down every 10 yards or so. As we went down we could see the second assault party coming up. Hillary and Tenzing were at Camp VIII and came forward to greet us. I collapsed and Hillary was wonderful in bringing oxygen up and dragging me into a tent. D. N. recovered better. In ½ hour, all was on the mend and Lowe hastened recovery with the wonderful news that Evans and Bourdillon had been sighted—between the swirling clouds and snow fall—crossing the South Peak about 1 p.m. What a triumph!! Would they go on? Would they make the top and would they return? Anxious questions. They were resolved about 3.30 p.m. when Bourdillon and Evans were again sighted, this time at the head of the couloir on their way down. We went to meet them at the foot of the slope, Bourdillon very done up. Evans—who had functioned partly on open circuit—less so. They'd reached the S. Peak and descended to the gap which had been so long the subject for conjecture. All well so far, but beyond were considerable ridge problems—cornices and steps—and they reckoned a further 3 hours were needed. Evans' oxygen supply showed 2 hours duration and the weather was bad. My briefing in these circumstances was clear—they must return—and they have achieved a great and gallant effort.

[7] It was in fact due to the more effective (Closed Circuit) equipment they were using. I discovered next day that ice blocked the tube of my oxygen mask and this may have accounted for my own great difficulty in breathing all 26th May.

Meanwhile, the second Assault party is here, and preparations are ready for tomorrow. They have brought up further supplies of oxygen and food, thanks to six volunteer Sherpas who have now made two carries to the Col. Hopes are high. Lowe has joined the Second Support Party, whose main task is to get the top camp sited higher on the Ridge than the point at which D. N. and I had left the stores (27,500 ft.[8]). At the moment of writing, it seems that they, too, will be short of a Sherpa—Ang Temba—who appears to have packed in on arrival at the Col. In fact, our carefully chosen team has shown up very poorly by comparison with several of the South Col chaps. As I write, the second assault party is making its final preparation for an early start. Gregory and Lowe plan to leave at 6 a.m.; the 'summiters' a little later. Bourdillon, Evans, and I are occupying the Meade, so as to give the second party the best chance of getting off. No less than three Sherpas are in the tiny 'Blister.' I have sent the two Sherpas of the first support party down with the second South Col team which came up today with Hillary's party. All is set for our bid to reach the actual top in the next two days.

May 27.

The wind, which had strengthened a good deal yesterday afternoon, gathered force during the night. Cramped as we three (Bourdillon, Evans, and I) were in the Meade, we spent a virtually sleepless night owing to the flapping and roaring of canvas. We also had no sleeping oxygen in order that there should be sufficient for the others.

It was thus no surprise to find—at about 8.00 a.m. that Hillary's party had not started. The wind was blowing like mad, so much so that it was a nightmare to go out of the tent. A scene of wild confusion reigned around Everest, which was shrouded in cloud with snow being torn from the S.E. Ridge. We huddled into the Pyramid, and discussed the situation while Tenzing made some attempt to work the Primus—of the Sherpas, only Ang Nima was showing any sign of life. A postponement of 24 hours was imperative; fortunately we have stockpiled enough to make this possible and the important thing is to keep up our strength by eating and drinking enough—for me, this is my third day spent on or above the Col, and I've had three nights of it. But it is interesting to compare our condition with that of the Swiss who spent a similar period here last year, and who scarcely got down alive. Here are we, well supplied with food, fuel and oxygen, sitting at 26,000 feet almost as if at Base. At about midday Evans and Bourdillon started off on their way down. Then Evans suddenly re-appeared with the alarming news that Bourdillon could not get up the slope to the top of the Eperon and was in a critical state. Another of us must accompany him down if we were to get down alive. Here was another difficult decision. My post was here on the Col, to see the big assault safely launched and decide, if need be, on a further postponement or, possibly, a withdrawal. Yet I was supporting the 1st assault, and

[8] Now estimated to be 27,350 ft.

by sending either Gregory or Lowe would only weaken the 2nd Assault's chances. I decided I must go. So rapidly packed, with much willing help, and plodded very slowly up the Eperon slope, Hillary carrying my sack.

