

## ON LHOTSE AND MOUNT EVEREST

BY ALBERT EGGLER

[We wish to express our gratitude to Othmar Gurtner and H. A. Meyer for translating from the original German—EDITOR]

**I**N DECEMBER 1954 I had a letter from Ernst Reiss which began : ' Are you coming along on a Himalayan expedition ? ' It did not take me long to decide, so I wrote back : ' Of course.' Shortly afterwards, the Swiss Foundation for Alpine Research invited Jürg Marmet, Ernst Reiss and myself to a meeting, at which the Foundation, represented by Ernst Feuz, disclosed its willingness to organise and finance an expedition to Everest and Lhotse. They proposed Ernst Reiss as the technical leader of the climbing party, Marmet as the oxygen expert, and suggested that the overall leadership should be in my hands. The others had already been on expeditions and agreed on the spot. As the whole idea was new to me, and as I had never taken part in an enterprise of that kind before, I took a little while to think it over before agreeing. It was a commission after my own heart and I hoped that I would soon master the unfamiliar problems involved. A provisional list of more than twenty climbers was put forward at that first meeting, most of them men with Himalayan experience ; it was assumed that these would be interested and would accept. From the very first, the main emphasis in choosing the membership of the expedition lay on the provision of complete teams which had achieved the necessary technical standard and experience by long years of climbing in each other's company, and were therefore likely to contribute not only the necessary keenness but a strong sense of team-work and good companionship as well.

We got to work as soon as the meeting was over with the task of assembling the team. A number of those invited were unable to accept for business or other personal reasons. In the end, the following eleven men were chosen :

WOLFGANG DIEHL, 47 years old and an amazing all-round climber. He knew the whole literature of mountaineering almost by heart and had been able to gain his vast experience on difficult routes all over the Alps. He had been several times to Greenland as the climbing member of the Lauge-Koch expeditions, and was earmarked as my second-in-command.

ERNST REISS, 36, an aircraft mechanic, came from Davos. He had been one of the most enterprising Swiss climbers for many years. In the Alps he had a long list of difficult first ascents to his credit, and in November 1952 had reached a height of about 26,300 ft. above the

South Col on Everest, in the company of Raymond Lambert and Tenzing Norkay. He was the obvious choice as leader of the climbing party.

ADOLF REIST, 35, was an aircraft mechanic from Interlaken. An old friend of Reiss's, he had done a great many difficult climbs with him in the Alps and elsewhere. In spite of his few inches, he was extraordinarily fit and tough and he attributed his condition to his devotion in earlier years to competitive cycling. A very handy man, and well above the average as a photographer, he was to prove one of the most useful members of the expedition.

FRITZ LUCHSINGER, 35, a career officer in the Motorised Transport Corps, came from Thun. He had been an instructor at numerous mountain training courses and had done many difficult climbs in the Alps with Reiss and Reist. Besides being immensely strong, he is an exceptionally level-headed character. We put him in charge of the expedition's finances.

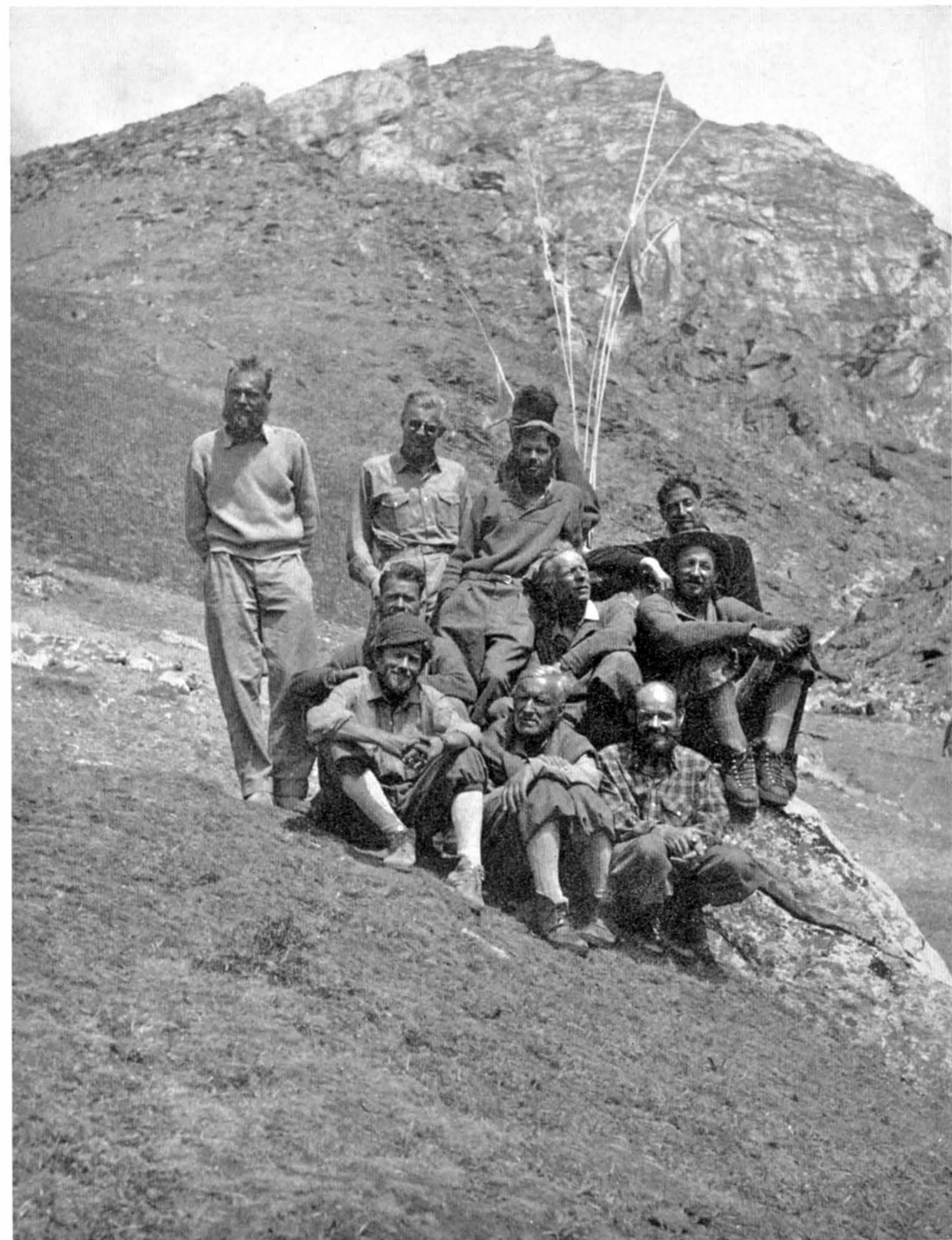
ERNST SCHMIED, 32, works in his father's leather-goods store in Bern. He is a thrustful and technically accomplished mountaineer, with a preference for stiff rock climbs, but equally safe and experienced on great ice ascents. He and his brother-in-law, von Gunten, were entrusted with the expedition's commissariat.

