The 1950 Houston Expedition to Nepal and the Southern Approach to Mount Everest

A collection of diaries, letters, press reports, photos, slides, journal articles and books

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The first five articles in the above list are copied from the Elizabeth S. Cowles Partridge archive collection housed at the American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming, 2111 Willett Dr., Laramie, WY 82071.
Anderson Bakewell, Oscar R. Houston, Elizabeth S. Cowles, H.W. Tilman, Charles Houston
U.S. EXPEDITION GOES 18,000 FEET UP UNEXPLORED SIDE OF MT. EVEREST

By Robert Trumbull
Special to The New York Times

New Delhi, India, Dec. 10 - The first American expedition to Mount Everest has returned to New Delhi after a pioneering investigation into the mysteries of the earth's highest peak that will be a future source of material to mountaineers everywhere. Everest's precipitous icy spire, reaching 29,141 feet, is one of the world's most dramatic challenges to man's mastery of nature.

Oscar R. Houston of 95 John Street, New York, was the leader of the group of climbers, members of which have tried to overcome great peaks in many parts of the world. The others were his son, Dr. Charles Houston of Exeter, N. H., who has climbed Nanda Devi, 25,645-foot peak in India and until this summer the highest peak ever scaled by man afoot; Maj. H. W. Tilman, British veteran of two Everest expeditions, who is credited with defeating more major summits than any other man; Mrs. E. S. Cowles of Colorado Springs, Colo., one of America's most famous women alpinists, and Anderson Bakewell, formerly of St. Louis and now at St. Mary's College, Kurseong, West Bengal.

Dr. Houston and Major Tilman alone made the first reconnaissance of the great mountain's south face. They climbed to between 18,000 and 19,000 feet to determine the feasibility of attempting to conquer Everest's untouched summit from this side, which lies in Nepal.

All previous expeditions have been made by way of the north face in Tibet, and the south side until now has been unexplored.

The Houston expedition was not trying to reach Everest's crest this time. The scouting of the south slope, however, was an important contribution to Everest lore and to the knowledge of one of the most inaccessible regions on earth, which white men had never explored before.

Their report, first given for publication to this correspondent today, was not encouraging. One gathered that only their scientific caution prevented their making a flat statement that to reach Everest's icy top from the south was impossible.

"Our conclusions about the south face," they agreed in a carefully worded statement, "were that it presented much greater climbing difficulties than the north side. The southern face is precipitous and broken by long and intricate ridges which would be technically difficult and dangerous. The south face may well be impossible and we could see no practicable climbing route."

HAS BEEN BRITISH MONOPOLY

Until the Houston expedition, Mount Everest has been a British monopoly, with the exception of one New Zealander, L. V. Bryant, in 1935. Few parties have been able to obtain permission from the Government of Tibet to make the trek to the foot of the unconquered peak.

The Houstons chose the southern experiment for four important advantages:
1. The route lay through the friendly and accessible country of Nepal, whose ruler sanctioned the American expedition.
2. The approach to the mountain is short and relatively easy, taking two weeks from India instead of six through Tibet.
3. The rock formation of the southern face was expected to be more favorable because of a gentler slope of strata and a formation resembling gigantic stairs, whereas the north side is dangerously smooth.
4. The north face is in the shadow most of the time, whereas on the south side all climbing can be done in sunshine that reduces the hazard of extreme cold.

**TAKE NUMEROUS PHOTOGRAPHS**

While other members of the party remained at a Buddhist monastery 13,000 feet high on the approaches to Everest, Charles Houston and Major Tilman set out Nov. 15 to examine the hitherto untried south slope with three Sherpa porters to move their camp from stage to stage.

On the second day, Dr. Houston and Major Tilman went to 17,000 feet on the face of the Nuptse ridge. The following day they climbed to 17,000 by a different route and on the third day they moved to Pumo Ri, on the opposite side of the valley, and went to between 18,000 and 19,000 feet to observe the south face of Everest from that vantage point.

They took numerous photographs, which, when developed, will add to the none-too-plentiful knowledge of Everest and throw the first light on a part of the world never seen by white men. No other persons except natives had ever been within seventy miles of the south foot of Mount Everest before, Dr. Houston said.

**FIND ANIMAL LIFE**

Dr. Houston and Major Tilman took their observations in temperatures that reached 10 degrees Fahrenheit at night and were never above freezing in sunlight. They found tracks and other indications of abundant animal life on this unmapped slope, including birds, mice, rabbits, snow leopards and many small insects.

Dr. Houston said Glaciation suggested that the south slope of Everest had much less precipitation than the north side. Nowhere did the snow show signs of melting. Glaciers themselves — including two major glaciers that do not show on any map — he discovered to be dying rapidly.

"They are black, dirty, rotten-looking and entirely stagnant," he said.

Except in cracks on the Majestic Mountain's rugged face, there was no snow until 19,000 feet, Dr. Houston said, although from an unattained summit the wind blew powdery snow in a plume that stretched fifty miles like a pennant of unimaginable size.

The party found that the lower slopes were too steep to hold snow and there was little on the south side of the topmost cone.

Mount Everest really asserted her majesty at sundown, when seen from the monastery where the other members of the party waited. As the sun went behind immense ridges early and left other great peaks in darkness, Everest continued to stand out in a glorious blaze of light, with its immense snow plume sparkling like a crystal mist.

The party's stay at the Thyangboche Monastery, where they were guests of a 16-year-old reincarnated Buddha, was unique in that an American woman, Mrs. Cowles, was permitted to witness Lamaistic rites for the first time.

What intrigued the mountaineering party almost more than even some of the breath-taking sights they saw was a sign over the entrance to the public school at Dhanakuta, a town two days' trek inside the border of most remote Nepal. Inscribed by an unknown hand, it said in English, "Gather courage — don't be a chicken-hearted fellow."
From this plane, riding along at 17,000 feet, in a beautiful early morning light nearing Damascus, I think back amusedly on the starts and stops of yesterday! the word that the 8:35 take-off had been delayed 4 hrs (5 would be delayed 2 hrs) never reached me in London at the Rubens Hotel so I had all the haste, the grey early morning start, & the gulped down brkfd to no good end. Got rid of my baggage at the air terminal and set off on foot to use up my 4 hrs. Got a haircut and the book I hadn’t had time to find. Sun came out & cheered my drooping spirits, sat by a huge bed of wonderful red geraniums at Buckingham palace. Then to the Berkeley where I found Oscar and Nell and with them went through the further postponements. Finally departed after lunch (at 1:15) from the terminal but further delays at the airport and 4:40 it finally was when we took off in our Pan Am constellation. In 1 3/4 hr we were in Munich; supper there (Wiener schnitzel & tasty salad). Nelly and I think that a national cookery orientation program would be just the thing for the British at this point; they do so poorly with what’s left them now that the roasts and joints of other times are gone. We have two friends: one an English businesswoman who says she feels “condemned to death” every time he gets on a plane (always takes our cut of insurance) - and an Indian name of GUPTA (Hindu) lives near Agra, was brought up “in one of the minarets of the Taj Mahal” (?) Looks like a pale olive Dr Bunche. There is also a cute oil couple going to Rangoon with 2 dear little kids. Socory Vacuum, but never heard of Casal!

3:30 AM Istanbul. The delay on the flight has made us miss seeing so much interesting country by daylight. Sad to think what’s so near! We must all be hungry because we stand around Istanbul airport talking about FOOD. Mr Agra says Turkish food is wonderful - 1,000,000 ways of fixing lamb. Dessert for every meal incl brkfd (is the place for me).

Off at 4:20. Damascus now (7:20) Country is not unlike New Mex & Arix but with a warmer glow to everything. Damascus is all cream color against a backdrop of lowlying pale green. Pointed eucalyptus plus rounded trees, then masses of the grey-green of olive trees. Everything is in lttle sq units - houses are like tan cardboard boxes. Then a mosque with a great dome. Airport crowded with men in fesses (red), telling beads behind their backs as they converse with friends. See some Druze tribesmen. We hear a broadcast of chanting of the Koran, strange and beautiful: the Koran has melody, rhythm, and poetry of meaning (says Mr Agra) and tells us that as a boy he went on a 1000 mile pilgrimage on foot with his grandmother to the source of the Ganges. We leave Damascus at 6:30 - Karachi in 7 hrs! Trip is going so fast! Wildest kind of country (desert) comes next. A winding river through the pinkish sand turns out to be the Euphrates! water then, and clouds below. Suddenly rises in the greatest tangle: (Hts of Oman) ½ the glowing rosy tinge, the other ½ an almost greenish chalky shade - the light hitting the two knocks your eye out. we all take naps. Poor visibility from my seat but I go visit Mr Walsh further back (our businessman) and see fine. Food troubles (don't get any). Mr Gupta (Agra) gets a meal, eats beef (against his religion) but he is able to do this because of having gone on the 1 great pilgrimages - is absolved, a and so is the steward!

Sept 22

Am writing this in the large marble-floored library of the American Embassy at Karachi - fans move slowly, everything is arranged for great heat and that's what there is, o boy. bare-foot servants each with a red fez and an Am. eagle on it, move around silently. (Terrible sight in the streets of Karachi: a camel pulling a cart on which is advertised the program of the evening movie show). Last night we arrived at the Karachi airport at 6:30, were met by the Warrens and eased through the customs by diplomatic immunity. Then whir through the streets to the Embassy in a big car with 2 Am. flags just as sun sets and the molesons are kneeling down for their evening prayers. The Embassy is a large airy high-ceilinged house, marble floors, cool pale curtains, servants in bare feet with red fesses. we bathe hastily and grab evening dresses from our suitcases and off to a garden dinner party of a most delightful Pakistani gentleman. WADID ALL. I have a wonderful time with a young soft-voiced Pakistani and a Colonel Rankin Brit). Food is strange and wonderful, like nothing I ever tasted before. Curryish and spicy. Music and a moon. Came home and sat up for hrs listening to fascinating talk from Warren who is a superb man. Political goings on at the party, it
To bed at 2 (nobody ever seems to go to bed here). Sleepy!

Friday, Sept 25

We breakfast downstairs on brook trout and spoon bread, very special. Sit around then while callers pour in, including a beautiful creamy-faced Burmese, and a Pakistani gentleman and his daughter, she with a little diamond in one nostril. Lunch. In aft Hart Warren, Nell and I have a quick visit to the bazaar to get material for a flag for the Ambassador's sailboat which he is to race this aft. The bazaar is terrific excitement explosion of colors, sounds, smells and all kinds of motion. Everywhere you look something amazing and unforgettable. Like bearded tribesmen, women in purdah (veiled), camels with bedouinish slight little brown people just managing to stick on the tail end - sacred cow wandering around along (etc). There are 500,000 refugees in Karachi alone and 150,000 of these are utterly homeless, sleeping in the streets at night. But one feels law abidingness and order and cheer, nevertheless. Little bursts of laughter and tinkling of camel and donkey bells, little children romping about. Bicycles and taxi cabs that a man on a bike is the horse of... The bazaar, not a very fancy one, is an uproar of sound and motion. No one bothers us, no beggars or diseased people, or terribly aged - so far anyway. One likes these Pakistanis and feels them alert and self respecting (somewhat, anyway - or anyway - the one I've seen). They are small and slight and agile except for the Fatam tribesmen and others who are tall, spare, mostly bearded, very impressively dressed in wonderful colors. Birds fill the air - a terrific squeaking every minute! Everything is low, flat, sandy and pale tan in color. The city seems formless, clusters of bldgs in one spot, empty fields and then another cluster of bldgs. Nell Mary and I return to the Embassy and make the flag, so engrossed in our conversation while sewing that we finish too late for Warren to use it. I like the ws immensely. He is vital, handsome, charming, very forceful - she warm, simple, taking her job seriously, no airs but very definite. They have a sweet daughter, Anne. We hear fascinating talk about Pakistan, the Pakistanis, the Indians, Nehru, Miss Jinnah, the terrific job and ordeal through which this new country has gone through during the past 2 years. Took a nap this aft late and then a big dinner party here. Wore my Uncle Phil Bendel number, divine! Wonderful to see how Mrs Taylor (Secr to Mr W) and Mary Warren run an affair like this: everyone met everyone, all names said clearly (even the long titled ones) so you understood it. Two beautiful women in saris: the Begum of Shawa, the Begum Husein (the latter a princess in her own right and breathtakingly lovely) The former one of the most charming women imaginable. I had a wonderful time at dinner sitting next her husband the Khan of Shawa (you say it H A H N but with the H a bit heavy, like a German ch) He is one of the ablest of the men running Pakistan today. When partition came, the white collar workers, all Hindus, just vanished - nobody was left who was trained to do their jobs. This man (in charge of the 24s) wicked people out of the bushes and, by miracle, kept the railways running. Now things are in good shape & he has just bought 20 diesel engines from the U S A, complete with crew who will train the Pakistanis to run them. Things are roaring along on all cylinders here in Pakistan now but the burden of the affairs of the country rest on the shoulders of about 25 men, Warren says. The dinner party was wonderful. Enjoyed a little Scot ("call me Scotty") on one side and on the other side (and what a Burr!) - is coming here tomorrow night and promises to wear his Forbes kilt. To bed at 2:00 again.

Saturday September 26

Ersk up stairs with Nell and Oscar in our dressing gowns. We talk about Nepal, get the maps out and mark our Arun Kosi river route. Warren comes in and we discuss the possibility of another member of our party (to take Walter wood's place who can't come). Man named Poling suggested. The Warrens leave for the U S A tonight but seem to have time for everyone and everything - wonderful people! Mint juleps before lunch, cushioned in choc cake; lots of sitting around and talking, then took a nap and there was a big party here for the travelers: Bag pipes from the Pakistan battleship HIMALAYA fireworks, 2 scotchmen in kilts (one of them little Forbes). Menu: wonderful soup, then Crabs; ham, chicken salad and van. ice cream with choc sauce; then to the airport. Leis thrown around the ws, more bag pipe playing, crowds waving - then drove in with a man named Husein with interesting talk about Windsor, Lord Llnlithgow, and the quick
British departure from India. Then to the Jacks on for drinks and the Scotch boys having a fierce Scotch-Irish argument about Cromwell, lots of feeling! Mrs J shows us over her kitchen - the cooking is all done over little charcoal braziers! Home and to bed at 10 o'clock (again) - weary (again).

Sunday Sept 21

Brkf with Nell & Oscar; it is a hot day. To the beach of the Arabian Sea with Anne Taylor for a picnic and swim at the beach house of General and Mrs Cahthorns. Swim before and after lunch - camels parade up and down. Dine at home, no guests for the first time.

Monday Sept 25

Late brkf after ten needed hrs of sleep. Then Anne Taylor takes Nell and me shopping. Buy little caps (Sind work), so cute, and shoes (wonderful gold embroidery). Its going to be hard to steer between buying too much and missing the things I'll never get a chance at again! struggled with circular letter, and took a nap. Hard to write; am seeing - and feeling - too much. Air corps party tonight; pleasant. We're getting to know people. Fun to say "hello Commodore Hill, Hi, Colonel Miller" (etc). Everyone interested in us and our expedition. To bed late.

