

THE  
**Yorkshire Ramblers' Club Journal**

VOL. VIII

1958

No. 29

INTRODUCTION

by H. L. Stembridge

IN YEARS to come people will look back upon the nineteen fifties as the Golden Age of Himalayan Mountaineering, the highest peaks in the world were being climbed one after the other by mountaineers of many nations, Britain foremost among them. There is small wonder that the keen climbers in the Club were eager to share the endeavour and the glory, but by 1955 it was obvious that our candidates for inclusion in the big national Expeditions such as Everest and Kanchenjunga were being rightly passed over in favour of men who had shown that they could go well at over 20,000 feet. At the Annual Dinner on 19th November, 1955, I suggested that the only way Y.R.C. men could get high level experience was for us to organise our own Himalayan Expedition.

Charles Evans, fresh from Kanchenjunga, was the principal guest and, as I sat down, he turned and asked Crosby Fox if he wanted to go to the Himalayas. "Of course," said Crosby, "Then why don't you go—?" rejoined Charles in that quiet, forthright way of his.

It needed no more than this spark to set the train of powder alight, and Fox wrote to me the very next day, full of enthusiasm suggesting that we should start at once to plan for a four man expedition to attempt some technically difficult peak, about 23,000 feet, in the Spring of 1957. The Committee responded with equal enthusiasm, Fox was asked to lead the Expedition, he consented, and the hunt was up. Although we did not realize it at the time this was to be the first Himalayan Expedition sponsored by a single club.

Three problems faced us at once (1) Team (2) Objective (3) Finance.

We had plenty of capable men in the Club, but had we sufficient who could get away for four or five months and afford



THE ILL-FATED PARTY ON ROUTE FOR CAMP IV Photo A. Tallon

not only £200 towards the cost, but the loss of earnings entailed?

It didn't take long to find out that we had, indeed the difficulty was not in finding a party, but in selecting one from the first rate men available. The final team selected were:—Crosby Fox, leader, George Spenceley, deputy leader, Wilfred Anderson, expedition secretary, Dan Jones, medical officer, Arthur Tallon and R. B. Wharldall. It was a sad blow when a few weeks before the Expedition was due to leave, Wharldall, who had done a great deal of work towards the Expedition, found himself unable to join the party. Fortunately Maurice Wilson was able to make up the team.

The objective was discussed with Charles Evans, who after a good deal of thought, put forward three suggestions with pros and cons for each. The Jugal Himal was finally decided upon mainly because it was the last area in Nepal where most of the peaks were unclimbed and about which very little was known. The report of the Ladies' Scottish Himalayan Expedition, the only party to visit the area, told of unlimited virgin peaks up to 23,000 feet. But these peaks were indeed formidable and from photographs it appeared that only one of them possessed a reasonable route, all else seemed utterly unclimbable. As an added challenge however this was the highest mountain of the group, a peak of 23,240 feet situated on the Tibetan Nepalese frontier. Although its height had been established and its position fixed by the Indian Survey this mountain had no name. But the Sherpas of the Ladies' Scottish Himalayan Expedition had christened it the Great White Peak and as such it was always referred to.

If any of us thought that Newspapers or Publishers would fall over each other in offering large sums of money for the exclusive news rights of the Expedition we were quickly disillusioned. Expeditions were legion and no longer front page news. Apart from £100 from one National Paper, and many offers to pay for articles when seen and approved, we were thrown upon our own resources for the raising of the substantial funds required.

A grant was made from Club Funds, members of the Club gave magnificently as individuals, and the Mount Everest Foundation not only gave us a very generous grant but backed up our application to enter Nepal. An appeal to North Country firms and friends of the Club brought in £441, and a good deal

of food and equipment was either given or supplied at "part cost."

Especially welcome was the unstinted help which was offered to us by members of many other Himalayan Expeditions and the staff at the British Embassy in Katmandu. One felt part of a great brotherhood, and one realised, as never before, that once a project is started that fires the imagination people are not only willing, but eager to help.

But it was not all plain sailing. At times things seemed to be at a standstill, time slipped by, and everybody felt frustrated. We bought too much of this, or were short of that, the tents were wrong and had to be sent back, and there were arguments about the methods of packing.

The closure of the Suez Canal in September, 1956, made necessary a rearrangement of plans and Air Travel added considerably to the cost, while entry into Nepal was complicated by new government regulations which included a substantial entrance fee for climbing parties, an added financial burden that we could ill afford.

To keep expenses down all the packing cases were made by members of the Expedition as well as packed and catalogued by them. The greatest assistance was given by Frank Inman, Tallon's step-brother, who allowed both his house and workshops to be used for this purpose. But in spite of this finance was a constant headache as it was clear that we had underestimated the cost.

Permission to enter Nepal came through at last, and in January, 1957, 3½ tons of gear was shipped by way of the Cape. Early on the morning of 17th March, the team left London Airport fit and eager for the fray.

In the light of the final tragedy many of us must have asked ourselves, as I have done, "Were we right in encouraging them to go?" There is no doubt in my mind. The answer is "Yes."

In mountaineering, perhaps more than in any other phase of human endeavour, the line dividing triumph from disaster is a very fine one. How near to success they were we know from Crosby Fox's last report, yet when the avalanche killed their friends and shattered their hopes, the survivors rose to the emergency and in spite of subsequent misfortune did what had to be done with courage and determination.

As Crosby's father wrote afterwards—"Mountaineering is like the time I spent in sailing ships, striving to face nature in all her moods and to overcome her worst. If it were not for the adventurous the world would be a sad, dull place, even if you have to die while following your bent. I hope some of your men will go back and climb that 'Great White Peak'."

## ENGLAND TO KATMANDU

by A. Tallon

On 15th March, 1957, the Expedition members met at the Southway Hotel in London with the President and four other Y.R.C. members as support party. The great day had arrived, all we had to do now was to find our way to the Himalayas and climb a mountain. All the work and worry was behind us, now we could relax and for the next few days at least B.O.A.C. could do all the worrying.

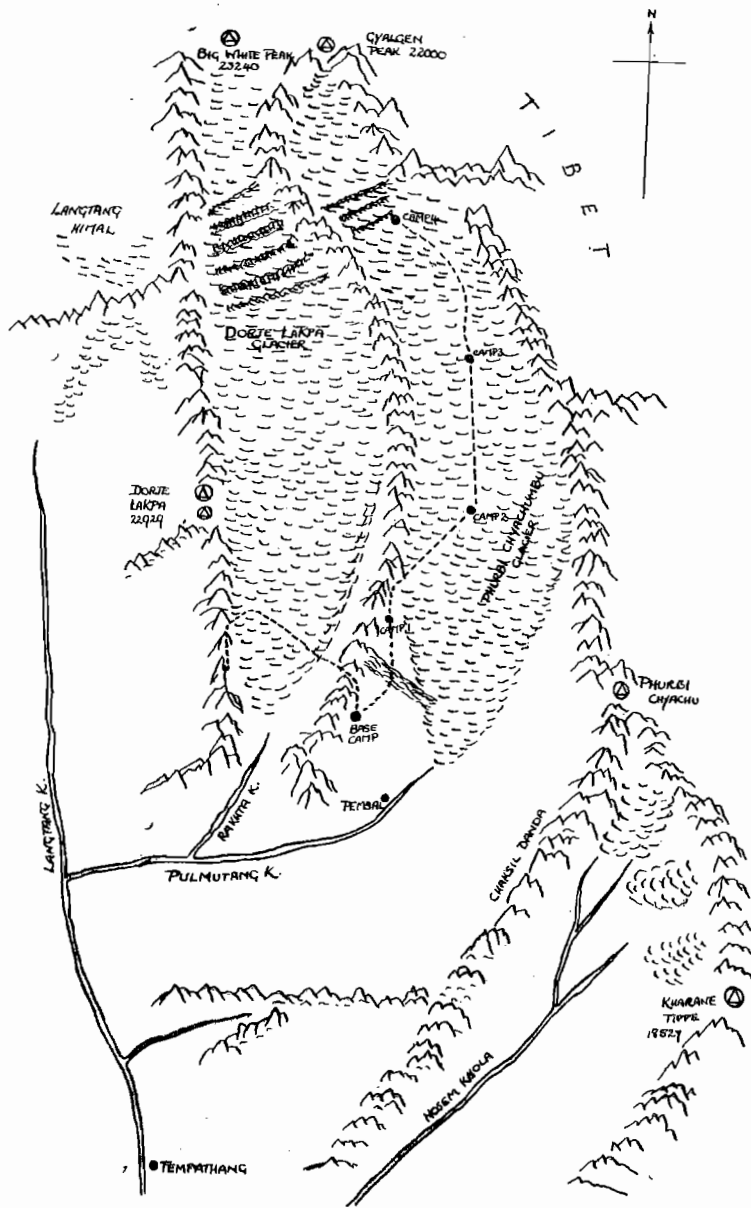
It was at 7 o'clock that evening that we had our first intimation that even a modest Expedition like ours had its little problems. We had excess baggage trouble ! Some of this excess had to be paid for in hard-scrounged cash but quite an amount was distributed about our various persons and so it was with heavy tread that we plodded out towards the aircraft next morning at London Airport.

Here our Cine photographer decided to justify his equipment. Failing to get any action from his exposure meter he proceeded to record the state of the weather as we proudly climbed aboard the aircraft. In this task he had some competition in the form of a duffle coated gentleman who dramatically emerged from a nearby cloudbank and announced that both he and his twin lens reflex were employed by a famous National Newspaper whose task and duty it was to inform the public of our progress. Not having seen the results of his labours I can only assume that the fog particles were as correctly exposed on his film as those on Dr. Jones'.

The flight was interesting if not exciting. Splendid views of the Alps (nearly everyone recognised the Matterhorn somewhere or other) Rome, Vesuvius stand out in the memory before darkness and the characteristic smells of the East brought us to Baghdad. One member of the party had by now established a claim to be the most seasoned traveller on the plane. He insisted on smoking the tobacco of the country over which he was flying. Another member who had been entrusted with the Expedition altimeters devoted himself to the checking of the Flight reports.

Finally Calcutta at midnight local time, 36 hours after leaving London. Here we were welcomed by three members of the Calcutta Yorkshire Society who steered us through the Customs





Next morning, 30th March, 1957, at 7 o'clock we boarded the miniature Nepalese train to journey to the railhead at Amlekganj 28 miles and  $4\frac{1}{2}$  hours to the North. Spenceley took photographs of the train by walking ahead at various points and stepping into the train again as it drew level—not a difficult task. Nepal immediately gives one the impression of being a democracy—the train conveniently slows down before and after each station to allow passengers to leave or board the train without the inconvenience of having to buy a ticket.

At Amlekganj the leader of the Expedition, assisted by a friend from the World Health Organisation, quickly negotiated for a lorry to take us over the hills to Katmandu. This, the last stage of our journey, was to be the most interesting and exciting of all. The lorry was quickly loaded and the six expedition members climbed on top. At Raxaul we had met an American and his wife who had hitch-hiked from London and they accepted our offer of a lift to Katmandu. The bearded driver and his mate were confident that we could reach Katmandu that day but it soon became obvious that we would have to spend the night somewhere. Even at this stage of our wanderings we had not become fully aware that in the East it is more commendable to set the customer's mind at rest than to tell the exact truth.

To say that the road from Raxaul to Katmandu is a marvellous feat of engineering would be an understatement. First we motored through pleasant valleys and foothills and soon we were in a steep sided valley without any obvious way out. The driver aimed his vehicle at the most vertical face he could find and drove straight up. The mere height of the passengers above the road was frightening enough without the empty space at the roadside. We were quick to notice that the driver negotiated the steep corners with his door open.

At one village the lorry stopped and the driver announced that we would have to stay there the night. We had other ideas and an argument followed between the driver and the local headman on one side and ourselves on the other. The local officials said that they could not allow us to continue as the next section of road was too dangerous in the failing light. Afterwards we had to agree with him but just then we were anxious to press on. In the middle of the discussion it was noticed that the driver, his mate and one member of the expedition had disappeared. Some time

later they returned—the missing mountaineer raised an imaginary deerstalker and explained that he had just been keeping an eye on things. Finally by signing a document absolving the local population from any responsibility for the accident which would inevitably occur, we were allowed to continue.

At one stage of the journey we had to pass through a low tunnel—we decided to walk through behind the lorry. This proved to be a wise precaution because several rucsacs which had been on top of the load were badly damaged—luckily we were able to get them repaired in Katmandu. That night we were guests of Major Wright, the Indian Army Officer in charge of the road. We left again early next morning after presenting a crate of our tinned beer to the officers mess. The highest point of the pass was soon reached—over 8,000 feet—and the journey became even more breathtaking. If we fell off the lorry now we would be run over. It was on this descent that we met a Land Rover flying the Union Jack. The car stopped and out stepped a beaming gentleman in leather shorts who introduced himself as the British Ambassador. He stayed and chatted for a few minutes and informed us that his wife was keeping a meal ready for us.

We were now nearly at Katmandu. The journey through the town itself was not without interest. Several times we were stopped by the police—for having a dangerous load—and dodging the electric wires and tree branches called for a steady eye and reflexes in perfect working order.

As we turned unto the British Embassy Compound, the Union Jack fluttering from the flagstaff, and the sentry springing several feet in the air to come to attention, some half a dozen jungle types sprang from the side of the road waving their arms and shouting. Surely this band of brigands would not dare to attack us on the very steps of the Embassy. Our fears were soon forgotten—they were our sherpas.

At last this was Katmandu—we had travelled over 6,000 miles from home, it was now the 31st March and we were over a week behind schedule. The combined efforts of Sherpas and Sahibs soon had the kit unloaded and sheeted up behind the Embassy offices. We distributed tinned beer to the sherpas and though they enjoyed the beer the sight of the foam spurting from the tins to descend on the expedition secretary's already fast disappearing hair was greeted with much more enthusiasm. They

dashed off to their lodgings in great delight taking their empty beer tins with them.

Four of the expedition were soon installed in the Ambassador's residence while Dan Jones and I were driven off to the Royal Hotel and let loose in a bedroom about the size of an allotment—we only used the bit nearest the door.

After four days of packing and sorting of stores on the part of the sherpas and sahib in charge of packing and apparently uninterrupted sightseeing on the part of the other five expedition members, we were ready to move off into the hills with our 110 porters, 6 sherpas, and 1 liaison officer.

## KATMANDU TO BASE CAMP

by Maurice F. Wilson

THURSDAY 4th April was D-day for the Y.R.C. contingent in Katmandu. Our Leader was soon on his rounds waking everyone from their slumbers. Even the coolies seemed to sense the importance of the occasion, for they began to arrive before 7 a.m. and quite soon the grounds of the Embassy were alive with an army of men. Loads had been weighed in the preceding days and Tallon was busy allocating them to the men. Each man was required to carry 60 lbs., but it was obvious from the time each man took to select his burden that they felt some 60 lbs. were heavier than others. Their suspicions, I must confess, were not ill-founded.

There were 113 of these men, 'city-slickers' as we called them, though two who acted as sirdars carried no loads. Since these two were of little use in any capacity, it was never clear why they came at all. A counter of three boxes was set up on the gravel path and each man solemnly came forward to receive his advance of pay . . . fifteen Nepalese rupees (17s. 6d.). Press photographers, as well as amateurs, were snapping everywhere.

After the storms of the preceding days this was a beautiful morning and the disorderly cavalcade got under way at 8 a.m. We returned inside for breakfast, for the sahibs were to be spared the ordeal of walking the first eight miles, a Land Rover had been laid on for them. In the early afternoon our own little convoy made a dignified departure amid fond farewells and presenting of arms by the gurkha sentry at the gate. Further military honours awaited us only a little way down the road as we turned into the grounds of the Royal Palace, where we were asked to sign the book reserved for distinguished visitors. We could hardly complain of the formalities attending our departure.

We soon caught up with the coolies who had got no further than Bodhnath, where a few words from our Leader were necessary to induce further progress. We ourselves continued along the broken road to its termination at Sanchu. Here we were surprised to find a lone Englishman, Mr. Rosser of the London School of Oriental Studies, who invited us to his upper room where we partook of chicken, the bird being rent asunder after the manner of Henry VIII. By mid-afternoon all our porters had



LOWER FOOTHILLS OF JUGAL HIMAL Photo W. J. Anderson

arrived and together we continued a short way up the valley to Sankhu Pheidi, there we camped, and from there our Himalayan adventures began.

The camp site was a green sward about the size of a bowling green, bounded on two sides by brooks. The boxes were pitched in the centre and tents on the perimeter. A fire was made and as darkness fell we sat down to a three course meal of pemmican, minced meat and pears. As the meal drew to its close Fox called upon the six climbing sherpas to select their sahibs. At first reticent, they suddenly rushed across to our improvised dining table each thrusting an arm round the sahib of his choice. This novel method of selection worked out as follows

Fox—Mingma Tensing. Spenceley—Lakpa Noorbu.  
Anderson—Lakpa Tsering. Tallon—Pemba Gyalgen. Jones—  
Ang Temba. Wilson—Pemba Tensing.

We slept well that night and the camp was astir early the next morning. The coolies had found their own lodgings in nearby houses and were on the job before we were ready ourselves. Loads were made up and the column stepped over the brook and straight on to the wooded hillside. We climbed about 1,000 ft. before reaching the summit of the pass, which was crowned by a chorten. The track followed was one of the main trade routes of the country and we were constantly meeting Nepali bearing their loads of merchandise. Men, women and children all carried baskets slung from the forehead in the now well known manner. We passed through several villages and were naturally the objects of curiosity wherever we went. Work, play and even gossip all stopped as the procession passed by, while the buzzing of insects intermingled with the whirring of the cine-camera.

We could now get some idea of the complexity of the Himalayan foothills. Ridge followed ridge in all directions and nowhere did there appear sufficient flat land to pitch a tennis court. The farming was primitive. Each hillside comprised countless terraces each about four yards wide. Along such a terrace a single ox pulled a wooden ploughshare. In similar manner, others tilled the ground above.

Below us we could see our destination, the Indrawatti. Always it seemed only another half-hour below but, in fact, it was mid-afternoon before we finally reached it, tired and very thirsty. Thirsty because although we had passed lots of drinking places,



we eschewed all water unless it had first been boiled or sterilised with tablets. We camped that night on a little hill behind Balam Patti, under a people tree, overlooking the river. It was a beautiful site, even if the village belied its beautiful name, and we had a commanding view for miles of the silted bed of the Indrawatti, one of the seven sacred rivers of India.

The following morning the prospect of crossing the river caused a stir of excitement. Camera men were rushing about everywhere for the best point of vantage. It certainly was an impressive sight as the men moved across the stony beach to the riverside. Then linked together in three's and four's they ventured into the torrent. At first the going was easy but by the half-way mark the water was up to the thighs and the current too strong for some bare feet on smooth stones. Nevertheless, in half an hour all were across and only one man dropped his box.

Across the river we embarked upon the long trek up the hillside to Nawalpur. As we toiled on we had a taste of walking in the heat of the day. We six, carrying gaily coloured golf umbrellas, were mainly dressed in cotton shirts, shorts, socks and basket-ball boots. (What a dream those boots are for walking long distances over dry ground.)

Nawalpur proved to be larger than most villages and boasted two or three well stocked shops. We halted for lunch and continued up the long hillside, past a wall of prayer slabs, to a prominent chorten. It was now mid-afternoon and after a short walk beyond, we reached a gompa (temple) flanked by prayer flags. There our caravan rested.

The name of the place was Moolkharka and we had barely pitched camp when we heard a great commotion on the hill behind. Riding down the ridge were two horsemen followed by crowds of people. This strange procession halted at the gompa and began to dance round and round it in increasing frenzy. The dance itself was in the nature of a shuffling gait to the accompaniment of beating tom-toms. The head lama was an old and dignified figure, while the chief dancer wore an enormous hat and was cloaked in a colourful silk garment richly embroidered with designs. Masks were a feature of the display, one man even wore an old army gas mask. The temple was being dedicated, and inside were placed cones of rice and small lighted bowls of oil.

The ceremony went on unabated long after dark and we were all completely fascinated. On our return to camp we put on a counter-attraction. Fox produced his mouth organ and on a Tamang hillside crowds listened to the lilt of the Skye Boat Song.

Whether or not the gods approved of the evenings' festivities, we never learned, but evidently they frowned on our own participation, for early next morning it started to rain. Our porters made it clear that they would not carry even in the slightest downpour, so it was after 10 a.m. before we were able to strike camp and get under way. A pleasant path traversed round the wooded hillside to Okhrenei. Here was another newly built gompa with a long wall of prayer slabs nearby. These latter with their familiar inscription of 'Om, mani padme hum,' also embodied long slate bench seats, affording a good excuse for the coolies to rest. Indeed, a journey in Nepal is measured not in miles, or hours, but as so many 'resting places.' A further almost level stretch of path brought us at length to Sanu Gaunda and here, in the early afternoon, we camped. In time and distance it was our worst day.

This camp was our highest so far (7,700 ft.) and from it we had a very fine view. Our coolies thought it was good too, good enough to warrant a further advance payment of five rupees each. We gave them some cigarettes and promised the rupees later. The following morning was fine and we quickly whipped up the slopes behind the village to get our first real view of the Himalayan giants. It turned out to be the Gauri Sankar range, so that we were still denied the sight of those we had come so far to see. However, we did not have to wait long. An easy track through the woods emerged on to a broad grassy plateau and there, at last, arrayed ahead of us were the peaks of the Jugal Himal. It was a thrilling moment, and we dallied as we played the game of 'snakes and ladders' up imaginery routes on Dorje Lakpa and Phurbi Chyachu.

If the scene ahead was thrilling, that at our feet was hardly less so. Below us at the bottom of a huge valley ran the Bolephi Kola. We had to go down there. It looked an easy path and we reckoned we would do it in an hour, two at the most. It was then 10 a.m. which meant we could comfortably lunch by the river at noon. We padded on and on downhill, and by noon the river seemed no nearer. By 1 p.m. we could pick out a bridge but it



THE JUGAL HIMAL—"BIG WHITE PEAK" IN CENTRE.

Photo A. Tallon

was still some distance below. Eventually, we reached the valley at 3.45 p.m. with stomachs empty and tempers frayed. We had received a salutary lesson on the deceptive scale of distances in these mountains, and the irritations of cross country travel. Katmandu is 4,500 ft. yet, after five days trekking, here we were at an altitude of only 3,500 ft. Would we never gain height ?

The porters received their advance payment and made off to the nearby village of Palam Sangu. Before long they returned with the plea that the new five rupee notes were not acceptable in the village. Apparently, years ago some forgeries of that denomination had been perpetrated and the villagers had never forgotten it. Naturally, we were limited in the amount of change we were carrying and a deadlock seemed inevitable. It was Murari (our Liaison Officer) who hit upon the solution. He suggested that the men be grouped into couples, return their five rupee notes and each pair be handed a 10 rupee note in exchange. To my surprise they did this and accepted the sharing of a large note without demur.

We left Palam Sangu early next morning, the first white men to be seen in the valley. We soon encountered a small girl coming along the path. The sight of Spenceley, Anderson and myself waving our gaudy coloured umbrellas was too much for her and she fled shrieking into the woods. Not even Spenceley's offer of an empty tobacco tin could placate her. This day too we met Kami Lama, the head man of Okhrenei, who was later to be invaluable to us, and he accompanied us up the trail to Gompathang.

By now, we were all familiar with the camp routine. Upon arrival at the site loads were stacked and covered, under Tallon's supervision. Tents were erected and wood obtained for a fire. Our sherpas then unpacked our kit and laid out in the tents our lilos, sleeping bags, rucksacks and torches. Ang Temba had been appointed Cook and to him would be handed the items comprising the menu for the evening meal. Through all this Jones would hold his surgery and always he attracted plenty of patients. Sometimes they were curable, sometimes incurable. None left without hope.

Beyond Gompathang the track became more truly mountainous in character, dipping down to a tributary and then winding up, with occasional rock scrambles, until we were traversing high

above the true left bank of the Bolephi Kola at about 7,800 ft. Hereabouts, we encountered our first sherpa family, a woman and two children living very simply in a bamboo shanty. She was making baskets of bamboo while her husband was away cutting supplies. Pleasantly, the path dropped through the woods to Tempathang, truly described as 'the gateway to the Jugal Himal,' and an important stage of our journey was over.

We camped on the outskirts of the village and, as soon as possible, paid off the Katmandu coolies. We had decided to retain Pasang Chitpong and take him to Base Camp, so 110 men received 20 rupees each and the two sirdars received 40 rupees each. In addition, each man received five cigarettes, an important part of our currency. We then took on 100 new men and women recruited from Tempathang and the surrounding district. Indeed, we halted a whole day at this point, Tallon and Anderson were very busy that day reorganising the loads, while Spenceley and Jones spent much of it making a photographic survey of the village and its inhabitants. Fox and I discussed the expedition finances. We had left substantial funds at Katmandu for future needs but, even so, were forced to conclude that we must continue to be economical if we were to remain solvent.

It was an undisciplined, happy-go-lucky mob that left Tempathang. Time to them was of no importance. Men and women, old and young, jostled for the lightest loads before a start could be made. With difficulty, Murari listed their names as each passed by. Down we filed to the river which we crossed by a rickety bridge a few feet above the torrent. Quite soon the path entered the jungle which was to engulf us for three days. It was alive with insect life. The going was by no means hard, but these people stopped whenever they felt inclined, and that was often. One fellow imbued with the joy of spring clambered like a monkey up a tall tree and with a few deft strokes of his kukri, lopped off the top. A little more daylight entered the bush. In the early afternoon they made it clear that they had gone far enough for one day and it took Fox some time to persuade them to carry to the top of a knoll, some 500 ft. higher. Yet, it was a lively and friendly crowd that gathered round the camp that night. The tents were festooned with rhododendrons and sherpas danced to the strains of our Leader's mouth organ.

The going from here on was distinctly rough. The jungle was thick with creepers and bamboo shoots. Tree trunks lay everywhere in crazy fashion. At times 'steps' had to be cut up and over them before progress could be made. Kukris were wielded with much gusto and great skill. At last we reached the banks of the Rakhta Kola. Contrary to expectations, its crossing offered little difficulty. However, once across our porters insisted that this was the place to camp. We were all most annoyed that our progress was being retarded so.