HANS RUDOLF VON GUNTEN, 27, was a chemist from Bern. He was an accomplished, keen and reliable climber, who had done many of the great Alpine climbs on rock and ice with Diehl and Schmied. He is quiet and well-balanced by nature.

JÜRIG MARMET, of Spiez, was 28, and a physicist in Zürich. He had been a diplomaed guide in the Bernese Oberland for some years and had done a considerable number of climbs, sometimes with friends, sometimes in his capacity as a guide. He had also been in Baffin Land and had worked on the oxygen apparatus for the 1952 Swiss Everest Expedition. As a result, he was our obvious choice as expert in charge of the oxygen.

HANS GRIMM, 44, was a Wädenswil dentist. His qualifications were a considerable and varied list of important climbs, and his experience as an instructor on innumerable military training courses. His knowledge of medicine and his experience in charge of an army medical unit qualified him to act as the expedition's doctor in case of emergency.

EDUARD LEUTHOLD, our doctor, was 28, and practises in Necker. The provision of a doctor for the expedition had proved one of our greatest difficulties, since several suitable parties whom we approached were unable to absent themselves from their duties. It was not until some of the team had already left for Nepal that we obtained the services of Leuthold, a friend of Marmet's. An enthusiastic ski-runner, he



THE EXPEDITION PERSONNEL.

FRONT ROW	LEFT TO RIGHT	LEUTHOLD, DIEHL, REIST
SECOND "	" " "	LUCHSINGER, EGGLER, GRIMM
THIRD "	" " "	VON GUNTEN, REISS
FOURTH "	" " "	SCHMIED, MARMET, MÜLLER (HALF HIDDEN).

had also occasionally climbed high peaks in summer. His swift powers of decision were to be tested several times during the course of the expedition.

FRITZ MÜLLER, 30, was a geologist and glaciologist from Zürich, resident in Montreal. He had taken part in expeditions to Greenland and Baffin Island and was picked as the expedition's scientist. In the course of his work he made observations on the weather, the movement of glaciers, the permanent zone of glaciation, and so forth.

I am 43, was born in Brienz, and practise as a lawyer at Spiegel, near Bern. I had climbed a good deal in the Swiss Alps and in neighbouring ranges, mostly in the company of my wife. My experience as an instructor and commandant of many mountain training courses stood me in good stead as leader of the expedition.

Although all the picked climbers were fully equal to their task, we still thought it advisable to do a number of climbs in each other's company and so strengthen our bonds of companionship; at the same time we took every opportunity of discussing the many problems which arose. Thanks to the co-operation of the War Department, the members of the expedition were also enabled to join two mountain courses, which gave them the chance of testing some of the equipment, and also improved their technical knowledge.

From the start of our preparations we divided up into several groups, allocated to special work on planning, travel arrangements, commissariat, equipment, and various other matters; and this paid good dividends later. The experiences of earlier expeditions were of the greatest value throughout. It was with the greatest interest that we studied the reports of the various pre-war British expeditions, led respectively by C. K. Howard-Bury, C. G. Bruce, E. F. Norton, Hugh Ruttledge, and H. W. Tilman, all of which had attempted Everest by way of Tibet. Naturally, the accounts of the post-war Everest expeditions which had approached Everest from the south side were of special interest. These were the reconnaissances by H. W. Tilman in 1950 and Eric Shipton in 1951, when he found a route up the Khumbu ice-fall, as well as the two Swiss expeditions of 1952, under Dr. Ed. Wyss-Dunant and Dr. G. Chevalley, both of which reached the South Col between Everest and Lhotse, the former pushing on up Everest's South ridge, on which Lambert and Tenzing reached a height of over 28,000 ft. But our real textbook, which we even took with us on the expedition, was Sir John Hunt's account of his successful expedition in 1953, when Hillary and Tenzing finally reached the summit of Everest. A most useful contact was that with Jean Franco and his friends, who climbed Makalu in 1955, and with Dr. Herbert Tichy, who succeeded in leading his lightweight expedition to the top of Cho Oyu in 1954. I need hardly say that I am greatly indebted to my friends Dr. Wyss-Dunant

and Raymond Lambert for their unstinting provision of invaluable information and advice.

#### THE JOURNEY OUT AND THE APPROACH

The financing of the expedition was at last assured in the late autumn of 1955. We were then in a position to purchase our equipment and provisions, which were packed for shipment by the 'Neue Warenhaus A.G.' in Zürich. On January 30, 1956, our first party of six men, under Wolfgang Diehl, was able to leave Bern and sail via Genoa to Bombay, where they saw the whole mass of material through the customs and then took it by rail to Jainagar, the Indian frontier station to the south of Everest.

I flew out with Fritz Müller from Zurich on February 20. We made short halts at Cairo, Bombay and Delhi, before flying on to Katmandu, where we got in touch with the Nepalese Government and obtained the necessary permit to climb Lhotse and Everest; it is an open secret that at the outset Nepal had only been willing to give us permission to climb one or the other. Here we also met our liaison officer, a young student called Prachand Man Singh Pradhan, who was later to give an excellent account of himself. On March 3, Müller, Pradhan and I met our advance party in Jainagar, where our sirdar, Pasang Dawa Lama, had already put in an appearance with twenty-two Sherpas from Darjeeling. On the evening of that day we loaded our stuff on twenty-two ox-carts and set off on our three-day journey northwards through the Terai. This march, through a plain which was at times as bare as the Steppes, at others luxuriant in tropical growth, past hamlets of clay huts and through rice-fields, was a novel experience for all of us, and in spite of the intense heat we enjoyed it hugely. At the Nepalese market town of Chisapani, where we paid off the ox-drivers, our doctor, Eduard Leuthold, caught up with us, and here too we met the 350 porters whom the sirdar had summoned from Sola Khumbu. The majority were Sherpas, with their women and children, under the command of Tensinbha.