Tuesday Sept 26

Off at 6:30 a.m. to see the Tatta ruins. Cool drive in the early morning milky light over the desert (Sind) as sun rises like a red orb. Camels, donkeys, herds of goats driven by tribesmen are on the road. The ruins are of burial places, built 1600 to 1700 A.D., brick and stone work and tiles, beautiful carvings, no arches or columns but domes wonderfully contrived and sq pillars and capitals and window openings very beautiful with stone carved grating work. Took pictures. Small temples with carved coffins in the center. And large temples with clusters of tombs in courtyards in the center, with round center domes and lower side domes. We climb up little circular staircases to upper balconies and look across over blue tile domes and sand. Very deserty surroundings. Then in to the town of Tatta itself (looks like an Indian pueblo) with creamy walls, mamasa & tamarisk on edge of water course, pod ilises, morning glories, processions of camels donkeys, turbanned bearded fine looking men, women carrying great water pots on their heads, men going down for water with goatskin, or a little cart with 4 jars in a row. The Basha: the street our car is in gets narrower and narrower and we are all but incarcerated. Sind embroidery; little brown boys guide us (cute). Camel turns a pump. Mid a.m. snack, very good, by the roadside in the shade. Hot! Home. Nap. Lunch (soup, salad, fruit). Shopping in ait - look at the silver shops. Cook at the Embassy gives us lesson in how to make a brandy souffle. The kitchen, just fixed, has tile floor, barefooted cook and assistant - Anne T describes its former condition with the braziers. Mary Warren's story about the stove breaking down just before a large & important embassy function. "I don't want to hear anything about it; if this isn't a perfect dinner I shall kill you!" Braziers were brought in from all over the neighborhood, dinner was a dream! Bill Parsons went in to Katmandu last year. Lots of talk about Nepal - we learn a lot. Pictures. To bed at 12.

Wednesday Sept 27 Coffee this morning with the Begum of Shewa, She so lovely in a soft white sarei embroidered in pink. (Her husband is the one who runs the R.I and did so all through the difficult days). She is sad; her parents are in Kashmir and she has not heard a word from them. Coffee party includes the Egyptian Ambassador's wife. Lunch with the Cahthorns at the Union Jack club with a delightful Begum (Pakistani for Mrs) in a green chiffon sarei - they call her TARA, just too beautiful, lovely, soft voice & perfect English. Packed. Cocktails at Mark Ingle's apt out in Clifton, the new section here. Nice young people and an Embassy attaché named Harry Spielman told ghost and snake stories. Net the Embassy mongoose today, name of CHARLEY. Dinner at Embassy.
We are all ready to leave for New Delhi, just time for Collinnes and lunch. Oscar is rejoicing that paper money is now the thing; says that on former trips it was necessary to have a special bearer to carry an anna bag, 2 ft by 1, full to the brim! We have everything packed, have paid our accounts, written a chit recommending MAGICOOL (head bearer at the embassy) and handed out tips (12 rupees apiece to distribute). ** After lunch we left for the airport; a long wait that was much enlivened by a helicopter whirling around; fun to watch the varied crowd watching. Spilman, Ingle, Anne Taylor and others see us off. Bill Parsons (the Kathmandu boy). Off at 6:05, cross the Indus river. Grey plains below and apricot light on the plane's wing as the sun sets. No food land at 9 at Delhi, hot and confused; very handsome turbaned official funnels through our papers. Very inept, we fill out questionnaire after questionnaire (no embassy help here!), then go through the customs and take bus to town. Nice talk with young Indian officer, very fine looking and intelligent. Then to the Cecil Hotel, had sandwiches, to bed, weary.

Sept 29

Delhi. Mail at Cooks. Very fine! Plans are arrangements for Kathmandu. We go to the Embassy. Delhi is a handsome city, beautifully laid out, many trees; teeming masses of people, streets are wildly crowded, many sacred cows wandering around. Cold lunch at the Cecil (a nice hotel) and a bit of sari shopping. Cocktails at Mrs. Service's. We cable Charley to come on the trip. Late dinner and early to bed.

Sept 30

Delhi. We spend the morning at the Kashmir shop - I buy a lot! Lunch with Ambassador Henderson at the American Embassy, Indian Amb. to Nepal was there and tells us he is going to Kathmandu on Tues by air. Very nice man. Also there: Mr. Greal and Mr. & Mrs. Forman (all of the Embassy here), pleasant people. We left in the afternoon and drove to Agra through unbelievable country, such squalor and filth, such crowds of miserable looking people. Every 1/2 mi there is a stupa (monument like a tower) to mark the distance a man can go in an hr (the old system of measuring distance). They are interesting in shape, rather like a pine cone on a pedestal, 20 ft high. Solomon, our bearer plus two turbans on the front seat. Along the way we see remnants of forts, burial mosques, ruins - and, everywhere, people living in complete hovels. Yes there are lovely colored robes worn by the women and they are often beautiful and graceful, carrying brass jars on their heads. Arrive at nice hotel at Agra. Sleight of hand man on hotel veranda - witty and exceedingly clever at his tricks (esp one with white sand and red sand and water). Moon rises and we visit the Taj Mahal. You enter, stepping over a high threshold - dim light hangs far above. Then you see in the moonlight ahead a long shining waterway at the end of which is the gleaming shimmering Taj. Great dome. Four minarets frame it, attach it to the ground, as it were, anchor it. Ghostly. Tree shapes and shadows. We approach the bldg, get overshoes put on (to protect the marble) and go up some stairs where we are met at the main portal by a white robed guide with a lantern. Tombs in center. Long echo. Smell of sandalwood. Guide wishes us long life and blessing and says of the tip (obviously too large) - do you give this freely?

Oct 1

Early bfrk and to the Taj, absolutely celestial as revealed in the early sunlight. Tragedy about my kodachrome film: brought exposed film by mistake! got just ONE COLOR SHOT but took lots of bl & wh. Against the creamy Taj, the greenery about and the flowers are beautiful. A flock of men dressed in red were walking around (1) and women in many-colored saris. O, saris are so marvelous! Then (more color) the side mosque and rest house are all red sandstone with white trimming. It is terrific, really. (The trees are: cedar, poinciana etc). 0 and I start up the winding stairway of one of the minarets (I am anxious to get a shot of the Taj from the top) and are assailed by 1,000,000 bats! One of the most wonderful things: the carved marble screens (all one piece of stone) with the
sun setting in, making wonderful shadow patterns. After the Taj we visited the FORT. Even more wonderful, I thought. The same wonderful carving and inlaid work (jade, carnelian, turquoise) and minarets with shining brass roofs and turrets. The Jasmine tower (where the emperor that built the Taj was imprisoned by his son for 6 years. Until he died, he could see the Taj down the Juana river, a few miles away. Name: Shah Jahan. The most incredible bath chamber for the ladies of the court; walls all carved marble inlaid with tiny convex mirrors; our guide waved his arm, there was a wave mirrored in each mirror (used a candle, too—endless little fires). Pools contained perfumed water and then there were streams and fountains flowing down patterned channels in the floor. A wonderful durbar court with arches outlined in gold with a huge seat made out of 1 vast piece of marble (Prime minister sits here during meetings). (In bath house: hollow places on wall (different clefts) to beat on for the dancing girls. There is a tunnel to the river (to sneak out through in case of an enemy, and for water too I imagine). (Note: at the Taj, kept hearing the thin music of a pipe or recorder). It was perfect. By the way that perfect wife that Shah Jahan built to Taj for had had 14 children by him in 15 years! In the mosque bldg (to L) the floor was laid in rug size patterns, each man kneels on his section. Next. Place for the Koran and for the head chapter. Here the comes are like what we saw in ruins at Tatta—built up in the same ingenious and wonderful fashion. Balance seen in everything; each cupola, even, has one to parallel it. Loved the cloisters. Nice to find the same idea here in the orient that I saw and loved so in S France and England—but so different from Normanaic and Gothic! Agra is 1/2 miles from Delhi. Taj was built in 1630 as tomb for favorite wife MUMTAZ MAHAL (Elect of the Palace).

** Back to the hotel for lunch—rest—it is hot I watched snake charmer afterwards with a pipe and cobras and then rode back to Delhi, saw monkeys, peacocks, green parrots in pairs (remember them from Colombia) water buffalo up to their eyes in ponds of water; 2 darling, lively cream-colored baby camels. Groups always around wells, women carrying 2 and 3 water jars on top of each other on their heads (pottery, brass) and walking in the wonderful graceful fashion that a head load gives. Crossed the RR tracks often; one place the RR watchman had his bed right by the tracks and was having a siesta Mahogany trees, mangos, darsie birds nests (tailor birds), monkeys hop around with babies attached. Home. Wire from Charlie he will come! Miss Hots (proprietress—Swiss—English) and her nephew John; she is sister of the Hots that I saw in Switz in '33 with Franz Lochanmatter just before they were both killed on the Weissenhorn. (Note: must not forget at the American Embassy the wonderful stylish outfit of the servants, red white & blue sashes and trim on their turbans).

Oct 2

The anniversary of Gandhi's death and a great holiday. A dry day, tomorrow too (we think we are going to be dry for quite a few days hereafter, so are rather sorry) Our new bearer, Abdul, looks like a ruffian (Solomon and his son were thought not up to the rigorous of our approaching trip) but maybe that's what you need? Today was a day of purchases (too many?) a cashmere shawl and small lively-colored rug. A marvelous sari and set of scarves for presents; lovely. 1st try at bargaining; went so well I wished I had tried to jow him down more! Packing for Katmandu and I worked over the Land camera, taking a few (miraculous pictures to practice). Amazing just to press a button and then pull the finished picture out! Nice yellow Mr Hots; has a sling shot—the birds fly off the min. he raises his arm.

Oct 3

Last day in Delhi. A M at Cook's with our efficient Indian clerk then go to buy a DDT bomb & termites at the Army Navy store and to call at the Embassy. Packed in a t. Long talk with nice Miss Hots (owns hotel) who told terrific stories of the 1917 uprising. Our new bearer Abdul is a heathen; his son was murdered; everything but the clothes he was wearing was lost. En route to Katmandu. Left Delhi airport at 7:15 via Bahar airline-cute Indian Stewardess in long blue tunic and white pants! Offers us food, literature, info. on the trip, and betel nut (or gum if we prefer) to chew. Better service, we think, than Pan A
Also: it runs on TIME. We arrive at Lucknow at 9:30 and are taken in tow at the airport by an odd young Indian (avistor?) who takes us up from station to hotel to zoo; tells Nell my fortunes (I must speak to you alongl) — "Don't take any physical or spiritual risks - you are going to have a serious illness at the age of 43 (11)" (etc) Then asks if he may tell me FORT (having told my palm) - I say "No!" Sights in Lucknow: the great warlike Sikhs, very fine looking, striding along the streets. Tonga, done all decorated with curtains and fringe and mat on floor saying WELCOME. We have a ride in one; nice, soon as you know how to keep from spilling out the back. Return to station, Abdul by this time has our luggage (a huge mound) on the little narrow-gauge train. Here we have a compartment, inahib style, with 2 lengthwise berths, one upper berth, the crowd in the station and on the platform is terrific all sorts of people, like a band of nepalese soldiers (jukhas) very trim and spry, with short stature, mongolian cast of face and all their luggage carried for them by Indian porters. (on heads, of course, always). Holy man, head shaved and pale pink shirt on. People lying all over everywhere asleep and a cow curled up real comfortable right by the main station door. The Sikhs are a sight - superb, fierce looking in bright costumes; they are the ones who have fought the bloodiest in all the troubles and are believed to be capable of starting it all up again any min. Train starts off at 1:35. We use a DDT bomb in our compartment and take malaria pills. Not ghostly hot (yet) and we eat sanlo from the Cecil and drink iced tea from a thermos and fruit from our picnic basket. Now Nell is reading, O is napping, and I am writing. Haaxaul (last Indian stop) at about noon tomorrow. I have lots to learn about the practice of hygiene in this country where there are one MILLION bugs, just ready to pounce. Nothing that hasn't been cooked, no fruit unless you peel it (no blemishes) water and milk must be boiled, things soaked in "pink water" (potassium permanganate) utensils must be watched carefully and one must NOT lick ones fingers! Later: 0 the heat! but we are stretched out on our bunks, bed rolls (from Cooks) under us and fans blowing great guns. We have been going through agricultural country, lots of work going on in the fields, oxen plowing, and now we are entering a city. Here (amazingly) is a nice playground with little brown boys playing football, these sudden changes are one of the astonishments of India and the great hope. We talk about sports and O tells about Gov Gen of the Philippines who got the head hunters over their head hunting but teaching them baseball. We wonder if units, spread all over India for development and improvement (let the rest go for the present) would be a good system.

A kind of MODEL COMMUNITY - and have as many as you have staff trained to man. Shall we suggest this to Nehru? In the stations we pass: masses of people always. Porters with great bundles on their heads, people thronging about the water taps, washing, (Hindu rite). Man is kneeling to Mecca. These Indians, by the way, WANT to be clean, never did see so much public scrubbing. Also public other things - they just go and squat down 2 feet away! Before going to bed, we all take pills.

Oct 5

1 hrs in my little shelf upstairs due to my pill, bless it, I had a fine rest, pulling up both blankets during the night. Abdul's face appears at the window in the morning and he brings us tea, bananas, soda water etc. Odd brtf! We are now at CHAKIA - sign is writ in English, Urdu and Hindustani. A beautiful girl and young man go by, then a gent with shaved head and little tuft of hair left in back, women with little red dots (caste mark) on their foreheads. We are in Bengal. Young woman with baby on her hip wears a yellow sari and a nose jewel, great earrings. We have been passing fields where American tractors are at work. - now it is 2:45 and we are in the rest house of the Nepalese government at Haaxaul. O the heat and confusion at the station; flies everywhere, hordes of people incl. little pint-sized girl about 1 ft tall with a pink sari and load on her head. Abdul handles everything well, an army of porters carry our baggage over to this bare but airy and comparatively cool place where we are now established sipping tea. There is a nice garden outside. Its old home week for Abdul who seems to have many friends here. We are 375, 76 & 77 of all Americans in all of history to come here to Katmandu. Bathrooms in the guest house have larlets, basins and a big tin tub that you fill from a spigot. Having washed my face etc I feel refreshed and fine. Am reading & enjoying C S Forrester's THE HIP. (Note: no women servants of any kind in India) Sign below says the rest house is for the use of the Rana family, guests of the state of Nepal, engineers and officials. Nell and I go over Charley's wonderful medical kit after tea - he made and outfitted it & drew up the very
clear & splendid directions. One could do anything, from taking out an appendix to delivering a baby! Now I am lying on my bed; it is hard as a board. The mattress is just planks! My bedding roll is laid out on it. The late shadows are beautiful. I've been fearful fuzzy-minded about photos - there are so many pictures, everywhere one turns. Only you have to be ready, and set and it's difficult for me with the 2 types of cameras, each asking such different handling. Am trying to think ahead to tomorrow. Am working over my new notes, learning a lot. O is gruff today but I find I can take it all right. Tea this a.m. was our last meal since breakfast. There are quantities of birds flying through the guest house, darting to and fro. We made a real CAN. Later a fine dinner (big) brought in. Neighbors' BEAT is just breathtaking.