However, next morning (14th April) saw great activity among the porters. They needed no coaxing and in less than two hours we had emerged from the forest to a pleasant pasture known as Pemsall. A halt was made while most groups cooked their tsampa in large bowls over log fires. Hunger satisfied, we trudged on to the slopes beyond. The track, at first gentle, soon steepened and finally became very steep. Even so, the whole party was moving well until the inevitable happened. Accompanied by a great shout comparable to that at the Fall of Jericho, High Altitude Box No. 6 went bounding down the hillside splitting into many pieces and spilling its precious contents as it went. The culprit, a character dressed like Robin Hood, was sent down after it but only half the contents were retrieved. If Robin Hood thought he was going to get off lightly he was mistaken. Ang Temba and Pemba Tensing promptly loaded him with the kitchen box for the rest of the journey. This mishap threw the party out of gear a little and rhythm having been broken the upper slopes seemed harder, until at last we reached Elephant Rock.

It was cold up there, the clouds were down and snow lay all around. It seemed an inhospitable place that day, and a little further on under the lee of a huge boulder, we dropped the loads and took stock of the situation. We stood on one of the few patches of ground within sight. It inclined from the boulder at about the angle of a glacis; it lay at 13,500 ft. and we had to tunnel for water; but we had arrived at Base Camp. Pomba Serebu they called it. We paid off the porters and, as their babbling voices disappeared into the mist, on to an upturned box I flung our remaining cash resources . . . seven annas and a few measly pice.

## "THE BIG WHITE PEAK"

by G. B. Spenceley

IT WAS someone's exclamation of astonishment that caused us for a time to give up the struggle for sleep.

We had all been settled in for our first night at Base Camp; the last page in our story of the approach march was written in our diaries, the last candle was blown out, when these superlatives, spoken in a tone of wonder and awe, came to us from the outside world and caused us partially to emerge from our sleeping bags and open the flap. It was worth the effort. Across the glacier, appearing utterly remote and aloof, its base still swathed in cloud, was our 22,000 foot neighbour, Phurbi Chyachu.

We had seen it before only from the distance, still six days' march away, as we crossed the shoulder of the Mauling Lekh before that dusty descent into the Belephi Khola. Since then we had been too deep in the gorges to see anything but the lower snows of our range. And that afternoon when we had reached the site we might as well have been on some Scottish moor, all heather—or something like it—patches of thawing snow, boulders and cold clammy mist: only the occasional roar of an avalanche warned us of the presence of high mountains, only the features of our Sherpas told us this was Central Asia.

But now the cloud had gone and we could for the first time make out the appearance of this landscape which was to become so familiar. Our camp was pitched on platforms levelled out of a slope which fell with increasing steepness to the snout and moraine of the Phurbi Chyachumba Glacier beyond which we could see to the east a long line of peaks, not high indeed, but bold in feature, terminating at its northern end in one mighty upthrust of snow and ice which was Phurbi Chyachu. Above the camp to the west were a series of rock buttresses and Chamonix-style peaks which formed the ridge overlooking the Dorje Lhakpa Glacier.

The next day, 15th April, was a day of organisation. The Sherpas erected a kitchen—later to be much improved, while Anderson and Tallon, who almost alone understood the complexities of our stores, supervised their orderly packing. Fox and I took time off to search for a suitable Base Line, for survey must be our first duty.

Behind the camp was a steep knoll on which later that day we erected a cairn. This would be one terminal and two miles to the north-east we found another, a sharp pointed little peak rising a couple of hundred feet above the moraine and commanding a view up the glacier to the peaks already fixed by the Indian Survey. At our furthest point where we rested, we saw seven great eagles—later identified as Imperial Eagles, majestically sailing with motionless wings, migrating, so our bird book told us, from the heat of Central India to the plains of Tibet and Mongolia. We returned not over the boulders and rough ground over which we had laboured, but on a yak track, as yet partially concealed below beds of old snow. This was a useful discovery and our Sherpas halted to cairn its way.

It was hardly midday but already clouds were filling up the sky. We were to learn that this was the usual pattern of the weather. All but for one day the morning dawned fine, cold but with a clear sky into which the sun would soon climb to soften the snow. But these brilliant dawns, so full of promise, were something of a snare for usually by 10 a.m. the first wisps of cloud would come creeping over the ridge to the south-west to make us hurry with our task.

Full use of these early hours was vital to our work and this was uppermost in our minds when the next day Anderson and I with our Sherpas, toiled towards the first triangulation point. But though the need for speed was clearly in our minds, it remained there, and this urgency could not be transmitted to our limbs. Neither of us before had been quite so high and our lungs and muscles rebelled at every step. Already the sun was doing its damage and when we turned into a couloir more directly facing the east we plunged to our thighs at every step. A short rock scramble brought us to the crest of the ridge.

We were now on the ridge to the south-west of Base Camp and overlooking the Dorje Lhakpa Glacier. Our thoughts had first been centred on one of the Chamonix-like spires to the north which would have given us rays to both ends of the Base Line. But this was the Himalayas and their ascent could not be undertaken in quite the light-hearted manner we had at first thought. Over the hot valleys to the south already there were clouds and we must be content with a lesser summit nearby.

While the Sherpas built a cairn—a monumental structure erected with great creative zest—Anderson and I surveyed. We looked down on to the Dorje Lhakpa Glacier. At its head, but out of sight from our present viewpoint, was the “Big White Peak.” This glacier would have given the most direct approach to our mountain, but not only was there no access to it from the Pulmutang Kholā, but halfway along its length there was a quite impassable icefall which could only have been turned by a lengthy and hazardous traverse on the left wall, where the climber for a couple of hours would have been exposed to the dangers of an avalanche. Across the glacier we could now see, mounted on ice walls of great steepness, two of the peaks which form the trident of Dorje Lhakpa. We were sure the most bold and optimistic of mountaineers would fail here to find a route, so complete were their defences.

It was on these two points and Phurbi Chyachu behind, that we first sighted our alidade in order to resect our position. While I took a multitude of rays to all visible and noteworthy points, Anderson drew on square paper, supplemented by compass bearings, a panorama which together with the photographs would provide material for filling in the detail. Each point fixed and drawn was christened with a survey name. Such was the routine of each station.

We were not the only surveyors. Fox and Tallon were similarly engaged on the moraine summit that we had earlier spotted; the east terminal of the Base Lane. A good start had been made with the map.

But the brunt of the work that day had fallen on Jones and Wilson whose task it was to reconnoitre a route to a site for Camp I on the Phurbi Chyachumbu Glacier. They had followed our yak track for some way but had been halted by a broad snow couloir. Technically this was no problem, but it was dangerous. Once the security of its banks was left they would be the target for any chance missile. Accordingly they had mounted labouriously upwards until near its head, where the span was much reduced and a reasonably safe crossing could be made. But the entry here was less simple. A steep bank of glacial drift had to be traversed; easy enough when all was frozen, but when softened by sun, an unstable mass of boulders and half frozen mud. A fixed rope was used and it became known as “Dan’s Delight.”

A second couloir proved an easier problem and beyond snow slopes led down to the Phurbi Chyachumbu Glacier. It was here, close to the head of the lower icefall that, the next day, Camp I was pitched. It was a safe site, but objective danger lay all about. Above, but happily not directly above, lay a mass of tottering seracs, while stones and icicles from the soaring walls bounding the glacier, fell to within a few paces of the tents, which themselves were pitched on a crevassed floor in frequent and alarming movement. It was a noisy spot alive with creaks and groans and sudden startling cracks that pierced the silence of the night. It was a place with character and atmosphere but one did not alone wander far from the tents.

While the others were thus engaged establishing Camp I, which was that night to be occupied by Fox and Tallon, Anderson and I again surveyed. The most southerly point of yesterday's ridge, a rock peak crowned with a square gendarme, had attracted us. It appeared a simple proposition from Base Camp; we could walk directly to it with a short and favourable looking climb at the end. But we were deceived, for just a hundred yards from its base we mounted a slight rise and there at our feet, separating us from the face we had come to climb, was a great cleft, a gorge indeed, cutting deeply into the slope and quite impassable. Perhaps a tortuous traverse might have been made round the head, but this was not for us.

How frustrated we felt ! It seemed for a moment we should have to go north to our previous summit and traverse back along the whole ridge, a most time consuming task, and we did not take kindly to the prospects of again labouring through the deep snow of the gully. Fortunately there was a more welcome alternative. Immediately to our north was the main feature of the ridge, a great rectangular rock buttress with a whole series of minor summits strung along its crest. From afar it would not have tempted us, but close at hand we could see it was not the unbroken granite wall that it elsewhere appeared. There were ledges and terraces, vegetation and patches of easy snow, and from where we now stood, a rake we could see, that would solve easily the first 500 feet of the problem.

We mounted upwards without difficulty, except of course for the difficulty of breathing and moving anyway, but the general angle did get steeper. When our rake gave out in a series of



SHERPAS ON ROUTE TO CAMP I

Photo G. B. Spenceley

narrowing ledges we turned left and similarly mounted in that direction until further progress was barred by a savage gully. Upwards there was only rock, but good solid rock, split by cracks and chimneys. It was a climber's paradise but we were not looking for sport. We were explorers and our minds were full of the serious purpose of the ascent. We were racing the cloud which once advanced would make our climb but a useless exercise. We were in no mood to be delayed.

And so we gave our attention to the first line of weakness. Lakpa Noorbu made it quite obvious he wanted to lead. There was no doubt about his enthusiasm, nor later did we doubt his ability, but we felt it hardly fitting, and so urged by myself Anderson started up the first rather confined chimney. It was not easy and for my part I should probably not have got up at all had a jammed ice axe not given me a hold at the crucial moment. The Sherpas were gifted climbers but they had not learned their craft in the best traditions. They had no inhibitions and with a rope above them they saw no reason why they should bother with the rocks. Up the rope they swarmed, hand over hand, while I, without belay, took their weight. Easier but loose rock led to an awkward corner which brought us to the top. We were relieved, for without a common language we found it hard to protect the Sherpas. They took it all in such a light-hearted fashion. They were supremely confident but without regard for danger; more than once confusion reigned, while their actions could be neither directed nor predicted.

Immediately we set up our instruments. It was a good station for at the head of the Dorje Lhakpe Glacier from which we could more firmly resect our position was the "Big White Peak" which yesterday had been hidden behind nearer summits. It was our first close view and we could now confirm that alone of all the great peaks of the Jugal Himal it could be approached with a degree of confidence. We could not yet see the col at the head of the Phurbi Chyachumbu Glacier from which the assault would be launched, nor could we see if from that col we should have to descend, or whether in fact we could traverse across the face without losing height. Of what we could now be certain was, that once established centrally on the face, given good snow conditions, we could climb it directly to the shoulder half-way along the summit ridge. The shoulder was the key to the problem;

from it we knew a narrow snow crête led in the best Alpine style to the summit. If this route failed then there was no alternative. Certainly from the col to the west of the peak there was an easy ascent, but this col, which could be reached only by the longest of routes, was defended by a difficult if not impassable icefall. All other routes if such there are, lie in Tibet.

Cloud once more put an end to our work and we returned, not the way we had come, but along an undulating snow ridge to our tracks of yesterday which we reached up a final slope of deep soft snow which took every ounce of our remaining energy. Soon however we plunged into the gully which we descended in a series of long wet glissades.

Fox and Tallon were having their first night at Camp I where on the 18th of April I should have accompanied Jones on a load ferrying job. But I was laid low with an attack of dysentery, a complaint from which I was periodically to suffer. I excused myself this task and so while Jones shepherded the Sherpas with another consignment of goods I went up the hill to the western Base Terminal where Anderson and Wilson were surveying.

On the following day with our Sherpas, Anderson and I set off for Camp I with the object of establishing Camp III on 21st April. On the way up we met Fox and Tallon returning. They had that day carried loads up to the site for Camp II. At this height neither of these men seemed in the slightest affected by altitude. It was not the same with Anderson and myself; although still at a modest height it was for all that a critical one. For my own part I could not eat, I could not sleep, I suffered abominable headaches and every step was an effort of will. I was grossly ill-tempered and not at all impressed by the challenge that had brought us so far. Anderson was little better and would occasionally halt to vomit quietly and uncomplainingly; he was not at all his usual energetic self, a fact for which I was profoundly thankful. Altitude I decided, was a great equaliser. It was in this frame of body and mind that we met these two boisterous and disgustingly healthy spirits romping along the track. They were, it seemed to us, horribly self-satisfied and actually boasted of their speed up and down the glacier. I am afraid that for a moment relations were slightly strained—such is human weakness. But once ensconced in our tents where we had nothing to do but listlessly lie back, while the Sherpas cared for our every need, we

felt better and there returned both goodwill and enthusiasm. It was good to be camped on the snow again and feel the tent billow out with the wind.

No direct ascent of the glacier could from here be made, but in the corner where the seracs of the icefall abutted against the containing rock wall, a short rock climb led to a more level surface. Down it there hung a fixed rope.

The next morning up this rope we hauled ourselves, but it was not the early start we had intended. Before 5 a.m. we had wakened the Sherpas. They are admirable fellows but smooth camp routine is not their best point. It was 7 a.m. when porridge was handed in and we were not away until 8.15 a.m. It was too late; the sun was pleasant indeed, but we did not welcome it on the cliffs above, festooned with threatening icicles. Beyond was an area heavily crevassed through which the best route was already marked. As yet early in the season, it troubled us little and soon we were slogging up slopes interminably tedious.

But to enliven the scene avalanches were constantly falling; small snow avalanches, loosened by the sun; they travelled only a little across the glacier. They caused us hardly to turn round, they were so frequent, but later, when we heard a great roar we halted—we were glad of an excuse. A mass of ice, in size like a small cathedral, broke away from close to the summit of Phurbi Chyachu and fell 6,000 feet down the face, filling the sky with a slowly mounting cloud of snow. We had never before seen an avalanche like it. Awe inspiring and magnificent, it made us realise the might of the forces guarding these inviolate peaks. So far however, except for the icy darts, our route was free from danger and we could stand back and admire these demonstrations of force.

At the site selected for Camp II there was force of another kind, gusts of wind that made the pitching of tents a tiresome task. This was a relatively minor demonstration, nevertheless we were glad to crawl into their shelter. We drank quantities of hot lemonade but for food we had little inclination. Each item of the ration box we carefully considered and each item in turn we rejected. Finally we had a few sardines.

It was a cold night, our sunburn oil became solid ice. Again in spite of an early call the Sherpas were reluctant to be out of tents before the sun brought some warmth to the world. We shared



their reluctance but we had a greater sense of urgency. Our route was still straightforward with only an occasional area obviously crevassed. Higher up the glacier where it sharply bent to the west was the Ladies' Peak whose crest formed the Tibetan frontier. A col on the right might have given us access to that land if we had been permitted to take it. We were to make our third camp somewhere near the lower slopes of the Ladies' Peak at the foot of which we could see a wide corridor that would take us above much of the final icefall.

Two carries were required that day to supply the camp with sufficient stores. Anderson was suffering his last bout of altitude sickness and when we arrived at a level and safe site we left him there beside the dumped loads, for his presence on the second ferry was not required. He ensconced himself in duvet jacket and sleeping bag and lay warm and snug in the snow dozing until our return. The rest of us made a quick descent and we were able to refresh ourselves with hot drinks at Camp II which was now taken over by Jones and Wilson. With lighter loads and a more direct route back we cut down our time on the return by half an hour. Already the afternoon cloud was building up and with it, wind and flurries of snow. I thought of another occasion, of vital tracks that fast disappeared\*, and I suffered a moment's anxiety. Poor Anderson alone out in the snow, but we found him all right, almost covered in drift and fast asleep. Close by we pitched our third camp.

We were a sorry pair indeed, totally without energy, too listless even to get properly into our sleeping bags. In silent misery, side by side we lay. We enjoyed still each others company, but in conversation we took no pleasure. We could drink, but for food we had little thought—not that, at any rate, contained in our ration box. For my part I had a strange and passionate longing. It was something very simple I wanted, but I could not have it—a poached egg on toast. This longing returned at every camp. It was a blustery cold night and we slept fitfully. I was still troubled with dysentery and sometime after midnight the awful realisation came to me that I should have to go out—this was a regular performance that I had to repeat at most camps. Next day our task completed we returned to Base Camp.

\*Y.R.C.J. VIII 28 P.115

During our absence the rest of the team had been most active. Camp II was well stocked and each day more and more loads had been carried to Camp I. That night with the whole party at Base Camp we celebrated. A luxury box was opened and we sat down to lavish helpings of tinned chicken with rice and curry sauce, blackberries and custard, Christmas cake, coffee and biscuits. We afterwards joined the Sherpas in the smoke of their kitchen and enjoyed till a late hour, a festival of western and eastern song.

The next day was one of rest and reorganisation and we drew up plans for the next nine days. The whole party was to be engaged in a big build-up on the glacier. Camp IV would be established and would be visited by each party in turn for the dual purpose of stocking and acclimatisation. We were to move up in three parties, the composition of which was now changed but each member retained his own personal Sherpa. Our marching orders read something like this:—

<i>Date</i>	<i>Party</i>	<i>Movement</i>	<i>Camp Occupied</i>
24th April	Jones Tallon	Base Camp to Camp I	Camp I
	Fox Spenceley	Base Camp to Camp I	Base Camp
	Anderson Wilson	Base Camp to Camp I	Base Camp
25th April	Jones Tallon	Camp I to Camp II	Camp II
	Fox Spenceley	Base Camp to Camp I	Camp I
	Anderson Wilson	Base Camp to Camp I	Base Camp
26th April	Jones Tallon	Camp II to Camp III	Camp III
	Fox Spenceley	Camp I to Camp II	Camp II
	Anderson Wilson	Base Camp to Camp I	Camp I
27th April	Jones Tallon	Camp III, reconnoitre to site for Camp IV	Camp III
	Fox Spenceley	Camp II to Camp III	Camp III
	Anderson Wilson	Camp I to Camp II	Camp I

Date	Party	Movement	Camp Occupied		
28th April	Jones	} Camp III, establish Camp IV	Camp III		
	Tallon			Camp IV	
	Fox		Camp I to Camp II	Camp I	
	Spenceley				
	Anderson				
29th April	Wilson	Camp III to Camp I	Camp I		
	Jones				
	Tallon				
	Fox			Camp IV, reconnoitre to head of glacier, survey	
	Spenceley			Camp I to Camp III breaking camp	Camp III
30th April	Anderson	Remain at Camp I	Camp I		
	Wilson				
	Jones			Camp IV to Camp III remain in support	Camp III
	Tallon			Camp III to Camp IV	Camp IV
	Fox			Camp I to Base Camp	Base Camp
1st May	Spenceley	Camp III to Camp I	Camp I		
	Anderson				
	Wilson			Camp IV to Camp III	Camp III
	Jones			Remain at Base Camp	Base Camp
	Tallon				
2nd May	Fox	Camp I to Base Camp	Base Camp		
	Spenceley				
	Anderson			Camp III to Base Camp	Base Camp
	Wilson				

The plan of operation was well drawn up. It gave, in the time available, the maximum lift to the greatest height achieved without imposing undue strain; altitude was gradually gained, no march was too long, no climb too abrupt. At the same time the plan provided for each party the opportunity of climbing high, while for each high camp, there was ensured support immediately below. If all went well we should be in a very strong position at the end of this period. A day or so of rest and we should be ready for the assault.

On the 24th April after the mass carry to Camp I we left Jones and Tallon alone amongst a most impressive dump of stores to which the next day we substantially added. Now it was the turn of Fox and myself to occupy this camp and listen to the ever creaking icefall. The next day after a night of snow we took

loads up to Camp II. The fresh snow on the rock climb delayed us some time, so that we cast glances anxiously up at the rows of lethal darts precariously poised. Wind and limb were by now in better function and we made good speed. Those of us who had before suffered from a multitude of minor disabilities were now for the first time enjoying life. Loads seemed lighter and the pace was no longer the agony it had earlier been. Gone too were the listless hours we spent tent bound. Our day's march was not long, perforce the advancing snow would cut short further effort, and so we enjoyed much leisure, which was not now wasted in silent self-pity as before. Our diary's daily entry grew in length and when not thus engaged, or perhaps settling the profound problems of the world, we were engrossed in the great literary masters.

Exerted by the frequent prompting of Fox, the pace of the Sherpas' early morning preparations was now funereal and the next day, 27th April, we were out of tents by 6 a.m. We were still under the shadow of Phurbi Chyachu and it was bitterly cold. The tiresome business of making up loads was sheer misery but once under way, stamping through fresh snow, warmth soon returned. No incident enlivened the tedium of the trudge except that once I broke through into a crevasse, a false step promptly corrected by Mingma Tenzing. He, of all the Sherpas, was the least casual with the rope. The crevasses hereabouts were well concealed and yet bridged but thinly. Later we learned, Jones had fallen some fifteen feet before Ang Temba with a handful of useless coils had checked his descent. Constantly we urged caution to our Sherpas for they refused to distinguish between difficulty and danger. But we suffered no great alarm on this Journey.

Survey was still priority and close to Camp III we left Fox thus engaged, hastily drawing rays before the usual clouds obscured the view. With the two Sherpas I descended for further loads. Half way down we met Anderson with their Sherpas toiling up to Camp III. It was a good effort for they had come up from Camp I heavily laden and were again to return there. We had not anticipated they would that day climb beyond the second camp but the fitness of Anderson, now recovered from his earlier disabilities, and the determination of Wilson, who throughout showed remarkable spirit, caused them in their enthusiasm to take on this extra labour.

There were eight of us in camp that night. A day of good work lay behind us and we were a merry party. The camp was well provisioned, Fox had secured a vital survey station and the reconnaissance made by Jones and Tallon was successful. They had not reached the summit of the icefall; distances are deceptive in the Himalayas and after four hours of travelling, cloud had halted their progress. But the route they had taken presented no difficulty and at their furthest point, in an otherwise uncompromising locality, they had found a safe site for Camp IV which we would establish the next day. There was more snow that night and it was colder than we had known it before.

It was cold as well as the altitude that in the morning numbed our senses. It took us an hour with well gloved hands to scrape the tents free of the ice that had formed during the night and to make up the loads for the new camp. We were away at 7.15 a.m. on two ropes of four, Jones and Tallon with their Sherpas on one rope, Lakpa Noorbu, Mingma Tenzing with Fox and myself on the other. The tracks of yesterday were almost obliterated and for the main in front it was desperately hard work. We took it in turns to lead and stamp a way through the exhausting snow but I think Jones and Tallon took the greatest share of this labour; they were both fit and not unduly affected by the altitude. At 8 a.m. we were out of the shadow of the frontier ridge where we removed sweaters and gloves and briefly basked in the sun. We had gained perhaps a thousand feet of height. The route was straight-forward but not without interest for we were now threading a way through a mass of intricate crevasses and the slope was steeper than any before encountered. It was satisfying to look back at the two tiny specks of Camp III down on the level glacier.

At last we reached "the Corridor," a level and uncrevassed highway skirting the base of the Ladies' Peak. Anderson and I had spotted this earlier as the best route to avoid the lower barrier of the icefall. Had the slopes above been armed here with ramparts of ice then indeed this would have been the last route of our choice, but there was no such threat. Avalanches of soft snow were certainly falling frequently but before they could reach the level platform on which we walked, their force was spent. Only an exceptional snowfall would make this route dangerous.



MAURICE WILSON ABOVE CAMP III

Photo A. Tallon

Once on "the corridor" we could see the problem ahead. Beyond the point where we would pitch Camp IV the glacier abruptly narrowed and flowed between walls of fantastic steepness—it could be described as the jaws of the glacier. They might not be the jaws only but the fangs too, for here the glacier became steeper and more broken up, the whole area split by crevasses. We knew then that we should be lucky to find between these walls a route free from objective danger. But that was tomorrow's problem; now we had thought only for the soft snow and our overburdened backs and the release soon to come at the end of "the corridor."

Another hour or so, punctuated by many halts, brought us this release. "The corridor" which had safely conducted us above the lower difficulties of the icefall had petered out and here the glacier mounted to its height. Close by, where there was little else but seracs and great chasms, was a level bed of snow adequate for our camp. We might have preferred a site a little further removed from the bounding wall but we were on a slight rise and were additionally protected by a series of open and wide crevasses. We had little cause for fear. Wishing us luck, our support party left us alone and hurried down to Camp III. Soon the tents were up and the Primus roaring to give us hot lemonade for which we most longed. Already the weather was deteriorating.

There were still many hours of daylight, but it was too cold to read and write. We burrowed deep into our sleeping bags and talked of tomorrow's plans. Fox for the first time suffered a headache, a discomfort from which almost for the first time I was free. But of that other plague I still had occasional bouts, and I had a return of it here. At about midnight I realised I should have to go out. For half an hour I pondered over this appalling thought and then slowly and panting for breath I struggled into all available clothing. Outside it was unbelievably cold; still a wind blew and still we were in mist. When I returned to the tent I put too much weight on the side as I swung my legs over the still sleeping Fox and the rear end of the tent collapsed, carried away from the slim supporting hook from which it was suspended. How I blessed all tent designers! With a length of nylon line again I went out.

The next morning we were not greeted by the usual sun and clear skies but by wind, snow and mist. There was nothing we could do and all day we lay up in our tents. Although we enjoyed no great degree of comfort, although for reading and writing we had little inclination and for food even less appetite, this enforced idleness after the efforts of the past days was not altogether unwelcome. We lunched off soup and sardines; these last were frozen in their oil and had first to be thawed out in our sleeping bags. We talked of past days and of future plans.

There was some reason to congratulate ourselves. In the fourteen days since we arrived at Base Camp, no time or effort had been wasted. The survey required only one more station and that we hoped to complete the next day. Four camps had been established, this last at 19,000 ft. and we had a considerable build-up of stores at a high level. Tomorrow we should solve the problem of the final icefall and after two days rest at Base Camp, would begin the attack. Acclimatisation was progressing satisfactorily, we were a fit, united and happy party; with three weeks in hand we had every reason to be optimistic of success.