Our long column was ready to start off on March 8. Passing in turn the market of Amtai, the Sun Kosi, the regional capital of Okhaldhunga, the monastery of Taksindhu, and the Dudh Kosi river, we reached the well-known Sherpa village of Namche Bazar on the 21st, to be most cordially welcomed by its inhabitants. The march had been extraordinarily varied and the weather lovely throughout. It had led us first through broad, shallow valleys and the dry beds of rivers; from the Sun Kosi the way led steeply upwards onto the protracted ridge on which Okhaldunga stands, along whose steep flanks, into which innumerable narrow terraces have been carved, lies the only cultivable land. From Tari we enjoyed our first comprehensive view of the eastern ranges of the Himalaya, from Everest through Lhotse to Makalu.

Snow fell on the night of our arrival at Namche, so we had to pay off our barefooted porters and transport our gear from there on by a shuttle service. No sooner had we arrived at the superbly situated monastery of Thyangboche than Fritz Luchsinger went down with an acute attack of appendicitis ; for more than four days he lay at death's door—a terrible time for all of us. But the kindly Lamas, particularly Mawang Gyurmi, placed their buildings and rooms at our disposal and offered up prayers to the Lord Buddha for the recovery of our poor friend.

Luchsinger's illness resulted in a considerable curtailment of our programme for training and acclimatisation. In the first instance we were compelled to stay near the monastery instead of being able to site our camp on the alps of Pheriche, Phalong or Karpo. Secondly, our spells of attendance on our sick friend, and the necessity to be in continual readiness should an operation become imperative, prevented our engaging on the important business of high mountain training, except in reliefs and in small parties at a time. All the same, we managed to reach an altitude of 17,000 ft. or more on several occasions before moving into our base camp. We climbed two peaks in the Taweche massif, one summit close to Kangtega, and two to the east of the Pheriche pastures, besides Island Peak in the Imja Basin, which was ascended by von Gunten. Later on, from the base camp, a successful first ascent was made of one of the two prominent 19,500-ft. Trikhang rock-spires to the west of Nuptse.

Luchsinger recovered quickly, thanks to the tireless and skilful care of Leuthold and his devoted assistants, and by April 3 he was well enough to get up. That was our time signal for the advance to base camp. Dawa Tenzing, who had joined us in Namche, had for some time been in charge of our supply dump at Pheriche. We now took him with us, reaching the Khumbu Glacier according to plan on the 6th and provisionally pitching our tents on the historic site occupied by earlier expeditions ; but we did not like it. It was small, right in the middle of the séracs, and showing only a very thin layer of moraine. Sir John Hunt had already drawn attention to its shortcomings. So we decided to look for a better site.

On April 7, Dawa Tenzing, Thundu the cook, Reist and I set out in search of it. Before leaving home, we had already had an eye on the foot of Khumbutse. As it turned out, it was there that we found an ideal site on the lateral moraine of the glacier, with big boulders which could be used to build huts, and plenty of room in which to fit out our little village tidily, with every attention to hygienic considerations. It also had the advantage of an uninterrupted view of the whole icefall, which the old site lacked. So we decided to move our tents over to it at once. And on the same day, Reiss and Schmied broke a trail up the

icefall to about 19,000 ft., that is to the hollow where it was proposed to site Camp I.