Left Hillary with parting instructions not to give in if avoidable, and promising to send up a reinforcement party. We (Evans, Bourdillon, Ang Temba and self) started slowly—so painfully slowly—down the couloir and across the big slopes beneath Lhotse. We halted frequently and for long intervals for Bourdillon, and to a less extent Ang Temba, were barely in control of their legs. I led, Evans brought up the rear. So it went on until, very nearly at the end of our strength (except, perhaps, Charles Evans) we staggered down the last few feet to Camp VII. To our relief and delight, here we were met by Noyce and Ward, who helped us in. Just as we are coming down the ice pitch above Camp, Temba slipped and fell into the big crevasse. He was held by Evans and Noyce managed to remove his sack (he was upside down) and get him up. It is indicative of my state of exhaustion that I could not find the strength to lift a finger throughout this incident.

Bourdillon, Ang Temba and I have stayed for the night at Camp VII, where we are being looked after by Noyce. Evans has been escorted down to Adv. Base by Ward. This suits very well, as Noyce is needed to take a reinforcement party up to the Col and Evans can go down to arrange for Sherpas to come up and join him tomorrow. In any case, I doubt if any of us three could have continued the journey tonight; nor could we have summoned the energy to cook for ourselves. Bourdillon seems better, but is very exhausted; Ang Temba does nothing but groan.

May 28.

The night was almost windless; there was a little snowfall early in the evening. This morning conditions seemed to be ideal for the start of the second assault, though we had no means of telling what they were doing on the Col. We managed to pack up and get away at 10 a.m. though this required a quite exceptional effort. Bourdillon in the lead, we made our way slowly down to the site of Camp VI, with a good many pauses. As we went down, we could see a small party (5) on their way up to Camp V. Presumably this included the Sherpas who were to join Noyce and go on up to the Col. The day was still and very hot; I began to feel stifled in the down clothing and windproofs which I had been wearing ever since leaving Camp VII on the upward journey. Just above Camp V we met the other party going up. It was led by Wylie, who was to deliver the Sherpas to Noyce at VII. We were down at Base shortly before 1 p.m., very tired indeed; in fact I have been lying 'doggo' in my sleeping bag practically ever since, feeling increasingly played out—reaction from the big effort of the last 5 days has thoroughly gripped me.

May 29.

It was a reasonable assumption that Hillary and Tenzing were making for the top today, but owing to the breakdown in wireless communications, we had no news. We watched Noyce's party going up to the Col from VII and a party of three coming down from the Col. The latter arrived here in the evening, and proved to be Gregory, Pemba and Ang Nima. Gregory was able to fill in a good deal of the story. Yesterday he and Lowe, with Ang Nima, (Pemba being sick), had carried the Ridge camp to 27,800 ft.[9]—a very fine feat indeed. It had involved their carrying loads of 60 lbs. from my dump upwards for at least 300 feet. Having installed Tenzing and Hillary, they got down to the S. Col at 6.00 p.m.

This morning they had seen the second summit pair crossing the South Peak as early as 8.00 a.m. With this encouraging news we scanned the snow slopes on top of the Eperon for the signals agreed between Noyce and myself, but in vain. Mists came up with evening and hid the Lhotse Face.

Westmacott turned up from Base, and gave an me account of his useful work on the icefall route.

May 30.

Our anxieties as to Hillary and Tenzing's safety were ended when 5 figures appeared in the couloir, making for the Traverse; at least this was the total number of persons on or above the South Col. We had to wait till 2 p.m., however, for news of the second assault, when Lowe, Hillary and Tenzing came in to Adv. Base. Most of us went out to meet them, and when we realized by their unmistakable gestures that they had been to the top, we temporarily went mad. I found myself embracing Hillary and Tenzing, and I think the others did much the same.

Morris of the ' Times ' had come up and was there in time to scoop the story. They had spent a sleepless night at the Ridge Camp (27,800 ft.) mostly heating soups, etc. (the little Primus had worked beautifully); the get-away had been about 6.00 a.m. on a clear, windless morning. They had found the going to the South Peak pretty hard, specially the last steep snow slopes—had actually not reached there till 9.00 a.m.