Of these things we talked and not for the first time I admired Fox's leadership. He was kindly and considerate yet also a driver, or would have been, if there had been need. But if he had been prepared to drive, he drove himself harder and he took upon his own shoulders the tasks least pleasant and most demanding. He showed a single minded devotion to the enterprise and he was utterly determined to justify the confidence placed in the party by the Club and those who had given their support. He said that day "If I can get two men to the summit of our peak it will be the happiest day of my life." As leader of a Himalayan expedition, the climax of a fine mountaineering career, he was completely fulfilling himself. As leader, mountaineer and as a man I admired him, as did we all; certainly there was no one whose company I should have preferred, tent-bound during a long day of wind and snow, than that of Crosby Fox, the dear friend and companion of many mountain days. Little did I then imagine that it would be the last we should share together.

April 30th dawned clear, gone were the troubled skies and the wind. We were out of tents just as soon as it was light. It did not take us long to gather the survey equipment; on this reconnaissance we needed to take little else. From the tents we moved

round a serac more centrally into the glacier. We could see the jaws, but standing below them, all was too foreshortened to see the problem. We could not plan our route, we could but progress upwards hopefully, taking the route least tortuous, avoiding the bounding walls. We were still in shadow and it was extremely cold.

For several hundred feet we mounted keeping safely in the centre of the glacier. There were crevasses in plenty but so far they were bridged in some part of their length, although but thinly. We dare not romp across them and our pace was slow and cautious.

We were slow too for another reason; we were higher than we had been before, there was soft snow and Fox was for the first time troubled by altitude. It was this last that caused me to take over the lead somewhere through the icefall, a position I was to keep for the remainder of the day. Fox now came second, to give me security over the fragile bridges. That change in the order of the rope was the first link in the chain of circumstances responsible for my survival. For a little way more we climbed, moving in a zig-zag pattern, but safely in the centre of the glacier. But this was too good to last; suddenly we came to a series of large crevasses, unbridged and unbridgeable, spanning the greater width of the glacier.

There was one way round them, easy and short on the true left bank of the glacier. But here where we proposed to turn them, we were for perhaps ten minutes in the ascent exposed to the possibility of an ice avalanche from a series of ice cliffs high above. A snow avalanche we knew might well fall, indeed they were falling every day everywhere, but from that danger we had little to fear, it was like "the Corridor," never were we sufficiently near to the bounding wall for it to be a serious menace; only the ice cliffs threatened. I say threatened, but in fact they looked uncommonly secure, there were no tottering seracs, no avalanche scars, at their foot no sign of debris. Yet had there been any other route we should have taken it; there was none, except one even more perilous on the other side. We were aware of the danger and gave it full consideration, but there was never any real hesitation or doubt, this was a justifiable risk. Already we had learnt that in the Himalayas some risks must be taken, not the risks which every mountaineer must take wherever he may

climb, risks over which his skill and experience have almost complete mastery, but objective risks, dangers against which skill and experience offer no protection. One can only pray for luck.

We turned the crevasses and in ten minutes we were once more central in the glacier. We did it quite casually, time was not wasted nor did we desperately hurry; the odd glance we may have cast up at the seat of danger but we suffered no strain or great anxiety of mind. The odds were too heavily in our favour. Soon we were close to the summit of the icefall, only a few crevasses remained. What faced us now was a weary plod which was to continue for four hours. We rested often and at one of these we saw four tiny figures far below on "the Corridor." It was Anderson and Wilson with their Sherpas coming up with further provisions to Camp IV. The big build-up was continuing, our position for the final assault becoming stronger. Already twenty-eight loads were at Camp III or above.

Distance had again deceived us. It always appeared that a few yards more and the angle would level out; it never did. Our pace was slow; we were all conscious of the altitude and the soft snow did not help. Fox remarked that never before had he suffered such a hard mountain day. We seemed to be immensely high; Phurbi Chyachu which soared so majestically above the Base Camp appeared from here quite insignificant. Over the col to the north of it we could now look, and beyond it in Tibet, were noble unknown peaks. In front, obscured partly by its eastern ridge was the "Big White Peak." There was nothing in its appearance to suggest defeat and no longer did it fill us with awe as when first we saw it, as an aloof, utterly remote triangle of snow.

Still we plodded on but at last the angle did relent. Even so we were too far from the col overlooking the Dorje Lhakpa Glacier to reach it that day, for already wisps of cloud were hovering round the tops. If we were to survey, then we must do so while we could. It was 11 a.m. and for half an hour we worked in this cwm of great peaks until deteriorating weather put an end to our task. We lingered there no longer, the wind was rising and we were glad of an excuse to leave.

We were in good spirits; we had accomplished almost all that we had hoped to do. The way, the only way through the icefall had been found, the last essential survey station had been

taken, it had been desperately hard work, but we had not collapsed and now on our downward track the past exhaustion was forgotten. We had thought only for long drinks of hot lemonade and the relaxation and the pleasure of each others company which soon we should enjoy in the tents below. I doubt if either Fox and I ever in our mountain experience, felt more contented in mind than on that fatal descent. Great too was the relief to be walking downhill and we made a merry speed in keeping with our spirits, as fast almost as on lower mountains and we found now no need for rests.

But if we did not rest we did once pause and this sealed our fate. We had been in cloud almost from the summit of the glacier guided only by our upward tracks. A few crevasses warned us when we reached the head of the icefall but we had not now the visibility to know exactly our position. When we heard an avalanche for half a minute we stood and listened. We were not alarmed; it was close but not dangerously so. It was the usual small snow avalanche of the kind that every day we heard and saw; behind it there was no great force. This had not the roar of the great ice avalanche that we had seen come down the face of Phurbi Chyachu, there was no boom to it, just a gentle swish of slowly sliding snow. When silence had returned we continued in our tracks.

A minute later we recognised our position. The crevasse on our right was the one by which to turn, we had that morning hazarded the icecliffs. Now on the descent, our moments of peril, if so they could be described, would be even briefer. We certainly gave them little thought. Soon we were at the furthest point, the point nearest to the cliffs. We turned the crevasse and were now walking back towards the centre of the glacier and safety, walking between two great crevasses. Thirty seconds more and we should be free from danger, but our thoughts were of other things and nothing ominous clouded them.

Then, just as the last man on the rope had turned the crevasse we heard it; a mighty roar from high above. There was no mistaking what it was or where it was coming. It was a great ice avalanche. We ran as fast as we could, every second the thunder swelling, but we could only make a few paces before it was on us. We knelt down, crouched, pathetically braced for the impact, as if with our muscles we could beat off its force. In the last second

I looked round, on the upward slope was the gaping crevasse which gave a feeble hope, behind a great cloud of snow advancing and outlined against it, bent and braced as myself, three figures, Crosby Fox, Mingma Tenzing and Lakpa Noorbu. That was the last I ever saw of them.

I was in motion pushed by an irresistible force, then almost immediately I felt myself falling. I knew I was going into a crevasse, but my fall was not far. A great force of snow followed me which desperately with my arms I tried to ward off. Buried, or partly buried I must have been for all was dark yet still with my arms I could fight.

How long I lay there I cannot say, but abruptly vision returned. All was strangely still and quiet. I was 25 feet down at the extreme end of the crevasse. Where I lay it was narrow, my body almost spanned the walls. Although still alive and apparently uninjured my position would have given me little comfort, but I could now see that in the centre of the crevasse where it was widest, the avalanche debris had formed a cone, mounting up to within a few feet of the lip of the crevasse. At least I knew I could get out.

I was still suffering from shock and it was some time before the full horror of the situation entered my dazed mind. I could not yet believe that Fox and the Sherpas were not just outside, unharmed as was I; the awful alternative I refused to grasp. When I had struggled free from the snow I tried to shout to them, but no sound could I make. I was gasping for breath as I had never done before and for some minutes I had to lean against the wall before I could make a second attempt. But my voice was lost, absorbed by the ice around me. I had strength now to move and I made a few steps up the slope towards the centre of the crevasse to be halted shortly by the rope. Before I had not thought to look for it; the rope that tied me to my companions 20 feet part. It was not broken. I followed it back to the little pit from which I had emerged. It descended vertically into the floor. Only a few feet could I pull free; no portent could be more ominous. I had now no axe and I could dig only with my hands. At first the snow was soft and a little of the rope I cleared, but soon I came to hard compacted snow and ice in which I could make no impression. I knew then there was no hope, below that solid floor no man could live.

I untied from the rope and climbed out. For some time I walked around trying to orientate myself. I peered into another crevasse, likewise filled with debris, one of the dark pits round which we had walked that morning, but I could see that no victims could be there. The crevasse into which I had fallen was immediately below the position the whole party must have occupied at the time the avalanche struck. All must have the same grave, yet with a fragment of hope I looked around and called out once more. It was an awful deathlike silence into which my voice feebly penetrated. Nothing relieved the whiteness around me. I felt very much alone.

I need not describe my descent nor the thoughts with which I was accompanied. Soon, a little below, I picked out our morning's tracks which I hastily followed, now crawling over the more dangerous of the snow bridges. I stopped at the pathetically empty tents of Camp IV and found from Anderson and Wilson a message. They were having trouble with the Primus stove at the lower camp and had decided to return that day to Camp I. This was a blow indeed. I packed a rucksack with a sleeping bag and a duvet jacket; I felt strong enough then but some sort of reaction might follow before I could go so far. Again I set out.

Fortunately there was no difficulty and little danger. I was in a sorry state of mind but as I came down the last slopes leading to Camp III, imagine my joy to see, standing beside the tents, a figure in red windproofs; Anderson. The camp after all was occupied. Soon kindly hands were looking after me while I told my tragic tale.

Only I had seen the crevasse, I only knew there was no hope. With the others some slender hope still existed. Wilson with Pamba Tenzing immediately set off for Camp I to carry the news; a fine effort for they had already suffered a most exhausting day. We left behind could only wait for the morning. I was glad of the quiet comfort of Anderson's company until later sleeping pills relieved me of that agony of mind from which I suffered.

Prompt action was immediate upon Wilson's arrival at Camp I. Jones and Ang Temba set off in falling light for Base Camp to collect the spades. After snatching a brief spell of sleep they departed at 3 a.m. returning to Camp I from where Tallon and

Pemba Gyalgen now took over and in the first light raced up the glacier, followed a little behind by the former pair. Wilson and Pemba Tenzing came up later with an additional tent and sleeping bags. With them there burned a feeble flicker of hope expressed by both Sherpas and Sahibs in this prolonged and hectic endeavour.

Anderson and I did not share this spur but we also were away early and were soon making our way along "the Corridor." It was from this height that we first saw the others far below on the glacier, two pairs, as yet mere specks, but moving fast. Indeed we did not have long to wait at Camp IV before we were joined by Tallon and Pemba Gyalgen, and Jones and Ang Temba were not far behind. Their climb that day was a remarkable performance of speed and endurance which deserves the greatest credit. Only I knew it was to no purpose.

The sun was now fully on the ice cliffs, under which we should have to work. The possibility of a second avalanche was remote but nevertheless it seemed needless to risk further the lives of our Sherpas and accordingly only Anderson, Tallon and myself climbed up to the crevasse. Lhakpa and Pemba set to work to prepare a well deserved drink with which to welcome the arrival of Jones and Ang Temba.

When my companions saw the end of the rope from which I had untied and the solid floor of the crevasse in which it was embedded any hope they may have still nursed was soon shattered. We calculated that the two Sherpas must be buried under not less than 50 feet of debris, somewhere in the centre of the crevasse. In the narrow end, perhaps wedged between its walls, was Fox, buried under not more than 10 feet of ice and possibly much less. It was there that we set to work, one at a time, crouched in that confined space, digging into the ice. We changed places every few minutes, for we were soon gasping for breath, while one sat outside to give warning of an avalanche. For over an hour we worked, but so solid and hard was the floor that after that time we had gained little more than a foot. At least we could confirm yesterday's judgement; death must have been instantaneous.

It was now midday and I felt we should no longer expose ourselves to further danger in this fruitless labour. We would come again tomorrow before the sun was high, but for the

moment we would abandon the scene and join the anxious party waiting below at the camp. Indeed it was a melancholy group that sat disconsolately round the tents. They did not need to see our faces or hear our report to know that the miracle for which they had hoped and which had spurred them to such resolute effort, was not to be; our early return was evidence enough.

Perhaps the full force of the tragedy had not made its impact upon the Sherpas until that moment. Our return and the sight of the empty tents brought it forcibly home. It was natural that it should be as great a blow for them as it was for us. They came all from the same village; all had lost friends, some relatives. They are simple child-like people whose faces portray their emotions and now they were as quick to tears as before they had been to laughter. But it was not only for their own race they wept, Fox was loved as leader and man not only by ourselves, and his loss took some share of their grief. Lhakpa Tsering, the least sophisticated and the most lovable of our men, emerged weeping from the tent holding in his hands, plaintively, Fox's few personal possessions, his face reflecting the desolation that filled all our hearts. In these solemn moments of mutual anguish the gulf between us of race, religion, language and culture was firmly spanned and we felt a close affinity with our Sherpa friends.

While soft snow avalanches fell leisurely down the slopes of the Ladies' Peak, which we now watched with a fresh apprehension, we sat outside in the sun and discussed the mournful facts, while gaining some little comfort from each other's company. No hope was there now in anyone's heart and only a little hope was there of recovery of one of the bodies; yet to do this we would make one further effort and certainly the Sherpas must see for themselves the scene of the tragedy. This was to be done the next day, early too, before the sun could unleash further destruction. Jones and Tallon with their Sherpas stayed at Camp IV while Anderson and I returned to the lower camp where Wilson was waiting anxiously for news. Signals for next morning were arranged so that if necessary we could be called back. I reproached myself afterwards for this decision for it was really my place now to share also this second search, but I confess I shunned a further night in that tent of tragic association, still littered with Crosby's



possessions. If it was a breach of duty I was forgiven, but it was no pleasant night for the others either.

Again I was grateful for Anderson's company. This time drugs left us unaffected; neither they or physical weariness could still our thoughts and we pondered long on future plans. For the moment we hated these mountains and there was little heart for further work. Certainly we could no longer attempt to climb the "Big White Peak"; not only were we now too weak as a party but never could we ask our Sherpas to carry loads up the glacier round the crevasse in which their friends were buried. We could not ask this even though the risk was reasonable. But if we could not climb there was no limit to the other work we could do. The map we had so carefully made was lost, this we must do again, and more; on both sides of this central glacier we could extend it to the very fringes of the Jugal Himal, even to the Langtang. A good map would be no mean memorial to Crosby Fox and while there were no peaks here we could climb, perhaps on some glacier to the east or west, a lesser mountain we might find whose ascent would reduce our failure. Only in work could be escape from our gloom. Discussing these plans some enthusiasm returned but this was not work in which I could for some time share. My own duty was clear; I must immediately and with the greatest haste return to Katmandu to report the accident.

To fulfil these plans no time could be lost. Certainly we should all be glad to leave the glacier, but before we could all retreat there was work to do, there were three vital survey stations to be retaken. Regrettably the remaining instruments were at Base Camp and there would have been a sad delay had not Anderson volunteered to get them. Accordingly early the next morning, while Wilson and I waited for the signals we did not really expect, Anderson and Lhakpa Tserring left on what was to be a further achievement of endurance. In eleven hours of continual marching they descended to Base Camp and returned to Camp III, this without the spur that had driven the others; they had just a sense of duty and superb physical fitness.

Wilson and I waited a few restless hours watching for the signals. This enforced idleness was no help to our spirits, but only added to our gloom. It was some relief to see at 11 a.m. four burdened figures on "the Corridor." Camp IV was being

abandoned. They had taken the Sherpas up that morning to the crevasse, a little further they had dug but all could see that their efforts in that hard ice and confined space were fruitless. The Sherpas were satisfied that nothing more could be done and were not anxious to remain longer. The ice will be their tomb, where forever they will be preserved and perhaps it is appropriate that this should be so.

In spite of the strain of the last two days and the fatigue obvious on their faces, Tallon and Wilson offered to remain two more days on the glacier to remake the map. And so I left them with their Sherpas, and Jones, Ang Temba and I made our way down to Base Camp where much work awaited me before I could depart for Katmandu. Even this journey, so often trodden, was not without its excitements for soon I was swinging breathless ten feet down between ice walls. I was grateful for Jones' prompt action with the rope. A little below Camp II we met Anderson and Lhakpa Tserring returning and I was glad of the ice axe they had brought me, so that in the final icefall there were no more abrupt descents. We reached Base Camp in heavy snow,

The following evening Anderson returned soon to be glued for a whole day to the typewriter and on the evening of 4th May the whole expedition was safely at Base Camp. Successfully Tallon and Wilson had plotted the upper reaches of the glacier. The party with an interesting programme of exploration and survey was left in charge of Anderson and the next day with Murari and Passang Chittong I left for Katmandu on the saddest of all missions.

## AFTER THE ACCIDENT

by W. Anderson

SPENCELEY left Base Camp on 5th May; after much preparation and the usual last minute delays the party finally got away at 9 a.m.

Out of the original 14 members of the party eight now remained at Base; Wilson, Jones, Tallon and myself with the Sherpas, Pemba Tensing, Ang Temba, Pemba Gyalgen and Lakpa Tsering. Spenceley expected to be away for two weeks. During that time our task was to visit the remaining survey stations at Base East, Base West and Heartache, the second station on the East ridge of the Dorje Lakpa Glacier, and thus to re-draw the map to the stage at which it had been completed before the accident. In addition to this we hoped to cross the Dorje Lakpa Glacier and establish a camp on the far side from which, in addition to survey work, we could investigate Monica Jackson's suggestion of a high level route to the Langtang and possibly attempt such a route after Spenceley's return. To establish the existence of such a route and the further possibility of exploration in the Langtang with a return journey down the unknown Langtang Gorge would provide some consolation for the loss of the Big White Peak.

In order to carry out our immediate programme it was necessary to re-visit the site of Camp II on the Phurbi Chyachumbu glacier to recover tents, stoves and assorted gear which had been dumped there after the accident. I estimated that the whole party would be required for this task and it was planned to leave about 5.30 a.m. on the day following Spenceley's departure, in order to be clear of the ice-fall above Camp I before the sun got to work on the cliffs above. Over early breakfast it was agreed that the food dumped at Camp II need not be recovered and that Wilson and I could spend our time more usefully in reconnoitring the crossing of the Dorje Lakpa glacier.

We were able to see the carrying party off shortly after 5.30 a.m. on 6th May, whilst we ourselves got away about 6 a.m. We followed the route Spenceley and I had used on the approach to our first survey station. This time we were properly acclimatised and although the going was steep it was possible using crampons to reach the fork in the gully in 1½ hours. Most

of the snow had gone from the upper section of the gully and we scrambled up over steep grass and boulders to the col where a few oddly arranged stones marked Monica Jackson's earlier visit. We looked eagerly across the Dorje Lakpa glacier to the South ridge of the mountain which bounds the glacier on its Eastern edge, but the clouds were early and were rapidly enfolding the ridge. Spenceley and I had on two previous occasions seen this ridge but had been so busily engaged in survey, in order to complete our panoramic observations before the clouds appeared, that we had not studied the approaches to it nor the possibilities of a camp site on its slopes. Wilson and I were denied the opportunity on this occasion too, but by descending on crampons to a promontory a few hundred feet below our col we were able to see a possible route down to the glacier on our side and a route across it to moraine heaps on the opposite edge. This was all we could do though we waited in vain for the clouds to clear from the opposite slopes. We returned in worsening snow to our col and glissaded down the slopes up which we had climbed that morning. Since we were early and had had an easy day we spent a little time exploring the tarns and unroofed buildings of Pomba Serebu before returning to Base Camp. The snow had now left this region and we were able to identify the camp site which Monica Jackson's party had occupied two years previously.

We were feeling happier now than we had done since the accident. We felt that we could after to-day turn our backs on the Phurbi Chyachumbu glacier and its tragic memories and look forward hopefully to regaining our confidence by work in a new area; work which we hoped would be a lasting tribute to Fox and our two Sherpas and which would justify the faith which had inspired the Expedition right from its inception to the day of the tragedy.

Wilson and I talked on these lines as we wandered slowly into Base Camp. We planned to have a light lunch and then deliberate over the evening meal we would share with the carrying party whom we half expected would have returned already. A note we found on the survey box, which served as our table in the dining annex, shattered our renewed enthusiasm. It had been written by Tallon "Another accident. Lakpa and Dan at Camp I. Lakpa with broken leg below the knee and bad cuts. Dan has dislocated shoulder and possibly other injuries . . ."

The bottom again fell out of our world. With heavy hearts we made soup and after a hasty meal I set off for Camp I with the medical supplies and odd items of food Tallon had requested in his note. It was late in the day for such a journey. Snow conditions were bad and the couloir more unpleasant than ever. I had a nasty moment when both my footholds gave way simultaneously on the traverse into the first couloir. The fixed rope proved its worth on this occasion. It was a sad party that I found at Camp I. Tallon had of course already been back to Base to collect medical supplies and food and under Jones' direction, had made a wonderful job of bandaging and treating the patients.

Both patients were extremely cheerful. Lakpa had no complaint about himself but was pathetically worried about my torch which I had entrusted to his keeping and which he had mislaid.

In spite of his suffering his main concern throughout his disability was that he could no longer be of service to the Expedition. Jones was cheerful though in considerable pain and was very well aware of the seriousness of the situation. The route between Camp I and Base was difficult for fit men and the prospect of getting two badly injured men over this route and subsequently to Katmandu was not at all encouraging.

The accident had happened on the steep slopes approaching Camp I after crossing the second couloir on the outward journey. Tallon and Jones had been at the head of the party and so had not seen Lakpa fall. The following is the probable sequence of events leading to the accident. This is based on the accounts of Tallon and Jones and questions asked of the Sherpas:—

“The accident occurred whilst the party was crossing a slope of frozen grass interspersed with thin snow where a rope would have offered no protection. They were within 300 yards of Camp I and the time about 7.15 hours. It seems that Lakpa Tsering slipped and that Pemba Gyalgen tried unsuccessfully to save him. Both rolled down the slope until Pemba Gyalgen was able to arrest his fall by the use of his ice-axe. Lakpa Tsering continued his slide out of control. The party were moving in line and Dan Jones, who was second man following Arthur Tallon, was disturbed by the noise of the fall and in turning to ascertain its cause he too lost his balance and fell down the slope. He tried unsuccessfully to arrest his

slide with his ice-axe and lost control. Both he and Lakpa fell over a small cliff and disappeared from sight. Tallon and the three Sherpas found them close together and both conscious, having fallen about 200 feet.

They were moved to Camp I without delay, where they were made comfortable in the tents.”

After Tallon had given Jones morphia we made an attempt to “reduce” his arm (to use his own terminology). After three painful attempts the arm which had hitherto laid close to his side had been reduced to an odd looking shape that stuck out. However Jones assured us that if not successful our manipulations had done no harm but that he must be resigned to having it out of place until he could reach a hospital when an operation would put it right. He was in frequent and great pain which fortunately grew less as the days went by.

Having seen that the party had all that was needed for the night there was little else to be done and for the safety of those returning to Base Camp there was no time to lose. We felt that Tallon would be of most value in continuing with his care for the patients. The Sherpas did not seem to feel the same need to stay with Lakpa and it was with apparent reluctance than Ang Temba at last agreed to do so. Pemba Gyalgen and Pemba Tensing could not shake the snow of Camp I from their feet quickly enough and we were soon travelling fast towards Base Camp. The Sherpas were quite justified in their anxiety to be away. It was 5.30 p.m. when we left, the journey was completed to the accompaniment of vivid lightning with soft snow falling and it was getting dark when we got in.

The following day, 7th May, Wilson and Pemba Tensing went to Camp I with more supplies. The storm was earlier that afternoon but Wilson returned by 1 p.m. with Ang Temba. I had begun improvising a stretcher using ration box lids and some spars Pemba Gyalgen provided. Our tools were on the Phurbi Chyachumbu glacier so that improvisation was the keynote and twine the means of securing. With reinforcing spars added the following day by Nima and Tensing Lama the stretcher was ready and subsequently survived the journey to Katmandu without mishap.

A conference with Nima and Tensing Lama, Ang Temba acting as interpreter, produced a plan of action which gave us

renewed hope. Our four Sherpas with the help of Tensing Lama undertook to carry Lakpa back to Base from Camp I on their backs using an "Everest" carrier. This was an undertaking which I had hardly thought possible but it was obviously the only way to make this difficult traverse. The stretcher would probably be used for the latter part of this journey where the ground was less steep. Tomorrow, 8th May, Pemba Gyalgen and I would prepare the route as well as possible particularly on the traverse into the main couloir, and spend the night at Camp I. Tallon and Pemba Tensing would return that day to Base and the following day, 9th May, all would return to Camp I early in the morning and bring Lakpa back to Base. Wilson would spend that night with Jones at Camp I. The following day, 10th May, all would return to Camp I leaving one Sherpa with Lakpa at Base, and bring Jones back; he felt sure he could walk back though at that stage he had great difficulty in moving about in the vicinity of Camp I even with assistance. Naturally getting him into and out of his sleeping bag was a long and for him a painful business. In helping him to compose himself for sleep the tent was almost wrecked on more than one occasion. Still he made a wonderful recovery and in the event negotiated the journey without undue distress. True on the dreaded traverse out of the main couloir a scene was enacted which could hardly have been surpassed in the most sensational of climbing stories or films. From my stance in the centre of the traverse I was in a good position to see Jones' feet shoot off their insecure holds as he ducked to avoid stones falling from above. His bad arm must have had a nasty jolt as he fell against the slope. The piton began slowly to draw out on being asked to support this unintended load. Fortunately prompt action by Tallon and Ang Temba restored equilibrium and quick movement out of the danger zone followed.

By comparison Lakpa's passage the previous day had been uneventful but like any job well done, the smoothness of the operation disguised the efficiency with which difficulties were overcome. Our Sherpas with help from Tensing Lama, who met them at the main couloir in his bare feet, accepted the challenge in a magnificent way. There were two false starts, after each of which Lakpa's position on the frame was re-adjusted until the most convenient position for the porter and the most durable

position for Lakpa were found; "endurable" because comfort was the last thing one would associate with Lakpa's position. He endured all things without complaint but the way he gripped my hand at one point whilst waiting for Tallon and Ang Temba to fix a rope bore mute testimony to his stoicism. It was good to see him safely installed in his tent at Base Camp though he was not really happy until Jones arrived the following day.