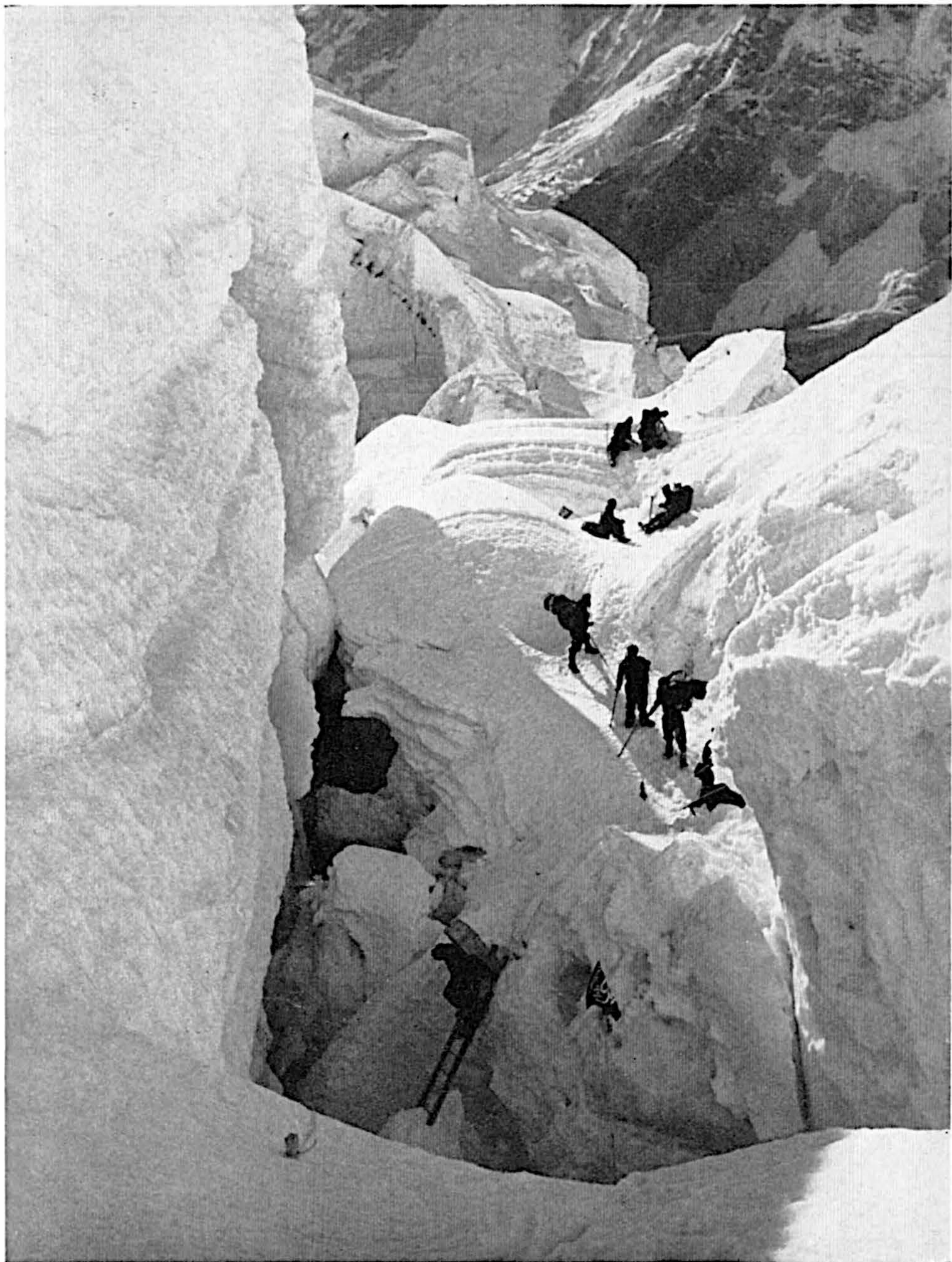
#### THE ICEFALL

As soon as we had reached our new base camp, Thundu, the first cook, began with the construction of the kitchen. In a few hours he levelled a spot of about 10 by 40 ft. and built a stone wall around it. At the back he arranged with some flags an ingenious cooking-stove. The whole was covered with a tarpaulin (canvas). Fritz Müller began with the installation of his meteorological observatory: two tents, several thermometers, a barograph and an anemometer. Dawa Tenzing built a house for us sahibs in which we could all sit round a table and in which a fireplace would warm us during the cold evenings. The Sherpas dressed the different tents and built a kitchen for their own use. A little later, the doctor installed his consulting-room and pharmacy and gave orders for the hygienic installations. During this time porters brought up the rest of our equipment from Pheriche, and several hundred loads of wood were deposited in good order at prepared, planned places. These works were watched by us in turn; so we got a very comfortable small village in which we could recuperate when we came down from the mountain.

After a short time we liked this spot very much. The inaccessible faces of Pumori, Lingtrentse and Khumbutse surmounted our camp in the west and in the north by 6,000 ft. and they sent down their thunderbolt-like avalanches of ice, snow and rocks without interruption. Towards the east our view was limited by the Khumbu La,<sup>1</sup> the western shoulder of Everest and Nuptse, that contributed their own part to the concert of the avalanches. The Khumbu icefall itself seemed quite calm, and only later when we climbed it did we become aware of its crashing movements. Towards the south, the clouds generally covered Taweche that closed the large and long Khumbu valley.

Even from the first moment of our staying at the base camp, a team of sahibs went up towards the mountain every day. We did it by turns. Reiss and Schmied had started on April 7; they could rest and watch the work in the base camp the following day, when Reist and I went up the icefall with our Sherpas to improve the way the first ones had opened. The next day we again changed our duties. We tried to follow this principle up to the tops. When von Gunten came to the base camp from the Imja Glacier, when Luchsinger with Leuthold could join us again and Grimm and Marmet brought the oxygen equipment, they all joined this rotation. Thus, in the six to seven weeks that the preparation of the way up and the establishing of the camps took us,

<sup>1</sup> Generally known to British mountaineers as the Lho La, see *A. J.* 60. 132.—  
EDITOR.



ICEFALL BETWEEN CAMPS I AND II.

everybody got the chance of fulfilling every function : finding the next part of our way, or improving it, or establishing a camp, or watching the transports, or even resting in one of the camps. Of course, the higher our tents were established, the more people were engaged, but everybody could find time to go down to the base camp, except Luchsinger, who, once he had reached Camp I at 19,300 ft., did not want to come down. He really had recovered from his appendicitis. Progressing in this manner, we got three or four teams that were about equal ; each of them contributed a lot to the final success, each of them got well acclimatized, and each of them earned the right to take part in the final assault on the tops of Lhotse or Everest.

The icefall itself was less steep than expected, but it offered us more difficulties in its upper part than we wanted. When we had reached its highest crevasses, it took us three full days to find an exit. We tried in the middle, following the line of Norman Dyhrenfurth's expedition last year, but the crevasses here were too large and deep now, so we tried to the right. It was not possible to advance there through a corridor formed by misshapen ice cubes and covered by groundless soft snow into which we sank to the shoulders and suffered much in the heat of a pitiless sun. Then we tried to the left, near Everest. We did not like to pass there ; high up, the hanging glaciers and séracs were threatening us constantly. However, it was the only possibility to reach the cwm, and here Schmied finally found a way. He had to use several metal ladders to climb the upper lip of a deep crevasse and to descend into another one. The exit from this crevasse was secured by a 200-ft. rope fixed in the snow by means of ashen sticks that he drove in with his *marteau-piolet*. In the next days we could install Camp II at about 20,300 ft. after having put a 15-ft. ladder over a crevasse near the place where Shipton had to give up and where the first Swiss Expedition, 1952, had installed a *Tyrolienne*. After having found a way up through the icefall, the work was not finished. Several crevasses became larger and forced us to build bridges. Finally we counted twelve of them, the last one situated between Camp II and Camp III. In our equipment we had 50 lb. of explosives which we intended to use for making icehole-bivouacs in the Lhotse face. Now we used half of it with good results for destroying the most dangerous séracs in the icefall. In the steeper parts we fixed ropes. Thus, we secured a very comfortable route. But we had to work on it nearly every day, as the icefall was in constant movement. Especially the part just below Camp I forced us to remove the route several times.

Even before everything was ready in the icefall, the Sherpas began to carry up their loads. We had engaged some additional Sherpas from Khumjung and other villages in Sola Khumbu. Pasang Dawa Lama was seriously ill and Dawa Tenzing had to replace him as sirdar. We