Continued along the ridge without pause, keeping low on the west side on account of cornices and cutting steps virtually all the way, reached the top of Everest at 11.30 a.m. Both were in good form, could remove their oxygen masks, admire the view and take photos for 15 minutes. The summit they described as a perfect cone with the three ridges falling abruptly away from it—West, N.E. and S.E.

The return journey to the South Peak took them 1 hour (12.45 p.m.) and they had reached the S. Col again, tired but well under control, before 4 p.m. Altogether the whole affair had been conducted well within safe limits and is a model of fine climbing and judgment.

[9] Now estimated to be 27,900 ft.

This, in very brief outline, is the story of Everest's eventual ascent. Such had been the success of our planning, team work and build up that it was conducted in its final stages very much as an Alpine climb.

Emotions have run high this afternoon. We began to realize just what this news will mean to 1000's of expectant folk the world over, but specially in our country. We know that our success is principally due to our happy combination as a team ; we remember how much is due to those who have gone before us in this field and onto whose shoulders we have climbed to reach this much-prized goal. Thus ends the Epic of Everest.

May 31.

We have said a not very reluctant farewell to the Cwm and the Icefall, and most of us are down again at Base Camp—myself for the first time in over 3 weeks (8 May). It's been a long, broiling day of plodding through rotten, sun-fretted snow and ice, browned with wind-carried dust. Gregory and I have come down together, escorting porters Ang Norbu and Balu (the Ridge Camp shirker). We are both still weak from our Ridge carry and arrived pretty done up. The snow surface in the Cwm is furrowed and fretted by the strong sun of the past fortnight ; the icefall has crumbled, subsided and lost all its earlier beauty—like a melted sugar cake, dirtied with dust. In places, the detail of the route has changed beyond recognition. At the bottom Gregory and I lost our way, misled by new and powerful torrents, and had to cut across a ' range ' of big pinnacles. It is good to be down, and will be even better to be beyond the snow and ice and down to good soil and vegetation again.

June 1.

A busy day of writing, eating, and cleaning up generally. I changed my clothes—first time in 6–7 weeks—managed an all-over wash, shaved, had my hair cut (by Evans) and cut his—did my teeth (first time since arrival at Thyangboche on 26 March !) etc. etc. All are down now except Wylie, who comes tomorrow.

June 2.

Base Camp. An unforgettable, wonderful day of days. At lunch time Hillary received a cable from the acting P.M. of New Zealand congratulating him (and us all) on our earlier progress. I jokingly said I wished Winston Churchill would send me one. In the evening we listened to the Coronation proceedings etc., on the Indian News. The second headline after the Coronation was—Everest has been climbed ! The news had broken in London on 1st June evening. The Queen and the P.M. had sent messages of congratulation on to the British Minister at Kathmandu—the news had thrilled the world—a lot about Hillary and even more about Tenzing—the Queen had sent her message just before setting forth for the Coronation, etc. etc.—Our excitement knew no bounds. I rushed out cables of gratitude to

The Queen and the P.M., and another to the Himalayan Committee saying I proposed to bring Hillary and Tenzing home by air, and asking them to approve of us all coming home the same way. We celebrated with rum, and so did the Sherpas. Everyone was very merry and deeply moved by the reactions to which our success had given rise.

June 3.

The coolies arranged by Tenzing came up by about 7 a.m. Base was a scene of terrific confusion as loads were gradually made up and allotted. Coolies—mainly women and children—were filling in the time scrounging empty boxes and other junk, as well as doing a good deal of pinching of useful items of our kit ! Evans and I sat on a rock, watching the scene and discussing our wonderful good fortune. By about 10.30 a.m. all coolies were laden and on their way so we started down, with Noyce. I was not sorry to say goodbye to our Base. It was never a cheerful spot—either too stiflingly hot or too chilly—the shifting ice floor covered by shale made for discomfort in our tents and the place had become thoroughly insanitary. As with the Cwm, as with the icefall, we were ready to turn our backs on this dead world of ice and rock and to reach towards the life-giving earth.

We reached our stage, Lobuje, at about 1 p.m. Still pretty arid, green things were nevertheless pushing through. Mauve Azalea, Primula (in particular, the lovely purple Primula Sikkimensis), a purple vetch too, and a minute yellow blossom. The tents were soon put up, while we sat in one of the stone huts sheltering from the first rain I'd experienced since Bourdillon and I were held up at Basra when flying out in February.