Meanwhile Nima Lama had recruited twelve men from Tempethang to carry Lakpa to Katmandu. These men arrived the same evening as Jones, 24 hours early, so once again we felt like inmates of an open zoo! Unfortunately unlike most occupants of zoos we had to feed our visitors. Still their high spirits and practical joking were a tonic to our overstrained nerves. However our distress could not have been very apparent as Jones complained that his journey to Base was made much more painful by the almost continuous laughter he was forced to undergo. The tensions of the last few days were now relaxing and our Tempethang men provided a welcome diversion from our own worries. The faces of those watching Tallon's operations to Lakpa's leg and face under Jones' direction were a study. Any attempt to record this on cine film was doomed as their attention was immediately distracted by the noise of the camera. The stretcher was strengthened and suitably tested by strapping two unwilling victims on it and lifting it off the ground. In spite of the groans of the stretcher and the shrieks of the victims the test was pronounced successful.

Wilson left Base Camp with Jones and Lakpa on the 12th May; George Spenceley would now be in Katmandu and was expected back on the 19th. It was quite likely that both parties would travel over the Nauling Lekh and therefore would most probably meet in four or five days time. Meanwhile Tallon and I had one week in which to complete the survey and if possible reconnoitre the high level route to the Langtang, the possibility of which Monica Jackson had suggested to us.

The survey stations on the Phurbi Chyachumbu glacier had been completed before Spenceley left for Katmandu but to bring the new map to the same state of completion as the original one we would again have to visit Base East and West and a station in the vicinity of Heartache. To complete the necessary re-sections and thus position many peaks on which we had only two

rays, and in some cases one, we had to establish a new station on the West side of the Dorje Lakpa glacier, which meant that we must locate a camp on that side of the glacier, which we hoped if time permitted to use as a base for our reconnaissance towards the Langtang.

We left at 6.15 a.m. on the 13th May with the survey gear, one Black's mountain tent and Fox's biouac tent. We had food for only two days but in spite of this limitation Pemba was carrying over 50 lbs. and Tallon and I each between 45 and 50 lbs. Many times we had occasion to regret the weight and bulk of the survey gear but never more than on this occasion when the penalty we paid was not only our toil and sweat but the restriction of our food to a minimum which did not allow for being tent bound by bad weather nor would we be able to seize a chance of good weather for our reconnaissance.

We were up at our col in two hours using crampons for much of the way. Visibility was good and we could trace a line along a broad and not too steep snow shelf which led from the moraine above the far side of the glacier leftwards towards a hidden col which we presumed to be the one said by Monica Jackson to give access to the Langtang. The upper part of this route was hidden but we judged the shelf to continue on steeper snow into a shallow gully leading to the col. Before turning out of sight into this gully a line of steep crags caused our shelf first to steepen then to form an almost level platform above these crags. This platform seemed free of fallen stones and was the obvious site for our camp. It was a long way and perhaps 2,000 feet above the point at which we would cross the glacier. To reach this spot with our present loads on an unreconnoitred route was an ambitious project, but we were early in the day and feeling fit. Pemba wanted to know if we were to camp on our present col but we assured him otherwise and proceeded on crampons steeply down on good snow towards the cliffs where Wilson and I with the eye of faith had forecast the possibility of a gully giving access to the glacier itself. We found such a gully; no more than a steep scree gully but menaced by unstable crags in its upper section; owing to our early start we were down before the day's stone falls began. An occasional stone warned us of the need for haste but we were soon in safety on the glacier. The glacier at this point was dry and we made towards the opposite

moraines in an erratic path dictated by the many but fortunately narrow crevasses.

Between us and the point from which it would be possible to climb the main moraine and get on to the snow shelf on which our subsequent route lay, medial moraines intersected our route. A small ice fall coming in on our right was no doubt responsible for these. Erratically disposed ridges of moraine solidly welded together by ice do not form an ideal highway and we found this section, though short, most trying, particularly as we were now exposed to the direct rays of the sun on our backs and the reflections from so many white surfaces in our faces. Before we embarked on this section however an enormous boulder perched on a column of ice which had melted away to leave the boulder overhanging on the south side offered tempting shade. We took advantage of this to have our second breakfast and whilst thus employed heard the gurgling of running water. A few blows with an ice-axe revealed a stream running under the ice close by and we were able to fill water bottles and drink to repletion. Naturally enough this became a recognised stopping place on all subsequent journeys, welcome shade, unlimited water without the need to melt snow or carry full water bottles and at a point half way between Base Camp and our Dorje Lakpa camp was too fortunate a combination to resist.

We reached our shelf by 12 noon having negotiated the main moraine at a point where it was thinly bound together by moss and grass. Our further route followed the shelf to our left though at these close quarters it seemed more a field of soft heart-breaking snow. We had perhaps a climb of 1,500 feet and a distance of  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles to cover; it was a matter of determined slogging. Tallon seemed fitter than either Pemba or I and took the lead. We came in sight of the rocks with the ledge above, which we had selected as our camp site. It seemed a long way, the slope steepened and we roped up to traverse above a deep gully which dropped steeply to the Rakti Khola a few thousand feet below. The snow was not good and on subsequent journeys we avoided this section by a slightly longer route going up to the right and approaching our shelf from a shallow col to the north and slightly above it. Though a little longer this route was easier and safer in bad snow, in fact a glissade was possible on the return journey. The psychological, not to mention the physical,

advantages of approaching camp in this manner are not to be discounted. We knew we had done well to push a camp so far in one journey—the col could not be much more than one hour away and we relaxed whilst Pemba prepared our dinner.

We had a clear sky and good frost that night and got away about 6.30 a.m. on 14th May with light loads carrying only the survey gear and personal gear for the day. We rounded the corner just beyond our camp and found that the snow did indeed continue in the form of a shallow gully to a col to the right of a rocky peak which we identified as the one Monica Jackson and Elizabeth Stark had climbed. We reached this on crampons in about one hour and looked across to new peaks—the outlines of the Langtang group, the higher peaks of which were not visible. A steep snow gully dropped below our feet but a series of glacier ledges did indeed seem to offer a route to the Langtang whilst one or two dividing spurs might lead into the Langtang gorge itself. Prospects seemed hopeful but a reconnaissance was necessary to establish whether these ledges could be reached safely from our col. There were one or two sections, particularly where some smooth looking slabs obtruded which might prove difficult or even demand a long descent and re-ascent if a route were to be found. However this was all speculation and would need to be put to the test. Our immediate need—and no time was to be lost—was to find a survey point which would enable us to locate our position from previous stations and fixes, and to obtain rays on to the new peaks we could see. Our present col was useless for the former purpose and so we descended a little, traversing under Monica Jackson's peak (which would have made a good survey point but was too tough a proposition to climb from our col) and so reached the col on the other side of this peak which the ladies' party had used as a starting point for their rock climb. We found an ideal survey station on the col itself from which we also had an excellent view at close range of the formidable rock and ice cliffs on the South face of the Dorje Lakpa peak. We saw the true summit now quite clearly for the first time, the ice spire which we had in our earlier survey mistaken for the summit was really much lower and separated by a deep gap. Neither was the ridge on which we were standing continuous with the main ridge of this subsidiary summit, it was broken by a gap from which glaciers fell steeply on each side.

We had a very good view of Phurbi Chyachumbu and of the rock outcrop on the intervening ridge above Base Camp which we hoped to reach in the next day or so and use instead of our previous "Heartache" station. The weather was perfect, hardly the suggestion of a breeze and excellent visibility. We completed the survey in comfort by 11 a.m. before the first clouds began to form over the high summits and were back in camp by mid-day on softening snow.

A review of the food convinced us that there was no sensible alternative to a return to Base Camp tomorrow. The reconnaissance towards the Langtang would have to wait until we could carry over food for a subsequent through journey. In any case we had the survey to finish and with luck could bag the heartache station tomorrow—given an early start and good weather.

We left camp at 6.30 a.m. on 15th May, and were setting up the plane table by 10.30 a.m. on the little rocky promontory which was so impressive a pinnacle when seen from Base Camp but quite unimposing from this side. After a purgatorial slog from the glacier during which we had to resist all temptation to rest we enjoyed a rocky scramble which brought us to a smooth slab forming the top of our pinnacle and giving just enough room for the plane table. Pemba had been unable to understand our haste and had caused some annoyance and delay by his re-roping technique when we came to the start of our rock climb. Apparently what was a good enough knot for his waist loop on snow was nothing like good enough for rock. Our Sherpas were nervous of rock climbs, these being largely I suppose outside their experience. They climbed like monkeys but their technique left much to be desired and the rope was more of a liability than an insurance to the rest of the party.

One hour's intensive effort and we had finished our observations just as the first clouds formed over the higher summits. This was a wonderful eyrie with the Big White Peak and Dorje Lakpa to the north whilst innumerable ranges of hills stretched to the south. We stayed a few minutes in the hot sunshine on the warm rocks admiring the view and marvelling at our good fortune to be amongst so many untrodden peaks. The weather was indeed favouring us and Tallon was able to complete both Base East and West stations the following morning, 16th May; I felt lazy but

did a few jobs around Base and took some publicity photographs. The map was now complete to the stage reached before the fatal accident (except for Fox's last station) and we had added the Dorje Lakpa station. We had 12 peaks positioned on the map and with the panoramic photographs and sketches it should be possible to produce a creditable and reliable map of the area.

Carrying loads of between 45 and 50 lbs., this time mainly of food, we left Base Camp at the record early time of 5.45 a.m. on 17th May. The wisdom of this proved itself as we were at the Dorje Lakpa camp by 12 noon having been able to use crampons to our col and down to the perched block before the sun reached us. Actually we were in sun after taking crampons off below the col, which dried off the rocks nicely. Again the sun obliged us as we paused for our second breakfast at the perched block. We had found an easier and safer way off the glacier on the Base Camp side on our last journey by using a snow tongue on the moraine and so avoiding the gully used on our first journey.

Our arrival at camp was followed by thunder and lightning: snow fell. The storm continued throughout the afternoon though it eased off later and we were able to get away at 7 a.m. the following morning 18th May in the usual bright sunshine. We were carrying food for a depot on the Langtang route and were at the col by 8 a.m., the snow was good for crampons and a short descending traverse brought us to a rib of snow which took us some 200 feet down the gully until it was possible to traverse right under the slabby rocks and so on to the level glacier which crossed our route having fallen in a series of ice falls from a gap on the Dorje Lakpa ridge. The problem was either to leave our depot here and return across the traverse before avalanches became a danger or to push on further returning after the avalanche danger had passed. We decided on the latter plan and pushed on slowly on softening snow until at 11 a.m. we reached a small snow col at about 16,500 feet (according to our aneroids). The world dropped suddenly away at our feet. A steep snow gully led down for about 3,000 feet to a big and much receded glacier which seemed to cut back in a great curve into the Langtang itself. There was thus no continuous high level route though a descent to the glacier at this point seemed possible. We dumped our loads and reconnoitred a little for an easier way down to the glacier. To the south of our col the snow slopes

seemed to lead continuously to the moraines below. The clouds were now down and we returned on our outward tracks in rapidly worsening snow. By 3 p.m. we were begging tea from Pemba. We had had an interesting if slightly disappointing day and tomorrow we looked forward to meeting Spenceley in Base Camp if he had been able to keep to the proposed time table. We hoped that time would permit a crossing to the Langtang glacier and perhaps a little exploration with a return to Katmandu down the Balephi Gorge itself or over the Nauling Lekh. All this was speculation and depended on what news Spenceley had for us.

It was sad to reflect at such times as these on the tragedy and misfortune that had so split our happy party. After days of intense activity such as Tallon and I had just experienced the contrast between what should have been a happy reunion at Base Camp with all the party and the sad remnant of the Expedition was all the more poignant. Misfortune breeds anxiety and we were greatly relieved after an arduous journey on new snow back to Base Camp on the following day—the 19th May—to find Spenceley with Murari and Pasang, just returned. Spenceley said he had found the heat of the valleys trying and much hotter than on the approach march. He had returned over the Nauling Lekh where it was somewhat cooler but he had made long marches and looked tired although quite fit.

They had brought with them Kami Lama—headman of Okhreni who had acted as guide over the Nauling Lekh route. Nina Lama and a few other Tempathang men had also joined the party so Base Camp was quite a lively place once more. A few hours later with the arrival of 14 porters from Okhreni who had been engaged to carry equipment back to Katmandu our camp was full to overflowing. These men had by their own choice arrived a day earlier than required; they wished to see the high snows, they said. I suspect the opportunity to inspect ourselves and belongings and to acquire any surplus items was a more immediate motive. It snowed hard that afternoon so the high peaks were hidden and the Okhreni men, who seemed to withstand the cold less well than their Tempathang brethren, were a pathetic group huddling under our dining shelter singing mournfully to the feeble accompaniment of a mouth organ. It snowed all night too and although we lent them as many spare clothes as we could muster they must have had a miserable night. These Sherpa

villagers are very self sufficient and independent and so far as our property was concerned scrupulously honest. This however did not prevent them from being determined scroungers and in view of the difficulty we had in retrieving our clothing it appears that the word "lend" cannot be translated into Sherpa language.

Next day, 20th May, the snow fell intermittently and an Okhrene Sherpa clad in Tallon's yellow anorak and a pair of snow goggles spent all day beating four small holes for the memorial plaque into a sheltering boulder near the tents. Meanwhile we struggled to pack gear ready for tomorrow's evacuation, 30 or so pairs of curious eyes watching our every move. We were expected to supply our visitors with all sorts of delicacies such as notebooks, pencils, ball pens and indeed anything they fancied, and which we could persuade ourselves we were not justified in taking home. The division of the surplus food nearly caused a civil war between the rival factions of Tempathang and Okhrene and not for the first time did we regret the presence of our uninvited guests from the former community. However after endless discussions and the insertion of numerous codicils in the agreement an arrangement satisfactory to both parties was arrived at. Peace reigned whilst the spoils were distributed. My lasting memory of the incident is of two Okhrene men squatting down solemnly opening tins of porridge, pouring the contents on to the ground and gleefully bounding off with the invaluable empty tins.

Spenceley had made arrangements for the party to be back in Katmandu on the 29th and so there seemed little hope of exploration in the Langtang or a descent of the Langtang Khola. The unknown factors of such a trip called for more time than was available but much questioning of the Okhrene men and the few Tempathang men who had come with them revealed the existence of a route to yak pastures in the upper reaches of the Langtang Gorges. These pastures were not far from a geographical feature called The Three Lakes and the existence of a high level route between this latter point and the five holy lakes called Panch Pokari seemed to be in no doubt. Panch Pokari was prominently marked on our otherwise vague maps which also gave the surprising information that an annual fair was held at this spot in July. At any rate we could be confident of a well marked track from Panch Pokari taking us on to the Nauling Lekh route of Spenceley's return march, Panch Pokari could also

be reached from Tempathang and in fact it appeared that this was the route taken by the Tempathang men in reaching their grazing grounds in the upper Langtang. We could obtain no information concerning a route up the gorge itself and were forced to the conclusion that the walls of the gorge were probably impassable and in any event the forest would be so thick in parts as to involve much expert and lengthy toil with the kukri. The probability of danger from bears, leopards or other wild life was also a serious consideration.

In view of this information it was decided that Spenceley and I with Pemba Gyalgen should leave next day 21st May, re-occupy the Dorje Lakpa camp and then traverse the route pioneered by Tallon and myself, pick up the food depot, descend and cross the Langtang glacier and find the three lakes. Two of the Okhrene men, Kami Lama's son Pasang and his more stolid friend Noorbu volunteered to meet us at this latter point, travelling via Tempathang, in order to assist with the gear. We arranged to meet them at the three lakes on the third day. They would clearly have liked to have accompanied us all the way but had no mountaineering experience nor the necessary equipment. As it was we had to equip them with basketball boots, warm clothes and sleeping bags and very proud they were of being chosen for this special task. I must confess to certain feelings of doubt as to the advisability of arranging such a rendezvous in a spot none of us had ever seen and whose location from the many verbal descriptions we heard seemed to be of a very fluid nature. However we were here largely for adventure and since the available information was so conflicting we could at least establish the truth and thus add a little more to the meagre knowledge existing about this remote corner of the world.

I was sorry that Tallon could not make this journey but someone had to accompany the porters back to Katmandu, also we needed a survey station from a point on the Nauling Lekh. He had done most of the work on the new survey and this was obviously his task. Thus it was with many regrets that Spenceley and I said au revoir to Tallon on the morning of the 21st May and turned our backs on the remnants of Base Camp which was rapidly disappearing into coolie loads. Soon there would be little to show that this desolate spot had once been the centre of so many hopes and plans, of disappointments and tragedy. But places have



no memory. The events which our farewell recalled as we climbed again to the col which Spenceley and I had first reached in the very early days of the Expedition are retained in our own memories and whilst sadness was the undertone of mood anticipation of a new adventure gradually replaced this. Pemba too shared our feelings, he had been packing Lakpa Noorbu's kit which he would take with him from Katmandu to Sola Khumbu and was obviously distressed as we climbed up to the col.

On reaching the col we bade farewell to Phurbi Chyachu before descending to the glacier. In spite of this being my third visit to the Dorje Lakpa camp it was made very enjoyable because of my light load. Pemba staggered under a large load and was not slow in making comparisons with our small sacks. Our pantomime expressing difficulty in lifting them from the ground did not convince him but brought the old grin back and our party was cheerful once more.

We reached the Dorje Lakpa camp about 2.30 p.m. in a thick mist. It was exceptionally mild and avalanches had thundered down for many hours past. Next morning, 22nd May, our loads increased by the camping gear, we crossed the col following the route Tallon and I had previously taken. A bear had also recently taken this route but in the reverse direction as its tracks in the soft snow showed. It had followed our tracks over the col and approached within two hundred yards of our camp. It is probable that it had arrived the previous afternoon after we had occupied the tents. We considered ourselves fortunate not to have arrived to find the Goldilocks story reversed and a bear in our sleeping bags!

We saw many animal tracks in the snow during the course of the Expedition but had never made closer acquaintance with their originators. Even the abominable snowman avoided us though Pemba pointed out some torn up shrubs which he claimed were Yeti food. Pasang was our nearest approach to a Yeti; he claimed to have seen one face to face and I doubt if the two could have been separately identified.

The snow in the gully was less reliable than when Tallon and I had first descended owing to the milder weather and there were recent avalanche tracks across the traverse where none had been before. However at that time of day we were safe enough and with a little care on the sections of harder snow we soon

traversed the steep parts; a steady plod brought us to the food depot which we reached about 11 a.m.

We descended 1,000 feet in crampons on steep snow and expected to be able to identify the three lakes—our rendezvous with the Ohkreni Sherpas—across the Langtang glacier which was now below us. The clouds were again unusually early and visibility worsened as we sat on the top of a buttress outcropping from the snow. I climbed the short distance to the top of the buttress and deposited a "Madonna" given to us for the purpose by an acquaintance in Katmandu. What a wonderful vantage point the figure has commanding a view both up and down the great glacier and of the entrancing peaks on both sides of it. Unfortunately this same view which was most necessary to us was denied as the clouds thickened around us until we were enshrouded in mist once more. The rendezvous was timed for tomorrow and as we were within striking distance we elected to camp where we were. We had crossed from the Jugal Himal to this glacier which would give access to the high regions of the Langtang but time did not permit further exploration.

The following morning, 23rd May, exciting peaks surrounded us on all sides and looking across the glacier we could distinguish possible grazing grounds and the probable location of the three lakes. The descent to the glacier was not without incident for as we cramponed down on steep snow Pemba over-balanced under his huge load and needed timely help to regain his feet. A moraine of large ice-glazed blocks provided a frustrating skin barking route down the glacier until we picked up a faint track taking us across the glacier bed towards the grazing grounds in a most delightful valley with a clear stream bubbling through it. The track climbed and was lost in snow but in a short distance we came sure enough to three lakes, two of which were frozen and the third invisible under a covering of snow. Our Okhreni men were nowhere to be seen. Pemba's frequent ear splitting calls served only to emphasise the vastness and loneliness of our surroundings and the vagueness of our arrangements for this rendezvous were once again brought home to us.

We had arranged to meet two men on the third day after leaving Base Camp at a place neither party had previously visited. Neither party had a map of the area and our persistent attempts to convert the vaguely translated phrases of the Tempathang and

Okhreni men into a rough sketch map had been a complete failure. Our pencil lines meant nothing to them although furrowed brows were evidence of a sincere attempt to understand the white man's magic. Murari had been his most exasperating self whilst these discussions were in progress the day before we left Base Camp. Half a dozen Tempathang and Okhreni men were in the bungalow tent with Spenceley, Tallon, myself and Murari. The doorway was filled with the grinning curious faces of many others. Patiently we would phrase an unequivocal question such as, "Can we return down the Langtang Gorge?" Murari would translate this question in a bored sort of way as if to humour us. The sea of faces would register surprise, incredulity and finally sympathy. Then the gazes became even more curious and I wondered if they were speculating on the fate of our possessions in the event of our successful suicide. Murari was brief and a few minutes sufficed for a satisfactory translation of the question. Everyone started talking at once and we settled back to watch the pantomime. It was unbelievable that such a question could arouse so much excitement and we suspected that they had strayed from the point. A diversion was caused when Tallon's cigarette lighter produced a flame which burned in mid-air about one inch from the nozzle. Great amazement was shown and our question was forgotten until this mysterious fire had been observed by everyone. Indeed the more courageous wished to produce the effect for themselves and were delighted to find that the magic worked for them also. Tallon was reprimanded and the conversation steered back to more important matters. Many minutes later Murari was prevailed upon to give a free translation. The grandfather of an Okhreni man had once grazed yaks at a place called The Three Lakes. Since the address of the man's latest reincarnation was unknown we could pursue our queries no further. Had we been so able I do not believe a more satisfactory answer would have evolved. It seemed that knowledge of the Langtang Gorge was nil or was deliberately withheld, but the route to Panch Pokari was well known and a continuation to the Three Lakes was also spoken of with some confidence.

Realising the futility of further questioning we had decided to travel hopefully but had impressed upon Pemba the need to arrive at some more definite understanding with our two Okhreni

men about the location of the three lakes and the means of reaching such a rendezvous in three days.

We at any rate felt confident that we had reached the rendezvous but it was no thanks to Pemba who seemed to think that shouting frequently was the most suitable method of establishing contact with another person in a mountainous area approximate in size to that of the English Lake District. We hoped that the Okhreni men had a more reliable system of navigation.

We had an excellent reason for resting in this delightful spot. I relaxed in the warm sunshine, Pemba began to "brew up" whilst Spenceley climbed the snow slope beyond the lakes in the hope of seeing our missing porters and tracing the continuation of our route. He saw nothing of the porters but thought he had found out how our track went on and over our mid-day meal we debated our next step. In view of the amount of snow we felt that our Okhreni men might have found it impossible to reach the rendezvous. We knew they were nervous of snow, they had no ice axe and their only footgear were the basketball boots with which we had provided them. Loath though we were to carry our heavy loads any further we felt that valuable time might be lost if we were to spend the night here and we might be exposing our porters to danger on the snow covered tracks even supposing they could find their way to the three lakes.

Reluctantly therefore we shouldered our loads once again as the usual afternoon mist began to enshroud us. The value of Spenceley's timely reconnaissance was brought home to us for in spite of many anxious moments we had some idea of the topography and eventually came to a well marked "highway." We followed this thankfully until it too disappeared into a snowfield, and we spent an hour or more looking for its continuation without success, nearly losing each other and our loads, which we had put down.

We realised that until the mist cleared we were wasting valuable energy and would have camped but could find no suitable spot, and since we had lost the track a meeting with our porters was most unlikely. A return to the three lakes was the only sensible procedure when better visibility tomorrow would enable us to solve the mystery of the disappearing track and perhaps find our missing porters. We had no sooner taken this

decision than Pemba returned from his latest scouting expedition full of enthusiasm at having found a track. Closer questioning revealed some doubts as to its being the track we had lost but it was unlikely that there was more than one track in the area so we decided to allow Pemba to demonstrate his find. The "track" disintegrated before our eyes having led us up steepening grass slopes to the verge of a shallow snow filled gully. We entered the gully and climbed on dubious snow for 100 feet until we emerged on to a more level section of the hillside. We were well and truly lost but Pemba's faith in his still oft repeated yells was undaunted.

We had just decided to camp where we were and I was unpacking the first tent when a faint shout answered Pemba's yells. Shouts soon echoed to and fro and seemed to be the only thing that penetrated the mist. Pemba's vocal radar guided us down the hillside we had just toiled up with so much effort and we found our porters at the spot where we had first found our "highway" about three hours previously. Expressions of mutual joy were exchanged and food changed hands rapidly. The loads of Spenceley and myself were reduced to more manageable proportions and it was a happy party that jogged along the track which no longer offered problems in route finding since the footprints of our porters had previously marked it across the frequent snow fields. The path dropped steadily and we were soon below the mist; our conviction that it should climb and not descend had been our undoing. We came to a 200 foot cliff slightly overhanging a platform which had been levelled out at its foot. The marks of many camp fires were evidence of its use as a resting place and our air beds and sleeping bags were soon in position whilst supper was prepared over a juniper wood fire. This was for me the most memorable camp of the whole expedition. I saw the peaks of the Jugal Himal flushed red in the setting sun. I slept and woke to see the moon rise over the shoulder of Phurbi Chyachu; a full moon in a clear starry sky lent unearthly beauty to the Himalayan giants. I woke again briefly to see the moon at its zenith and marvelled again at the good fortune which had brought me to that sanctuary.