Oct 6

O has just told me our bill at the guest house was 20s: a room for dressing room, bath, bath (running water) - meals were 2s for the 3 of us, incl 4 courses: soup, croquettes, curry, 2 veg custard tead and coffee, gratuities at the house (8 servants) 1:50. Now we are on the tiny Nepalese train (only one in the whole country) just creeping along. Takes 3 hrs to go 18 mil. We're talking to a very interesting Gen (Col?) Hall and his wife. Nell is now telling Mrs L about an American woman's day. I have just heard her say "I take my husband to the station and then go to the A & P". O and I are talking to L about Katmandu, the Gurkhas (he is in charge of the training of all the Gurkhas in the Indian army) and India. He speaks of the need for peace so that India can get herself started, the need for education and industrialization. We say we are struck by the intelligence in the faces we see - he tells us that his wife started a school for sweepers' children (untouchables) and what amazing progress they made in lessons. He regards Nehru with great respect; speaks of religious cleavages as a great difficulty, tells us 90% of Indians are illiterate. We look N (just beyond Raxaul) and see the high and beautiful snow mts - the Himalayas. Train moves splamelishly. Mrs L says that one of her friends (a lady) said of the locomotive "I could stop it with one hand". Note: Col L says the average life expectancy in India is 27. We play rummy and the hot meals. Train stops 5 or 6 times for long stops. Nobs at every station. Amlekanj at 1:30. UPROAR! We follow the Lalls up to the top floor of the little station where it is relatively cool and quiet. We have lunch (they give us chapattis, spread with jam or cheese they are marvelous). (Note: gardian of guest house gave us three sweet little bouquets as we left). Then we get into a station wagon below in the midst of the seething throng and roar off down the dusty road, 1st a tunnel, then series of new-looking bridges. 3:00 at Ghimpiedi where our baggage is assembled and coolies are gathered and loaded. Little spry ponies for us, each with a pony wallah (boy). Kites are being flown with incredible skill by a flock of little boys with large spoons (letting out & drawing string) We see the ropeway over to the left, like a ski-lift. Crowd of people, very interesting types, all are so smile as they catch our eye. 3:15 we leave Ghimpiedi. Such lovely looking girls (shy) on carved doorways. (The town is acrobatic). Then we start up on our ponies making our way across the dry bed of a stream, then straight up, on a wide rough, well-graded trail, occasionally with stone steps. We pass coolies, small men, their loads in great baskets, tump-lines on foreheads. My pony wallah leads my horse, but then I find I can drive him myself fine. Picture difficult; so much so very much to take: like suddenly come out on a col flooded with late aft light, shiny banana leaves, short figures in cream colored tunics, houses with thatched roofs and interesting lines. Out across the slopes we see little huts in folds of the hills like oaks towns, endless terraces for cultivation of rice. Orchids. (Nell says she saw a cheetah disappearing into a thicket as we went through the jungle in the station wagon). Brilliant green. Ghimpiedi below us looks very picturesque. Now we are beginning to see the Bisagarhi rest house far above. Fascinating (is an old fort, too). Ropeway is now in the air right beside us. The loads are laid on platforms, they pass each other like setas on the chair lift. (We've just worked it out we've been 60 hrs from Delhi and had one sq meal). We pass: a dandi (a car) type and another (2 coolies) and a gentleman lying prone in a basket being carried by ONE coolie! 3 little girls go by, giggle as they pass. Our ponies are quick, surefooted, well kept. My pony wallah is bright-faced, smiles, is barefoot, has on clean tan pants, tunic, sash, flouncy soft fez-like cap. We pull right out of the heat as we go up. It is utterly heavenly. The late aft light is golden and beautiful. Great trees, wonderful shadows, plouds are ahead but there are patches of deep blue sky. We can not IMAGINE why
people take on so about the difficulties of this trip. So far it has been long, eventful, intensely interesting, hot, short on stalwart food, but not hard. As far from Shimpa on it has been a delight, not hard at all. Our guest house at Sisagarri provided us with clean & comfortable accommodations. We each had a bath in tin tub, marvelous. So I take a walk. My pants seem to appeal people, they stare so, but as far as that goes, I seem to have aroused a lot of attention even in a skirt. Good too. Not it is late at, and the evening light is just heavenly. It has a muave tinge. Many heavily laden coolies go by and Gurkha soldiers, who are very intelligent looking, trim, neat and fit. The Lalls have a Gurkha officer with them and several soldiers, one with the darlings most little cute face, full of expression. The Lalla have invited us to visit them (we have invited them to visit us). Mrs L is delightful, has a college degree, they both speak perfect English. All the Gurkhas have kukris at their belts and the crosse kukri pin in their berets). This is a trip of closely juxtaposed extremes, we note: mts and tropics, wilderness and civilization. The terrain: the first flat section we passed, rice fields, open lands, then the trees began. The mts in the distance were terrific - snow all the way up, not just beginning high. Nosey and shimmering, we wonder: are they the very big ones? We had not known that the mts were visible from Ramaul. After the trees began, then the really thick tremendous jungle. Corbett style. This is the greatest wild animal territory on earth.

Oct 7

Kathmandu. Today started at 6:15 am with getting up, getting packed, and break (should note here that we dined fine last night off chicken, new potatoes, chappati, and an omelet). A chappatti tastes marvellous, whatever you put on it. It is a flat meal cake. In the morning we watched the coolies taking on their loads & started off about 8. There were some wonderful faces around to photograph: a woman and her child delighted 0 & me. The ride to the top of Sisagarri pass is a dream in the cool early morning. At the summit, we see the high peaks. Glorious. They shine so, are silvery white and so incredibly far up in the sky, so steep and sharp and all snow. Very rough drop down from the pass to the valley; we mainly walk it. The coolies that pass are all carrying heavy loads: there are 6 men dandis (and 3 men) and one coolie sometimes carries a person all by himself, lying in a basket and usually draped with a sheet. In one basket I saw a tangle of arms and legs, it was a child being carried! We pass women in saris, barefoot, often they are carrying their shoes. Everywhere we arouse giggles, silvery peals of laughter; the women are often beautiful, also they are responsive and prone to smile, shyly too. The children are darling, such alert expressions, with a haunting look, pensively; this seems to be a characteristic of the mongolian eye of these people. I talk for a minute to Col. Lalla Gurkha, one who has a rare beautiful and noble face. "The Gurkhas are a true people," he says, "and they expect everyone to be true." The great burdens one sees carried by these slight looking nepalese; they have wonderful physique tho and patient quiet faces. Women too are heavily laden, often carrying great baskets of wood. The houses we pass are small, plastered outside in a 2 tone color job: white above, a kind of red ochre below, thatched roofs, delightful. Growing wild everywhere are zinnias, marigolds, cosmos, ageratum. The hillsides are terraced (rice). The green fresh color is glorious. In the towns, rice is laid out on cloths to dry, red pepper too and corn is hung in bunches under the eaves of the houses. These houses have quite lovely, carved woodwork, windows, balconies etc. Saw the loveliest mother and child in one window, so sweet-faced. If one looks too long at them, they are apt to disappear, shyly. Sat an inadequate lunch on a hillside. Poor Abdul, scolded by bell for not having provided adequately for us, brings us a 1/2 lunch (we refuse). We wind up a long valley leading to the Chandragiri pass; cross suspension bridges. In the river nets are being fixed for fishing. Water buffalo are in it up to their necks, look so cool. We wish we could. Hot sun. The ropeway is above us, flat platforms with loads lying on them. What I want to do: make the 1st ropeway trip into Kathmandu! We remember reading about the fountains for drinking with stone hands; see none. A mystery? They put a fresh green leaf at the edge of trickling streams for drinking. Sweet burst of chant-like song is frequently heard from ahead or behind. We see temples now: 3 bells with curved snakes above (& 3 little boys playing cards, much laughter; grandma comes, scolds, scatters the cards, the boys run off more puahght). We wonder why no one has talked about the beauty of this trip! Everywhere you look, a new delight. We mount steeply now to Chandragiri pass. Very rough. Big polished
rocks like steps. My pony is wonderful and so is my bright little boy. I give him a fruit drop and he smiles so sweetly! The top of the pass proves to be a disappointment. (A coolie sets down his basket; out steps a man!) Clouds obscure the high peaks also, but over to the left a little lower down, we have a beautiful glimpse of the Himalayas. Walk down, picking a sample of each kind of flower I see, wonderful rhododendron in bloom. Cool. Path much easier than on the other side, with a wall built on the edge. Much the effect of paving. We think a jeep could almost make it. Some of the cooilees loads we pass are in twin baskets, swinging from a bar on the shoulders. The baskets hold pottery jars, stacks of colored cotton materials. Frequently faces are puck-marked, but generally well-fed and cheerful. More kites - the national pastime, apparently! Hex marks on the walls of houses and great cobwebs on the cactus hedge bordering the path, huge spiders on them. The hillsides are terraced, making a beautiful pattern in the golden sun. In the village streets one sees brass utensils being scrubbed till they are shining; great jars are often standing in rows, filled with water and flowers thrust in the top. Houses are decorated with hanging flower baskets - 1st of the kind we've seen. In India the general morale is so abysmal no thought of decoration occurs. On the way down Chandragiri pass we note the thick lush rain forest. The paths winds through the slope opposite but no sign of it though we know its there and hear voices, buried so in the trees and greenery. Late aft sun shining on the sp of Katmandu and, above, here and there a snowy ridge shows through the clouds. Sad to have it cloudy. Path ens in grassy slopes, large trees and, later, a sizeable village. We see two buses and two cars (very ancient) and are greeted by an official, European-dressed individul. Crowds of nepalese gather around and yell and I have fun with the children using lifesavers as bate. They finally are induced to take one, giggle as I say "put it in your mouth," repeating the words in imitation to each new candidate. Sweet humorous faces, alert expressions. Abdul finally shows up 1/2 hr after us. Nell is very tired. Coolies get generous backshish (tip) and go off looking happy with many salaams. We have 2 cars for us and the baggage. It is cool. We drive off bumpy at 5:30, fearful springs! Crowds of natives on the road, well-built walls and bridges along it. Every in is cultivated. No sign of that erosion we've heard so much about and did I mention that we never saw a sign of those drinking the form of a hand we read about? It get dark. Everything smells marvelous, of cyscalpy and mints, spices and the far east. Sounds of piping, and sing - the singing a chantlike affair of odd tonality. We reach the city - has street lights and we see other cars, bicycles, handsome houses etc. Road is oiled here! Turn in at handsome gate and are received at guest house by a line of servants, pots of geraniums about, vases of flowers and our rooms delightful and obviously newly fixed up, carpets etc. I am downstairs, N & O upstairs with porch & sitting room attached to their quarters. Big tin tubs in bath (just imagine THEM coming in over the passes) but running water in sink and a terlet. Hot tea all ready and a dish of English biscuits and fruit. We are slightly starving and eat every bite. Then unpack, and I lie down until told my bath is ready, hot and o boy. Then dress up nice in pink pakable and dinner served (8PM) - very fine, soup, chicken, new potatoes, marrow, and for dessert custard & baked apples, perfectly marvelous. O says we can drink the water (served from a decanter) and so do, lots of it. I take a big dose of salt. Go to bed in netting draped LIT hard as a rock. I'm getting used to these beds and don't mind, sleep fine. Hear distant music and bird sounds, an in Katmandu also, forgot to say that a gentleman in white linen suit, fez, black with coat of arms, called on us, hoped we were comfortable, said he ud come tomorrow at 10 to discuss our Program (?) and that Mahiby had inquired especially for us twice that day, asking if all was ready for us, and if we had arrived and were comfortable. Obviously we are in the #1 guest house, we think. Weary, but not too.

OCT 8 Rest day. Nice brkf in our dressing gowns. We look about, all is interesting, colorful, well kept, handsome. Our nepalese gentleman calls on the dot of 10 and we practice our Land camera (our present to the Maharajah) on him. Last attempt is very good and he is delighted. Makes sweet speech about America, we discuss history of the region and he says he will bring us the 2 vols of the Landmark book. He does. We read aloud for an hour before lunch for which we are hungry as bears. Delicious: curry & rice and a sweet omelet filled with banana. Nap, and then we walk through Katmandu - it is beautiful! Began with a narrow Far East street, and on to bridge with temples and brass statues en route. Walked out over the wide river (Bagami), dock works on side, men wading (fishing?) and filling baskets with sand. Everyone cheerful and intrigued with us. Smiles. The walked home via the great green open common (maidan) just too beautiful. Boys doing callisthenics, tall trees at edge, and the high round tower (Hm Sen's folly). Very handsome. Home for tea and fruit. Something yellow, with inner seeds like a tomato but sweet & mellow. Also persimmons and bananas, and a big brown apple-like
affair with a pear-like consistency, in its flesh. Then by taxi (1) to Sir George and Lady Falconer's (Engl ambassador) for cocktails and met Major Tilman (famous mtner) just on his way out after 5 months in Nepal, also Major Roberts and Col. Lowdes (botanist). All nice, we are to go to the bs tomorrow dressed to the 9s, the Maharajah is coming! Home to rice & chicken, apple with custard sauce. Good. Aed Landon aloud and then bed. Need 2 blankets at night so snatch an extra from Cook's bed roll. (Added thoughts: piles of vegetables & fruits (onions? lemons or limes?) on squares of cloth outside the house, seemingly dehydrating)

Oct 9 Start off bright and early for Kathmandu with a car (jalopy) and a guide who speaks SOME Engl. B is wonderful: has turred temples, brass statues on top of columns, the palace (red brick with level wood), the great bell, the golden door (all in Darbar sq). Crowds follow us everywhere and some of them pose, shyly. Bathing fountain down some stairs & a succession of people are visiting it, getting water in big brass jars and bathing. Lots of children with school books, one little neet boy in a lavendar suit. Beautiful streets and bldgs with roofs all intricate carving. The five storied and roofed temple with pairs of heroes, lions, dragons and goddesses (each 10 times stronger than the others), dedicated to the "unknown god" was undisturbed during the great earthquake of 1935. Seta Pokhari (tank) marks the limit in the valley that foreigners can go. 1/2 id distance, clouds. After lunch we visit the museum. We go in, by in. past weapons and collections of swords and knuris (can't photogr) and then find we have the whole art section ahead and its closing time so we have to gallop through! Home through old Katmandu, the Durbar sq and bazar. Tea, bath and rest and off at 6:30 to Amb. and Lady Falcons where they are "at home" to members of the diplomatic circle, the Maharajah and his brothers. The former assemble first, it is all very impressive, red tuniced servants, a great many soldiers along the route from town. Everyone dressed in his best (incl us). At about 7 (we having been passed trays of drinks in the meantime) the 1st dignitaries arrive; Commander-in-chief of the Army, then various other generals and excellencies. These are all Rana brothers; then a young man or two (these are sons of the Maharajah). Finally His Highness, the Maharajah Mohun, Shumshere Jung Bahadur Rana. He is taken around the circle of guests by Sir George and introduced. I say "Good evening your Highness" and we shake hands. He is small, elderly, sweet-faced and quiet voiced, moves slowly and thoughtfully around the room, then is ushered into an adjoining one. I talk to Tilman, Col. Lowdes, Mrs Lall (who is there with her husband) various of the Indian embassy, then am passed down the line of generals and from one excellency to another by Lady Falconer. They are lovely, very quiet and gentle-seeming, several stutter. Many have been to the USA, all want to go. His Exe the 1st Nepalese ambassador to England, must be about the next in succession to the present Maharajah - tells me about tiger hunting; the circle of elephants that closes in on the prey. He has shot 60 himself! At about 8:15 the Maharajah reappears, go gravelly around the circle of guests again, shaking hands, and leaves. The Indians make their sweet gesture of salam (hands joined at finger tips at forehead, head bent) we leave soon after, o dinner! Added notes: this morning in Katmandu saw some nice things, interesting street scenes and the Durbar sq. Had left my Bantam home and rolleiflex starts acting up - ugh. Home. Lunch with Mr Tilman here, worked hard on him about the Kosi river trip and he seemed interested. Such a nice time; left late. Worked on my #3 letter home and our capt. arrived.