This evening has been full of incidents. Bourdillon had the bright notion of firing off our mortar bombs, which we did to the excitement both of ourselves and the whole of our numerous retinue. This was followed by some target practice with my ·22 rifle, the targets being a few spare detonators for the mortar bombs. During tea our wireless warned us of a recorded message to be given after the 1 p.m. news from Sir E. Herbert, President of the Alpine Club and Chairman of the Himalayan Committee. I could scarcely contain myself till the moment came and was reduced to a positive state of nerves when the wireless started to make appalling squeals just before the News. At the last moment all went well and we heard, to our amazement, that the announcement had been made over the loudspeakers as the crowd were waiting for the Coronation procession. The Sherpa train has fully caught the spirit of victory ! They started a dance soon after dark and are still hard at it. The singing is quite lovely and the dancing most intriguing. They line up, arms linked, women and men together but not intermixed. The singing is quite unoriental—Russian music is the nearest comparison—and they start with a swaying movement. This gets worked up into an intricate foot stamping, more tricky than it looks. To the uninitiated each dance is much like another, but there is evidently a subtle distinction. We filled in the intervals by

singing songs, which evidently delighted the Sherpas—' Uncle Tom Cobbley '—' Ilkley Moor '—' Tom Brown's Baby.' They are still hard at it as I write.

Thyangboche tomorrow and we've sent ahead a request for a Lama dance. Telegrams today from Summerhayes and letters from the ' Telegraph ' and Reuters men at Namche—very nice of them indeed. What a strange and thrilling thing we have let loose—a very wonderful experience awaits us, if we don't lose our heads.

June 4.

We are back at our old Base, Thyangboche. Camped this time in a walled-in meadow below the Monastery hill as water has dried up in the well above. Our walk from Lobuje has been a growing enchantment, with greenery increasing as we come down. Early in the march—we started at 8 a.m.—we had some excitement crossing the swollen Khumbu glacier torrent, Lobujya Khola—a slightly nerve-wracking performance and I had to go to help Gregory. Below, azaleas were in full bloom, in three kinds, an orange, a magenta and a cream. Primulas, too, have been a feature of the walk—many blossomed mauve one which was in flower as we came up, over two months back ; the deep purple Sikkimensis ; and on all damp ground a lovely, drooping yellow one.

Shrubs were in bloom, and dog roses—many anemones and the ground was carpeted, in places, with strawberry plants. What a wonderful, beautiful world we found it !

Some time after arrival we were bidden to the Monastery, to watch some Lama dancing. Before we left Thyangboche last time I had requested this, and yesterday sent word to confirm it. The performance took place in the courtyard, with the Acting Abbot sitting along one gallery ; ourselves, entertained by the second senior Lama, along another of the three sides. I made a presentation of Rs. 500 to the repair of the Monastery roof. A broad hint had been given to this effect before we left to start acclimatizing.

The dancing took a long time to start, but was well continued from then on. I watched some six dances and found them amusing ; in a few cases they were quite skilled, though apt to continue for too long by our standards. Dresses and masks were fascinating. The second senior monk was sitting with us, but could give no very clear explanation of their meaning. The dancing was accompanied by blowing of long telescopic horns from the balcony, and some short kind of hunting horn ; the former very similar to Swiss horns. The show ended soon after dark. Although interesting, it was not to be compared with the dancing my wife and I had watched at Gangtok in 1937.

This evening we were a happy if sentimental party ; I said a few words about the past and future ; what a show it's been and how wonderfully we've hung together. P. Jackson of Reuters has spent the second part of the day with us.

On the track today I was met by a runner bearing the much awaited

cables from The Queen and P.M., also from Prince Philip. This evening came another big batch—its already a little overwhelming.

June 5.