Pemba was offering me tea in the still light of dawn, 24th May. Another day's march was ahead and what wonderful backward views we had as we followed a fascinating track from which we

looked down into the deep gorges up which we had travelled on our approach march. That afternoon we reached Panch Pokari: the five holy lakes which annually draw thousands of Hindu pilgrims to worship at the shrine built over the source of the Indrawatti. These lakes, then still partly frozen over, are contained in a cirque of crags reminiscent of a Scottish Corrie. A new-looking stone built shelter roofed with rough hand-trimmed planks stood near the shrine at which the Okhreni men paid their obeisances. Our seclusion was interrupted by a group of Tamangs who approached from the opposite direction making a wonderful picture as they passed along the shores of one of the lakes, their reflection in its still waters emphasising the rhythm and grace of their movement. Our Sherpas were a little discomfited as, although the building would have accommodated at least fifty people, they apparently found the close proximity of the Tamangs uncongenial and elected to spend a crowded night in the little mountain bivouac tent.

The following day, 25th May, we had a long but pleasant march joining the Nauling Lekh above Tempathang and camping in a clearing within an easy day's march of Okhreni.

We met the Tempathang porters returning from carrying Lakpa to Katmandu; they had seen Tallon's party who were one day ahead of us. They were a merry crowd and we were delighted to have met them before they dropped down from the ridge to their village. Our happy association with these wonderful people was now at an end. Without their enthusiastic co-operation and help the Expedition would not have reached Base Camp and their patience and care in bringing Lakpa's stretcher to Katmandu was a story which we heard later from Jones. One could go far in "civilised" countries to find such reliable and trustworthy men and we were sorry to say goodbye to them.

Another chapter in the Expedition story was closed. Indeed the next few days were ones of successive farewells. We spent a night in Okhreni at the house of our very good friend the village headman Kami Lama. He of course was with Tallon at the time but that wonderful old lady—his wife—offered the hospitality of her home. The fact that Spenceley and I preferred to sleep outside did not detract from this spirit of hospitality and I

remember her standing in the doorway of her house in the morning sunshine as she said goodbye to us the following day; her face, enclosed between two huge brass plate-like earrings, wrinkled by age and weather into a permanent smile. She offered us chang and wild berries before we were permitted to take the downward track that led eventually in increasing heat to the banks of the Indrawatti.

We spent the afternoon hours bathing happily in a side pool—an offshoot of the main stream—Noorbu had been frankly terrified at crossing the main stream whereas I think Pasang had been equally frightened but showed it less. Pemba overcame his own nervousness so as not to lose face before the others. When it came to bathing the Sherpas were at first prepared only to wade into the pool and wash themselves but, confronted by the aquabatics of Spenceley and me, Pemba and finally Pasang ventured in deeper and made tentative attempts to swim. Noorbu retained his traditional conservatism and put his thick sweater on again to maintain his prestige. The sun had made the rocks bordering the pool too hot to stand on and shade or cool water seemed the only things in life worth having just then. Despite this our Sherpas wore their woolly balaclavas and sweaters day and night although obviously suffering from the heat.

We moved on in the cool of early evening and slept on a terrace, prepared for an early start on the 2,000 feet climb before the sun got to work. We wanted to be at Sankhu by 10 a.m. at which time the Embassy Land Rover was scheduled to meet us, and we were to catch up with Tallon. A dusty ten miles walk to Katmandu from Sankhu in the heat of the day was not to be considered so we left out breakfast in order to make the initial steep ascent before the sun began its enervating work. Spenceley had not slept much due to sickness and neither of us was feeling too well. It was getting uncomfortably hot as we came down to Sankhu Pheidi at 9.30 a.m., but the next two miles along dusty level paths to Sankhu itself were soon completed. Tallon was there with Murari and Pasang; the latter resplendent in a scarlet shirt, had belied his nickname of "solid" by hiring two porters to carry his gear for the latter part of the journey whilst the Okhreni porters had engaged a lorry in Sankhu to take themselves

and loads to Katmandu. The Sherpas liked the heat as little as we did. Tallon also had been unwell for two days and we seemed a sorry party when Wilson, immaculate in clean shorts and shirt, arrived to collect us in the Embassy Land Rover, and we were soon ourselves enjoying the luxury of hot baths at the Embassy.

## A BEARER OF ILL TIDINGS

by G. B. Spenceley

I WAS anxious to be in Katmandu as early as possible to report the accident, and speed was essential too if I was to complete my work there and be back in Base Camp before our planned departure on 22nd May. I calculated that I could complete my outward journey in five days and be back in six. I did in fact keep to this schedule but the heat of the valleys together with the pace of my travel imposed some strain.

Originally I had planned to take only Pasang, our odd job Base Camp Sherpa, as my companion and to travel light, dispensing with a tent. But if I was a little stirred by the adventure of having only a Sherpa for company I was to be disappointed for Murari insisted on joining me, and insisted too on bringing a tent apparently necessary both for our comfort and status. I had no complaints, he proved to be an excellent companion, untiring, cheerful, always considerate and helpful and he relieved me of nearly all responsibility.

And so on 5th May we departed. A Tampathang Sherpa, come up for empty tins, relieved me of my load in exchange for a wooden box, on the first leg of the Journey and only Pasang seemed burdened. He carried 50 lbs. but this included his heavy yak skin from which he would not be parted and a wardrobe of warm woollen clothing, scarves and balaclavas, all to add to his prestige in the populated plain. He wanted to take an ice axe too but this last sanction to his pride I would not allow.

Down we went then to Pemsal, the green Sherpa pasture, 3,000 feet down the winding track up which a few weeks earlier, on the last day of the march, we had come with such high hopes. I did not like to think of my mission now. Two or three Sherpas and a young boy with a most engaging smile who seemed to regard himself as my personal guide and guardian along the intricate jungle path, kept us company until after we had crossed the Rhakti Khola and entered the first Sherpa clearing, where along with our escort, we halted for food. From then onwards I had to carry my own load and most heavy did I find it. We had been going twelve hours when we entered Tampathang and dusk had already fallen. I was very tired.

But if I had hoped that speedily the tent would be erected and the fire blazing for the needful food and drink I was mistaken. It seemed necessary that our respects should be paid to the leading households of the village and to each, at great length and with dramatic detail, the tragic tale was told. Murari enjoyed being the centre of so much attention but here at least his story fell on sympathetic ears. These hill people knew well enough of this mountain terror and there was much sorrowful shaking of heads and for me, understanding glances. These were the men who had carried for us to Base Camp and in a small way they felt themselves to be part of the Expedition. Fox for three days had been their Burra Sahib and it was evident that in this short time he had earned their respect.

Only Pasang took little part in these noisy social gatherings but sat at our feet like a great obedient dog waiting for his master's orders. But once the camp site was settled—here it was amongst the goats and hens on a Sherpa's doorstep—he would busy himself seeing to all the comforts of his Sahib with touching devotion. Only occasionally did he halt in his labours to gaze with an unmistakable look at a passing Sherpani, but I think he would cause no hearts to flutter. He was in fact married, or rather he shared a wife with his brother, yet he was the most ugly of beings, ugly and perhaps more grotesque. Pasang of all our Sherpas was the only one who claimed to have seen a yeti and sometimes in the morning when he entered my tent, his face positively distorted in a smile—I think distorted is the word—I sometimes wondered if he was not himself a yeti. But his animal and amorphous features belied his character; simple earthy soul though he was, there was no more willing worker or more kindly and devoted servant.

We ate that night by the light of bamboo flares held by our Sherpa friends as we sat in the porch of their house. Many came to watch, some to bring simple gifts. Sherpanis brought their babies asleep upon their hips while others spun their wool. The flames were reflected in their brass soup plate earrings and strange shadows were cast upon the walls; there was rich atmosphere about the scene.

We were away next morning early and all day we walked along forest paths down the gorge of the Belephi Khola. A Sherpa from the village joined us and relieved each of us a little

of our loads; a typical kindly act for which he sought no reward. He was a Trader travelling to Kuti, over the border in Tibet, for a load of salt. He returned, he told us, over a high pass and down the Nosem Khola, a valley unvisited as yet by western travellers.

I had hoped to reach Palem Sankhu that night so that we could cross the chain bridge and tackle the long steep climb up the other side in the cool of the morning but the distance was greater than I had thought. Furthermore the heat was now intense—I did not then know it, but Nepal was suffering a heat wave and the temperature in the valleys was probably 110°F; this together with the halts at the prescribed resting places, which convention on the part of our Sherpa escort decreed us to observe, caused further delay.

The result was that at nightfall we were erecting our tent in some Tamang village still a few hours short of the goal we had set ourselves. Our tent did not stay long erected. We could hear thunder among the mountains and suddenly a fearful wind tore down the valley, scattering the fire we had just lit and threatening to blow the tent into the torrent far below. Even great teak slating blocks were being wrenched from the roofs. At last we found sanctuary on the porch of a nearby house and here that night we lay down, sharing our bed with creatures that either cackled, bleated or barked or just crawled and bit.

The next day was hotter than ever and once across the chain bridge I could not resist a dip in a nearby pool. Here too I washed for the first time for some weeks and decided that it was really quite a pleasant habit. All this was watched with astonishment by Pasang but it must have impressed him too, for soon he also entered the water and washed, an effort I encouraged by lending him my soap. I must have misjudged poor Pasang for I had not credited him with ever washing; certainly his vest had never seen water.

I was anxious to get our 4,000 foot plod over and we did not stay too long enjoying these luxuries. But we had gained only a couple of hundred feet when I remembered I had left my camera at the pool. Pasang returned for it but it was not there. This was serious. Murari and I returned across the chain bridge to the village to seek out the Headman. We found him, a distinguished gentleman of comparative affluence, seated in the porch of his house surrounded by the village elders, smoking an enormous

hubble-bubble. I was offered a seat—surely the only one in the village; this was going to take a long time I could see. Murari talked at great length, then spoke the Headman and the village elders too, all at great length. Chang was handed out and I composed myself for a long wait. Enquiries were leisurely started but there was no hurry and Murari was the last person to hasten the proceedings even if he could have done so. Time has no meaning in the East. Sometime towards midday after I had handed out my third round of cigarettes and had drunk my third bowl of chang the camera was returned and with it came the finder, loud in his claim for a reward.

And so at last we started the long grind uphill now in the full heat of the day. Pasang plodded on only stopping to whistle for a wind, but Murari positively wilted under the heat. Although at the end of a day he was less tired than I, he could not as well withstand these high temperatures and now he was glad of any excuse to delay our progress. There was excuse enough too for other travellers were on the path and there were many halts to gossip. A white man in these parts was cause for curiosity and Murari was always ready to answer their perplexed questions about the nature of our business. He was proud of his association with the Expedition and of the important mission on which we were bent and he would readily embark on a long account of the whole enterprise, the accident and my part in it in particular.

Our quest for local food, for we were now dependent upon the country, caused further delay and it took us over an hour to negotiate for some maize, tsampa and dried vegetables. My hope of reaching Okhrenei that night I abandoned, and my thoughts now turned to a cave I remembered half way along the forest path. But we did not even reach that, and when, near the summit of our climb, we arrived at a rough shack I was glad enough to halt. A group of Nawars, trading great planks of hard-wood with Tibet, kept us company.

I was determined to make up the distance we had lost and since for a great part of the next day we were in the comparative cool at 8,000 feet this was not too difficult to do. At Okhrenei we made our way to the house of Kami Lama, the headman, for he was to be the Sirdar of the Okhrenei Sherpas that we were to employ for the return march. His wife asked us into the house where we

were ceremoniously treated to bowls of refreshing chang. Our course along the track afterwards was slightly erratic.

Half way to Nawalpur we were joined by a fellow traveller returning to Sankhu; a shop keeper and a man of some social standing in that town, he felt we were fitting company for the rest of his journey and for the hundredth time I listened to the interminable questions and Murari's lengthy replies.

At Nawalpur we halted and while Pasang built a fire for tea, Murari and Purma Das, our friend from Sankhu, went shopping. This was rather necessary for we had now exhausted our food and already we had travelled ten hours without anything to eat.

Food had indeed been much in my mind that day and when, as darkness was on us, we forded the Indrawatti, I was glad to buy from a naked fisherman casting his net in the centre of the river, a quantity of fish. Purma Das supervised the cooking of this while I talked in English to a Hindu Holy-man on pilgrimage, and they were served to me, complete with heads, fried in oil with onions and rice and so heavily spiced that I was left gasping for breath and clamouring for drink.

The Indrawatti is little over 2,000 feet in height and so appalled was I with the thought of climbing the far side in the day's torrid heat that I had ordered a 4 a.m. start without breakfast. It was indeed still dark when we left the village next morning and before the sun was fully upon us we had gained most of our height. I rejoiced at this for I was now tired of the dust, flies, the heat and the constant thirst, and was thinking with an increasing longing of the comforts that I soon would enjoy. But I might have guessed that once the heat of the day had caught us up this would be excuse for some delay. We reached a village on the crest of the hill and here with a look of triumph Purma Das produced more fish than he had secretly bought. With little ceremony we took over a room in someone's house and lit a fire on the floor. But there were going to be no more hot eastern dishes for me, my mouth had hardly ceased to burn from last night's meal and so I cooked my own. In half an hour I had eaten and was ready to leave, not so the others. There was going to be nothing casual about this meal. After three hours of preparation, of preparing unnumerable strange spices and herbs, all painstakingly ground down on a flat stone, watched by me with mounting irritation, they were ready to eat. And so by the time our breakfast was over and

we were again on our way it was almost midday. It took us a further three hours before we had dropped again to Pheidi Sankhu, the site of our first camp on the march out. Now at least there was no more climbing, we were in the Plain of Katmandu. Pasang celebrated by decorating our loads with wild roses and by donning his warm woollen clothing.

But that last stretch along the road to Katmandu was the dustiest, driest, hottest trudge of the lot. Perhaps it was no worse than before, but now on the last lap a general weariness beset the party and even Pasang lagged behind. And so at 7 p.m., one woollen clad Sherpa, one youthful but tired Nepali and a dirty dishevelled, bearded Britisher all carrying loads, were smartly saluted as they entered the gates of the British Embassy.

Colonel Proud and his wife are people who themselves understand the rigours of a long march. They asked no questions but plied me with whisky followed shortly afterwards, oh heavenly joy, by iced beer. Soon I was relaxing in a hot bath and after dinner and wine I told the story.

To Colonel and Mrs Proud and to Major Burnett with whom I stayed the next few days at the Embassy Residence I shall always be grateful, both for their hospitality and kindness, and for assisting me through the various formalities that had to be performed. Four days later on 14th May I left on the return journey, taking with me a Memorial Tablet to erect at Base Camp. There was now no tiring Sankhu road but a bumpy ride in the Land-Rover—Pasang who never before had ridden in a car was both frightened and sick.

Fresh after four days of easy living we made rapid progress. At the end of the second day's march we reached Okhrenei where we were the guests of Kami Lama and his wife. We bought a hen—a miserable scraggy creature—which Kami Lama declined to kill, he was too good a Bhuddist, so expertly Murari decapitated it with a kukri—he had learnt to do this in the Hindu temples.

I was not anxious to suffer again the heat of the Belephi Khola and had decided on the return to follow the high-level route of the Nauling Lekh. Kami Lama agreed to come along with us as guide and he arranged for 25 porters to follow in two days time to carry back to Katmandu.

The next day we were somewhat delayed as indeed the night before our sleep had been delayed, by the apparent necessity of

paying social calls where of course politeness demanded we take a measure of chang. But I was acquiring a taste for this drink and did not complain. All day we continued to climb until we were above the treeline and it was pleasantly cool. We might have continued far but water is found on the ridges in few places and these prescribe the halts. When we dropped down to a col and a pleasant green meadow Kami Lama announced that here was the last water for several hours and we must go no further. It was a beautiful place with a view on one side down into the depths of the Belephi Khola and on the other side, 6,000 feet below, was the Indrawatti River. At its head we could see the peaks of the Langtang Himal which for once were not obscured by the afternoon cloud. A delightful place for a camp except that the water when we found it, had all but dried up and we obtained only enough for one small cup each of muddy tea.

By morning the trickle had ceased altogether and so we set off very early with a dry throat and climbed up to nearly 13,000 feet, where, lit softly by the early morning light the whole range of the Jugal Himal was disclosed. In the centre and far back, yet dominating the scene, was the "Great White Peak." From here I could see the col, a few feet below which Fox and I had halted on the last day of April, and could appreciate how far in fact we had climbed and how near victory we were.

From this vantage point we dropped down into the forest and near a bed of old snow we halted for breakfast, and then on again along forest paths gay with rhododendrons. The comfort of this elevated walk and the beauty all around me, the views I got through the trees of our mountains, all combined to put me in a contented frame of mind. I was looking forward to reaching Base Camp and learning of a wealth of exploration and survey completed. I had been away thirteen days and I was confident that much work would have been done to lessen our failure on the "Great White Peak." Such was the frame of mind I enjoyed when abruptly round the corner I came upon a pathetic procession; Lhakpa Tserring on a stretcher and Jones crippled with a dislocated shoulder.

For a second time all our hopes dashed, not this time by a natural mountaineering hazard, but by an unfortunate mischance, a moment of carelessness or horse play on the part of a Sherpa, not on mountain or glacier, but on a well trodden and easy path.

For the rest of the day, down to Tampathang, melancholy thoughts pursued me and neither the chang that I later enjoyed, nor the natural high spirits of the good people of that village lifted my mood of depression.

I was still anxious to be at Base Camp for I knew that Anderson and Tallon, who with Pemba Gyalgen, were now all that was left upon the mountains of our once strong and determined party, would be doing heroic deeds to make up for our tragic loss. We nearly reached Base Camp the next night but through the jungle it was a slow and tiring path and I was content to spend the last night of my journey in the cave high up the Pulmutang Khola. We were not alone for there joined us several Sherpas in search of jobs and loot, amongst them Nima Lama, his load carried on the back of his twelve year old grandson. It thundered and rained to some purpose that night, and it was cold. The Sherpas lit a great fire round which we all gathered for warmth. I spent the time searching for lice.

We had breakfast at Pemsal the next morning, for there was little water at the cave, and then we made the stiff climb up to the high yak pastures and Base Camp—how differently I walked now from my first laboured plod up these slopes, and how different too were my thoughts! The camp was deserted, the bungalow tent had collapsed under a weight of fresh snow, but there was a message, Anderson and Tallon had completed the map and were that day to return from a camp on the west ridge of the Dorje Lhakpa Glacier. This was indeed good news.



## BASE CAMP TO KATMANDU

by A. Tallon

IT WAS about midday on the 19th May, that Anderson and I with Pemba Gyalgen some distance behind, glissaded down the snow slope towards Base Camp. We were supposed to meet Spenceley and Murari at Base sometime that day, but it was doubtful if they would be able to get there in time. Anderson and I had a really enjoyable little expedition all of our own in the Dorje Lakpa area but now the time had come for the return.

As Base Camp came in sight, Pemba gave one of those terrific shouts that only Sherpas can give. And to our delight there came an answering shout from the Camp. That would be Pasang, who had been to Katmandu with Spenceley and Murari. Thanks to the sliding properties of our Wyncol trousers we were soon down at the camp where Spenceley talked of his record-breaking journey to Katmandu while Anderson and I read our mail from home. That afternoon the Okhreni porters began to arrive and we ate and made plans for the next stage of operations.

We decided that Anderson, Spenceley and Pemba should go back to Katmandu by way of the Langtang route while I took the route over the Nauling Lekh with the porters. I had to stick to a pretty tight time schedule to meet the Embassy Land Rover at Sankhu on the 28th.

That night it was very cold and several inches of snow fell. In spite of the spare clothing and bottle of over proof rum which we had given to the porters they had had a rough time behind their boulders and under the mountain tent flysheets. To aggravate matters it snowed most of the next day. However, we managed to sort supplies out for the day following and fixed the Memorial Plaque on the rock behind Base Camp.

We were up at 4.15 on our last morning at Base and had the fire going before Pemba got out of bed (one up to the Sahibs). The Langtang party were away at six and I was left with twenty loads to fit onto eighteen porters. Nima Lama and a couple of his friends who were cleaning up the chaos at Base were persuaded to carry the extra loads to Pemsal where I hoped I could secretly pack the extra into the other loads while the porters were having breakfast. Suffering much personal discomfort and a certain loss of dignity, I carried a forty pound load down to Pemsal on a

headband, where I was able to rearrange the loads, and with Murari and me carrying much more than we had intended, we were able to move off. Nima Lama's grandson carried for us to Tempathang in return for an empty box. The two porters who were to meet the Langtang party dashed off ahead of us bearing iceaxes and wearing balaclavas and snow goggles. One of them took my anorak with him—I never saw it again—he lost it somewhere on the way.

We did not do a long march that day—to a Yak pasture just below the Rhakti Kholo. It was a pleasant march through pine forests with flowers and wild strawberries lining the path. I saw my first leeches on the journey, they were hanging from the shrubs at the side of the path ready to cling to any bare foot that came within reach. Thanks to Jones' anti-midge cream we were all eaten alive that night.

The Okhreni men were enjoying this trip. They knew just how long they had to reach Katmandu and it was quite obvious that they intended to take their own time. The trouble was that besides the 60 lbs. plus that they were carrying for us they all had about 30 lbs. of loot that they had collected from Base Camp and it was truly remarkable in the circumstances just how fast they did move. It was amusing to see them when we stopped for the night—they would light a fire with expedition matches, smoke an expedition cigarette, take a drink of expedition lemonade from their expedition plastic bottles and retire under their expedition flysheets—the only thing they had left at Base Camp was toilet paper !

Next morning we were up early ready for an early start, we rose at 4.30 and at 7.30 were still there. Eventually we did get away and moved for an hour without a halt. After that it was the usual routine of half hour march, 20 minutes rest until at 3 p.m. we were just below Tempathang and it had just started to rain. The porters decided to camp—it was quite a pleasant spot but there was only glacier water to drink—I decided to risk it for one night. The day's march had been through dense forests and I had found it rather hot after the snows and had not been going quite so well as usual. Pasang gave a touching little display of loyalty today. I had wandered off into the jungle on one of my solo expeditions and returned to the track to find the rest of the party had disappeared, I pressed on—it was never a difficult job

to overtake these chaps and I was not really worried about getting lost, after about five minutes I passed Pasang who had apparently stopped to admire the view and took not the slightest notice of me so absorbed was he in the snow-capped hills and pine forests. Then, about 200 yards lower down, he made apparent the reason for his lingering. He shouted to me and pointed to a hidden path that branched off from the main path, the main party had gone that way and Pasang had waited behind specially to save me from about half an hour's extra walk. A touching little gesture and so typical of the Sherpas' loyalty towards their Sahibs.

That evening we had a visit from some of the Tempathang residents who insisted on making me drink some sour milk which they considered to be a great delicacy. I managed to stop myself being sick until they all left.

Next morning we were away in quite good time, we soon crossed the Belephi Kholā and set off upwards on to the ridge of the Nauling Lekh. The sides of the valley are so steep at this point that one of the Okhreni porters threw a stone at Tempathang on the opposite side of the river. He didn't hit anyone. At about ten o'clock we reached a house where some women gave us water and sour milk and we had a long rest. Two of the porters were not going so well, Kami Lama had a fever and hired two girls to carry his load to the next camp. Another Sherpa, a lad of fourteen (who was married) had so much loot from base camp that he could hardly move. All day we walked uphill and I frequently went ahead to try to see the top of the mountain we were climbing but it was impossible to see very far ahead because of the dense forests. All the time we had splendid views of the mountains through the rhododendron trees, and finally we reached a rather dirty looking pond where we camped. It was a very romantic looking camp site, with the tents reflected in the pool, the Jugal Himal across the valley and the porters all squatting round their fires smoking, talking and gambling for cigarettes.

Travelling in the Himalaya with 20 porters is a very interesting experience but it is also hard work—one has to be expedition doctor, treasurer, surveyor, Burra Sahib, food officer, secretary and photographer all at the same time. Jones had given me instructions on dealing with any complaints likely to be met with and that evening I treated what I thought to be one case of

malaria, three of dysentery, four of bronchitis, one foot with a thorn in it, and a swollen knee. Most of my treatment could be classed as faith healing!

At six next morning I was having tea in my sleeping bag and at eight we were on the road. Kami Lama still had a fever and so I carried a tent for him. We marched uphill for a time and then after crossing a couple of cols we went down for a short distance and found some water for lunch. A mere trickle, little more than a wet rock, but enough for everyone. Just after lunch there was a lot of arguing amongst the porters, it looked as if I might have a strike on my hands. Murari came to explain the situation to me. The porters had agreed to get to Katmandu in eight days, but they wanted to spend a night at Okhreni on the way and because of the shortage of water on the ridge they were reluctant to go very far beyond the infrequent springs. This meant that they could not reach Okhreni tomorrow as they had intended. I consider it the greatest achievement in my Himalayan career that I managed to persuade them to set off early the next day and try to get home before night fall. I learnt later that the real reason for them wanting to stay this side of Okhreni was that according to a local superstition they thought it unlucky to enter their homes after an absence of nine days. Most of them had been away from home exactly eight days at the time of the argument. They did reach home the next day and avoided arousing the anger of the gods by waiting outside their houses until nightfall and then nipping inside when no one was watching.

We reached camp that evening after another pleasant day's march. The camp was on a little col and we were joined there by six men who were out collecting bamboo for mats. After my evening surgery I trimmed my beard just in case there was a dance on at Okhreni the next night.

We were all away by seven the next morning. The porters really had their noses pointing towards home that day. I remember I stopped to do some surveying along the ridge and it took me about two hours to catch up with them. I met Tensing Lama on his way home after taking Jones and Lhakpa to Katmandu. I had a long conversation with him and managed to find out that the patients were both in hospital.

I arrived at Okhreni about three with the first of the porters and spent a pleasant two hours wandering from house to house

testing the different brews of rahksi and chang. At one house we had some roasted wheat which tasted just like a breakfast cereal. By the time we reached Kami Lama's house where we were to spend the night I found that I was speaking the language quite fluently. Murari, Pasang and I had a meal in the ground floor of the house. There are no chimneys in the Sherpa houses and the smoked flies went down very well with the chicken and rice. After dinner the Sahib rather lowered the British prestige in that area by whistling a very Western tune in the house—he was asked by the master of the house to stop at once. One must never whistle in Sherpa houses. The Sahibs' education was further improved when he was invited by one of the porters to walk round to his house to try some real home brewed chang. Never have more than three bowls of chang before walking home along a terraced hillside. Murari and I finally got ourselves back home without too much loss of dignity and crawled into our tent which was pitched in Kami Lama's front yard.