Oct 11 To Patan. Superb. Cute little groups of children copying us "thank you" "American" "please" "goodbye" as we have a mob with us at all times, esp fascinated with film changing etc. See Rana palaces for first time. Bodnath. Lama tells of the faith and its symbolism in good English. Has on, under his robe, bright shiny civilized shoes! Lalls call. To the Kilbournes for drinks. Advice as to protocol. We have a good time. Home, dinner, bed. 

Oct 12 We go at 10:30 to see the arrival of the first commercial airlift into Katmandu. Very gay and colorful. Band. Soldiers. Indian ambassador gets out covered with garlands; speaks very cordially to us. Merchants bring wares here; I don't buy anything. Then to drop a card on the Indian Ambassador. Did we succeed (?)/. To Balaji this afternoon to see recumbent Vishnu (narayan?) lying in water on a bed of cobras. Has four hands (wish I did) and a line of 71 waterspouts, carved stone, very beautiful. Forgot to say that at the airfield this morning while in a cute little tent, we had a talk with 2 Indian ladies about styles. They are intrigued with the idea of nylon and plastics; tell us that there are 2 styles in saris: whether a border or not, for instance. When borders are no longer in fashion, everyone chops hers off. We say we are disillusioned. I hoped the Indians were above fashion. We have such a nice
time. Lalls go off on the plane this aft. After Balaji we visit a w onderful brass-crested stupa. Cute time with gang following us: crying baby (crowd laughs uproariously while I take its picture) The girls in a window, too beautiful, I tilt my camera and crowd roars as they dis-appear in an instant! (A man appears in their place; general mirth).

Oct 13 (Fri) Obedighe this unlucky day by breaking his watch and I bust 2 of my precious kodachcr films by tearing them, uth. Cameras are NOT in good shape. The rest of the day all good however! Visit Swayambhunath, long ascent via stone steps, each riser about 1 ft from next. We reach shrine, beautiful garbh and dorje. This is the one that's all gold, and lovely. A Hindu shrine (everything else is Buddhist) to the small-nog goddess. Monkeys! Bell sees one start all the prayer wheels going. Lama in orange robe follows us about. Hard to photogr what with electric wires strung everywhere. This is true all over the valley. We go over to the next hill where Asoka's stupas were built very long ago. Much new building there, too - very ugly. Earthquake hit hard here. On tall bamboo poles hang printed streamers (prayers) - each time they wave in the wind it means all the prayers are said. In the aft we visited Pashpati - o wonderful! The sacred Bagmati river flows through the center, lines of wonderful temples, all alike, carved doors. Some golden pagodas in distance. The burning gats are so or round, with platforms where the dying are laid by the river with their feet in the water. Then, after death, burned. Royal family rites are held upstream, polulace downstream. They burn in the a m, do the laundry in the p m, and bathe! Beautiful bells (the children ring them for us) and lovely afternoon vista down the river. Home. We dress and go to leave cards at British Embassy. Tea. Mrs. Kilbourne leaves us a lovely cake and some fresh eggs. Capt Hinken comes to call, is all along at primitive guest house across the way. We ask him to dinner. Letter arrives from Tylman that he will come with us on the Everest trip! Mustn't forget to speak of monkeys everywhere at Swayambhunath, on the temple steps, and carrying their babies all around; and Nelly WOZING the crowd of children with her little rosaries &c. Tonight Hinken dines with us and we row a bit about America in Korea but are amicable afterwards. Discuss place names and history. Cannon goes off at 10. Its the curfew. Anyone caught out on the city streets gets shot to taken to jail. Cannon goes off at 5 a.m to say they can come out. Must say I haven't heard that one. Another cannon goes off daily at noon, knocks your teeth down your neck. We note that Nepal time (have I said this?) is 8 min earlier than Indian & world time - just to be independent?

Oct 14 A leisurely start and the trip ends at a stupa of Asoka bec of broken spring. OK with ust! Home, and I finish up my RR letter. O hears from Andy; he can come. To lunch at the Killcck's (2nd secretary at the British Embassy). Young Welchman there, an attache. Hear about there being a golf course on the air field, too dry now to play on. Dinner at the Kilbournen's. Very nice. Tiger and hunting stories: he shoots a bear, it drops, no sign of a wound (was hit right down the open mouth, cutting the tongue in two) Delicious dinner. No plumbing!

Oct 15 Pack and write and assemble things. Mr Nani Ram comes and tells us we see his Nibs tomorrow at 6. Good! Go driving. O gets a "business" kukri. Crowds tremendous as fete day approaches. (Nani R also has told us we have a nepalese guide for the Kosi trip and 2 ponies, good! Quiet aft. Well and I wash our hair in the morning and I sweater and gloves. Tea. Dinner. Read "The Ship" aloud, it is wonderful. O very cross all day Camera troubles! I make a darkroom under my bed clothes, do some adjusting that I hope will help. We send flowery letter to H H, & mean every word of it.

Oct 16 Pack. Last shots in color of Katmandu and trip to museum. We like our guide so much; he has been sweet. At 4 we go up the steps of the Singha Durbar, 1st having entered the gates and gone around the vast courtyard filled with fountains, lawn, flowers. In the large doorway we are met by Hill's private secretary, sign guest book, are taken up a stairway with a tiger hunt mural, huge, on the walls (1912, Maharajah Chandra knocked from elephant, right in front of the tiger - Behaved very bravely, killed the tiger - George the fifth there). Then down a long mirrored room, chandeleers, crystal fountain in center (lights all around edge) a crystal clock (looks like giant perfume bottle) and throne at one end. Beyond this, a small reception room with 7 congy island mirrors around it! We look at ourselves in them with the usual horror. Then are ushered into a drawing room with yellow satin upholstered furniture where III was. In addition to his usual black outfit, very simple, he wore a black service
visored cap with silver braid and on the front a terrific pin of huge diamonds. We sat and talked. Neel on one side, I on the other on a yellow satin sofa. General Bijaye (his son & foreign minister) is there also and the seer, both very able and fluent in English. He is a bit difficult to understand as his manners which are iron grey and huge. The Kosi river trip comes up (luckily) and we are horrified to find that some slip up has given the impression that we do not want to go in to anache Nazari error is corrected. They are being so helpful, and we say so. He tells whiskers story "Surely my father's life does not depend on my whiskers", we speak of the new parliament. "Most of the people, I am afraid, don't know what a parliament is". Danger to the country lies not from the (he says) where nature has protected them, but from infiltration through India from the S. We present the camera, all wrapped purdy and show sample of its work (picture of guest house). General 3 has read about them and will (we fancy) take it over. No present for us? We speak appreciatively of everything. At a little after 4:30 we all rise and Mr walks into the hall with us - shows us the mirrors and looks at himself in one with obvious pleasure. Then we proceed down the long crystal room (tiger skins on the floor) and he bids us goodbye at the head of the stairs where the tiger hunt mural is. On the steps below is a vast fireplace; his date comes next. He's all dressed up fit to kill. Home and last jobs. We say goodbye to Mani Ram ("a sad day for me" he says) and to our guide who have both been so nice. They make Hindu salaam, with touching finger tips, so sweet. Then tea, last packing, buckhshish and an army of servants (12) saying goodbye incl our dear little sitri, just a baby. To the Falconers, we unpack. I have a big beautiful room and bath. Bed is divine with linen sheets, soft snowwhite blankets and some books on Nepal to read. Down at 7:45, Kilbourne's come and his Erc the Ambassador from India. I have fun, like Mr & Mrs K so much. Sir C talks about India and Pakistan. I blare out the work PAKISTAN and he tells me "you have to be careful, feeling is running so high". Dinner delicious. To bed in my lovely quarters about 11. Before dinner: o such a big hot fine bath! Clothes all laid out. Servants with scarlet belts and turbans. Linen sheets & soft white blankets (said that already). Fine smelling soap.

Oct 17 Big celebration day here (dance). We go to Bim Sen's tower and have a fine panorama in the AM. The Dasarha crowds are large. Coats and sheep are being led into town by every road prior to the slaughter on the 19th. We are told that animals are killed throughout Kathmandu on that day, beginning at 7 AM. Mr Kilbourne says that the bodies go on one side of the street heads on the other and that the eyes blink for hours. Pleasant lunch here and we stroll around the grounds. Big tiger head over living room door was shot by Lady F. (Their only son killed in this war). We dress for the Phulpati ceremony. Bright red car from the Maharajah comes for us. We drive through crowds to the maidan (parade ground) Cannons lined up at the sides; troops all around. Then guard of men in green striped turbans ride up, accompanying the state carriage & 4 horses - HH is in it. He has an khadi uniform, puttees, decorations and TERRIFIC diamonds on his cap. A line of about 30 generals stand at attention (standing in the order of their succession) They face out as the carriage makes the rounds of the parade and then wheel inward as HH reaches the tree (Jang Bahadur's tree) where we are standing. The tree, in center of the maidan, has a platform built around it, that's where we are). HH alights from the carriage and walks up the steps, then goes down the line greeting each of us. I am crazy about him! (Court ladies do not attend this function; children used to) He smiles sweetly at me. Next to me is Mrs. Kilbourne to whom he says "I miss my horse" (he is no longer permitted to ride, for safety) He loves the KS, you can see. And they him. While he was arriving and walking up the steps 2 priests in white robes like toga, gold crowns and staves and a (sort of) red mantle mutter some kind of low incantation - a blessing, we suppose. Cannons go off (I jump) Then we hear: THE KING IS COMING. Up he drives in an automobile, also escorted by the mounted guard. He is a young looking man, seems sad. The Maharajah greets him at the car door and walks up to the platform with him. Then one by one we go up and curtsey, and say "good afternoon, your majesty" HH introducing us to the King. When I come up he says "She wants to go up the south side of It Everest and smiles sweetly at me (I am crazy about him). King looks mournfully at me. Don't think he has any fun! (they say he is very bright, hasn't been well). After everyone's met the king, he and HH sit down (I meanwhile have snapped some pictures) (very dark so am dubious about them). Then I ask someone if I may take a picture of the 2. Senior Commaning General asks them if I may and they say yes. So I go right up and take it while HH gives a cute smile. (0, worried so about the light). Then gunfire starts - is called a feu de joie - muskets going off all around the maidan - though, actually, I remember that 1st the national anthem was played by 3 bands, each a cour
of bars behind the other (on purpose, says Mrs. K) - the tune is slow and sombre, then suddenly it sounds like a morris dance! Then all the guns go off and then the great cannon.

I jump. As talking to the Maharajah's son. Very nice, he laughs! Smoke pours out, bang bang from the guns, little cannons and then great huge ones. Hideous noise. Then it dies down. Up drives the king's car (a tan de Soto) and he is taken to it by H.H who helps him in. King's diamonds, set into special place in his cap, are something. Then H.H stands there, all our cars drive up and see us all into them. He says to me "Have a nice trip". I say, Your Highness I've had a wonderful time here". He says "Good". We get into our bright red cars (fine for going to a fire) and drive off. ! Tea. I'm becoming very fond of the Ks. At lst felt they were looking us over rather than thinking; How American. But now they really seem warm. The Ks, too. Mr K I like immensely. The embassy is a rather ugly yellow affair set in beautiful grounds and up high, so a lovely view of the valley is seen from every window. It is definite; getting cooler. Suits feel comfortable. Much fuss about our Kosi itinerary - also visa is bad to reenter India. The vagueness of Indians! Also funny to see them push in at official functions. Can see the competition between them and the British that they are feeling. At 130 The Killicocks and Mr Swain call for me and we went to a reception at the Indian Embassy. Many ladies in saris (Katoches, Gupas, Singh) - I liked the daughter's red - and some gents incl one that laughed (son of H.H) when I jumped at the cannons. I talked to Mrs Gupta about saris and An dress. Nice time with Dr G and Mr Killick who is cute (his idea of American talk: shucks, that ain't say) Then a nice talk with the Ambassador ("this party is for you") and his sweet daughter who likes the idea of mountaineering. Some beautiful saris. Large crystal hung room, red brocade furniture on which we sit. They bring people up, charge one's partner, stir around. I wear my blue dress which is admired and enjoy myself. Home and dinner at the embassy. Afterwards we look at movies of Lord Javel's and Auchinlecks visit here, tiger shoots etc. Added notes: 1) The king (office hereditary, father to son) has 2 wives, sisters, married them the same day. The one that produces a son first becomes the senior queen, when the children are old enough to marry (both branches being equal) it is difficult to remember, says Lady F, which queen to congratulate. H.H says to her on one occasion, "not that one, the other one". 2) The dress of a Nepalese of good class: underneath, some jodhpur-like trousers, made of material like pyjamas, as is a long tunic-like jacket that reaches in above the knees, hang loose, Western style short tweed jacket over this. Shirt gives accent with soft folds at neck. Black hat. Sometimes embroidered or made of fur. Caste marks on forehead. For women: the sari. Mrs Gupta tells me that in S India the women use 9 yds of material instead of 6 and it is wound into a sort of pr of trousers before going around the shoulders and over the head. 3) Matter of gout cure. All the gents, and H.H, all have it, or most of them. We have the newest American cure in our medicine chest. Question? shall we hang it out? Sir G says better give soda mint or aspirin; if one of them had a heart attack just be coincidence just when he took our pills, it would be an international incident.

Oct 18 Brkl, then Lady Falconer takes us on a tour of the embassy kitchen etc. Then we look at (and buy) some Nepalese jewelry. Then we show her our nylon things, Nell's wonderful bags and packing gadgets. I take pictures. Lunch. Then Nell and I buy a couple of singhas. Off then to Gaucher Field (where they also play golf) at quarter to 6, evening light begins and it is heavenly as we walk. I take pictures. Can see Bodhnath. There are children around, adorable. Tea, servant standing near with a stick to fend off monkeys. They say they often dash through the tea, lifting a tidbit! As we walk towards the car, the clouds lift from the high mts and we have a glorious view, the best since being here. Drive home is lovely, evening shadows. Presents come from the Maharajah! Then at 6:30 movies of garden party, Gen Auchinlecks visit and the frosting of the colors. Killicks, Swain and a Mr Sommers there, who is a H.M. man, will arrange our transportation to Jogband - what a break! Then to a very gay dinner party at the Kilburne's. Mrs. K's birthday. Fun. Mr K calls me "Betsy". Much gaiety. I discuss wines with Sir G. He is sweet. Home late. O boy we'll be weighed down on the plane with H.H's presents! I owe Nell 75 rupees.