Gregory, Bourdillon and I, with three Sherpas (Dawa Thondup, Pasang Dawa, & Nimmi) have started our journey home. What a day! The Sherpas started their drunken orgies yesterday; today they have been far worse. No coolies turned up and Nimmi, who was put in charge, could not explain why—this was a bad start. I left soon after 9 to visit Tiwari, the O.C. Indian Check Post at Namche, taking Dawa with me, duly warned against drink. Got there about 1 p.m. after meeting Tenzing on his return from visiting his mother at Thami. He had newspapers and mail, which took some time to peruse, so I sent Dawa on. The Indian party was overjoyed to see me. When Gregory and Bourdillon turned up we were entertained to very good—but painfully hot—curry, chapattis and tea, biscuits and egg. By 3.30 p.m. there was no sign of the other Sherpas or coolies and we were getting worried—the stage intended was Ghat, some 3–4 hours on along the Dudh Kosi. Then they came in—the Sherpas were drunk, the coolies a scratch party of women, 3 of whom declined to go on. I was furious but anger didn't help. I dismissed Nimmi and handed over to P. Dawa, giving him money to buy food. An hour later both he and Ang Temba were dead drunk—it was exasperating. At this point Tiwari came to our rescue in raising 3 local coolies. We eventually got away at 5 p.m. with the other four from Thyangboche, and these 3, Dawa, Temba and P. Dawa were unfit to go.

However, once away we recovered our[10] . . . about $1\frac{1}{4}$ hours journey away from that. . . . Dawa T. is struggling with the cooking in the absence of P. Dawa. The river is roaring by outside, a much more mighty force than when we last walked beside it.

June 6.

Woken at 5.15 a.m. as in the days of the march out, with tea and tsampa. We were away soon after 6 a.m. on a cloudy morning. Weather soon deteriorated and, although we had a few minutes' hot sunshine over breakfast at the hamlet of Ghat, it settled down to drizzle intermittently, later to rain steadily the rest of the day.[11] . . . the next valley to the west of the Dudh Kosi (the Lumdong Khola). As we arrived at Tate about 1.15 p.m. and in view of the weather, I was very pleasantly surprised to find our Sherpas and coolies agreeable to continue. The journey was said to be some $3\frac{1}{2}$ hours and the existence of shelter was a matter of some doubt. We spent an hour at Tate, and were entertained to tea, Chang and eggs by some of Dawa's friends or relations, in a very clean and tidy Sherpa house. Going on steadily and steeply uphill for an hour, in thick mist and rain through dripping rhododendrons and bamboo forest, we arrived on the ridge

[10] At this place, a page of the diary has been damaged by tearing.
[11] Here again the diary has been damaged.

dividing the two rivers, and plunged down as steeply on the other (west) side. Bourdillon and Gregory are wearing gym shoes, which made for difficulties on the muddy, slippery path. We also found a few leeches active, which I was spared through wearing boots. At about 4.30 p.m. we had come down to the Lumdong Khola, a mighty, rushing, muddy river, whose containing gorge is astonishingly steep and narrow. Higher up we had passed one or two overhanging rocks, tenanted by Sherpas, but with no water (other than raindrops) at hand. However, by the river no shelter seemed to be available. We therefore set to work rigging up our tarpaulins and shelters for ourselves, the Sherpas and coolies. Everything is soaked, but we have set up a very passable bivouac, and are now eating supper—thanks to the Sherpas' quite uncanny skill in lighting a fine cooking fire from soaking wood.

Pasang Dawa and Ang Temba both reported in this morning before we left our last night's shelter—very busy and anxious to please !

Heard the Common Curlew and many Koels today. The path was bordered by many long purple orchids with a big single blossom ; also wild strawberries in profusion. The noise of the swollen river is deafening, a few feet away.

June 7.

We spent a very fair night in our impromptu bivouac and no more rain fell. This morning we were away by 6 a.m. It was already cloudy and very soon we were plunged in mist, which has persisted more or less densely all day. After crossing the river, which had greatly abated since last night, we had a long and steep ascent through dripping forest for no less than $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours—at least 3,500 feet—to the crest of the next ridge to the west. We waited in the cold, swirling mist for the Sherpas to turn up ; then found ourselves contouring to the head of the next valley. A wide amphitheatre of crags clothed by Rhododendrons was soon reached, where we halted at 10 a.m. for a belated breakfast by a cave. It was a glorious spot, with masses of flowers beside a stream—primulas (yellow) : a big mauve peony ; a large celandine-like flower ; white anemones. We spent a pleasant 2 hours, resting and breakfasting, for our intended destination was Ringmo—2 more ridges and valleys away, and we need both time and stamina. Going on, we climbed up to yet another crest, higher than the last and above the tree line. Azaleas—saffron yellow—were growing on the top, and below the yellow Rhododendrons, also a few pinkish-white, were blooming still. Another contouring spell towards the head of the next glen, all at 13–14,000 feet, and we were repeating the process of climbing up through dense Rhododendron scrub—the yellow in profuse blossom—towards our third ridge of the day. It was at this time that the yellow-backed fired-tailed sunbirds were seen. I'd last seen these little wonder birds in Sikkim many years ago and had never forgotten their incredible beauty. Here we saw quite a number—just fleeting glimpses, for we were pressed for time and had no binoculars. They must be nesting just now in the rhododendrons. The next (3rd) crest