The following morning we were not away very early. While we were waiting for breakfast Kami Lama showed us the tracks left by a tiger as it had wandered round the house during the night, his dog was missing . . .

We were still in a festive mood and finally got away about 10, our water bottles full of chang. We met up with the rest of the party just outside the village and set off down into the heat of the valley. We had been joined at Okhreni by a goat and a woman: the goat was being taken to Katmandu to be sold—I think the woman was going shopping. She evidently considered that it would be more interesting to travel the three days to the big city in the company of twenty men than to do the journey on her own.

We were now moving into Tamang country and here the Sherpas were considered just as outlandish as myself by the locals. Just before the Indrawatti river the party split up, six of us, including the woman, considered the short deep crossing of the river preferable to the long shallow route. Some local fishermen helped us to cross, the woman was carried across, Murari gave them half a rupee and the porters gave them some maize flour. I had neither food nor money to spare and so thanked them. Murari and I now decided that we would have a swim in a deep pool by the side of the river. This was a great moment for the

Sherpa porters—some of them had never seen anyone swimming and for an hour they all sat on a huge rock shouting and cheering while Murari and I made fools of ourselves in the water. Two of the porters came into the shallow end of the pool and actually washed themselves.

The camp that night was the one we had used on the way out on the hill above Baman Pati. Murari took three rupees down to the village and came back with some wood, potatoes and onions. We dined quite well that night but it was very hot. Everyone except Murari slept out, it was too hot for a sleeping bag but without one the midges and ants had too much of their own way. We were all away at half past five the next morning without any breakfast. The porters were in a great hurry to be as far as possible on the road before the sun came up and Murari was not amused to find the tent down before he was out of his sleeping bag. We were half way up the hill before we had breakfast, eggs and rice, and as we ate it we watched the amazing assortment of tins and boxes walking past. There seemed to be a lot of traffic that morning. After breakfast, Pasang who seemed to like the heat even less than the rest of us, hired two coolies who were returning empty to Sankhu to carry his load. There were shouts of "Burra Sahib Pasang" from the other porters as he set off up the road with his men.

It was about this point that I had my first and only attack of dysentery. It was terribly hot, the road was steep and cover was not always available at the right time and I spent a miserable day. But everyone was very sympathetic, Murari carried my rucksack and the porters were blaming themselves because they thought I had picked up the disease at their village. This may well have been so but I tried to reassure them, they looked so worried. I eventually staggered into camp at Sankhu Pheidi about two hours after everyone else, it was in fact almost dark. My tent was already up and I slept for two hours and then had quite a good meal. Then I retired to bed with two thermos flasks, one full of hot coffee and the other full of cold lemonade.

By the time I was up the next morning most of the porters had gone. They had dashed into Sankhu to hire a lorry to carry them to Katmandu. These Sherpa people are not without initiative, it cost them their day's pay to hire the lorry but as most of them had only come for the outing they preferred to do this

than march in the heat along ten miles of roadway. Murari, Pasang, two porters and myself wandered leisurely into Sankhu to meet the Embassy Land Rover at ten. We had plenty of time to spare and sat around watching the local population going about its business and the business of the local population that morning seemed to be to stand and stare at us.

Anderson and Pemba arrived about ten, Spenceley, having fallen by the wayside with dysentery, was following at his own speed. The Land Rover arrived at ten thirty, at least I said it was ten thirty but Wilson who had come for the ride informed me that my watch was in fact thirty-five minutes fast—I must have missed the time signals. As soon as we got to the Embassy, Ron Barclay invited us across to his house and half a dozen beers soon cured my dysentery. Spenceley arrived soon afterwards and we set about adjusting ourselves to civilisation once more—not as difficult a task as we had thought.

## A DOCTOR IN THE HIMALAYAS

by Dan Jones

“AND if he should stop breathing during the anaesthetic I can always use artificial respiration.”

“One white tablet a day, one green tablet a day, one yellow tablet and one red capsule every two days.”

“If anyone is ill before we get the drugs through the Nepalese Customs, then he will have to practise yogi because I can't break the seals.”

Such thoughts were almost the limit of my medical activities during the first part of the Journey; my medical talents were allowed to lie dormant apart from ensuring that everyone had antimalarial drugs, and treating the odd sahib for dysentery. Perhaps the highlight of this stage was an encounter with the Indian Customs who eventually succeeded in explaining to me that my £170 cine camera was surely worth about £15 second-hand (otherwise they were sorry they would have to impound it). My pockets at this time were bulging with Dangerous Drugs which I had been advised to conceal at all costs, otherwise I should have been delayed several weeks with customs formalities.

Once clear of Katmandu and on the march, there seemed to be more scope for being a doctor. At any rate the equipment was available, two huge boxes of it, ten to twenty pounds heavier than any other load and usually perched precariously on the backs of the most fragile looking porters. If anything happened at the front of the caravan, I would be fairly certain of a long period in which to consider my treatment before the wherewithall caught up with me.

At this stage we ourselves needed very little doctoring. It was the porters and local inhabitants who took up most of the time. Surgery was set up in the evening when we had found a camp site. Murari would act as interpreter, nurse and often as dispenser. He seemed to enjoy his office thoroughly. However, not even he could do much to help me solve the problem of where in the boxes were the particular drugs I needed. nor the even more difficult problem of how to replace them all *and* shut the box lids afterwards. This was bad enough at night but was much more hectic in the morning when the whole expedition wanted to get on the move.

Evening surgery was more like a circus than a consultation. What seemed to be the total population of the local village would encircle us and one by one step into the ring to display their ailments. First it would be the men, then the children and then, with a little more hesitation, the women. However, there was no false modesty and they all allowed me to prod their bellies and listen to their chests with less embarrassment than many western patients.

The nature of the illnesses varied greatly. Many of them were very real; coughs with blood stained sputum—almost certainly tuberculous; chronic diarrhoea—probably amoebid dysentery; skin eruptions and burns, made septic by contact with dirt; a child with discharging ears. Eye complaints were some of the most common—and the saddest. There was little one could do to alleviate the chronic infections which had, in many cases, been going on for years. Old folks with the most advanced cataracts and corneal ulcers would hobble forward for a few of the drops which they were sure would make their eyes as good as new. When it was explained to them that we could not work miracles, they would retire into the crowd again, puzzled and sad, their eyes filled with tears. We were honoured by a visit from the Lama of the village. Did I think his spectacles were correct? He too had advanced cataracts and could probably see little, nevertheless he had the only spectacles we saw outside Katmandu! One small child was acutely ill—probably cholera—pale and dehydrated from diarrhoea and vomiting. She was almost moribund and seemed unlikely to live more than twenty-four to thirty-six hours. Without a great deal of hope, I gave her two injections of an anti-biotic before continuing on up the valley. A month later on my return I learnt she was alive and well.

Others had weird or vague symptoms which it was impossible to fit into any diagnostic pattern—pain on getting up in the morning, pain on getting cold, pains in the oddest and most unlikely places and all responding quite miraculously to pills, especially if covered with tin foil! The sirdah of the porters has a pain in his thigh. Something must be given to rub on to it—good relations must be kept at all costs. One lady had a pain which I confidentially diagnosed as angina of effort. I had to modify this diagnosis next day when I saw her carry a sixty pound load up the mountainside.

By contrast the sahibs' complaints were slight, straightforward and eminently treatable. Nor were there many of them. Dysentery was high on the list. However, we all had it very mildly so that it could scarcely be called true bacillary dysentery. It usually lasted two to three days, with no raised temperature, and made the sufferers feel 'groggy.' One of us developed a more severe attack which lasted for some time and took a lot of curing, but even it was never completely incapacitating. There were no real chest infections, perhaps because we never climbed high enough. One man had an irritant cough at night. We plied him with cough mixture, but none of it seemed to work. Sore heels, blisters and sore lips were fairly common. One lip failed to respond to any of the more usual remedies and had to be treated with Gentian Violet—much to the owner's discomfiture when facing colour photographers.

What of the effects of high altitude, sun and cold? We all, of course, became breathless much more easily on exertion, but not to any excessive degree. I myself have been more affected on a high alpine summit. Several members of the party developed severe headaches at different times and these did not respond to the usual medication; time and acclimatisation seemed to be the only effective treatment. One of us had a typical mountain-sickness episode of nausea and malaise at Camp III. This quickly subsided on return to a lower altitude and did not recur. We had no snow blindness or frostbite.

There remain the two casualties from the second accident; Lakpa who sustained a bad compound fracture of his left tibia, and myself who was lucky to escape with a dislocated right shoulder. I had made arrangements for a wide variety of medical emergencies but not for the doctor to attempt to reduce his own dislocation, or to attempt to treat others. Lakpa presented a problem. Should his leg be put into plaster? I had no plaster shears which are essential for plaster removal. An inexperienced hand might apply the plaster too tightly and we would not be able to remove it. Lakpa's leg would have to be splinted. At any rate, we would be able to look out for infection more easily, a point which proved most important.

At the time of the accident the first problem was warmth, first aid and the relief of pain. Since it was only a day trip we had no stores with us. Camp I was empty of all save the tents

and a little food. Tallon set off back to Base Camp and left us lying in the sun. He returned in excellent time with a mixed bag of medical stores and set to work to deal with Lakpa's leg. I was useless for anything other than advising. Tallon had the unenviable task of straightening a very grotesquely bent leg and of dressing the wound and applying the light metal splints. This he did most efficiently, although turning a delicate shade of green at one point.

Lakpa also had a large cut on his knee, another on his forehead, and numerous abrasions on other parts of his face. The cuts should really have been sutured, but I could not manage this. When we eventually reached base camp they were healing so well that I was unwilling to disturb them. By the time he reached Katmandu his minor injuries were all quite healed.

My own injury, although less severe, was harder to treat as an emergency. The golden rule with such dislocations is reduce them as soon as possible. Tallon soaked me in Morphia and then set about trying to do this. I gave him instructions—just how and where to pull and move the arm. After the first attempt my arm was somewhere above my head and wouldn't come down again. At the time this was rather distressing though in retrospect it has its amusing side. The normal procedure with such a dislocation would be to anaesthetise the patient, but I had some pretty strong views on that subject! More Morphia and another determined attempt brought my arm down to my side, but still out of joint. We decided to leave it where it was.

I shall not describe our journey back to Base Camp except to say that it was most excellently organised and carried out. Once I was fit enough to move, my troubles were over for I was much more comfortable sitting or walking than I was lying. Lakpa was, of course, unable to walk and for him the journey back to Base Camp and from thence to Katmandu must have been an extremely painful ordeal. He was so stoical that it was extremely hard to tell when he was in pain and how severe the pain was. I gave him Morphia initially, then Pethidine and finally only barbiturate sleeping tablets. If he was ever in excessive pain, he would not admit to it. Nor did his leg respond to Penicillin by mouth, given in order to try to prevent infection. The leg splint was removed periodically and five days after the fracture the wound looked fairly healthy. Five days later there was infection round

the wound and spreading right up the thigh. This was most worrying and I started Penicillin by injection straight away.

This was another serious incident which had its amusing side. Our sterilising procedure must have been quite unique. One of the billy-cans was used. Ang Temba would boil the syringe up in the cleanest water he could find—this always contained a liberal supply of bits of dirt, some of which would inevitably get into the syringe. Still, it was sterile dirt so we ignored it. I would try to get hold of the billy-can when Ang Temba was not looking but seldom succeeded. He usually bore the billy-can towards me and before I could stop him, placed his filthy fingers around the tip of the sterile needle and handed it triumphantly to me. The only comparable action I have seen was when he cleaned my table fork by spitting on it and wiping it on the inside of his shirt! In spite of this, the Penicillin worked superbly and when Lakpa finally reached Katmandu there was very little infection to be seen.

At Katmandu my Himalayan doctoring finished. Lakpa was put to bed in the American Mission Hospital and his fractured leg placed in traction. He was to remain there for three months. We have heard that his leg was very slow in healing, and that although now healed there is some shortening and he will have a permanent limp.

After a very creditable but only partially successful attempt to reduce my dislocation at the Mission Hospital, I returned to England and the job was completed by open operation. I have now a slightly limited range of shoulder movement, with hopes of full movement later. For me the disability was well worth the experience, but for Lakpa this cannot be so, for the limp will limit his ability to earn a living.

From a medical point of view, the expedition was comparatively uneventful, except for the casualties of the second accident. But these bring home the essential difference between Himalayan medicine and that in Europe. Any illness or accident on the mountain will have to be treated for at least two weeks before hospital can be reached. One doctor and a limited amount of stores cannot always ensure that the two weeks delay is of no significance, but they can do a great deal towards minimising it. In an expedition which has had more than its share of trouble there is one slight consolation; we may have saved the life of one small sherpa child.

## THE INJURED FROM BASE CAMP TO KATMANDU

by Dan Jones

ONE broken leg and one dislocated shoulder to be transported back to Katmandu as quickly as possible. This was the next task which faced the expedition once they had got Lakpa and myself back to Base Camp. Wilson very nobly agreed to sacrifice further climbing to take us back. Our Sherpas, Ang Temba and Pemba Tensing would accompany us and minister to our needs. Fortunately, some of the Tempathang Sherpas had visited Base Camp just after our accident and one of them had returned to the village to collect a party of porters and stretcher bearers.

Two days rest in the sun at Base Camp made us feel stronger and more able to travel. On 12th May we were ready to depart. The morning was singularly inauspicious. Clouds were clamped down over the mountains, there had been a fresh fall of snow which made the slopes slippery, and Base Camp was cold and inhospitable. To make matters worse, Nima Lama had been offered some rum and had made himself tipsy with it. He became even more obstreperous than usual and tried to organise a strike of the porters. They mercifully ignored him, and the descent was able to proceed.

The first problem was to get Lakpa down the steep slope to Pemsal Meadow. Pack frame transport on a Sherpa's back was used. Lakpa had been given some Pethidine to ease the pain in his leg, and bore the descent very stoically. I was too preoccupied with staying upright on my own feet to observe his progress in any detail. Wilson was just behind me and I was attached to him by a short length of rope, like a small child on leading reins. Regrets at leaving Base Camp, especially in this state, were thus fortunately tempered by other preoccupations.

At Pemsal Meadow we halted for refreshments and Lakpa was changed to his stretcher. The stretcher team consisted of four men; one in front between the stretcher shafts, carrying most of the weight by a headband, and two behind carrying one shaft each at shoulder height; the fourth man either rested or helped the rear couple. The journey through the woods was slow. The fallen trees across the path now proved major obstacles and had to be hacked out of the way, or a fresh path made round them.

Kukris were wielded with amazing skill and small trees severed by a few strokes. Lakpa, borne precariously aloft over these obstacles, remained calm and cheerful, and was very unwilling to admit to pain.

I was unable to move fast at all. On the march, I had very little pain in my shoulder, but my back must have been strained. The weight of my arm which was transmitted to my neck by a sling, produced backache which forced me to stop and sit down every 100-200 yards. The Tempathang Sherpas, whom we had cursed so bitterly on the way up to Base Camp, here showed the other side of their character. They were extremely kind and thoughtful to both Lakpa and myself. Tensing Lama, who was normally at the front of the party hacking out a path, would wait for me by any major obstacle and assist me over it. In addition, a Sherpa attached himself to me permanently as a guide. Nima Lama would materialise from behind a tree, grin broadly and utter some encouraging words, before leaping elf-like on his way.

We spent our first night in a cave. I was not very enthusiastic about this at first as it was normally used for goats, however, neither Wilson nor I caught fleas or lice. We all crowded in, the Sherpas lit a fire and we had a warm, if rather smoky, night. Tensing Lama and my Sherpa guide spent the evening amusing Wilson and me, as well as themselves, by writing in Tibetan.

The second day continued in much the same way; more forest, across the Rakhta Khola and on down to the Langtang Khola. Wilson had hoped we would be able to reach Tempathang, but the distance was further than he had thought, and I was utterly exhausted. Therefore, we camped the night at the river junction and spent the third day descending to Tempathang. During the journey, I discovered a method of taking my arm weight off my neck by pulling on a length of bandage attached to the top of the sling and running down my back. This about trebled the distance between sit downs. Life was sweet again!

The people of Tempathang were most friendly, thrusting chang upon us, making sympathetic noises, shaking their heads and frowning at the mountains. Some of our porters wanted to return to their families, so fresh ones were engaged. By a little bit of judicious manoeuvring, Wilson managed to persuade Nima Lama to stay at home, and Tensing Lama to lead the party. As always, an argument broke out about the payment of men. More

Sherpas wanted to accompany us than we could afford. We discovered this after everyone had descended 500 feet to the river. Having got this far, no one was keen on going back. I was quite shameless and left all the bargaining to Wilson. Ang Temba acted as interpreter and after much haggling the dispute was settled.

We had decided to return by the Nauling Lekh ridge. Water was scarce on the ridge but the Tempathang men knew the sites of the springs. The route would be cooler, more interesting, and would avoid carrying Lakpa across the suspension bridges. We had first to climb up 5,000 feet to the top of the ridge. The lower slopes were heavily wooded and we wound upwards in the shade in a series of gentle zig-zags, the path often hidden by ferns, dead leaves or rotting wood. The stretcher team was superb. Lakpa must have been heavy and the going was rough; yet they kept up a steady pace, with three men at the rear; straining upwards on the steep sections, pivoting the stretcher round the front man on the corners, leaping over boulders and tree trunks, and squeezing almost into single file when the path was narrow. Only once in the whole journey to Katmandu was the stretcher dropped, and then only from a height of two feet. My own condition had improved greatly. Wilson was able to relinquish the tiresome business of shadowing me and stopping whenever I stopped. My arm seemed to make very little difference to my ability to walk uphill and I negotiated the slopes with far less effort than I would have done on the march in. I started using the cine-camera again. This was quite a pantomime, by the time I had set up the tripod, located the Sherpa carrying the camera, and placed the camera on the tripod (all with one-and-a-bit hands) my picture had often gone. By the time we had packed up, we were five minutes behind everyone else.

The next night was spent near a small farmstead perched half-way up the steep Nauling Lekh slopes. On the following day, we wound upwards along a hard dusty path through scrub covered slopes and then into the rhododendron belt. For half the day we climbed upwards through the pink, red and white rhododendrons which were a splendid sight. We were still amongst them at night when we camped on the banks of a small lake. Some enthusiastic Sherpa proceeded to decorate our tents with rhododendron blooms.

Two hours walking the following day and we reached the top of the Nauling Lekh. The route now followed the ridge, a line of interlinked hills which gradually lost height until we dropped down to the Indrawatti. We could move faster here; the slopes were less steep and we skirted the tops of many hills. A few stretches were comparatively level, and on these the stretcher party tended to run. We soon, sadly, lost sight of the white spires of the Jugal Himal for the last time. On our first day's march alongside the ridge we met Spenceley, and broke the melancholy news of the second accident; brief discussion of plans, collecting mail, and we moved on to our respective destinations.

There was no water by the camp that night, but we had passed a stream some fifteen to twenty minutes walk away. Some of the Sherpas went to collect water for us. In the evenings, Ang Temba and Pemba took the initiative. During the day, they tended to walk by themselves, often at the rear of the party. In the evenings they set about organising the camp, arranging the inside of our tents, lighting the fire, cooking and serving the meal. We usually ate in the luxury of our sleeping bags in the tent, for the evenings were cold. For me, perhaps, luxury was hardly the word. A dislocated right shoulder and bruised left ribs makes movement above the waist difficult. I preferred the day's march to the evenings, and I have a feeling that Wilson did also. What with getting through the sleeve entrance, getting undressed, getting a back rest adjusted, and getting into two sleeping bags; what with my tablets, my lozenges, my drinking water bottle, and my other kind of water bottle; what with the interminable shuffling until my arm was comfortable and the fact that by morning I usually occupied two-thirds of the tent, I don't think I made the ideal tent companion.

I could never learn a great deal about how Lakpa fared at night. His leg certainly seemed to be painful and he wanted fewer tablets. His general condition was improving and the fairly extensive abrasions on his face were healing well. I have described elsewhere the progress of his leg wound and its 'aseptic' Penicillin treatment. The injections were not popular with Lakpa but proved well worth while. Wilson's first aid bandaging technique came in most useful at times.



We were a little surprised by the comparatively small amount of attention Ang Temba and Pemba gave to Lakpa. Much of his care was left to the Tempathang Sherpas. Indeed quite a strong friendship grew up between Lakpa and one of the latter. This fellow was one of the rougher characters, a bit of a clown who used to entertain the party with amusing and often bawdy mime. It was he who organised the stretcher party, most often took the strenuous front position on the stretcher and carried Lakpa off into the bush when necessary. It was he who would sit with Lakpa in the evening and keep him company. It was also he who whenever I was writing a letter would somehow manage to use mime to pull my leg about it being to a girl friend.

I covered a long distance the next day, descending off one hill and climbing over two more. The first was bare and windswept; we passed a completely dried up lake. The second was thickly wooded with wild strawberries dotting the path sides and providing welcome refreshment. We also saw our only snake—at least the Sherpas saw it—a viper and apparently poisonous. Finally, we descended a steep and slippery earth slope and reached Okhreni, and our march in route again.

The Sherpas had had little difficulty in covering this great distance and Wilson and I had high hopes for even better progress on the next day when the going was all down hill. But our Sherpas were a law unto themselves. On the next day, the shade of every tree presented an irresistible temptation, and change was an essential fuel for the journey. No amount of arguing would make them change their pace. We had now moved out of Sherpa country into that of the Newars. The air was hotter, the land drier, the vegetation more sparse, and there were more terraces, houses and people. On the way to the mountains the lower foothills had seemed poorly populated and primitive; now they seemed overcrowded and tainted by civilisation. I felt sad to be leaving Sherpa country.

We reached the Indrawatti by mid-afternoon, and crossed the river at a very shallow region higher up stream. Lakpa and I were got across without difficulty. Wilson gave great delight to the Sherpas by crying out at the impact of sharp stones on his tender Western feet. We followed a private band into Baman Pati. It had been hired by a rich Nepalese pilgrim, and made us feel very poor. We spent the night on the same small hill above

the village and enjoyed a short but very violent storm, with thunder every two to three seconds. Wilson's enjoyment was not as great as mine because his half of the tent got much wetter.

On the following day we faced a slog up the hill which had seemed so interminable in the downwards direction during the march in. I enjoyed the ascent more than I had the descent six weeks before. The Sherpas again surprised us by taking the whole hill at great speed and with a minimum of rests. We were beginning to appreciate the wisdom of leaving the planning to them. We climbed to the top of the ridge and camped for the night overlooking the plain of Katmandu.

On the following day a Sherpa messenger was sent off early to tell Colonel Proud of our approach. He insisted on borrowing a pair of boots for the occasion, although it is doubtful if he ever wore them. The rest of the expedition moved down to Sankhu, and from thence along the dusty road to Katmandu. We soon met the American Mission Hospital Ambulance. Lakpa and I were suddenly transformed from mountaineers to patients. What had been for me in spite of everything a most wonderful experience was over.

## EQUIPMENT

by W. J. Anderson

EXCEPT for a few items purchased in Katmandu and clothing worn by the British members on the journey out, the Expedition's equipment was packed in 15 wooden boxes and 14 kit bags plus our own rucksacks; the total weight, including packing was 18 cwt.

The list attached to this report does not include food, medical supplies, or scientific and photographic equipment which are dealt with elsewhere. It may prove useful to a party organising a similar expedition, but must necessarily be 'tailor made' to suit the particular programme of such an expedition and its financial resources.

Much valuable help was available to us in the early planning stages both from information published by previous expeditions and from personal discussions and correspondence with other Himalayan climbers. In particular we are greatly indebted to Charles Evans and Dennis Davies for the patient and unstinting help and guidance given by them. Both men busy with their own plans might well have found it impossible to spare the time to deal with our many and often naïve questions.

There is, however, no substitute for first hand experience; and in the light of ours the list could have been curtailed in many respects without prejudice to the success of the Expedition. In saying this I am conscious that our programme was far short of being completed and that had the "Big White Peak" been climbed, our resources would have been drawn on more fully and certain items of equipment might have proved inadequate as to type, quantity or quality. The following comments are therefore intended to interpret this list in the light of our own experience and to assess the usefulness of the individual items when measured against the full Expedition programme.

*Section A: Mountaineering*

Whilst not all the ropes were used, in particular the thinner nylon lines, it is almost certain that they would all have been brought into service had we gone higher on the "Big White Peak." The amount of rope needed when fixed ropes are likely to be required must not be underestimated. A shortage of rope at

such times could lead to unnecessary risks being taken. As it was a good deal of rope was immediately swallowed up on the big couloir approaching Camp I, and on the rock pitch behind Camp I. Apart from their use as waist lines we had not much use for spliced slings. It is generally preferable to make knotted loops from cut lengths as required.

The heavy tubular ice pitons were made from steel electrical conduit tube. They were used in earth on the traverse into the first couloir. Here their length was essential. They would probably have been even more useful higher on the mountain. I would have taken more such pitons though our supply of rock pitons would probably have been adequate. An additional piton hammer should have been taken.

Ex W.D. karabiners are quite satisfactory for attaching fixed ropes to pitons.

The marker flags were actually khaki handkerchiefs. We were able to collect suitable sticks below Base Camp. These flags showed up quite well though an orange colour and larger size would have been better. There is no point in being short of markers.

Four spare ice-axes of *good quality* would have been sufficient. As it was, due to the antique nature of ours and the breakage of two 'good' ones, the surplus was barely adequate.

*B. Camp Equipment**1. Tents*

The Base Camp tents were quite satisfactory. The Sherpas liked their communal tent. We appreciated the extra room of the 'Bungalow' tent which we (the Sahibs) used as a dining room/lounge. The poles of this tent were not sufficient to withstand the weight of two inches of snow on the canvas. The comfort of a bigger tent at Base Camp is not to be underestimated and it is essential that the whole party should be able to foregather as required. An even roomier 'dining shelter' was constructed later. This was built with three sides open and roofed with a flysheet. It was a great success—though draughty—and well worth the trouble of making. Expedition boxes were used as tables and chairs. Three men slept in the 'bungalow' and the other three 'sahibs' with Murari slept in two two-man tents.