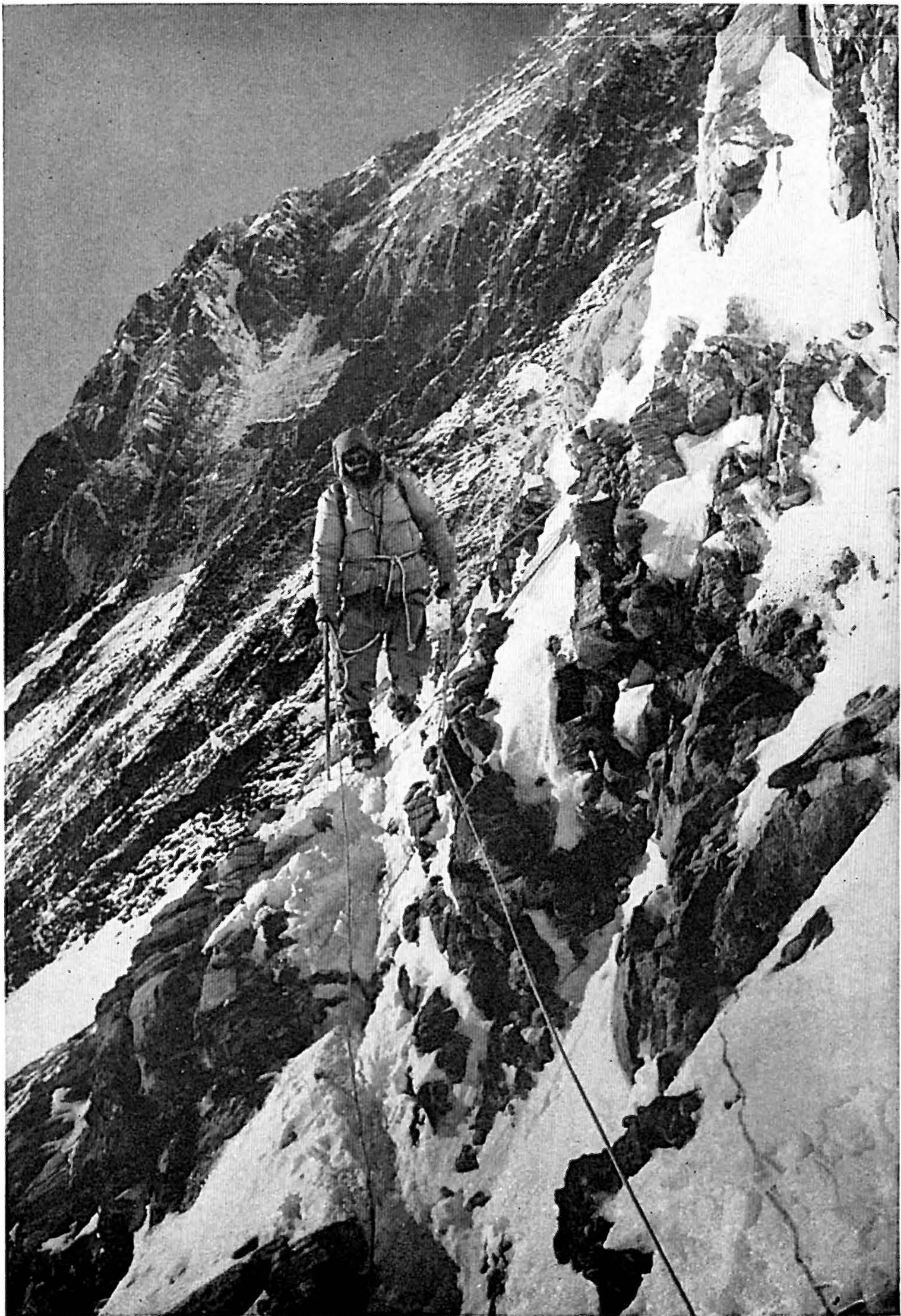
liked the new sirdar very much for his abilities as organiser and climber. We highly esteemed his personality and his experience too. He had a well-founded authority over the Sherpas: Urkien, Annullu, Da Norbu, Pasang Phutar II, Pa Norbu and others. They all worked very hard, and our stocks of equipment and foodstuff in the higher camps grew in a very satisfactory manner.

#### THE LHOTSE FACE

As expected, the cwm did not offer any difficulties. In the lower part, the route went in zigzags through the zone of crevasses, followed the base of Nuptse, and then crossed towards north-east to the foot of Everest, where our Camp III—the advanced base camp—was established some feet higher than the British Camp IV. From here we went up through the wide terraces to the foot of the Lhotse face. Camp IV was installed just on the first ice barrier, a little higher than the well-known Camp V of the previous expeditions.

As soon as we had dressed this camp, we went on without delay to open the way through the very steep glacier of the Lhotse face. Reiss, Luchsinger and myself were the first to climb here on Wednesday, May 2. We cut a lot of steps and fixed ropes along almost our whole way. The altitude we reached this first time was about 23,600 ft. The next day, Reist and von Gunten continued. Then Schmied, Reiss, Luchsinger and Marmet went higher up, and the latter established our Camp V at 24,600 ft. between the British Camp VII and the highest camp of Dyhrenfurth. From here, our route traversed the Lhotse-couloir and the yellow rocks towards the 'Eperon des Genevois' without going much higher. All this way was secured by fixed ropes. Then, it followed the line of the fall, parallel to the foresaid ridge up to the rocks of Lhotse.

As soon as Schmied and Luchsinger had installed a tent here at the altitude of about 25,900 ft., the weather, which had been marvellous for the last three weeks, turned. A heavy snowfall forced us on May 10 to leave the Lhotse face. This brought the hard-working teams well-merited rest in Camp III or in base camp. By this time, Pasang Dawa Lama, who had been in the base camp, suffered from a liver abscess that made his evacuation necessary. The doctor informed me by wireless, and I went down with about eight Sherpas, all relatives of Pasang, who wanted them to carry him to Namche Bazar. This hindered our transports at the mountain, but I could not refuse it, the way down the moraine to Lobuje being very bad and sometimes difficult. Pasang's fever diminished the very day he was brought away from the base camp and he recovered, so that he could join us three weeks later on our way back to Katmandu. We were very sorry for his bad luck, especially as he wanted to go up to the tops of Everest and Lhotse; in



TRAVERSE ACROSS YELLOW BAND (24,600 FT.).