Oct 19 Pack, and last talk with the Ks. We have become so fond of them! 0 gets up early for the head cutting; says it was not so gory or objectionable. Ate 2 breakfasts! We leave at about 10:30 for the airport. Plane comes in. Mts are abs clear and wonderful. O and I work out their identity and positions with the Amadar Pokhara map. See Everest! It is not impressive but it im-
pressed us. Capt Hanken comes to see us off. Plane leaves. Nts are marvelous and plane ride intensely spectacular as we leave high valley behind with its snowy mtn border and cross rugged bend of hill-jungle country separating it from the tea!, High fields and gorges and dense forests and rivers. Then heavily wooded upper terra - then lower rice fields & meandering rivers - the GANGES with boats and sails. Patna, a nice airport; then we leave soon and are in Calcutta at 1130. Ride into town on bus through unspeakably squallor and filth. Very hot! Airlines Co and rear (Basis) very thoughtful and nice. There got onto the plane at Katmandu a child of 1?, a girl, obviously pregnant. Well, we've heard about it, and here it is. Great Eastern, the big hotel, is very hot and cutbyish and confusing. Bar is closed on acct holiday - tragedy! We take a nip from Roll's 11-skeleton Kodak seems also to be closed. Hope for luck there tomorrow. Added notes: Jang Bahadur's tree is where he in 1855 (about) told the men of his troops about the plot against him by the then king who was then and there depose. Figurehead king comes in at that time and has remained ever since. It was Jang Bahadur that went to the aid of the British at the siege of Lucknow and who jumped, they say, with an umbrella, from the top of Bin Gem's tower. Some guy! The nepalese has exactly the same shake of the head and deprecating expression for YES as he has for NO. Impossible to tell when our guide meant we could do something and we couldn't. Have to get it from context.

Calcutta Oct 30

Calcutta is a dump - hot, wet, filthy. A blow to find the Kodak Co closed both yesterday and today (the holiday) and not to be able to have a drink, which we did look forward to! Also the Great Eastern, O's best, has a most irksome tipping system, supposedly a percentage but every pain out nevertheless. O & N in a great temper about it all; I do better not to get all speamed up and so don't. Enjoyed time in my room last night, getting the RR letter under weigh, always lots of work, somehow. Them to dinner. Mood of party seemed confused and he subsided but we covered a lot of ground about equipment & supplies. We will take my cameras to Eastem tomorrow. Up roar with porters etc and taxi goods wrong way ("Keep calm" I say) but finally we got ourselves on airlines bus and to airport. Ride through Calcutta is really terrible, contributed to by the dark and drizzle. Cloud everywhere, lying on sidewalks & steps and rolling around. Naturally, spreading filth. Nell's story about man mixing saffron dye in Kashmir; cow walks up and starts drinking it. "If she wants it, she can have it". Odd to see, that, that we have beer for dinner at the hotel! Only good feature of our stay was a good dinner. Meet very interesting man at airlines 'terminal. Here for the army for future business. Says Calcutta has been awful. Says that - in business - the need, the $ and the plane for modernization all exist but fundamental uncertainty about the state of the country makes people hold off from going ahead. Again we hear (from him) of the fine job the British did here, which is only beginning to be appreciated. He thinks the retrogression has been great and the danger of a complete collapse is very serious. Says only 1/3 of 1% of population is adequate and able, equipped and trained. I find Calcutta weighing heavily on my spirit. The "mother India" we read about. Plane trip is cool and pleasant. Cross the sprawling Ganges again, and cut into the sun and clear air. Delhi much cooler and seems marvelous to us. The Cecil welcomes us so warmly. Lovely rooms, each with a sitting room, a drink and dinner. Miss Hotz and nephew so nice and give us a sense of being home. 0 the clean and quiet and cool after Calcutta! Tired. Letters from Em and Fanny.

Oct 22

Big pile of mail at Cook's. Word from Charley he arrives the 26th (good) and we wired Andy and Tillman we shall start from here on the 27th. To American Embassy. To Army and Navy store for good purchases, a shoulder bag and top, maybe a wonderful mattress with built in pillow, a basin etc. Home via Kashmir stop to settle up. In after rest. I am writing like mad on my RR letter; think it may be good this time. The we drop cards at Ambassador Wadsworth and call on the Nepalese ambassador to India who is very delightful to us. We tell him about the trip and how wonderful everything has been. Do feel that a general sense of "it's been a success" is present in the minds of all about our trip. So glad! Home, dinner, and a cute talk with Miss Hotz & nephew. Supposedly to be early but I write till late. Fun!

Oct 22 Home this morning, sorting things, writing letters (RR is finished) and organizing
everything. Headway! At lunch Miss II tells cute stories: (they illustrate the make-up of the Indian) 1- Indian servant is surprised by his mistress straining the soup through his master's sock when assailed about it, he says "but Mem Sahib, its is not Sahib's clean sock but a dirty one!" 2- Servant is seen before brief lying before the fire, a piece of bread between each toe - he warms his feet and toast gets made, same time. 3- when attempting to get plastering done here, she found workmen stymied because the white ash hadn't been brought up by the women. Going down, she finds they are making no headway: "what on earth is the matter?" why, they say, there's a hole in the tin, as fast as we pour whitewash into it, it empties on the ground. Nephew (cute) shows good pictures. We visit the Delhi Fort, o so marvelous.

Maybe instead of having a House, I'd better build myself a Fort. The durbar halls, with place for the Prime minister (a big marble slab like a table) and the emperor with wonderful arches and inlaid marble work - the screens (all one piece, carved out), pools and fountains, and a bathing room - mirror inserts have mostly been destroyed in 2 earthquakes and the mutiny but enough remains to show the effect. Like Agra. The Jumna river flows by on one side and we see the balcony where the Mogul emperor would appear daily to the people, who were in boats. (see inscription) "O thou who hast fetters on thy legs and a padlock on thy heart, beware, and o thou whose eyelids are seen up and whose feet are deep in the mud, beware, and thou who art bound to the west, O traveler, thou hast turned thy back on thy destination, beware." And, in the great durbar hall: "If there is a paradise on the earth, it is this, o, it is this, o, it is this." A tiny private mosque, miniature, is unpeakably delicate and beautiful. We have more sandals put on, like at the Taj. Other people leave their shoes behind or go in their bare feet. Wonderful domes, 3 over the main room, with brass circles on sharp spikes - looks like meat on a skewer. Much gold work on marble arches. The fort was restored by Lord Curzon to a great extent. Much destruction in sacking during the mutinies. Today a reduced-price day, and the fort is full of people. Interesting to see the types, all in their Sunday best. On the greens in the courtyards gather, and they are often very sweet, young mothers and children, young men. We are soundly cheated by our guide. Minsight, one sees how our easy trustfulness gets us in the position of being "done" by people to an extent that is really humiliating. I have been stewing over having handed letters to a maid to mail in that awful Great Eastern Hotel in Calcutta. One was my RR letter #1 - bet he never mailed it but copped the stamps. This is a racket here that I just heard about and suspect happened. I am cross at my stupidity in not having kept lst drafts of the RR - so easy to have done. (Items: flock of paddy birds - egrets - sometimes are on the Rana turbans, though usually it is bird of paradise feathers). Mrs. Service to dinner. Word has come that her husband (a McCarthy suspect) has been released and she expects him here in a month or so. Bed. Tired.

Oct 23

Abdul, surprised b me yesterday rummaging through my pocketbook. Left this a m! - no regrets. We have a nice talk with Hotz nephew, the one who is secy of the Himalayan Club and very helpful. Then a useful morning shopping and doing errands. Lunch. Nap. Throat is beginning to scratch - ouch - and now I find N & O having the same symptoms. Take cold pills, digestion pills, anti-acid pills! The three big crates have arrived from the embassy and are unpacked, now all our duffle lies on 0's floor. It is really beautiful stuff. So well planned and arranged. Not as overwhelming in amt as I thought it might be. Dinner. Nice talk with the Hotzes. To bed early.

Oct 24

Seem to be improving (i.e. cold). Worked around this a m. Packed and wrote. Lunch. Errands. O what a run-around about films. Endless documents. Don't apply to us but we fill them out anyway hoping that the merchandise (exposed film to fly to the USA) will go. Shopping with nice Mrs. Service. Ray gold tissue and a flowered Kashmir sari and 2 bags. Home with equipt exhibit and refreshments for the Hotzes. To bed early.

Oct 25

Worked, packed and wrote in the a m. Lunch at Mrs. Services (Mrs. Henderson, Col & Mrs. Sutherland, Mr. Beemol - or something) Nice. Errands. Dinner with the Robert Hotzes (Him. Club) In the aft a Mr. Thomas came in, great Himalayan traveler, nice, enthusiastic. Reminds me of Mr.
McCarthy of the AAC. Brought his Sherpa along (Gylajen) - whose home town is Namche Bazaar. We've made a deal: Sherpa is to go with us, will be our bearer. In small, bright, Mongolian looking and has every virtue (says Mr T who obviously loves him). Isn't this a break? Mr T is moving to the Cecil soon to able to see a lot of us before we go. Good advice for us in re locking things, provisions etc. Will stay over Fri to see Charley. Crew rather bored at the Hotes last night, all so endless - no dinner till 9:45 and me definitely with a cold - wanted to come home & go to bed (or write in me RR letter which is becoming more and more engrossing). Finally did (11:15) - cross!

Sat 26

A long, hard day, my cold making it difficult - but am OK really, throat bothersome. To town in AM, Cook's, PanA (films have gone) dressmaker will build me a gold choli for my saris. Got last things (padlocks) saccharine (for if sugar gives out) etc - then home and lunch and I wrote letters and on my RX and packed. Thomas here again, and then to the Devisors (dull) and dinner.

Then it begins to be fun. We drive out to the airport and C's huge plane is seen almost at once, circling the field. Great crowd with garlands and we are sorry we haven't any. Plane lands beautiful, like a bird, and out steps Charley! Long interval for passport and customs. We talk to a lovely man who was India's representative to the UN, meet his daughter. Then dear Charley - so cute and full of life. We fall on his neck. Drive in and John W, we're getting so fond of meets us at the Cecil. He has been making a list of Urdu vocabulary for me).

Words like yes, no, good morning. Think I should be able to communicate with Gylajen some way besides nobs and smiles! Notes on Delhi traffic; ALL kinds of man beast and vehicle. Cow fast asleep in the middle of the noon traffic. Good humor man's sign reads: HIMALAYAN ICE CREAM. Lady on bike in a sari - not so good! O told me about Urdu today. Is the only synthetic language that has ever worked. Invented at the command of Akbar. Found that his armies were talking 97 languages, so he got his experts人造 in and said DO SOMETHING. So they got to work. Took Hindustani as base, got rid of syntax, declensions, conjugations, all grammar. If the Hindustani word was too complicated, they scrapped it and borrowed something simpler from another tongue. Result: URDU. Then Akbar said to the army; you boys talk this language or else. So they did, and everyone still does, and now we are going to. Thomas and John help me with my vocabulary. Now back to the eve of the 26th - came back with Charley from the airport and had French 75s, the Warren drink; champagne, gin, lime juice - really terrific! Lots of love.

Lovely!

(now on to next section, beginning Everest trip)
Oct 27 Cold still hangs on tho gh C is dosing me Terrific with penicillin. Worked on packing. Locked up all the food bags. Thomas to lunch. We asked him to join us if he can - like him very much; he’s being very helpful - 0. sends a wi wire to Sir George Falconer asking for permission for him to come along. If it comes, he will join us later, catch up. Worked all aft and felt tired. List our advance baggage (34 items!) The hotel food arrives. Drinks and early supper. To the Lucknow train. Seething torrents of humanity pour past. T & Gyaljen there. We wave and shake hands and say "au revoir". Train pulls out. 0, C & I think of all the women who envy me (men envy them?) G gets out the sleeping bags and we settle down (all 4 in little cell). Difficult to be cool - still stay covered. Dished for a big SHLT. (Is all so funny: C in upper berth above me, 0 across the way below, and Little new Gyaljen above him) I giggle to myself! We took our pre-malaria dose of 2 tablets of aralin at dinner. I wind a scarf around my eyes and take a dramamine pill (½).

Oct 28 Wake up at 6.00 in a station - uproar! people crying wares in in different voice tones, people going back and forth with loads on their heads, trunks, bags, baskets, trays of fruit. We are near a water spout - much washing & scrubbing. Hotel (Kanpur) sign: "STATION VIEW HOTEL" (!) We sit here for quite a while (hr ½) Have tea and fruit. G folds up our sleeping bags and we try our Urdu out on him - he knows some words of English. It is cool and comfortable, very different from our last train trip! The long stop was evidently on the schedule because we reached Lucknow on the button, a surprising habit the dirtiest little Indian train seems to have. Away for us! Are met at the station by the hotel people & all our luggage piled on a cart. Pulled over to narrow gauge station by army of turbanned porters. We drive to Royal hotel - wash(shave) and have a nice brkfr.

Write letters. To station at 1. G standing on guard at familiar platform - there are even ghurkas there. I walk up & down - crowds, uproar. Life is going to be very full (says Charley) eating, sleeping, photog, writing diary & letters, Urdu school - just don’t let anything interfere (says!) with putting 1 foot in front of the other). Talk about fish - MAHSAER. Grew very large; maybe we shall have fishing. 0 says the mahseer is a gamey fish when in cold water, lethargic when in hot. Talk about Tilman: bark is worse than bite, says C. He comes around (like with potatoes) what are you going to eat those things for? just pure starch. I’d just as leave eat a boiled shirt. Talk about Everest: geology: un lithed sedemen tary rock, deeply eroded. Powder snow. Plume from S to N. ** People asleep on ground in station but it is much cooler and I am calmer about India. Train starts - at 3 we have lunch and then all nap. I feel so much better; C doses me again. If gets dark and up comes a terrific yellow full moon. Our mood is lovely - we look ahead to everything, wonder about things, talk it all over. Co-education in exploration is FINE, I think! Try to fit myself in usefully, and do. Cocktail party with last of the scotch and finish up the sandw. Fun. Talk of Tilman, past trips & climbs. I enjoy everything. Feel much better. Stop - and I walk up & down the platform with C. Sounds: backgr of wailing cries, selling, dogs baying, calling stations. Then variety of smells: tobacco, curry, spice and adobe (I’d say). To bed. Usually bag is too hot but outside too cold - but being in the upper berth now I get outside my bag, spreading nylon nightie over me (am in my sllip) Glad of my short hair (done with Bell’s scissors) Do have a nice time with C & 0. Slept quite well.