Sleeping partners were changed frequently and no particular aversions were evidenced.

The Black's standard mountain tent with sleeve entrance was modified in line with our requirements. The main changes were the fitting of nylon guys attached by leather tabs to the tent fabric; groundsheet was extended six inches up the side walls and canvas pockets were provided along the walls. We did not experience severe enough conditions really to test these tents but I feel sure they would have been quite satisfactory under the conditions we were likely to meet. The flysheets were not used above base camp and were not really needed at all. The two main criticisms of these tents were the difficulty of erection and their weight. The latter is probably inevitable in a tent of this size and strength but there are too many guys and the many sectioned poles are an abomination. There would be a considerable risk of losing a section in an exposed situation and the colour coding system of identifying mating sections was very frustrating in trying conditions and not foolproof (as our Sherpas proved) even under ideal conditions. The conventional steel pegs provided are useless in snow. We had flat wooden ones made in Katmandu, which were fairly satisfactory though tending to split if driven into hard snow. Guys had to be reversed so that the adjustment was made from the tent and tent manufacturers do not seem to appreciate that once a peg is buried or frozen in no adjustment of the guy round that peg can be made. We found the tents sufficiently roomy for two but I suspect the Sherpas found conditions a little crowded when cooking.

The ex-American Army bivouac tent was old and unserviceable for severe conditions. In design and for ease of erection and lightness (Nylon material) it surpassed the Black's tents. It was smaller than the Black's tents but I think two tents similar to this would have been valuable for the higher and final camps had we climbed the Big White Peak.

The tarpaulin type sheets made by the R.F.D. company to our specification were extremely useful for sheltering porters and gear as occasion demanded. One was used at Base Camp in the construction of the cookhouse. A bigger size might have been an improvement.

Summarising: Our tents were good and suitable for the uses to which we put them. However, we might have found the

Black's mountain tents annoying to carry and erect at higher altitudes.

## 2. Kitchen

The primuses were good and reliable and stood up to rough usage. We did have occasional trouble due to manhandling by the Sherpas who have no mechanical aptitude. One experience which could have had more serious consequences pointed a moral. One morning at Camp III the Sherpas could not light the stove. We didn't get to know of this until they had manhandled the burner, stripping the thread. I looked for the spares box in order to fit a new burner. The spares box was for the one pint stove. We were using the two pint ! As a result we were without a proper drink for 24 hours. Although the two pint stoves with self cleaning jets were a wonderful job, the simpler and smaller stoves were quite adequate since we only used them when away from Base Camp. Had we gone higher on the mountain we would have been better off with a total of five one pint stoves all of the same model. Solid fuel 'tommy' cookers would have been useful for emergency use. The meta fuel was quite satisfactory and glucose tablets a poor substitute as Lakpa Tsering discovered.

Certain items of kitchen equipment we could have managed without. The pressure cookers could have been used to better advantage at Base Camp—they were never taken higher. The thermos containers proved their greatest value in providing cool drinks on the return journey to Calcutta. The crockery was excellent. Small mixers or shakers for the powdered milk would have been well worth while.

## 3. General

Not all the paraffin was required as we cooked on a wood fire at Base Camp. It would however have been unwise to take much less and risk a shortage. Half gallon or one gallon polythene bottles would have been useful for carrying paraffin to the higher camps and for holding stocks of it there.

The light alloy pack frame was a great success. We could have used more.

Two-pint polythene jars or bottles were used as water bottles. 'Alpine' starts were not fashionable but the 'glacier' lanterns were very useful in the tents and were lighter to carry than torches.

The staple nylon banding made good laces for boots and overboots.

The spring balance was well worth its weight !

Other items need no comment. We used them all as occasion demanded except the Lindane tablets.

### C. Office

In view of the lists required by the customs authorities, and for official letters, a typewriter was essential. Our model withstood the rigours of the journey well although a true portable, as against a transportable model, might have been robust enough.

Duplicate books for diaries were ideal, more should have been taken. It would be a good idea to have a thin plate to insert below the page being written on as the books were paper backed. The small pocket notebooks were good for odd notes and photographic diaries made on the spot, to be re-written at leisure. The loose leaf books were inconvenient in use and unnecessary.

The ball pens and pencils taken worked admirably and there was no need for conventional pens and ink. Ordinary lead pencils were needed for the survey.

Stationery was in excess of requirements but was not bulky or unduly heavy.

The post bags were a good idea and would have been put to more use had the Expedition programme been completed and a runner employed on regular journeys between Base Camp and Katmandu.

### D. Amusements

We did not use either playing cards or dice, though the Sherpas had their own game played with dice. Reading was our main spare time activity. We had all selected rather solid reading to take with us and regretted not having included more light matter.

### E. Personal Gear (British Members)

Most of us had light weight 'Grivel' Crampons and found them very good. The 'Bally' boots were quite satisfactory but the metal hook fasteners were weak and many broke off which made the unpleasant job of getting into frozen boots even more tiresome. Unless such hooks are absolutely reliable one is better off with the conventional eyelet.

The canvas overboots were useful but not essential up to Camp IV. I am quite sure that we would have found them a real blessing higher up the mountain.

The 'stop tou' snow gaiter was most satisfactory as were our 'Wyncol' climbing suits which proved very warm, reasonably waterproof with good wear but poor tear resistance and yet light in weight. By virtue of the nylon lining they were easy to put on and take off, an attribute not to be underestimated when living in small tents.

Ideas on the best materials for socks and stockings varied. Several of us found loosely knitted harris wool perfect. We were all delighted with the superb woollen sweaters and gloves which were specially knitted for us.

The track suits were a good idea. The trousers were of great value for wear beneath windproofs. The zip ankle fastening was good but a fly would have been useful.

The basketball boots were absolutely ideal on the approach march, i.e., on dry ground and around Base Camp. They are of course treacherous in wet conditions.

We mostly had 'Edgingtons' double bags. The difference in quality between the 'Himalayan' and the 'Everest' type is very apparent, the latter being much superior all round. The problem is of course two bags or one. It is likely that we would have found the Edgingtons 'Himalayan' bags inadequately warm at higher altitudes and the two bags were certainly not as warm as a single bag of superior quality (a Black's 'Polar' which one of our members had taken) even though their combined weight was greater. For the uses to which we put them, however, our bags proved quite satisfactory and the convenience of a single bag for use at Base Camp and below was appreciated.

Our 'Duvet' jackets were of superb quality—rather too good for our needs and a little too bulky but a great comfort in camp. We might have come to consider them almost essential for climbing higher on the mountain. The comfort of these jackets, once experienced, is not easy to forgo. A short, waist length inner sleeping bag of the same quality used in conjunction with an outer bag would solve the two bag problem and reduce the equipment required. The water repellent covers for sleeping bags were useful but it is questionable where one needs such a cover most on the bag or on the air bed ? Our 'Sea Esta' beds were perfect

but became quite wet on occasion. We preferred lung power to the pumps provided. For lightness the shorter bed is a worthwhile economy.

Of the other items taken, the specially made waterproof capes were very good though the waterproofing was not an unqualified success. Wrist watches, rubber torches and many items of clothing were provided by the generosity of manufacturers and we had nothing but praise for these items. Our golf umbrellas were of great value as sunshades.

#### F. Equipment provided for Sherpas

Little comment is needed on the equipment provided for our Sherpas. Boot sizes were a problem to decide on in England but Sherpa feet fortunately seem to be very accommodating. We had expected the loan of crampons in India and had great difficulty in making do with the ancient and rusty pairs we had brought from England.

Otherwise our Sherpas were superbly equipped—probably beyond the standard that was really necessary.

It seems high time that a definite understanding was arrived at regarding the equipment (if any) that an expedition should provide for its Sherpas. All of our men had been on previous expeditions but arrived in Katmandu only with the clothing they stood up in expecting to be fully kitted out. Much of the equipment, still in good condition after the expedition, is sold or exchanged by the Sherpas on their return.

#### LIST OF EQUIPMENT TAKEN ON EXPEDITION

	Quantity
<b>A. Mountaineering</b>	
Nylon Ropes $1\frac{1}{2}$ ins. × 120 ft. . . . .	9
$\frac{7}{8}$ ins. × 200 ft. . . . .	3
$\frac{7}{8}$ ins. × 150 ft. . . . .	1
$\frac{7}{8}$ ins. × 120 ft. . . . .	1
$\frac{5}{8}$ ins. × 250 ft. . . . .	1
$\frac{5}{8}$ ins. × 200 ft. . . . .	1
Hemp Rope $1\frac{1}{2}$ ins. × 150 ft. . . . .	1
Nylon Slings $1\frac{1}{4}$ ins. × 3 ft. circ. . . . .	6
$\frac{7}{8}$ ins. × 6 ft. circ. . . . .	2
Tubular Steel ice pitons (up to 15 ins. long)	12
Flat steel ice pitons 8 ins. . . . .	8
Do. 4 ins. . . . .	6

	Quantity
Rock pitons (various) . . . . .	12
Karabiners—	
Stubai 'D' type . . . . .	3
Stubai oval . . . . .	10
Ex-W.D. . . . .	22
Marker Flags . . . . .	50
Spare Ice-axes . . . . .	4

#### B. Camp Equipment

<b>1. Tents</b>	
6 man Bell tent for Sherpas . . . . .	1
'Bungalow' tent with flysheet and groundsheet . . . . .	1
'Good Companions' tent . . . . .	1
Black's (special) Mountain Tent with sleeve entrance . . . . .	6
Flysheets for above . . . . .	6
Black's mountain tent with normal entrance . . . . .	1
Ex-American Army Bivouac tent . . . . .	1
Tarpaulin type sheets 10 ft. × 10 ft. (PVC material)	2
<b>2. Kitchen</b>	
2 pint primus with self cleaning jets . . . . .	2
Spares for above . . . . .	1 box
1 pint standard primus . . . . .	2
Spares for above . . . . .	1 box
'Meta' fuel . . . . .	14 packets
Matches . . . . .	132 boxes
Large aluminium cooking pot (local purchase) . . . . .	1
$2\frac{1}{2}$ gallon cooking pot . . . . .	1
Set of Billies . . . . .	2
'Black's' trio canteen . . . . .	3
Pressure cookers . . . . .	3
Frying pan . . . . .	1
Large teapot . . . . .	1
Whistling kettle . . . . .	1
Pot lifters . . . . .	12
Cloth bags for cooking pots, etc. . . . .	as required
Large Thermos containers . . . . .	2
Tea infusers (large) . . . . .	2
Tea infusers (small) . . . . .	2
Tea strainers . . . . .	2
Mixing bowls . . . . .	2
Measuring jugs 2 pint . . . . .	2
Kitchen strainers . . . . .	2
Kitchen scoops . . . . .	2
Measuring spoons . . . . .	2 sets
Large measuring spoon . . . . .	2
Spirit measure . . . . .	1
Large strainer spoon . . . . .	1

	Quantity
Large fork .. .. .	1
Soup ladle .. .. .	1
Spatula .. .. .	1
Egg whisk .. .. .	1
Potato peelers .. .. .	3
Tin openers .. .. .	6
Meat knife .. .. .	1
Soup plates in 'Bex' ware .. .. .	26
Drinking mugs in 'Bex' ware .. .. .	14
Polythene bucket .. .. .	1
Canvas water bucket .. .. .	2
Inflatable water bucket .. .. .	1
Floor cloths .. .. .	12
Dish cloths .. .. .	12
Nylon pan scourers .. .. .	24
Vim .. .. .	12 tins
Kitchen soap .. .. .	32 bars
Tea towels .. .. .	12
Cloth bags for food .. .. .	30
Muslin .. .. .	12 yards
<b>3. General</b>	
Everest carrying frames .. .. .	3
'Yukon' type pack frame in light alloy .. .. .	1
Spring balance (to weigh up to 100 lbs.) .. .. .	1
Paraffin in 4½ gallon jerrycans (local purchase) .. .. .	5 cans
Polythene containers for paraffin 2 gallon .. .. .	3
Tins for paraffin 2 pint size .. .. .	3
Small 'storm' lanterns (local purchase) .. .. .	3
Small collapsible aluminium candle lanterns .. .. .	6
Candles for above .. .. .	108
Electric torches complete .. .. .	6
Spare batteries for above .. .. .	48
Spare bulbs for above .. .. .	25
Polythene bottles 2 pint .. .. .	21
Do. 1 pint .. .. .	3
Do. ½ pint .. .. .	6
Polythene jars 2 pint .. .. .	2
Polythene bags—assorted sizes .. .. .	24
Alloy containers—screw top—assorted sizes .. .. .	24
Sisal cord .. .. .	3 balls
Hemp cord .. .. .	1 ball
Twine .. .. .	2 balls
Garden lines 30 yards .. .. .	2
⅝ ins. lamp wick .. .. .	1 roll
Ajax staple nylon banding .. .. .	1 lb.
Nylon braided cord .. .. .	1 lb.
Nylon boot laces .. .. .	24 pairs

	Quantity
Waxed boot laces .. .. .	36 pairs
Large sheets brown paper .. .. .	6
Sellotape in tins .. .. .	4 rolls
'Calotherm' anti mist cloths .. .. .	6
Do. bottles .. .. .	3
Water sterilising tablets .. .. .	12 boxes
Lindane (DDT) tablets .. .. .	4 tubes
Disinfectant .. .. .	7 lb. tin
Toilet rolls .. .. .	24
Toilet soap .. .. .	24 tablets
Alarm clocks .. .. .	2
Travelling mirror .. .. .	1
<b>4. Tool Kit</b>	
2 lb. axe in cloth bag .. .. .	1
Matchet in leather case .. .. .	1
Small hacksaw .. .. .	1
Blades for above .. .. .	6
Carborundum stone .. .. .	1
Screwdriver with assorted blades .. .. .	1 set
Pincers .. .. .	1 pair
Assorted nails and screws .. .. .	1 tin
Rubber solution .. .. .	1 tin
'Copydex' .. .. .	2 bottles
'Bostick' .. .. .	1 tube
Black paint (for lettering boxes, etc.) .. .. .	½ pint
Brushes for paint .. .. .	3
Windproof cloth .. .. .	1 piece
Tent repair outfits .. .. .	2
<b>C. Office Equipment</b>	
Typewriter and spare ribbon .. .. .	1
Typing carbon—(quarto size) .. .. .	3 packets
Typing paper quarto size .. .. .	500 sheets
Headed notepaper .. .. .	150 sheets
Plain notepaper .. .. .	150 sheets
Airmail paper .. .. .	200 sheets
Manilla envelopes foolscap size .. .. .	150
Envelopes 5½ ins. × 3½ ins. .. .. .	150
Log Book .. .. .	1
Duplicate notebooks for diaries .. .. .	6
Pocket notebooks and pencils .. .. .	12
Pencils .. .. .	12
'Scroll' liquid lead pencils and refills .. .. .	12
'Biro' pens and refills .. .. .	12
Loose leaf notebooks (with refills) .. .. .	6
Pencil erasers .. .. .	2
Typewriter erasers .. .. .	2

	Quantity
Penholders .. .. .	3
Nibs .. .. .	12
Ink in plastic bottle .. .. .	1
Assorted rubber bands .. .. .	1 box
Sealing wax .. .. .	6 sticks
Post bags .. .. .	3
Above items packed in special box	
<i>D. Amusements</i>	
Playing cards .. .. .	3 packs
Dice .. .. .	6
'Penguin' books .. .. .	29
Tibetan English dictionary .. .. .	1
Pocket English dictionary .. .. .	1
<i>E. Personal Gear Per Man (British Members)</i>	
Waist line and karabiner .. .. .	1
Whistle and compass .. .. .	1
Ice axe .. .. .	1
Crampons .. .. .	1 pair
Rubber soled climbing boots .. .. .	1 pair
Nylon mesh insoles .. .. .	1 pair
Canvas overboots .. .. .	1 pair
Snow gaiters or 'Snow Tous' .. .. .	1 pair
Snow goggles .. .. .	1 pair
String vests .. .. .	2
Wool shirts .. .. .	2
Wool socks .. .. .	4 pairs
Wool stockings .. .. .	2 pairs
Heavy sweater .. .. .	1
Light sweater .. .. .	2
Balaclava .. .. .	1
Wool scarf or comforter .. .. .	1
Silk square .. .. .	1
Wool mitts .. .. .	2 pair
Fingerless mitts .. .. .	1 pair
Celanese inner gloves .. .. .	1 pair
Windproof gauntlets .. .. .	1 pair
'Wyncol' climbing suit .. .. .	1
Hat .. .. .	1
Track suit tunic .. .. .	1
Track suit trousers .. .. .	1 pair
Swimming trunks .. .. .	1 pair
Basketball boots .. .. .	1 pair
Shorts .. .. .	1 pair
Climbing breeches or trousers .. .. .	1 pair
Sleeping bag outer .. .. .	1
Sleeping bag inner .. .. .	1

	Quantity
Inner sheet lining .. .. .	1
Water repellent outer cover .. .. .	1
Down filled 'Duvet' jacket .. .. .	1
Air mattress .. .. .	1
Pump for above .. .. .	1
Rubber covered torch .. .. .	1
Pocket knife .. .. .	1
Knife, fork and spoon .. .. .	1 set
Housewife .. .. .	1
Pocket can opener (Jiffy) .. .. .	1
Wrist watch .. .. .	1
Waterproof cape .. .. .	1
Golf Umbrella .. .. .	1
Mosquito net .. .. .	1
Small rucksack .. .. .	1
Cotton shirt .. .. .	2
Underpants .. .. .	4 pair
Pyjamas .. .. .	1 pair
Handkerchiefs .. .. .	6
Light coat and trousers .. .. .	1
Light shoes .. .. .	1 pair
Light socks .. .. .	2 pair
Tie .. .. .	1
Toilet necessities .. .. .	1 set
Towel .. .. .	1
Smoking equipment and other purely personal belongings	
All above packed in one wooden 'Personal' box and 'Bergen' rucksack excepting clothing worn or carried whilst travelling.	

*F. Equipment provided for Nepalese Members**i. Equipment for each Sherpa*

Kit Bag with rucksack straps .. .. .	1
Waist line and Karabiner .. .. .	1
Ice axe .. .. .	1
Crampons .. .. .	1 pair
Rubber soled climbing boots (size 6 or 7) .. .. .	1 pair
Canvas overboots .. .. .	1 pair
Snow goggles (ex-W.D.) .. .. .	1 pair
Clasp knife .. .. .	1
Windproof trousers and braces .. .. .	1 pair
Windproof anorak .. .. .	1
Windproof gauntlets .. .. .	1 pair
Balaclava .. .. .	1

The following items were issued to the Liaison Officer also :—

Basketball boots .. .. .	1 pair
Wool or string vest .. .. .	1

	Quantity
Long wool underpants .. .. .	1 pair
Track suit (tunic and trousers) .. .. .	1
Wool shirt .. .. .	1
Wool socks .. .. .	2 pairs
Heavy sweater .. .. .	1
Wool mitts .. .. .	1 pair
Sleeping bag inner .. .. .	1
Sleeping bag outer .. .. .	1
Waterproof outer cover (actually a water repellent gabardine) .. .. .	1
Air mattress .. .. .	1
2. Other Items	
Spare boots (for porters, etc.) .. .. .	2 pairs
Spare snow goggles .. .. .	7 pairs
Woollen blankets .. .. .	6

## FOOD REPORT

by A. Tallon

IT IS NOT proposed to attempt a detailed analysis of the relative value of each item of food taken. A list of the ration scales for high and low level and the total number of food boxes and their contents is given below.

We had been advised by the previous expedition to the area that the local people were reluctant, and in most cases unable, to supply an expedition such as ours with large quantities of rice, flour, eggs or chickens. Money was of no use to them in exchange for the only food they had to feed their families until the next harvest. This proved to be the case and we were only able to buy small quantities of eggs, rice, and potatoes when travelling in small groups. One item of food we could have obtained, indeed a small quantity was bought but at the time we did not know quite what it was or even what to do with it! This was Yak 'Ghi,' which, according to the appendix to the Everest book, is clarified butter—it looked rather like a thick engine grease. It was very useful for frying and we could have saved a lot of our butter by using more of this for cooking.

## Low Level Ration Scales

		OZS.			OZS.
Sugar .. .. .	4·3	} Used in conjunction with supplementary pack to make up 30 man days	Dried meat .. .. .	1·4	
Oatmeal .. .. .	1·3		Bacon .. .. .	1·7	
Complan .. .. .	2·0		Meat bar .. .. .	1·0	
Pemmican .. .. .	1·6		Salmon .. .. .	1·5	
Butter .. .. .	1·6		Sardines .. .. .	1·1	
Cheese .. .. .	2·6		Dried vegetables .. .. .	1·2	
Jam .. .. .	1·6		Spaghetti .. .. .	1·3	
Ryvita .. .. .	2·1		Soup .. .. .	2·1	
Biscuits .. .. .	1·3		Dried fruit .. .. .	5·0	
Raisins .. .. .	·8		Fruit .. .. .	3·4	
Chocolate .. .. .	2·5		Egg .. .. .	·6	
Mint cake .. .. .	·5		Cocoa .. .. .	·9	
Bournvita .. .. .	·5				
Salt .. .. .	·8				

Total—44·9 ozs.

This ration scale was only approximate and could be supplemented by luxury rations.

At Base Camp we ate what we wanted (within reason).



## High Altitude Ration Scales

OZS.		OZS.	
Sugar .. ..	4.8	Biscuits .. ..	2.0
Oatmeal .. ..	2.0	Raisins .. ..	1.2
Complan .. ..	2.4	Sweets .. ..	2.4
Pemmican .. ..	3.2	Glucose .. ..	1.1
Butter .. ..	1.6	Chocolate .. ..	2.0
Cheese .. ..	1.2	Mint cake .. ..	2.4
Jam .. ..	1.6	Bournvita .. ..	1.7
Ryvita .. ..	3.2	Lemonade powder, Tea and Salt	

Giving a ration scale of just over 32 ozs. per man day.

These scales could be supplemented from spare food boxes and/or luxury boxes when necessary.

The method of packing was controlled not so much by the need for so many ozs. of this or that as by how many tins of different shapes would pack in a rectangular plywood ration box to make up a weight of 60 lbs. gross.