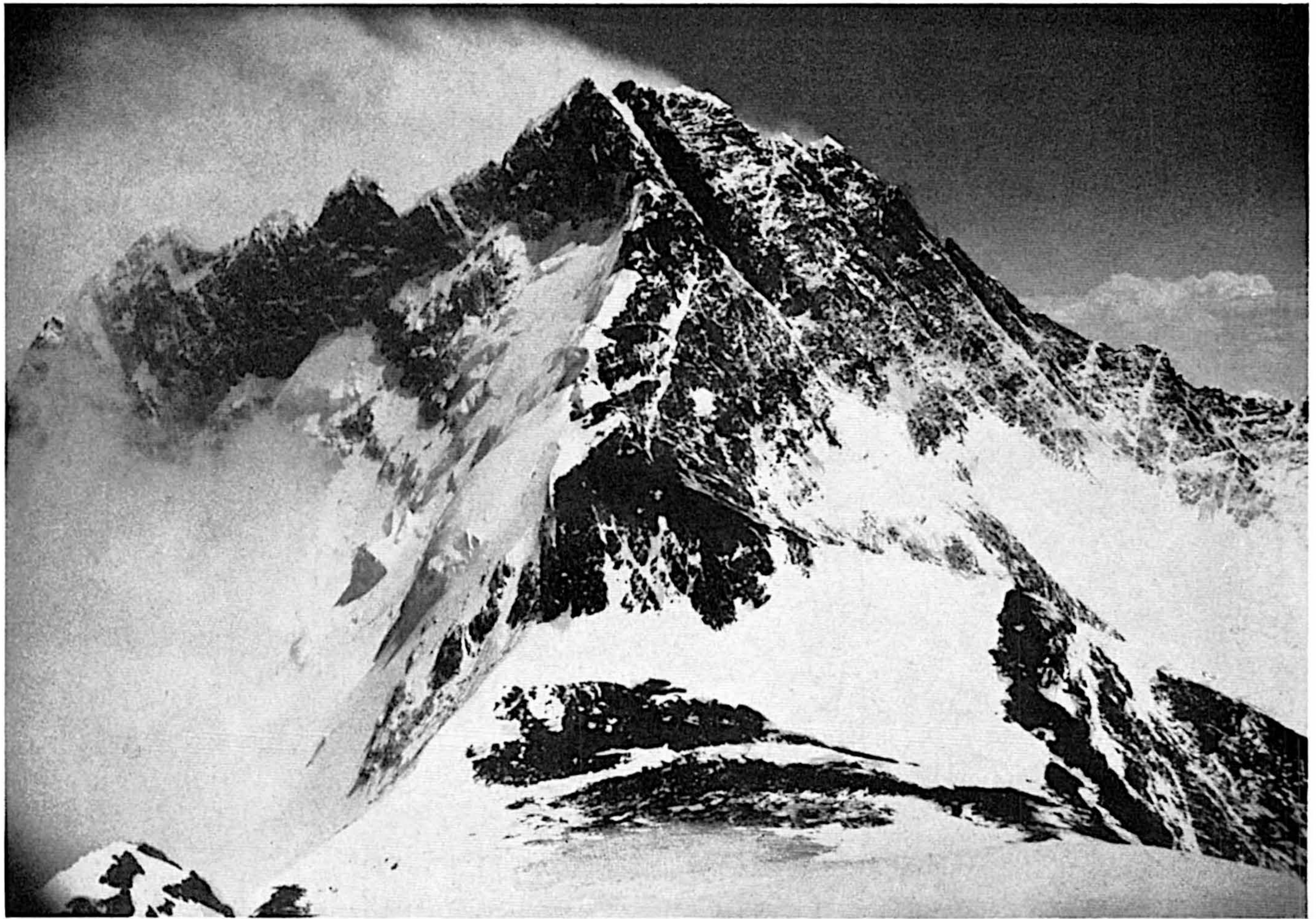
case of success he had decided to take a young girl of Sola Khumbu as wife, the second one just being pregnant and his house in Darjeeling being large enough for three wives, as he used to say.

#### THE FINAL ASSAULT

With the remaining Sherpas, we could work, in spite of the bad weather, between the base camp and Camp IV and bring up the chief part of our oxygen equipment. With time, the weather became a little better, and according to the special broadcast of the All India Radio for our expedition, the temporary advance of the monsoon was stopped for a while. Our doubts diminished and we regained the confidence that had reigned in our team before the snowfall had stopped our progress and before mighty avalanches had fallen from Everest and Nuptse into the icefall and the cwm. However, as the clearing-up could be of a few days only, we revised our plans for the final assault. In principle there was nothing to change, we would go on in several waves as planned, but we probably could reduce our equipment and stocks in the highest camps to a minimum. Thus, we should be able to perform the assaults in a very short time. This we would risk, and we could risk it, as the assault teams should climb up the Lhotse face and the top with an interval of one day. So they would be able to help each other if necessary.

At 8 A.M. on May 14, Reiss, who was in Camp III, told me by wireless that they would come down to base camp, the weather being bad. I agreed. At 9 o'clock they confirmed their intention. But at 10 o'clock they had changed their opinion, because the weather cleared up in the cwm. 'Well, go on. Good luck! We follow,' was my answer. Reist and von Gunten prepared their sacks, and at 11 A.M. they started from base camp and reached Camp III in the late afternoon. I did the same on the following day with Dawa Tenzing and Pasang Phutar II, who had come back from Namche Bazar.

From Camp III, Reist and his friends went up into the Lhotse face. They installed a windlass with a thin iron rope of 2,000 ft. length, with which we hoped to bring the loads from the yellow rocks up to Camp VI. They also stocked food, camping gas and oxygen cylinders in Camps V and VI. The night from May 17 to 18, Reiss and Luchsinger slept in Camp VI. Reist and von Gunten were in Camp V, Schmied and myself in Camp IV, and the others in Camp III. The next morning was very cold and windy. Nevertheless, Reiss and Luchsinger started at 9 A.M., but were stopped soon by some ice in the oxygen tubes. After an hour's work in steep rocks, the damage was repaired and they could continue their climb towards the gorge that comes straight down about 1,500 ft. from the top of Lhotse in its western face. In this gorge they climbed up. At the middle it became



LHOTSE SEEN FROM CA. 27,000 FT. ON EVEREST, ACROSS SOUTH COL, SHOWING WEST FACE AND GULLY.

very narrow and the snow in it was only 1 ft. broad. The difficulties were increasing. To ensure a safe descent two iron nails (*Felshaken*) were struck into the rocks. Then the gorge got wider, but now the snow was irregular, and in spite of the oxygen supply of 4 litres per minute the climbers felt tired. Nevertheless, they went on. A green rocky step and the following snowtop were at about 60 degrees and needed great care. At a quarter to three P.M. the top was reached. It was so pointed that the climbers could not put their feet on it; they cut large steps in the hard snow just 3 ft. below the highest point. So they could look over the top and take some pictures.