Oct 29 Light about 6 and stirring below. Getting dressing in my low-ceilinged upper berth is Something. Fruit early, then tea, a little loaf of bread & jam Gyaljen buys us. Fixes room. At Samastipur our nice RR friend Summers gets on (man we met at the Falcons and who has fixed our RR up for us). He had just been to church - has been 21 yrs in India - had lots to tell of the ‘42 trouble up in this country - also of the war years & his associations with Americans here. Nice man. Hops off the train as it goes off. It gets hot. We take malaria pills. Noise of platforms, whistles tooting, augmented by crying of a little dog, lying sick.
sick. Fewer beggars (says C) than when he was last in India. Just then comes one with a whine "Mem Sahib, Mem Sahib" Sommers, too, corroborated the story of the open dislike of the Indians for the British in '47 and the changed pt of view now as it begins to be apparent how much of a job the British have done. A hot aft, then quite a stop at Katihar. VERY DIRTY. Slept a lot in aft & we have nibbles at crackers, cheese, fruit & tea. I read some of "the DeMauriers" stupid. We see some wonderful faces, just when you expect them least, and expression of humor and intelligence. Always the sari, when made of filthy sacking even, falls in graceful folds - as when you see a woman's figure walking across the fields. Even the man's outfit has some line - draped pants. Usually combined with a European shirt, hanging out, very sloppy. Now it is 4:30 and beginning to get dark. Man just stopped, seemed to be selling tea, turned out to be TEETH (false). "Goldies" he said - and there they were, in a small glass case - the other kind too! Big fish on platform (Oscar says is mahseer - 4 ft long (40 lbs) Coolie walks off with fish on his head. Aft gets very hot and long wait at Katihar. Night falls & we turn the light off and watch the big moon and mysterious country. I climb up onto my berth and sleep sound (dirty as pitch by now) till 11 when we all awaken as Gyaljen says we're at Jogbani. Then there appeared Andy and Bill Tilman, Sherpas (plus Sharpettel) We load up a big bus & pile in to the jute mill's guest house, have tea & get settled. I have a room to myself & bed with mosquito netting.

Oct 30 I am sitting on a log surrounded by a MOB (Nepal style); our truck & big-size jeep are sitting in a field, duffles being piled on ground, coolies lining up, 2 horses nibbling near by must be ours. Bill T taking things in hand & ordering & overseeing. Trip in car began with a terrific road then began improving (work on it being from wild side towards civilization). Command car goes fine. Is like terai we saw after Haxauli. Big mts in sight - Kanchenjunga is terrific (furthest E) Makalu & flat at (Chamlang) next, and shine to beat all. (Yellings & shouts here). Don't know what we'd do without Tilman. He stands calmly overseeing loads. Coolies have a different kind of basket here, more open-work, and tattered. Saw a jackal in the jungle. It is a sal forest and very beautiful. Tree spreads at base, very fine effect of rootage. Wonderful bright-colored birds - green, black/white wings. We begin to see more characteristically nepalese houses, villages, people. Again the plaster job with thatched roof, corn hung up and masses of flowers (hibiscus, oleander - yaller type) Ahead of us now rises one of the steeply wooded hillsides, patches of cultivation. Our path goes here. 12 miles, 3000 ft to next town (Dhankuta). Less amusement here than in valley of Nepal but lots of interest. Lady coolies about. Will we have one? Wonder if this is to be coeducational in this respect too? Alt. here: 1000 ft. It is hot. (We passed a tinsel shrine on the way, looked portable. We do have a lady coolie. ** Now quite an interval and I am sitting on a stone on the trail writing, with a MOB around me. Just gave one little girl chok & taught her how to say "goodby" ("salaam") Walked for a while, in afeard sweat then I & pony got way ahead of the others. A pull to the top of the pass, then clouds and it gets cold - then they parted and there is a beautiful view of Makalu and the high peaks. I take several pictures. Traffic comes to an absolute standstill where I am - they line up and look me over. Great crowds on the trail; women too carrying loads. Some singing like the tamandu singing. Some dear lives, little faces and sweet expressions. I like m. pony boy whose face is: 1 foot away at this min. Sweet looking girl is right near too. Dhankuta a long way away still. I put my glasses on the girl - everyone giggles - and I show them all the image on the ground glass of my rolleiflex. They love the film changing, esp. Singing comes down the trail & I get some new fans. 2 PM now and no food except some choc that I gave a little of to my little girl. I'll go back to the morning: the jute mill man came to seuss; everything had been done and arranged wonderfully. We are supposed apparently to go from governor to gov. (Makalu shows up wonderfully but where is Everest?) Summary of day's progress: We start at 11 - over pass (2000 ft?) & drop to high camping place at 3:30 where we have a most marvellous view over into the next valley & to Kanchenjunga, just heavenly in the distance. Up on a nob above us is a nepalese ferris
Acheel we patch it up and ride. The Sherpas are delighted. Camp is made quickly and efficiently - much amusement over my tent but it proves to be a palace. Mustn't forget to tell about my sweet little Nepalese friend who left me with a salaam. Then 3 cute little boys. I have fun with lifesavers. After thought about the train trip; the man pining on the platform at Katihar - trills & runs, so sad and sweet. Then did I tell of the boy hand springs and hand stands beside the track; incredible contortions, rather terrible with his thin emaciated body. Back to camp life; it is wonderful. Everyone cheerful and having fun. "Greatest danger on Everest is bed-sores" (Tilman) Dinner works out well; the Sherpas are impressive. Must copy down their careers but many of them have been on the big expeditions. Little Gyaljen is doing wonderfully. After our good supper we sit and talk. I feel fine about everything - my little tent laid out beautifully. C says he had his pyjamas laid out to 23,000 feet on K2! It is all a great experience for me. I feel happy & content (& lucky) Kanchenjunga superb in the sunset & moonlight.

Oct 31 Start 6:30 after good sleep and brkfst. Camp cleared quickly & we start down the hill - o so beautiful. The traffic is terrific and everyone who passes us stops to look. When we sit down, crowds assemble - it is impossible (practically) to get privacy enough for some of life's small necessities! We are droppin down to the Tamur R -(beautiful greenery) I saw the biggest spider web, about 30 ft. & a huge spider entrenched. Tried a picture of it. Then down to the river's edge and along; the suspension bridge in sight. The river is rushy and fine. On the bridge the pony I am on and me, we meet a gang of water buffalo in the middle. The W B win; I get off and walk past gingerly. A village on the other side; three darling little goats, 1 white, 1 black and 1 white with bl seams, and a dear little girl. Then a long pull (its getting hot) up the hill side beyond. I am mostly walking but ride some on the horse. Hard to find a spot on the hillsides to stop in but I finally do where there is shade and a breeze. Then such fun: little kids approach and we go through the life saver routine. They repeat "thank you" "please" "hello" etc all so cutely. Great crowds congregate. All traffic stops. But good will is everywhere apparent. Sweet mother and child and 3 little boys that follow us up to Dhankuta, full of smiles, salutes and repetition of Engl words I've taught them. Twice in a crowd passing, people have said Engl words. Once it was an old soldier and once an old servant (maybe) who said "Mama Sahib" and a few words, all sounding sweet, and ending "Good evening, Meme Sahib", and going off. One man said with obvious pride "Bon jour". When we got to DhankUTA we found it an adorable town, clean bright, flowers in windows and alert friendly handsome faces. About 1 hr above the town we come to a rest house, nice water tap, and a fine camp spot in big pines. Cool & Beautiful. The mob that moved up the village street with us got shoved off and we are incomparative privacy here. Nice after yesterday when we were surrounded on all sides. The Gov (Colonel Shumshere) comes to call and lines up porters, rates, stages for us travel through his domain (to Singla). Seems longer than we hoped (5 days). Coolies that are going back home leave & ones staying stay - incl our lady coolie. The Sherpas get camp set up and tea fixed (Gyaljen Sr - cook - is excellent) little G, my sherpA, is marvelous. C fixes the gasoline lamp; light is terrific and fine. Good dinner, everyone happy & cheerful; laughter & jokes. I am happy & feel useful & liked. Light goes out suddenly & stars shine & trees are beautiful. C & A go to town & I'm in my tent, writing by the light of a candle. We were interviewed by a newspaper man (1) - talked good engl. We told him: "Nepal is Wonderful". Well, goodnight. Seems to me this is the trip of a lifetime. So Lucky. Items; Colonel Shumshere (who rode up on a white horse) has a fancy coat smells of mothballs. C figures there were 1200 people on the trail we passed today.

Nov 1 Am sitting on a hillside looking out towards Makalu on the most beautiful art. Cooie trouble is bothering us (the we now hear they are on their way to here). Tilman is lost (later found). O such a day. Early brkft then down to DhankUTA; met the headmaster of the school & (attended by crowds) visited the library, a little window to hang out the books, 7 days a whack. They have a life of Roosevelt, David Copperfield, and "Now we are 5"! On wall near the school was written in chalk "Gather Courage; don't be a chicken-hearted fell-
ow. We think this should be the expedition motto. Every class from 5th grade on is taught English. Excuses read "I beg most humbly and respectfully to state that I could not attend my class 31st due to my domestic business so pleasekindly grant me leave of absence for l day. Your Obedient pupil." (addressed to Headmaster through Class Teacher). Parade grounds is also school recreation field on which soccer volley ball, badminton is played. We see all the teachers and a man who represented D in the new parliament at Katmandu, and his son who is ass't head of the upper school. Girls quarters on one side (all outdoors) the boys school on the other: partly in dark little hats, BlackB covered with tough compound fractions. We are deeply touched & impressed with everything. Hope to send books. We write in visitors book. 400 pupils here, ages 5 to 17. Finally with handshakes and good wishes we part and go up the lovely street in every doorway of which there is a sweet figure. My children turn up again, big smiles, Engl words repeated to show they haven't forgotten. We climb to top of big ridge - view is incredible. Makalu, Chamlang (Everest is behind the latter) Then at Kpairibas we drop down to camping place - a field - Sheras get to work marvelously. (Item: above Pairibas all 3 sahibs bathe in a pool - big audience) I meet a sweet woman there with 2 daughters; she offers me her necklacke, brings flowers and then offers me a rupee (?) all so touching. When she leaves she touches her eyes to say there are tears in them. She counts out on her bare toes and fingers 20 - to show her daughter's age. All our human contacts are so warm & bright. We weather the difficulties of the day (getting separated and coolie trouble) Tilman turns up and we feed him. Now C is writing our diaries by candlelight, the lamp having burned up (?) More thoughts about Dhankuta, our native town. Bohimia trees blooming, poinsettias, big peepul trees. The scrubbed look due to yearly plastering for the festival which is to happen in 7 days. St lights are Japanese lanterns hung up high on bamboo shoots. Some houses have delightful carved lintels, eaves that turn up at corners, decoration of enchanting color and form (for instance, on a wall, a half moon with a couple sitting in center, angels on each pt.) The view of the Himalaya from the Pairibas pass is one of the great at views, we feel. Rice terraces, wonderful yellow green. Altitudes: Day 1: 1000 ft over pass (4000) camp at 3000 ft Day 2: 3000 ft to 15000 ft (Tamur) to 4000 ft (Dhankuta) Day 3: 4000 ft to 6000 ft (pass) - 5 miles; drop to 5000 ft here.

Nov 2 C mistook the sounds of the coolies, laughing & singing, as signs of morning and got us all up at 4, thinking it was 5:30. I got things organized party well in the pitch dark & got up too. Oatmeal AND eggs today, little tart tomatoes, delicious. Gyaljen Sr is a good cook (tent & sleepingB damp last night). C, 0 & I start down the hill. Reach the Arun & stop for a wash - 0 it is FINE. Quick sand. Swift current. I get right into it though and very fine it is. Man comes down saying there is an Indian sergeant up there, says to go no further we'll all be killed - go back to Dhankuta. ? Seems to be drugged so we ignore. Lunch and more swimming & wading, very fine. Then a short fast walk with C - we discuss 0 how to save him, keep him having fun and still get on with things. At Chamawan at 2, 'arm sun, and all our things get dried out - bathe again, put on clean clothes - break out my nylon blouse & red sweater. We sit around talking. Nice. Arun R is swift and green. C tries fishing, no success. T makes bread, kneading. Difference between USA rice & Nep. rice (for our evening curry). Things I wish I had: a good PEN, bathing suit - unnecessary: so many books, pressure cooker, mosq netting (is built in to my tent). We hear singing often and piping (bamboo) See swing supports (swings not up bec it is not the "season" - same as with kites; there is a "kite season") We passed 2 prisoners yesterday attached to guards by chains - on their way to Dimgla. C is absolutely wonderful in spirit and warmth, in strength and humor. Beyond telling. T warms up at times (gave me a piece of orange, peeled a while ago) smiles cutely when making one of his dry jokes. Like "trouble with America is you are all package minded". I think he is quite a man and will be happy if we end by being friends. Andy is agreeable and cheerful, less forceful than the others perhaps but very sweet. What will happen if (when) we have really hard days I do not know. 0 does NOT like to ride. But he is being sweet. This a.m.
Walking down the trail, Anglo drill with my pony wallah: ONE, TWO THREE... These people are all so bright. Little G cannot read or write; we learn in 6 months if he were really taught. Sad. The nepalese dress of the middle class: a pr of fitted cotton pants, rather like jodhpurs, bunchy up high, then long tunic or shirt hanging out. Cap of cotton like a soft lop-sided fez. About the sherpa-wonderful the way they get to work. Gyaljen Sr has been with Tilman these last 5 months (on Everest expeditions too). He whips tea and food on the table as well. Sarkey - also a veteran - has a wonderful face; cooked yesterday when Gyaljen (who was with T) was lost. Had a plate of soup all waiting when T arrived. C says coolie trouble always happens - getting as much as possible out of us of course. Coolies struck on K2, he says, the exp was stoned in one village, a real war on. Each sherpa slept at the tent door of his sahib, armed with his ice axe! Little Dicky (lady Sherpa) very cute and bright. Carries a real load and is always in front. Tonight was wonderful: the early arrival in camp, everything aired and dried and washed (incl ourselves). Then a good dinner and we set around after, writing by the big lamp (worked this time) - then a big fire - till telling about his 2 disappointing seasons. All that went wrong and why. One sensed real sorrow there ("my ceiling is 24,000 ft - just too feeble") 0 talked interestingly about S America. C cute and gay as always. Stayed up until after 8!

Nov 3 An early start - 0 & I off at 10 to 6. Camp at the Sabaya Khola at 2. A fine day though hot from 11 on - but early morning was overcast & delightful going along the Arun, up and down the steep side wall. A narrow cliff passage with only footholds and a real drop stopped the horses so we have none. Ok tho. Also 2 fords today - the 1st quite fast, Gyaljen holding my hand, water cold and nearly to the waist. 2nd easier but sharp pebbles hard on my feet (took off boots both times) Hot by now. A high ridge to cross then down to the river bed, very trying. 110 in the sun, Andy, our scientist, reported. Fine views up high of Chomolang and "Big Mak". A plume at center of Chomolang may be Everest; its just behind. Signs of terrible erosion here. The way is narrow and very rough, we be hard to ride much even if we did have the horses. At camp - a lovely spot - we have a fine stretch of river, smooth, green and deep. C sees fish but can't get them. We all swim, heaven!! Wash clothes, nice tea. Supper and the gas lamp won't work again so C & I are writing by candlelight (again). Some doubt as to where we are and where going - in relation to ferrying the Arun and reaching Dingla, but nobody seems too concerned. Wonderful that it doesn't depend on ME! C, A & I talk some, lying by the fire.