## LIST OF RATION BOXES

	Weight or Quantity
24 High Altitude Ration Packs each containing :—	
2 lb. tin of sugar .. ..	3
20 oz. tin of oatmeal .. ..	2
12 oz. tin of Dried Milk .. ..	4
1 lb. tin Pemmican .. ..	4
1 lb. tin Butter .. ..	2
12 oz. tin Cheese .. ..	2
1 lb. tin Jam .. ..	2
1 lb. tin Ryvita .. ..	4
1 lb. packet Wholemeal Biscuits .. ..	1
1½ lb. packet Shortbread .. ..	1
12 oz. packet Raisins .. ..	2
4 lb. Tin Boiled Sweets .. ..	1
2 oz. packets Glucose Tablets .. ..	11
2 oz. bars Chocolate .. ..	20
4 oz. bars Mint Cake .. ..	12
1 lb. tin Bournvita .. ..	1
20 Low Level Ration Packs each containing :—	
2 lb. tin Sugar .. ..	4
20 oz. tin Oatmeal .. ..	2
12 oz. tin Dried Milk .. ..	5
1 lb. tin Pemmican .. ..	3
1 lb. tin Butter .. ..	3

	Weight or Quantity
12 oz. tin Cheese .. ..	3
1 lb. Jam .. ..	3
1 lb. Ryvita .. ..	4
1 lb. packet Wholemeal Biscuits .. ..	1
1½ lb. packet Shortbread .. ..	1
12 oz. packet Raisins .. ..	2
2 oz. bars Chocolate .. ..	24
4 oz. bars Mint Cake .. ..	4
1 lb tin Bournvita .. ..	1
1½ lb. packet Salt .. ..	1

## 12 Supplementary Ration Packs each containing :—

12 oz. tin Cheese .. ..	3
12 oz. tins Dried Meat .. ..	3
15 oz. tin Bacon .. ..	3
5 oz. Meat Bars .. ..	5
8 oz. tin Salmon .. ..	5
4½ oz. tin Sardines .. ..	6
1½ oz. packet Dried Onions .. ..	10
1½ oz. packet Dried Mixed Vegetables .. ..	10
Small packet Mixed Herbs .. ..	3
1 lb. packet Spaghetti .. ..	2
3 oz. packet Soup .. ..	18
Bottle Tomato Sauce .. ..	1
Bottle Worcester Sauce .. ..	1
Bottle Heinz Sauce .. ..	1
2 oz. bars Chocolate .. ..	12
12 oz. packet Dried Fruit .. ..	8
8 oz. packet Dried Fruit .. ..	2
1 lb. packet Dried Fruit .. ..	1
15 oz. tin Fruit .. ..	6
1 lb. tin Dried Egg .. ..	3

## Half of these 12 packs contained :—

12 oz. tin Dried Egg .. ..	3
1 lb. tin Cocoa .. ..	1
instead of :—	
1 lb. tin Dried Egg .. ..	3

## Luxury Rations :—

1 box containing :—	
4½ lb. Cake .. ..	2
4 lb. tin Chicken .. ..	1
4 lb. tin Chopped Pork .. ..	1
11 lb. tin Sausage .. ..	1
6 lb. tin Corned Beef .. ..	1
2 oz. bars White Chocolate .. ..	24

	Weight or Quantity
11½ oz. packets Custard Powder .. .. .	2
5 oz. packets Table Jellies .. .. .	8
4 oz. tin Nescafe .. .. .	2
2 lb. tin Sugar .. .. .	1
<i>1 box containing :—</i>	
1 lb. tin Dehydrated Fruit .. .. .	4
1 lb. tin Pemmican .. .. .	4
4 lb. tin Chopped Pork .. .. .	1
4 lb. tin Chicken .. .. .	1
6 lb. tin Corned Beef .. .. .	1
8 oz. tin Salmon .. .. .	6
4½ oz. tin Sardines .. .. .	15
1 lb. tin Bournvita .. .. .	2
1½ lb. packet Salt .. .. .	2
<i>1 box containing :—</i>	
4½ lb. Cake .. .. .	2
6½ lb. tin Stewed Steak .. .. .	1
7 lb. tin Ham and Tongue .. .. .	1
6 lb. tin Corned Beef .. .. .	1
4 lb. tin Chicken .. .. .	1
2 oz. bar White Chocolate .. .. .	24
11½ oz. packets Custard Powder .. .. .	2
5 oz. packet Table Jellies .. .. .	8
4 oz. tins Nescafe .. .. .	2
2 lb. tin Sugar .. .. .	1
1 lb. tin Bournvita .. .. .	1
<i>1 box containing :—</i>	
4½ lb. Cake .. .. .	2
7 lb. tin Pork Shoulder .. .. .	1
6 lb. tin Corned Beef .. .. .	1
4 lb. tin Chicken .. .. .	1
6 lb. tin Ox Tongue .. .. .	1
2 oz. bar White Chocolate .. .. .	24
11½ oz. tin Custard Powder .. .. .	2
5 oz. packet Table Jellies .. .. .	8
4 oz. tin Nescafe .. .. .	2
2 lb. tin Sugar .. .. .	1
12 oz. tin Dried Milk .. .. .	1
<i>1 box containing :—</i>	
4½ lb. Cake .. .. .	2
6½ lb. tin Stewed Steak .. .. .	1
7 lb. tin Ham and Tongue .. .. .	1
4 lb. tin Chicken .. .. .	1
7 lb. tin Pork Shoulder .. .. .	1

	Weight or Quantity
2 oz. bar White Chocolate .. .. .	24
11½ oz. packet Custard Powder .. .. .	2
5 oz. packet Table Jellies .. .. .	8
4 oz. tin Nescafe .. .. .	2
2 lb. tin Sugar .. .. .	1
1½ lb. packet Salt .. .. .	1
<i>1 box containing :—</i>	
4½ lb. Cake .. .. .	2
4 lb. tin Chicken .. .. .	1
6 lb. tin Ox Tongue .. .. .	1
11 lb. tin Sausage .. .. .	1
4 lb. tin Chopped Pork .. .. .	1
2 oz. bar White Chocolate .. .. .	24
11½ oz. packet Custard Powder .. .. .	2
5 oz. packets Table Jellies .. .. .	8
4 oz. tin Nescafe .. .. .	2
1½ lb. packet Salt .. .. .	1
1½ lb. tin Pepper .. .. .	1
¼ lb. tin Mustard .. .. .	2
<i>Spare Food :—</i>	
<i>1 box containing :—</i>	
12 oz. tin Dried Milk .. .. .	48
<i>1 box containing :—</i>	
20 oz. tin Oatmeal .. .. .	31
<i>4 boxes each containing :—</i>	
2 lb. tin Sugar .. .. .	18
1 lb. tin Ryvita .. .. .	3
<i>1 box containing :—</i>	
1 lb. tin Dehydrated Raspberries .. .. .	4
4 lb. tin Boiled Sweets .. .. .	4
1 lb. tin Butter .. .. .	5
12 oz. tin Cheese .. .. .	6
12 oz. packet Raisins .. .. .	8
1 lb. packet Prunes .. .. .	2
5 oz. packet Table Jellies .. .. .	8
<i>1 box containing :—</i>	
1 lb. tin Wholemeal Biscuits .. .. .	12
1½ lb. tin Shortbread .. .. .	14
1½ oz. packet Dried Onions .. .. .	6
1½ oz. packet Dried Mixed Vegetables .. .. .	24
Small packets Mixed Herbs .. .. .	4

	<i>Weight or Quantity</i>
1 box containing :—	
2 pint polythene bottles filled with Lime Juice .. ..	15
2 pint polythene bottles empty .. ..	4
Alloy containers assorted sizes empty .. ..	18

*Food bought in Katmandu*

Tea, Rice, Tsampa and Spices for Sherpas

## RESULTS

The diet was on the whole satisfactory.

The rations were all packed in 60 lb. boxes. We found that the Sherpas were reluctant to carry a full 60 lbs. above Base, so that the High Altitude rations had to be repacked into 45 lb. loads above Camp I. These rations could have contained less boiled sweets, cheese and pemmican and more sardines, soups and possibly lemonade powder. We found that a lot of the Mint Cake had melted on the outward journey and we did not eat as much as we had expected. The cheese became rather monotonous and was too strong when cooked with onions.

The low level rations were satisfactory and with a little imagination quite appetising meals could be concocted. The sauce, except perhaps the tomato variety, was an unnecessary luxury. The spaghetti was enjoyed except when served for breakfast. Of the dehydrated vegetables, the onions were the most successful and were in great demand for flavouring, especially at the high camps to disguise the pemmican or dried meat, which, even when cooked, was still very dry. The jam was excellent but we felt that the marmalade was unnecessary.

The luxury rations were always enjoyed and though we may have taken rather too much tinned meat, it is difficult to say what would have resulted if the expedition had run its proper course. The tinned fruit was well worth the coolie-power needed to transport it to Base.

Of the drinks, the tea was most in demand—this was bought in Katmandu. Cocoa and Bournvita were quite good and no doubt contained more food value but lemonade and tea proved to be more palatable. Nescafe was taken only for one member who did not drink tea and he afterwards remarked that all the drinks tasted the same—of Complan. This Complan was used as

dried milk and though it was difficult to mix was excellent and one member who was unwell at a high camp claims to have lived on nothing but Complan for two days without any ill effects.

The gin, rum and beer were taken and used mostly as a means of repaying hospitality in Calcutta and Katmandu. Some rum and beer were taken to Base and the beer made a very refreshing drink when mixed with lemonade. The rum was not very useful except to prove to the Tempathang men that they were not quite as tough as they thought ! Cigarettes and tobacco were found to be essential, cigarettes for the coolies and Sherpas and tobacco for some of the Sahibs.

Summing up, it can be said that the rations proved to be generally satisfactory except that the High Altitude rations should be packed in 45 lb. boxes with less pemmican and more soup and sardines. Some of the luxuries were perhaps not worth the transport but were nevertheless enjoyed. Yak Ghi and rice could be bought locally or at Katmandu to augment Base Camp supplies. The Sherpas liked to eat their own food at Base and it was noticed that even Murari, after an evening meal with the Sahibs would say his good nights and disappear into the kitchen for a few bowls of curried rice.

## MEDICAL REPORT—ILLNESS AND DRUGS

by Dan Jones

I GIVE below an account of the main illnesses we encountered and the drugs we used in treating them. First I will deal with the two casualties from our second accident.

### *Fracture of (R) Tibia and Fibula*

This emergency occurred at Camp I. The Sherpa concerned had to be transferred to Base Camp and from there by stretcher to Katmandu. This journey took 15 days. The fracture was compound and also (we learned later) comminuted.

Morphia was our first requirement, and we found the Omnopon ampoules very useful. Later we used the Tabs Morphine Hydrochloride gr  $\frac{1}{4}$  and distilled water. We carried him to Base Camp on a pack frame, and after resting him there were able to continue to Katmandu by stretcher. Morphia was not used beyond Base Camp. I started by giving him Pethidine 50 mg B.D. for the journey but when he appeared to suffer little or no pain I discontinued it. I gave him Soneryl gr 3 at night but when he failed to sleep changed to Pethidine 50 mg + Soneryl gr  $1\frac{1}{2}$ . With this he slept well. I continued this for six nights and then changed to Soneryl gr 3 again. He continued to sleep.

We reduced the fracture as well as we could under Morphia. At this time I was incapacitated by a dislocated shoulder and could only supervise proceedings. We possessed no plaster shears and so would be unable to remove a plaster once set. For this reason I decided to avoid plaster in case it was put on too tightly. The leg was splinted from mid thigh to ankle using Cramer Splints padded with cotton wool and bandaged tightly. I was able to uncover the wound partially every 4-5 days to keep an eye on it.

He was given Penicillin V Pulvules 2 tds prophylactically. I suspect he didn't take all these, for I found after 10 days that he had a small cache of them. Those he took were not at any rate sufficient to curb infection. Five days after the accident his wound was hardly infected at all, but four days later there was a wide area of redness and induration around it which extended laterally up into his thigh. I gave him Crystapen 250,000 units bd and continued the Penicillin V pulvules making sure he took them. Five days later nearly all signs of inflammation had subsided.

He also had lacerations to his face and to his (R) knee. These, together with the compound fracture, were dressed with Penicillin Tulle. Both face and knee lacerations healed well.

On reaching Katmandu he was admitted to the American Mission Hospital and his leg placed in skeletal traction.

### *Dislocated (R) Shoulder*

I myself sustained a dislocated (R) shoulder. One member of the party attempted to reduce the dislocation under morphia—following directions from me. Unfortunately we were not successful. After two days of Morphia and a further day of Pethidine I was able to limit myself to Codeine Co tabs 2 with Nembutal gr 3 at night. I was able to walk back to Katmandu with my arm in a sling and with practically no pain.

At Katmandu the dislocation was reduced with considerable difficulty under general anaesthesia. I found that some superfluous tissue in the joint cavity was preventing complete reduction, and this was subsequently removed operatively.

### *Dysentery*

This comes high on the list of complaints although comparatively speaking we did not suffer much from it. During the three months abroad we all had from 1-3 very mild attacks lasting up to three days each. One member had a moderately severe attack which lasted 10 days. No one was bedridden. Kaolin powder plus either Sulphaguanidine or Phthalylsulphathiazole tablets controlled these satisfactorily. Anethaine ointment was used once for a sore anus following dysentery.

### *Respiratory Infections*

These were almost non-existent, perhaps because we went no higher than 19,000 feet. Two members of the party developed common colds which resolved satisfactorily. One member had a chronic non-productive cough which failed to respond to any cough mixture.

### *Minor Injuries*

These were more common amongst the Sherpas and porters than amongst us. They were most frequent on legs and feet. Surgical Spirit, Pigmentum Tinctorium, and a gauze or plaster dressing were used, the Sherpas being most impressed by the

colour of the tinctorium ! I failed to take sufficient small bandages. Injuries to the soles of feet were common as the porters went barefoot. For the same reason it was impossible to make sticking plaster adhere properly. Bandages were the only solution. Elastoplast and Sleek were used very successfully for injuries elsewhere. I didn't have any Magnesium Sulphate paste with me which would have helped the treatment of certain inflamed wounds.

### Sleep

Apart from those injured by the second accident only one member of the party had to use sleeping tablets with any frequency. Nembutal was used in preference to Soneryl because of its shorter action. It was found to be very satisfactory with no hypnotic hangover on the following morning. Chloral Hydrate was used little as the bitter taste of the tablets made it unpopular. Both it and Soneryl when used were satisfactory.

### Sun

Evans Suncream proved most satisfactory. It was quite as effective as any of the proprietary brands and many times more economical. It was also extremely pleasant to use. We were all most grateful for it.

Acriflex antiseptic cream was used to soothe the skin of those unfortunates who were too late in applying their suncream.

Lipsyl was moderately effective in protecting the lips. One person developed a sun sore which became infected and only responded when Pigmentum Tinctorium was used.

### Diet Supplements

Adexolin capsules and Fersolate tablets were issued to be taken every second day. It was felt that on the mountain our biggest dietary deficiency was Vitamin C; Nisorbin tablets were to be taken daily. Members of the party took these with varying degrees of regularity. No appreciable difference in health was noticed between them.

### Insects

Not much could be done to affect mosquitoes in the outside atmosphere. However we only came across these in the plains. Paludrine 100 mg daily was taken prophylactically over this period. No one contracted malaria.

D.D.T. and Talcum Puffers were very useful, especially for delousing climbers who felt they had 'caught' something !

Dimethyl Phthalate, although effective, was not popular as the bottles leaked and as it was oily and tended to pick up much dirt when applied to one's hands and face. Its main purpose would have been as a leech repellent in the monsoon, but we returned before the monsoon started.

### Aperients

These were not generally required. However when they were required the Emuls Paraffin Liq è Agar proved rather too mild and the Castor Oil capsules rather too severe.

I have not as yet mentioned the ailments we encountered in the local inhabitants of the regions through which we passed. They made full use of the 'doctor sahibs' services. Many of their complaints were vague and not substantiated by clinical findings—vague tummy pains and head pains which we suspected were designed to obtain a pill wrapped in silver paper from the doctor. Such cases were usually given Solprin or Codeine Co. However certain illnesses were very real.

*Dysentery* was common and appeared to be chronic—presumably amoebic. It was treated as already mentioned.

*Respiratory Infections* occurred with fair frequency—were usually chronic and were often limited to a cough with no physical signs. Some of this may again have been in order to acquire a spoonful of medicine. Quite a number, however, had physical signs in the chest. A few cases of cough with blood-stained sputum suggested tuberculosis. If physical signs were present a course of Sulphamezathine or Sulphatriad was given. Otherwise Toclase, Ethnine or Piriton cough syrup were used alone.

*Eye Conditions* were very common, were nearly always chronic and often showed irreversible changes. Trachoma was common but all I could do was to insert one or two doses of Sulphacetamide ointment into the affected eyes.

### Children

A number of young children were brought up, several with infective skin conditions or burns. Systemic Penicillin and a local dressing was all I could do.

One child had otitis externa for which I used Terramycin Otic drops.

Another child was almost moribund with possible cholera. I gave this child two injections of Terramycin I.M. When I returned four weeks later the child was alive and well.

This last cheerful note completes the survey of illness encountered on the expedition. I have mentioned all the drugs we had cause to use; for them and for all the other drugs and medical equipment which we had to take with us but fortunately did not use we should like to thank the Donors very much indeed.

All drugs and equipment which we did not use ourselves were given to the Mission Hospital in Katmandu. I was a patient in this hospital for a while and was most impressed by the efficiency of its Staff and the large amount of useful work they do amongst the Nepalese.

Drugs donated by

*Allen & Hanbury Ltd.*  
*Evans Medical Supplies Ltd.*  
*Glaxo Laboratories Ltd.*  
*Eli Lilly & Co. Ltd.*  
*Parke Davis & Co. Ltd.*  
*Pfizer Ltd.*

Packed by

*Evans Medical Supplies Ltd.*

## THE SUMMING UP

by G. B. Spenceley

WE had all the conditions for success, for the successful ascent of the "Big White Peak" and the survey and exploration that we were required to complete; all the conditions for success except one—and that the most vital of them all, luck. We did not have the luck, the one condition you can neither measure nor control, the ingredient that is the final vital factor that will decide success, failure or tragedy.

The most careful planning and organisation we did have—there was nothing hurried or slipshod about this; there had been time for absolute thoroughness and minute care and attention to detail, so that in the field progress was smooth and according to plan. Much credit for this is due to the ability and hard work of those, both inside the party and outside, who were most concerned with the Expedition's organisation in the month preceding our departure. It is worth recording that the efficiency and speed with which, after our arrival in Katmandu, we prepared for our outward march, was commented upon by Colonel Proud, the First Secretary to the British Embassy, a man who has seen the arrival and departure of many expeditions. Of the actual equipment, in spite of slender resources, there was neither lack of quantity or shoddiness in quality. We had considered well ourselves on these matters and by others had been well advised; a few redundancies there may have been, but no vital item was forgotten, nothing proved ill suited to its task.

Success on a Himalayan peak depends too on the party both as individuals and as a team, and neither as individuals nor as a team, was there any evidence of weakness, either in skill, endurance, attitude of mind or temperament. Indeed we may not all have been capable of climbing so high as the very summit of the "Big White Peak"; we were not tested to this extent, nor is it likely that we should all have been able, or required, to be so tested; it was only necessary that two should reach this high objective and that and more we could certainly have done. Beyond the normal minor disabilities suffered by all who first reach these heights there was no ill health or weakness, and in fact before we had retreated from the Phurbi Chyachumbu Glacier three men

had demonstrated their fitness for any feat of endurance they might have been called upon to make.

And if we were a fit and healthy party, so, too, were we a happy and united one. The stresses and strains, the petty irritations unavoidable in any exploration or mountaineering enterprise, and which alone have been sufficient to cause less ambitious projects than ours to founder, were never enough to cause any disruption in our accord or breed the slightest ill feeling. But no party is complete or capable without a good leader and in Fox we had a man of exceptional mountaineering ability and judgement; a man with a wide vision, bold in planning, prudent in execution. He was conscientious and considerate, dedicated to his task and loved by us all. And to all this concord and unity of purpose can be added a team of six high altitude Sherpas, strong and willing, fully entering into the spirit of the enterprise; serving us indeed in the manner which climbers have come to expect of this worthy race.

Even the weather, the least predictable of elements, and the factor which alone could have defeated our strength and brought our well thought out plans to naught, was not unkind. There was no day on which at some time we could not be active, and although few days were completely fine, the weather did follow a regular pattern so that we could plan accordingly. In all aspects we were a strong and favoured party.

Our strength and good fortune was not wasted. Till the accident on 30th April dashed all our hopes and destroyed the efforts of two strenuous weeks, our programme had progressed according to plan. Behind us was the painful period of our initial acclimatisation, the time consuming reconnaissances, the tedious building up of stores, the largest part of our survey programme. The first major operation was completed. From an already well stocked Camp III as a new Advance Base, we should have gone forward to the attack. Camp V would have been pitched at the head of the glacier near to the point where Fox and I made our final reconnaissance. From that site, the col overlooking the Dorje Lhakpa Glacier could be easily and quickly reached, and by descending slightly and traversing we could have gained the final slopes which lead to the summit ridge. A party superbly fit might have made the ascent in one day from the col,

but it had been our intention to place a light camp on these upper slopes if we could find a platform sufficiently large.

Such had been our achievement and such were our plans for their successful completion. We were defeated not by ill health, bad weather, by technical difficulty, by distance or height, most usual causes of failure, but by sheer bad luck. The decision that Fox and I made in the final icefall on 30th April was not lightly made. It was not lightly made, yet there was really no choice. Had there existed any alternative route, less hazardous, then we should have taken it, but there was no such route. Had it been some less important peak then we should have returned; were we to be exposed to hazard for a long time, or even had we seen evidence of recent falls of ice then we should have gone no further. But these conditions did not apply and this was no small peak but the very purpose of our journey. The mountaineer who has come so far will not easily turn back. We took the risk, calculated and deemed to be justifiable, as must all but the most fortunate who wish to climb these great peaks. On Everest, Kangchenjunga, Makalu and a host of lesser giants the same risk has been taken, not once but many times, and will continue to be taken as long as there are mountains to climb and men to face the challenge.

The odds were not high but we had gambled and lost and now we were back where we started. Weakened party though we were, we might still have climbed the 'Big White Peak.' Our chance of success was reduced but it was not impossible. It would have been a worthy feat, to have turned our misfortune into victory, and a great memorial to Crosby Fox. But although the risk was slight we could not expect our Sherpas to walk by the very place where lay their comrades and I am sure our decision to retreat was the right one. Unfortunately there was no other peak that we could climb, but on all sides lay glaciers unknown and mountains unmapped; there remained a fascinating wealth of work to do and this not on the Phurbi Chyachumbu Glacier, a place of evil association to us all. Fresh scenes would ease our burden and bring new life to the shattered expedition.

We do not know what might have been done had fate not struck again, not again tragically, but most unkindly, when Lhakpa Tsering and Dan Jones were injured in a regrettable mischance, The time that was wasted, the efforts that were

needed to transport these two injured men to Base Camp, efforts which speak most highly for those concerned, would have been put into fruitful exploration and survey. There was work to do, the time and the men to do it; worthy deeds would have been accomplished and high rewards gained. But it was not to be; what was done, initially by Wilson and Tallon, while still high on the glacier in the days immediately following the accident, and later by Anderson and Tallon in the few hectic days after the departure of the injured, gives some measure of what might have been achieved. The map of the area as far as we were committed to make it was completed, and great credit is due to these men.

I suppose it was on the return to Katmandu, when we had more time for thought, that each in his own way pondered on the past months, their rewards and sorrows, and what they had brought to him personally. We had failed and suffered bitter tragedy. There had been moments it must be admitted when all mountains seemed hateful, gone was their beauty and their challenge. With Crosby and our Sherpas buried there, just up the glacier, yet their presence haunting still every moment of the day and at night occupying our dreams, it seemed an evil and treacherous spirit that had lured us there and it enticed us no longer.

But this was a passing mood. We did not regret less the death of our friends, and still we suffered for those at home, for whom their loss meant most, but there was restored to us again, faith in the values of the way of life we had chosen. In the silent, majestic beauty of the mountains we felt too close to reality to hold for long these brooding thoughts; their very presence was uplifting and even death had a nobility as had the challenge which we had answered. These mountains had killed our friends but it was the mountains that had made them the fine men they were.

Our faith then was restored as was our love of the mountains and it was with a very real regret that we made our way back to the plains. There were no great achievements to record, we had won no victory except perhaps a little over ourselves, we had lost dear friends, yet even so it seemed then, as we turned our backs to the mountains, to be so infinitely worth while. We had failed and yet each of us individually in spite of, indeed perhaps because of that failure, had gained something of immeasurable value, a vast

wealth of experience, a knowledge of himself, deep friendships, a memory of a fine man. These intangible things are our reward.

The "Big White Peak" is still there, its snows untrodden, offering its challenge to future climbers. Those who go to it again will not perhaps call it by the same name, for that clumsy title was one of convenience. It bears no name on any map but we have heard the Tampathang Sherpas call it Yambicho and we hope that this local name will be adopted.

Any future expedition with designs on this peak must inevitably approach by the same long route. Their Base Camp could not be placed better than on our site, or close to it, nor could our route to Camp I be improved upon for we explored every possibility of avoiding the hazards of the stone couloir. It is most unlikely that a reasonable route will be found straight up the valley from Pemsal, through the lower icefall. The way to our Camp IV will remain materially the same, but it is above the camp in the crucial 'jaws' of the glacier that we hope improvements on our route will be made. Glaciers change and another year it may be perfectly possible to walk safely up its centre. But it may not be so and a future party would be wise to equip themselves with alloy ladders with which to span the barrier.

After the successful ascent of the "Big White Peak" there is little else on which the party can occupy themselves in the immediate area. It would be unwise to say that Phurbi Chyachu and Dorje Lhakpa are both unclimbable, but we believe no attempt will be made on these savage peaks until there is little else in the accessible Himalayas left to climb. Neither mountain is high by the standard of the Himalayas, but neither would yield to any but prolonged siege tactics. Dorje Lhakpa seems defended on all sides and no line of weakness could we see. Phurbi Chyachu is not quite so uncompromising, there is a possibility of a route from the cols on the frontier ridge on either side of the peak, but either would be long, very steep in parts and technically difficult. We could see no footing for a high camp.

But before this area is left by a future party the fringes of the range should be visited, both to the east and west of the Phurbi Chyachu Glacier. Here in exploration and survey and possibly too in climbing there will be enough to reward them. To the east across the ridge of the Chaksil Danda they can reach the glaciers at the head of the Nosem Khola where on the Frontier



Ridge between Kharani Tippe and Phurbi Chyachu there may be climbable peaks. But it is to the west that they will most be rewarded, in the unknown country to the north of the Langtang Khola, which should not be confused with the river of the same name in the Langtang proper further to the west.

Where the moraines from two much receded glaciers meet and invade the green pastures of the head water of this torrent there are rough Sherpa shelters and here by little lakes and streams of clear water is the most ideal of camp sites to act as a base from which to explore this area. It is not likely that it could be reached direct from Tamphang for the gorge of the Langtang Khola holds strange fears and hidden perils for the Sherpas, and we found none willing to take that way. But from Panche Pokhari there is a track leading in a day's march to this heavenly site—only it could not be traversed by unshod porters before the end of May. Any expedition anxious only to explore this area midway between the Langtang and the Jugal Himal should take this route and we believe they will find a rich reward for their efforts. No high mountains, but fine vistas and a wealth of unmapped country.

## IN MEMORIAM

CROSBY IAN WALLACE FOX

1923-1957

As one of the most experienced and enthusiastic mountaineers in the Club Crosby Fox was a natural choice for the leader of the Y.R.C. Himalayan Expedition. To those of us who had known and climbed with Crosby, and had followed the fortunes of the Expedition, it came as a tragic shock to learn of his death in the Himalayas. While returning from a reconnaissance of the Phurbi Chyachumbu Glacier, the party was overwhelmed by a fall from an apparently stable ice-cliff overhanging the key passage of the glacier. Crosby and two Sherpas were killed and George Spenceley only narrowly escaped.

His climbing career was full and varied. Before I met him he had climbed in South Africa and he started his Alpine career at Meiringen in 1949 where he attended the second of the Alpine Club Training meets. From that time he always climbed guideless, sometimes with myself or D. G. Bennett of the J.M.C.S. and in later years with David Oxtoby and George Spenceley. His record of Alpine ascents over the years was long and varied, the list of difficult ascents continually punctuated by an easy route ascended usually for its incomparable view. The difficult ones were usually classics in their own right and never purely sensational gymnastics. Such routes as the Zmutt Ridge, Weisshorn North Ridge, Mont Maudit Frontier ridge, the Ryan-Lochmatter Ridge of the Aig du Plan and the Old Brenva Route, to name but a few, are of such stature as to command respect in any assembly of mountaineers but among them we find Le Besso, ascended for the view, Weissnollen, because he liked the name, and the Mitre de l'Eveque because it looked as if nobody ever bothered to climb it. In this he was rewarded by finding a bottle on the summit with the names of the only two preceding parties since it was first ascended.

As a mountaineer he was very fast and a sheet anchor of reliability. His energy and enthusiasm made it often difficult for ordinary men to keep up. I can only remember his once relinquishing the lead because he was physically incapable of leading farther and that was on the Ryan-Lochmatter, a route notorious for its demands on the endurance of the leader.

He was educated at Glasgow Academy and was an apprentice in the Merchant Navy during the war, subsequently obtaining the Master's Certificate.

He married in 1956 and to his wife and parents we express our sympathy in their loss.

We have lost a fine mountaineer and friend.

W. Kelsey.



Photo G. B. Spenceley

CROSBY FOX AT LAST SURVEY STATION