was about our highest point today :—14,500 feet approx. It was hailing and blowing hard as we crossed it, and rain continued for about the next hour. It was on this section of the route that the Swiss lost 2 coolies from exposure, in bad weather last autumn.

At last, about 3 p.m., we reached the last ridge of the day and started down it towards our stage, the hamlet of Rimgo. It was now clearing and we were able, for the first time that day, to appreciate the magnificence of our surroundings. Deep, forest-clad gorges fell away to right and left, their mountainous ridges sharp and clear cut as only Himalayan ridges can be. Lower down a valley opened out, Alpine in character, with grassy meadows and cultivation cut out among the fir forests. Rimgo was there, a few tiny chalets, beckoning us down from the heights. At the head of the valley on our right, two gleaming snow summits were being slowly unveiled by the mists—Karyolung and Numbur. At our feet and all round, azaleas yellow and magenta were in full and glorious blossom : a large-flowering white heather edged the path. We sat for a while in hot sunshine to drink in all this beauty, with the big, heavy monsoon clouds hanging over the valleys and the growl of thunder not far distant. Then down, down the long ridge, into the giant trees and on until, at 6 p.m. we reached the cultivation and stopped for the Sherps to show us a dwelling for the night. For it was raining once more.

And now here we are—warm and snug on the floor of a Sherpa's house waiting for our supper. It's been a long (12-hour) trek in most beautiful scenery.

June 8.

We only realized after starting off this morning that we were already on the same track as that taken on the way out, between the monastery of Taksindu and Junbesi. But what a difference. So lush and green had the hillsides become. Now the dry, dusty ground had become covered with grass, bracken (for once I was delighted to welcome the 'fern'!) and many flowers. Those which most struck the eye all through today were a tall, slim blue iris and the mauve orchids, growing in great masses like croci. The sky was menacing with great banks of heavy raincloud to the south, but we were spared a wetting for some time, reaching Junbesi and entering a hospitable house just in time before the first heavy shower (9.30 a.m.). We made our customary two hour halt in this charming village, so Alpine in character and setting, eating a substantial breakfast, buying chickens, eggs and ghee.

Then on up the lovely valley westwards to the 12,000-foot pass which Hillary, Tenzing and I had crossed at great speed $2\frac{1}{2}$ months ago, double marching forward after visiting the rear party. As we approached the top a severe hail-cum-rain storm came on, and was at its height at the moment we breasted the crest—most unpleasant, particularly for the other two, whose only protection was an umbrella. I was much better off with my cape. Not far from the top, I caught a glimpse of a pair of birds, sparrow size, in the rhododendron forest,

the markings very similar to bearded tits. Were they those described to me by Mrs. Proud, which are apparently much prized and very rare ? Later, down the ridge towards our destination—Sete—I had an excellent sight of a flock of lovely canary-yellow finches, pale yellow breasts, rump, etc.—black poll and little patches on cheeks—in fact, just like canaries. We have stopped for the night in a house at the edge of the 3,000 ft. descent to the Likhu Khola ; it has cleared and is a beautiful evening. We feel we are about to leave the big mountains from this moment, for here the country changes character and becomes more open and gentle, as we leave Sola Khumbu.

June 9.

We slipped down the hill to the Likhu Khola this morning, meeting a Dāk runner (he proved to be the first only ; for a pair have met us here this evening) carrying mainly telegrams of congratulations. We sent him onwards with the letters and personal cables. By this evening I have 65 cables addressed to me, but intended for everyone ! Many couched in language which is both moving and genuine—indeed we have unleashed some very deep felt emotions in the hearts of our countrymen and others the world over.