Nov 4 Up fearful early (1st coolie sounds at 2:30! brfrk at 5 and off at 5:45. Up to a high beautiful peak: with the snow mts ahead, the Arun below on one side and the Sabaya on the other. Then ridge widens to a broad cultivated table land and we pass fine farms and fields: maize, dahl, beans. Oil refinery (nepalese style) from sunflower seeds - women pushing great beam around in a circle that grinds in a center pit (oil goes down middle into a pot) Ghostly cracking noise! We pass dear little houses: place for the chickens to sleep right under place where owner sleeps! Our jemadar is wonderful; knows words for right, left. very good and red cap (!) writes his name in the sand, says he'd like very much to go on to Namche Bazar with us if we can get permission for him - then acts out a pantomime of calling on the telephone "hello - hello" to show they can telephone from Dingla. Our future seems rather confused as we now appear to be by-passing Dingla entirely to avoid the big hill from which we should have to descend immediately. C & I have a talk about the expedition - I saying that it is amazing to me that we'd have considered doing it without him or T. This is wild country; one cd get into an awful pickle, really dangerous. C agrees we were not being very sensible - imagine 0 & me with only Andy or some of these strangers we might have taken on, who know nothing! Feel, myself, that C & T are rocks of Gibraltar. So go on; past cute little bamboo bazar where they have flashlights for sale, and lux soap and liver salts! As well as oranges, which we buy millions of. What wd we have done without them? (man at bazar brings a rug, so nicely, for me to sit on). Then on down to the Arun again.
more natives sit and gape - makes me think, for the 1st white woman too bad I'm not Myrna Loy or Betty Grable. Life savers continue to be a great success. My little pony boy walks beside me saying "six, seven eight" - pony has turned back but he still seems to be here! Incident of mislaying glasses: I must be careful.

C stops for fishing with worm he found; I find a caterpillar for him. Then on for a while; stop with O & miss the others & C comes back for us. All very got on bothersome but we get to the ferry and more darn fun - long tree hollowed out you sit in the bottom (bilge swishes over your rear), 3 oarsmen - 2 fore, 1 aft, they strike out from shore then hit the current & paddle like mad towards opposite shore - boat lists and rolls and tips (being round, tree form, you wonder what keeps it from spinning around?) Sensational! We land about 1 mi further down the shore than where we started - get out. Then boat goes back (6 loads). Service is free but you can tip. Really it is a sight. Feelings of weariness are forgotten as we sit on the rocks (shady side) and take pictures and watch the 2 next trips. Revived by all the excitement, we toll to the top amid a large audience and then down a place to our beautiful camping place in a grove of great trees. Bathe in river and wash clothes. Good supper and we talk by the fire. A good sleep.

Nov 5 Off late, new coolies to fill in but 16 staying with us. Have real feeling of expedition morale now. Smiles follow us everywhere and there is a sense of gen warmth ( & amusement). Left camp 6:25 due to the coolie business and sending letters off to Dingla. Mounted steeply to top of ridge, most lovely resting places built - platforms with seats, 2 large trees framing the view and always up where the look-out is wonderful. We find oranges when most thirsty. Plenty in a nice farm-house; they bring a mat for me to sit on and we buy 6 doz at 2' a doz! Take pictures of inhabitants going up to 2nd fl of their house via a ladder made of a log cut into steps with big Vs chopped from the side. Stiles over fences are also made like this. Today was one of our sweetest days for People...stop for lunch in a beautiful place with the Arun valley disappearing in on side, our new river (Irka) below. The whole village arrives and we have lots of fun with lifesavers and pictures. Stop at a house where the owner, old and full of dignity, takes me by the hand, leads me in, and seats me in a chair he has had brought. He delivers a speech ("he is putting himself, his house and all its contents at your disposal" said Bill) We thanked him, sat for a while, took his picture and then left. Then he pursued us with a present of more oranges! (We gave him a pak of lifesavers) All this is so darling; we meet smiles and friendliness everywhere. Over here the country is rich, green, prosperous. Little villages smuggle up high, like Swiss towns. C & I talk about how wonderful everything is being. "Do you think if a caravan of Nepalese were to go through Exeter it would meet with such a welcome?" We love the people, the country. Want to write the Maharajah a really thoughtful, full and appreciative letter. 0 says these are the only people he's ever run into that really appreciate a view. Houses, villages, swings, resting places, all placed with that in mind. I worry some about the little coolie that we have who is so young, looks so patient, has such a weary look across the eyes at the end of a day. Our coolie is having a marvelous time - she Dicke and I say we are the 2 women of the party, will stick together. Reach camp at 2:30 beside the river. I bathe in a little natural tub - soap my self and let the river roll over; feel my temp. gradually subside. Wash my underclothes and myself every night; you have to, get so grimy. Tea; plan dinner; darn; fix my things. C & I have nice talks. He says it is good having me, everything cheerfuller & happier. He is a dear friend.

Notes: Dicke-lady sherpa- has white ankles; makes you curious, is she white all over? face dark br, however! When I hand out lifesavers, they always put their 2 palms together for you to put the candy in - never take with thumb and fore-finger, our style. Big pass is ahead (12000 ft). 2 days still. Watched man fixing fishing net with bone needle and twine. 2 good bridges today - one a single log, flat.
loosely together as base, and railing made of another shoot... quite jiggly. Item... Charley caught his first fish today - very little - divided EXACTLY for supper among the five of us; 200 foot waterfall just across the valley from us; and a monkey followed me for quite a spell today.

Now we've been a week out from Jagbani today. Last night we sat around the fire, Bill telling of his war experiences. Dunkirk, then dropped by parachute into Albania and Italy. Stayed a year in Albania. **Dickie saved us several times yesterday (cross-paths very confusing) whoops! - hoisters in her striated voice till she gets your attention. C has a bird he whistles to; it answers. We talk about what the natives must be saying to each other: 0 boy, get a squint of this, the queerest people, carry loads when they don't have to, laugh all the time, religion very odd, consists in a boiling water ritual - and they eat ALL the time. Thoughts about Urdu: it is a cute tongue SUB CHEESE (all those pkgs) KITNER BUDGI (what time is it) etc. Today has gone wonderfully, cooler now we're getting up. We are at Phedi (5500 ft). Saw a fish barricade, sending them from the stream down a channel into a trough. Passed cute little boy in a green shirt fishing. Passed a swing, got some boys to demonstrate, very lively! Now we are nearer Sherpa country and are meeting them on the road. Cocie trouble tomorrow probably, the best dinner today though, and a nice talk. I like my people so. Everyone came in to my tent and we read "Kontiki" aloud. After supper, a line of men and women carrying the harvest (hay? rice?) up to the village passes us - they are carrying brands and it makes a lovely sight as they go on, across the stream and mount the path, lights shining cut in the darkness. My tent rope goes across the main path to the village.

Nov 7 We are camped below the pass at about 9700 ft. The climb went well the we started late (7:55) due to serious cocie trouble that almost stopped us altogether. An error - serious, maybe - not having gone to Mingla to get new cocies and liaison. We pick up a few local cocies and stay with us - our transport officers & extra people all pitch in and carry. My little saas had a terrific load. I carry my things - our sergeant thought so lazy did a wonderful job. All climbed wall and reached camp at 2. It is beautiful and quiet here. Cold. Clouds come & go. Pass looks to be 1500 - 2000 ft up. The climb was wonderful, very steep. We passed one of the best swings to date & the cocies & coolies stopped and had a time, swirling around. They are all so endearing. We met 3 Sherpas on their way to Phedi, said they'd return and carry for us; so: things look up the yesterday was abysmal. Just below camp we see a Buddhist wall & there is one here; they look ancient. All Buddhists pass to the left of it, writing on both sides for ascending and descending. There is a stone shelter here for the coolies, good. They are so lightly dressed. Great forest today, moss, holly trees, and the great trunks seem often to have been hallowed out by fire. The little houses and villages go very high & the cultivation terraces. Ahead we can see the chorten showing the pass (11,500 ft) A fine stream up high, lovely to drink (don't need to boil). The great saluter - we thought him a bluff) carried a terrific load today. Cigarettes all around. This was a working day for me but it goes well & I take great satisfaction in watching 0 and seeing he has things to suit him. All so cute a bout my being helpful & an addition.3 warming up, sang a little song at tea!

Excerpts from letter from Mrs Anstharkay (A is the head of all the Sherpas in Darjeeling and a very fine man, she obviously very fine too). To Bill: "I am very glad to know you are going to Sar Khumbu which is our birthplace and I am well acquainted with all the places you want to visit. In Solah Kambu there is a place called Namzay Bazar from which it will take you at least 3 days to reach the foot of Mt Everest. On the way you will find places named Tengbu, Pangbu, Lingbu. In the first places big monastery and very sacred places are found. These Buddhist monasteries are governed by lamas of very high standard of spiritual advancement. Lingbu has nothing but scenaries & scenaries all round and
It is told that the beauty and grandeur are simply marvelous and enchanting. I have actually been to Tenbuzey & Panbuzey & these are the nearest places to Mt. Everest from which one can get a clear view of it...I wish I were a man & not a woman to accompany you to these darling darling places to see with my own eyes those hills where we often played a childish hide & seek game with much frolics & those snow-capped hills and yonder mountains where our eyes never got tired of looking at the majestic beauty of those mountains. When you reach those places, my dear Sir, do please remember us & think in your mind that your Ang-tharkay and his beloved wife are actually with you to show all that they possibly could do in their power to be as much helpful as the would be...

(from Barjoeling - addressed to Bill Tilman Oct 20, 1950).

I am sitting in my tent (cold - have wool pants on for 1st time) Near bursts of singing and laughter from our entourage. Very gay! Supper not very good tonight (spag underdone) charpattis tho with sardines and Bill's cake. Read Kontiki for a while by the fire - cold. Sat 3 sharpas on the trail - wonderful looking men - with boots and big knitted stocking-tops. We persuaded them to leave their salt loads in Phedi and come back. They do. They turn to and help in all the camp jobs, tent demolishing etc.

Nov 8 A hard day. To the Salpa-la very easily (left at 7, pass at 8:20) A beautiful view with a 22,000 ft peak (Lumbur) ahead. Fine views ahead & just below we are meeting mani walls (now we are in Buddhist country). The fact that they are often in disrepair makes one wonder if religion does not mean so much here as formerly! As you walk past you must leave it on your right (the path splits for up-going and down-going paties). Our escort is all carrying loadsnow. Some of them are very heavy. 0 goes slowly. The forest as we went down was beautiful, mossHunting. Holly trees, and what lookslike deodor. Streams are fine, remind me of the Smokies. People we meet now are all sharpas, very Tibetan, strong, solid vigorous in aspect. Friendly and interested in us. Life saver routine goes well. Such cute types, esp women, children. Some fine men. We get down from pass but not far enough and push on till 4 when we camp on some terraces above Gudel. Morale a bit low as we look ahead - 2500 ft more to drop - at least & then up to another high pass. Some dispute as to just how far away Namche Bazar really is - 5 days - 9 days? Can't be VERY near anyway you look at it! I irk HWT sometimes, but must try not to be too perversive. Tent wet and late arrival at camp keeps one from having a sense of respite. Food low in heat. They bring a goat (20 rupees) but too boney. Lots of fine looking cows and sheep about & the cross betw cow-yak called a ZOE. Just like a cow but has curled horns & furry tail. Bagpipe sounding pipes come to play for us - cute. Fine looking man is head of village. I am tired. Seems like a long trek. Lights at a distance (Bung)

Nov 9 Off at 6:30, really sunk at aspect of the drop to the river we cannot even see the bottom of...Bad going, esp when looking across to ride to the pass on other side. Clear view of Chamlang this morning; hidden by clouds last night. In 2½ hrs we reach river - terrific bridge, too dark to photogr. (Oscar: I like being in a land the hand of a white man has never set foot in) Reach the village of Bung - bad time trying to get food. Old gurkha soldier (wounded in Germany) gets us a goat. Rice to come later. Trouble about meeting for lunch, place to camp and gen. bad humor...I go up the stream and have a fine bathe, feel heartened with tea. Food and distance are our problems now. I think 0 has to be closely nursed and watched. Not far today, but should be over the pass tomorrow. Then only 1 more. HWT's abysmal pessimism is a real load for everyone to carry. Aft goes nicely tho and we look again at the map - 5 days to NB, maybe? Read kontiki aloud while 0 lies warm & comfortable in his sleeping bag. Good dinner of roast goat & roast potatoes - fine soup. Forest fire across the valley. Bad. Talk about doctoring. Interesting. Morale rises. Sleep FINE and enjoy the good protein meal.

Nov 10 Over the pass today and above the Innukha Khola bridge - tomorrow's pass
the last) looks high but close— we are hoping to see you-know-what from the top unless it is purely mythical! Today has been good, altho the pull up was long and hard. Passed some wonderful mani walls and the populace followed along with us for a long way. Fine big shorten that we thought meant the top or near it was fully 2 hrs below. Flies. Lovely little streams & green glades. Sweet-smelling bushes. The top of the pass the wildest & rockiest we've seen yet. Crisis for today: No Charley. He had gone ahead—but finally got found & we much relieved. This is no country to get missed in! Descent was steep but went well. Jemadar has a headache. Pour rice all night, he says. I said the Dr Sahib wd give him a pill—he looked so pleased! The people of this area (all sherpas) are strong, healthy, happy—sounds of cheer from every group & a really ROSY look in the cheeks of some, as well as real distinction of feature. I make up to everyone; feel its successful as smiles meet no everywhere from outsiders as well as from the bunderbust. We now have 4 sherpa coolies and they are superb—most of them come and say good-night, good-morning with a salute. They call of these people is really eerie—a succession of high-pitched words ending in a descending wail. One hears calls from all over—from distant hills. We are camped on a rice terrace, rather greeny, the steep walls of the valley rising on all sides. Signs of erosion everywhere & the forest queer-dark gloomy, trees like moss-hung ghosts. Large tree rhododendron, HTT in a bed temper but I feel better about it now he is mad at everyone and not just me. I feel stronger and better today. More goat tonight. Was hanging over an ice ax last night (we had the rear end) now the front part is impaled over hear the fire and will soon make a fine curry. Huckleberries this afo on the trail! Yet zoes with horns wound with marigolds—cute little boy throwing stones at their rear ends to make them hump along. Deserted lasenery on the way today, arrounded with a wall and circle of trees. The day: 6:40—3:00. Frost tonight.

Nov 11 Down to the Inuakhu Khola for some reason looking for a big steel suspension bridge—what we found was a bamboo affair, looked flimsy but worked fine. The river just boiling along. Rough in gorge above. Up & up then to the col Stopped for lunch by a wonderful brook. Altitude argument betw Bill & C (B wins).