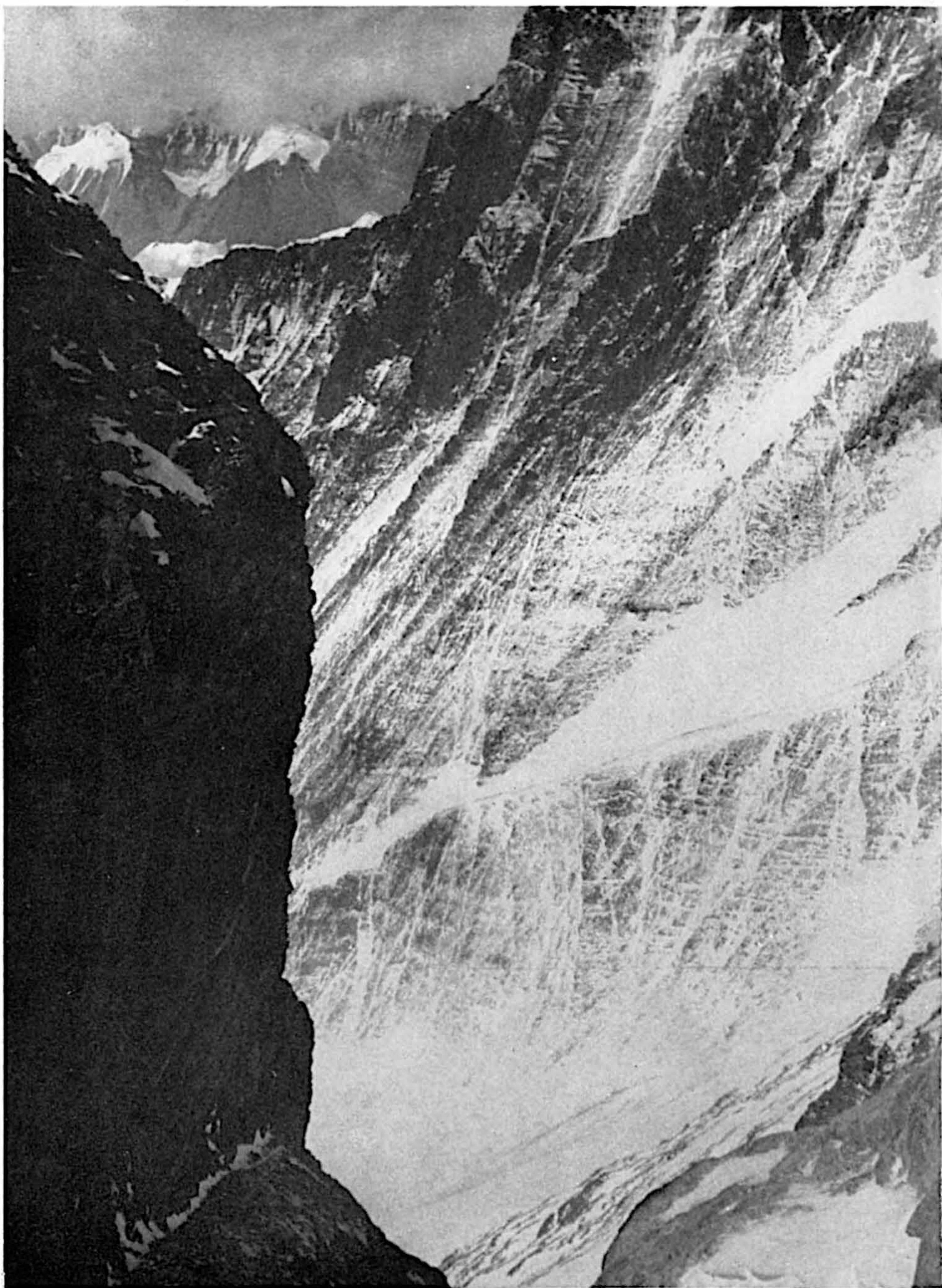
The sahibs and the Sherpas in Camp III saw Reiss and Luchsinger on Lhotse and informed me by wireless as soon as I had reached Camp V. We were very happy and this success gave us much encouragement.

The descent took about three hours and our friends reached the tent in the late evening. Here they passed a bad night. The wind had covered the tent with snow and only when they had dug it out could they enter it. But the wind went on pressing new snow on the tent. Under great difficulties one of the men would go out and clear away this snow, which threatened to squeeze them to death. After long hours the bad night was over, and they could step down to Camp V, where we served them breakfast.

The next day, Schmied went with two Sherpas up to Camp VI. With Marmet and eight Sherpas, I followed a day later. Thin clouds covered Lhotse and Everest, but as the sun could pass through sometimes, the ascent was really hot. When we reached Schmied, who was working at the windlass, he told me that the Camp VI here was not well situated. The windblown snow always covered the tent and we could scarcely find other places to put up more tents. Reiss and Luchsinger had had the same experience. So we were forced to move to the South Col. As André Roch had warned us against the heavy wind there, we would have liked to stay south of the 'Epaule des Genevois,' but this proved to be impossible.

We dressed our tents some 100 ft. westwards from the previous camps of the Swiss and British expeditions. We found a lot of things there. The tents, of course, were destroyed, but coffee, tea, sugar, oxtail soup, cheese, biscuits had not suffered since 1953 and enriched our meals. We also used a Primus stove and some kerosene left by the British expedition. Marmet examined the British oxygen cylinders. Some of them were not empty and he prepared these to be used with our apparatus.

The next morning we had some sunshine. Schmied and Marmet prepared their rucksacks and the loads for the Sherpas. These were sent to the windlass for food and oxygen. Two hours later they were



VIEW FROM SUMMIT OF LHOTSE DOWN GULLY TOWARDS THE ÉPERON DE GENEVOIS.

[To face p. 248.]

back. After lunch, when a light snowfall began, the team started with Da Norbu, Pa Norbu, Pasang Phutar II and Annullu, to whom I had promised a good prime. After a few minutes they disappeared in the clouds. Three hours later the team had reached the South ridge of Everest and could install a small tent at 27,500 ft., just between Lambert's and Hillary's sites on the left hand of the ridge. The Sherpas came down again to the South Col.

In the meantime, Grimm, with three Sherpas from Camp V and Reist and von Gunten from Camp IV, had reached the South Col. We all went back to the windlass for a tent, for food and oxygen cylinders. On the return, we could not use the oxygen as the lockings of the cylinders were frozen. It was a very hard walk up to the top of the 'Eperon des Genevois' with our heavy loads, especially as a storm had arisen and night had fallen. In our tent, Da Norbu had prepared dinner, and when we finally came in, he helped us to take off our crampons and boots and warmed our fingers and feet. After these efforts, we had a fairly good night, except Grimm, who dislocated his shoulder when preparing his sleeping-bag.