Summerhayes, in his generous way, has sent along 4 half bottles of champagne to celebrate. The walk was very pleasant until early afternoon, much of it in hot sunshine. We took 4 hours to reach the terrace on which is the monastery of Chmangola ; so warm was it that our first, spontaneous act was to bathe and wash in the stream. We chose a pool which we had used last time, and I've felt better for the cleansing ever since !

We reached the pass above Chmangola at 3 p.m. coincident with the rain which came down in torrents as we descended towards the Bhote Khola—a real monsoon downpour. A beautiful, white scented lily was growing by the path and we stopped to admire it despite the behaviour of the weather. At the bottom the Sherpas and coolies kept us waiting for over an hour—I suspect it was a drinking session—and it was 6.30 p.m. before we entered Those.

We have found shelter in the first house of the village, and have been busy reading and sorting cables since dark. A sumptuous meal of chicken, rice and potatoes (as last night) washed down with cham pagne and coffee, has brought a long day to a very satisfying close.

June 10.

We parted with our 3 stout Namche coolies at Those this morning and had some delay while 2 local men were found. This is the rice planting season and most are reluctant to leave their fields. Eventually we got away soon after 8.00 a.m., making for Yarsa and as far beyond as possible. Contrary to normal routine, we had breakfast before starting.

Its been an uneventful march, hot and sultry but no rain for the first day since leaving Thyangboche. The Sherpas and new coolies lagged a good bit but in the long run we have passed our previous camping site

and stopped well down the slope towards the Bhote Khola, at 6.00 p.m. The Sherpas are using an empty building and we our tarpaulins rigged up as a shelter. Just as well as rain has now started (9.30 p.m.). Shortly before we got in, a Dāk runner came out from a house ; he had a huge mail, another 80–90 telegrams and the first batch of letters from home with reactions to the news of our success. People everywhere are ecstatic with pride, admiration and joy ; its very moving and nearly unbelievable. Nice too to see how many Indians are delighted. But I'm concerned to note that already political capital is being made of Tenzing's part, and have written to Hillary to warn him of this. There is even talk of renaming Everest as Mt. Tenzing—1,000 pities, this turn of events, and I fear more trouble of this nature.

Notes to Hillary and myself from Summerhayes to say we've both received knighthoods—difficult to take this in yet, but a great tribute to the Expedition.

June 11.

A hot and tiring day. We have made two stages, stopping at Deorali at about 6.30 p.m. This morning I sent on one of our young Sherpas with a forecast of our arrival, date/time at Banepa—E.T.A. evening 13 or early on 14 June. While having our breakfast at Kirantechap, yet another pair of Dāk runners came along—a good deal more fan letters, but the cable avalanche seems to have ended. In a note at his final stage, Morris expresses concern about the Press eagerness to see us ; he is actually going to come out again in our direction so as to get all the ' Times ' needs. I intend firmly to hold a Press conference as early as possible and straighten out incipient misconceptions regarding facts. In particular I'm worried about Tenzing. There are already stories of his having ' guided ' us which will grow enormously and fantastically if we do not ' scotch ' them now. I believe the mountain may even be renamed Mt. Tenzing. . . .

No special events of note. The terraces are growing Indian corn and young rice—the latter a beautiful emerald green.

June 12.

We are nearly at the end of our journey. This evening we have come in to Chyabas well after dark (8.40 p.m.) after a very long day. As darkness fell we decided we must go back for the Sherpas and coolies, guessing they had stopped at a house about a mile and a half back along the ridge. But we were wrong, for after some 10 minutes, we met them still struggling along, very tired, by torchlight. Getting our own torches out of our baggage we escorted them along, and reached the hamlet unexpectedly soon.

Earlier today it was very hot, and the first stage, as far as Risingo, was a trying one. But we all three had a most refreshing bathe before tackling the last hill to the monastery. Going on after breakfast (eaten at 1.30 p.m. !) we met yet another Dāk runner. Lots more fan mail. Tomorrow we should get in to Kathmandu, a little over 3 months after starting our journey to Everest (10 March).