Schmied and Marmet had a very stormy night. Schmied was lying on the mountain side of the tent. Here, the snow filled the space between the tent and the mountain, and the tent yielded to the weight so that after a few hours Schmied was unable to move; he was packed up like a mummy. Marmet had to get up and dig off the snow. When he opened the tent, snow blew in and covered everything. Marmet had to work a full hour before Schmied could sit up. At 4 o'clock, the dawn came and a clear day announced itself. Our friends made ready to start. They did not cook, as the cooking utensils and the food were buried under the snow; they swallowed only two stimulating tablets. It was 8.30 A.M. before the team were ready to begin climbing. From the South Col we watched them. Several times they disappeared in the clouds of snow, and then we asked ourselves anxiously if in the next clearing they would reappear above or below the spot we had seen them last. But in spite of the heavy wind they continued their way on the snow ridge, and very steep climbing in the rocks brought them at 12 noon to the top of the South summit. Here they changed the oxygen cylinders and deposited the used ones for the way down. As 1,000 litres of oxygen would be sufficient to reach the summit and to descend again, each man took only one cylinder with him. The wind was blowing less and they deposited their eiderdown clothes as well. They took two more stimulating tablets before they went on. The cornices required much caution and some blocks of limestone offered easy climbing. The step that had given much work to Hillary and Tenzing was surmounted in a few minutes, which was probably due to better conditions than in 1953.

Then some steep snow caps led them to the top of Mount Everest, which was reached at 2 P.M. As they described it, there was a snow plateau on which a teacher might have gathered a whole class around him, and which was limited on the east by a mighty cornice, and on the west, some feet lower, by rocks. The view and the visibility were excellent. They could identify the Brahmaputra, Dhaulagiri, Cho Oyu, Gaurisankar, Makalu and Kangchenjunga. Towards the north the vegetationless brown hills of Tibet seemed to stretch out endlessly.

Suddenly, monsoon clouds progressing from the south in a threatening manner wrapped our team in dense fog. This was the signal to leave the summit, where they had spent nearly an hour. They stepped down carefully, securing each rope-length. At Camp VII they met Reist, von Gunten and Da Norbu; with the last-named they reached the South Col in the evening. I was very proud of their success and happy to have them back safe and in good condition. They had not suffered any frostbites and after a substantial dinner they fell into a deep sleep.

Reist and von Gunten that afternoon had found the tent of Camp VII in very bad condition. It showed three clefts through which snow had entered and filled nearly the whole tent. Schmied and Marmet had, unfortunately, selected the only old tent we had with us (which had been used during the training previous to the expedition) rather than the new and better Jamet tents. The worn cloth of this tent had not resisted the storm and snow pressure. So the second team had to dig the snow out before they could enter. After three hours' effort, they succeeded in arranging a sleeping-room. But this was not wind-proof and the light nylon bivouac sack they had hoped to use had been swept off by the wind. The zip fastener of von Gunten's sleeping-bag did not work. Considering all these circumstances, they did not expect a good night. Nevertheless, they melted a lot of snow and prepared litres and litres of Ovaltine, gruel and lemonade. At midnight they tried to sleep. Unfortunately, every blast of wind brought cold snowpowder to their faces and awoke them. At 4 A.M., when their sleeping-oxygen cylinder was empty, they prepared two litres of Ovaltine with the camping gas stove. They could drink it, but were not able to eat anything. At 6.45 A.M. they were ready to start. In the rucksacks they had some food, equipment and two cylinders of oxygen, altogether 40 lb. Before they reached the rocks of the South peak, they deposited one oxygen cylinder each. Now they could increase their speed and they reached the top at 11 o'clock. It was very cold, no wind was blowing and they enjoyed a clear view. They did not use any oxygen supply for one hour, and after having taken a lot of pictures, they felt very hungry. They ate some dried fruit. At 1 P.M. they left the summit to reach the South Col two hours later.



VIEW FROM SUMMIT OF EVEREST SHOWING KANGSHUNG GLACIER 12,000 FT. BELOW.

In the meantime, Schmied, Marmet, Da Norbu, Pasang Phutar and I had prepared our sacks as well as Grimm's. We all left the camp as soon as we saw Reist and von Gunten coming down safely. Grimm could not carry anything due to his dislocated shoulder and left his rucksack, containing—among other things—200 Swiss francs—at the South Col. He hoped that one of the Sherpas who were expected for this afternoon would take his sack down. By some misunderstanding, nobody took the sack down and it still lies on South Col. The next expedition will surely find it.

On our way down from the Eperon des Genevois we became aware of ten men climbing up the Lhotse face; their heads had been visible, for a moment, near the mountain station of our windlass. A few minutes later, we met Luchsinger, Reiss, Müller and Leuthold, who brought six Sherpas with supplies of food, camping gas and oxygen. They had misunderstood my wireless message of the previous day and had been fearing for us. So, making a big effort, they had brought us plenty of supplies. This powerful and well-equipped team near the South Col seemed to give us the possibility of a new assault. However, as the weather forecasts were bad, nobody was eager to take the risk. I am sure that if I had given only a little push, a new team could have been formed for a further climb to Lhotse or Everest, but in view of the previous success we decided not to try a new attempt. Luchsinger's team wanted only to pass a night at the South Col. The men went on to Camp VI, where they met Reist and von Gunten, who had just arrived.

The following day, everybody went down to the lower camps. With Pasang Phutar, I moved from Camp V, where I left Grimm waiting for the doctor, down to the base camp, which we reached at 10 P.M. The other sahibs and Sherpas came down during the following days. I was very glad when on May 30 everybody had left the cwm and the icefall. The latter had opened wide its crevasses, and two of our bridges had fallen down into deep and dark clefts. In its upper part our route had changed completely as avalanches had covered it over a length of 600 ft.

The next day, we began to evacuate the base camp. In Lobuje we met an American girl, Miss Courtney, who was on a trip from Katmandu to Darjeeling and had made the excursion from Namche Bazar to bring us a bottle of Benedictine. We spent a whole day there and had two pleasant evenings watching Sherpa dances. Then we continued our way. After visits to the monastery of Thyangboche, to the house of Dawa Tenzing, who offered us a fine lunch, and to other Sherpas in Khumjung, we left the region of Mount Everest, which had given us so much and which we shall like for ever. We left up there, alone with four Sherpas, the geographer Fritz Müller, who

will continue his scientific research work till November. Our friend Mawang Gyurmi Lama, who had accompanied us as well to Namche Bazar, stayed there too.

The way to Katmandu was done without great difficulties. The monsoon brought a lot of rain. Clouds hindered us from enjoying the beauty of the landscape. On June 20, our first group reached Katmandu, where we were received by Boris Lissanovitch in his Hotel Royal.

We attribute the blessing of our expedition's success to Providence. During the important days everything rolled on in a quite satisfactory manner. The assault teams were in excellent physical condition and they burned with impatience to reach our goal. The Sherpas were very capable and did their best to help us. We had sufficient equipment ready in the highest camps, and the weather, even if it did not show its best side, was quite fair.

In the name of our team, I thank everybody who contributed to our performance, and I thank especially all the men who years ago tried to find a way up to the top of the world.