From the col we see high peaks very near Numbur (22,800 ft) is very grand. Then we rop down on a good trail to the Kosi valley side. Very fine looking man sitting on Tibetan boots, dressed in wonderful colors (purples, reds)—then he demands Buckshah (Tip) a shock. How did he learn about it? Then a long sit in the sun with Numbur ahead and the Kosi valley below—beautiful! air is fine and "like" wine" as Mac used always to say and everything clearer than ever before. I have a sweet talk with a mob who congregated while I was writing the above. 2 little children with the most adorable faces. When finally I leave, I say "goodby" & they say "goodby" back and wave in imitation (a new gesture for them). I just loved them. I'd gotten their pictures instead of the awful old thing that wanted buckshah. Then we descend further, lovely woods and beautiful temperature. Nice path to side hill camp site—old rice terrace. Dickie puts on bright shirt (to celebrate she's near home?) and so do I. Tea. Fun. Camp life genial & pleasant. Gen sounds of laughter & cheer. I have lost all my feeling—rather claustrophobic—that I had for a time: as if enclosed in this country, like within walls. Jemadar had a headache yesterday which C treated with a pill. Today J is cured—result: C's fame as a Dr spreads far & wide. So—at tea—many applicants for treatment. Pills for Gyaljen Jr (has a cold) & Dickie has cream on a sore knee (Dr Gray's sunburn cream—all we have) Supper. Read some from Kontiki. Bed.

Nov 12 6:40 to 3:00 from Above Kharte to below Chaumrikharka

Our supposed descent had lots of ups & downs. The trail is beautiful, often with fine steep stone stairs. Kept going around bends expecting to see the GREAT VIEW. Finally it comes and is magnificent but Everest is still hidden behind a 22,000 ft beautiful peak. C climbs a tree to photograph. Down and around a huge mullah for lunch at a beautiful spot with stream and triple waterfall. We go up & down—2nd wonderful view showing whole length of the Kosi valley with Namche Bazar located at the head, foot of fine rock peak named KUMBILA. 2 fine snow peaks on
are across the valley (Numbur is one) & two on this side. It is all marvelous.
Passed the establishment of a mani wall builder & repairer (he was out at the
time) A small hut with the flat stones about, & one standing on a sort of
easel where I have been working on it. Passed roadmenders - 1st time - working
at the top of a long staircase. They show us how they move the rocks around, with
a long curved tool - they pull a big rock down, put it in place. Fists alert dig-
mified faces, so cheerful too. Boy with them with dimples & such a sweet ex-
pression. Pass 2 big flocks of sheep & goats. Made my mouth water! Big Tibetan
dogs like huskies are used for sheep dogs. Such darling baby lambs and goats,
one so tiny was being carried by the herdsman. Fine looking man. $00 in the
head - 0 counted. On the last section of trail we see the camp, a big drop,
directly below, pine st cam. Jamadar (walking right behind me) starts reciting
the bones of the body, organs of the different body cavities, sections of the
heart (I) we are in stitches - thinking it most amusing and ridiculous, somehow,
at the end of each group he stops, says to C "Teak Hi, Sahib?" (OK?) All very
cute and funny: "Big intestine, small intestine, pancreas, spleen..." this
from someone who can barely communicate in any way in our language. Tea (with
run) and we plan about the future. G & Bill to go on up from Manche to get a
real view of the S face of Everest - 5 days (which is what we have) should do
it; if i or E more are needed they can forced-march to meet us at a lower
camp. Don't know just what we'll do (A,0 & me). Go on up to the "buzays" per-
haps, I do want a good squint at E myself. Rest & respite will be good for O - m
me, too, I imagine. Today such a beautiful forest - holly, birch, oak - many
signs of burning, laurel in bloom and winter cherry. Beautiful streams. Heard th
the beating of a drum for a long while last night and chanting early this a.m.
Here at our camp: two men who come asking for buckshish (sophisticates) Ugh.

Nov 13 Am writing on a slope beside the Kosi - a blue-white glacial stream, cold
as greenland. C & I came on ahead and now the lunch is spread and 2 shapna nativ-
es are peering intrestedly at our food, our writing and us. Today has been
beautiful and easy. Contouring around the slopes above the Kosi - then it
rises as we descend and here we meet for the 1st time (so-called Kosi River
trip!) We have seen lots of Buddhist mani walls, shrines, temples & chortens.
Vast prayer wheel in one - when it made a complete revolution a bell rang to
show you'd covered the ground. Small wooden prayer wheels seen for the 1st time
strung along theman walls. Some beautiful chortens. Air is cool - in the shade
really cold. Pine or spruce forest on opp hillside - 1st white pine since our
camp grove at Dhamkata. Some wonderful children's faces today & man with Tibe-
tan hat of felt and fur, and man with pr of scissors One interesting fact is
that the saw appears to be unknown, all big beams seem to have been chisled
with a kukri. Some goiters, lots of coughs and runny noses but gen health &
vigor. Every now and then some words of English - today a man with a trench
coeat on speaks quite well (old soldier probably) See more Tibetan dogs & sev-
eral loudly barking little Ibassa terriers (look like Cairns) Slight row about
not marking the trail - which side of river - but all agree the E is right
(which is where we are). Cross on a good bridge of a design supposed to have be
en made (says O) by Alexander the great. Model seen in nashmir. Then an elabo-
rate detour around a beehive on the rampage (advance guard was attacked) - camp
at Gomila C & R climb the back hillside & see fine peaks, all unclimbable.

Mts are as follows (N to S): (S to N) (5 peaks)
Taweech (21, 386) (over to E) Numbur (22, 317)
Kangtega (22340) Kwangde (20, 320)
Punugreanmavry (208) - picturesque - with windows of glass; well-run farms. We went
through Chaumrikarka, a considerable settlement with mani walls, chortens and
temples. Very rich women, dressed fancy, with ever so much gold about incl in
a band across her teeth; Chicken for supper, tough but tasty. Dessert jelled
for once (but I don't think my men like it much). Washed clothes, myself. Hot
toddlies. The day: 6:45 to 1:15, very easy.

Nov 14 Up early - roaring fire shone right into my tent, difficult to get my
pants on unobserved! Big buckwheat cakes for brkfn. O & I start along, grab for
...the trail for a while then finds them in a drag. The air is cold and fine. Passed a flour mill (turbine) - And we've met 3 bridges; people more and more warmly dressed, more Tibetan. Every sherpa wears three beads strung on a string around his neck - a flat long bead in center (usually: mottled & rather grey) and two round ones at end (usually pinkish). We are seeing silver and turquoise jewelry men in odd hats (some peaked high Chinese in effect), and felt with scaloped edges of fur. Today in a village a man shows us (a monk?) a Buddhist painting, really lovely, and a manuscript on Tibetan paper. Work in from Darjeeling evidently on a pilgrimage to raise funds; old Gurka there too. We meet good will & cordiality, though sometimes the women seem hesitant and afraid. Now the road splits. 1 branch goes into Tibet by the Tzingri pass. 8 branch goes up to the Buceyes and Everest. 1 very rocky and wild now; fir trees; cold. Sun does not reach us down here till 9:45. Around a bend (lower down) the whole Mt Gashmora (or Kangtse?) first of all like a Thunderbolt! It is terrific - but just lights the 3 arete. Mixed face and delicate ridges are typical of the Himalaya. Our map has been proving most inaccurate. At the head of valley (Kumari 4 17,000) very near now, looks like a snow hut in the Tetons. Now we drop to the river, very steeply, and then a real push up the hill - we pause on edge and see right up the nearest valley but clouds obscure the peak itself but we see the approaches and the two peaks Taweche (L) and Lhorrung (R). Next thing we hear the sound of cheerful bells and down the trail come 4 little horses with Tibetan trappings & bright saddle blankets and the 2 head men of Nance B and the police officer. We shake hands and make polite speeches and count the horses - then ride into this incredible town! Every window filled and all the streets packed. It is a town like nothing I've ever seen; houses of stone, in rows, dark woodwork - looks a bit like a cliff dwelling, fits right into the amphitheater it's built against. We smile at everyone and say "saalam". Everyone greets us enthuasically. We dismount & are led up some dark steps into an upper room where we have some lunch. Room is crowded with people watching, and children who are periodically chased out. Tents are set up outside on a dirt terrace - the whole village watching our every move from above and below. Cold, Cloudy. Coolies are paid off and they get a sheep for the evening meal; we get one too. I climb the side hill to take pictures, with a mob following that drops off one by one. Hear an uproar on an opposite hill & it is G & Bill & THEIR entourage! I clamber up to them & the children (who are mostly what's left) put on a terrific show of scrambling & roughhousing and somersaulting, so bright and rough and cute. One marvelous little tomboy girl, all tanned. We descend, meet O. All the days around are simply terrific and the Kosi valley going out towards the lowlands is blue and violet in all light. Home. Fix up the food sacks for the two gangs (we split up tomorrow). A sherpa drink (rack a) very gailying. A good good dinner. First choc pudding (we should have had more). We eat up a whole big cookie box. Tomorrow the plan is to move on to Trang boche (one of the buzies) nomenclature varies & spelling). Could NOT stay here! Plans for our departure & meeting up with B & C, after their reconnaissance. All very cheerful, incl family who live here. Tired. Little G and Dickie go to visit their families at Tamma - C's haven't seen him for 5 years. He comes back the 17th, she later; all of us go back together.

Nov 15 We have landed on our feet in the most wonderful lamasyery (Compa). We are established in a small unused house, fire burning (no chimney, smoke just goes out the roof) works fine, a little spooky. A constant audience, but not so many as we are used to! Cold last night, rain and sleet on tent roof. This morning snow and drizzle, very dark and cold. Fine brisk and we need it, discouraging about the weather but C & B prepare for there get-off. Big branches of our sheep are piled on the coolies packs (nice note of color!) and our usual audience below and above... Sarky, da Nangyol and our tall sherpa (one of the Musketeers) go with them - they go off at 7:45, plus food supplies for 6 days. We follow soon after. Farewells to Dickie and Gyaljen and waves to the populace. Snow falls & the wind is blowing. 3 ponies but it is so cold, we walk mostly. Wild gorges below and rocky hillsides above. Fine spire, pine, rhododendron. Quite a sight to see barberry bushes (red) draped in pale green moss and snow all over both. C saw fine showy-colored pheasants, he said. Our coolies from lowlands are bare-foot and dressed in their flimsy clothes but smile as we pass and trot along without pausing. I give them each ½ pkg lifesavers & thank them for their fa...
nullness, drop to river and cross - pass series of little houses, each with a prayer wheel, water runs down through the series, making all the prayer wheels go (only wasn't working). Then long pull up to Thyangboche (13,500 - 13,000 ft) ground covered with snow; yaks lying around. The lamasery very impressive, as the view must be on a clear day. We could see nothing. C & B ahead all morning & we meet them at the Gompa where we are welcomed by a fine looking man with a smooth shaved head & a raft of red-dressed boys. They bring us up to a balcony where there is a charcoal brazier; benches are brought and covered with rugs for us to sit on. We bow and smile and I give presents around to the small boys - sweet bright faces, Snowing. We are led to our new home. On the upper floor of a little house, a bit delapidated; ¾ for sherpas, bigger room for us. It gets swept out and we are given rug after rug, brazier after brazier, and benches are brought and covered. We establish ourselves with sl bags on low benches by the window, bench in front of fireplace, 2 on the sides. My things are on a shelf, dressing table set out and we are really cozy. The Namche Bazaar head man came a long and has been most helpful here. He was pleased at being given one of the 85¢ ball pt pencils with appropriate words of thanks (which he couldn't understand a word of). B & C have bread, tea, butter and cheese lunch with us and I leave - Lingboche is a day up. We hear there is "sickness" (?) in the next village so will give it a wide berth. The plan is to rest here; meet the boys on the 19th here or 20th and that day leave for Namche and the return journey. The break in the weather has been a real surprise - too bad to have it happen now aloft actually it wd have been hard to have had bad weather on the trip in (or any time). B has told 0 that this is much harder than the trip in to Nanda Devi & the Almora trips he has taken. Head lama (in charge - smooth-headed man) calls on us after we are established. He is Gyaljen Sr's cousin. We have a polite discourse in which we learn his name, hear of 4 months trip to Darjeeling via Tamur & Tingri pass. L herd river is the BHOTA KOSI (to Tibet pass) Proper spelling of lamasery THYANGBOCHE. A convent is ¾ mi away. We have a hot toddy by our little fire and close the door for privacy. Good dinner (vast). Read a little Kontiki. Bed.

Nov 16 We are, I think, in the most beautiful place in the world. We woke today to a clear sky a circle of the most incredible mts and temp of 18. Andy points out that we have had a 100 degree temp range! Snow on the ground and black yaks about. Shorts with gilded tops against these inedible hills. We take picture after picture - everywhere you look it is unspeakably marvelous. The monks wear red homespun suits with a kind of poke bonnet - boys wear red suits too and have bright alert faces. Mt B is undeniable but a high ridge (Hupstse) cuts right across the face and makes it not seem so imposing as some of the nearer peaks. Loho (27,000 ft) is just to R, Tameche to the L. Many others Nothing looks as if it could possibly be climbed by anyone, ever. At about 10 we are taken into the lamasery for an audience with the High Lama. He turns out to be a boy of about 16, from Namche B. His mother is here. We were ushered into a room, walls painted in bright colors (2 are lined with books) Everyone but us make 9 kneeling obeisances before the altar in center. On either side are seated 9 monks beginning with the elders and the youngest on the end. Chanting begins, in 3ds and 5ths. Then as if this were the verse and now a chorus comes: 2 huge horns in tandem, 2 smaller horns (soprano) 2 conch shells 2 big drums (hit with curved stick with leather end) cymbals, bells, and instrument that seems to be of horn with a metallic beater, sounds like castanets. The verse and chorus business goes on for some time. We note the books; later on we look at some; they are loose sheets of paper laid together, wood block printing on nepalese paper, two blocks of wood put on either side of the sheets are wrapped in rose silk, wound with a thing. Book labelled at one end with vari-colored flaps of silk, very handsome. Then each book slips into its own cubicule. The ceremonial room is elaborately painted and carved - banners hang from ceiling & what look like lamp shades with silk flounces. 4 red columns in center of room, painted in primary colors; gives an elementary, rather naive effect until you come close and see the detail & the design which is lovely. Then the chanting service is over, Gyaljen beckons forward, bearing
our presents (hostile gotten together: 30 rupees, a ball pen, (75¢ drugstore variety) and
my tan Swiss silk scarf. We are led up to the High Lama and Gyaljen expresses our thanks
and appreciation & we present our gifts. H L is a nice, simple-faced boy. We bow and 
leave, and are then shown on the upper floor of the Gompa a library and a room with painted 
and cabinets, there are masks stored in some. Then there are great preparations for photo-
graphy in the courtyard: peacock fans, flower vases (with false flowers), banners, silver
prayer boxes, tea cups, rugs laid on ground and banners hung up behind. Took 2 hr at least.
I took lots of close-ups of the old lamas and Gyaljen's cousin who is acting head lama ( a
rotating office). Lots of laughter as I drag the lamas over and say "don't look like this"
(making a solemn expression). Little groups on balcony duck when I point my camera up but
finally I do succeed in snapping them. Then Head Lama arrives, gets a red peaked cap put on
him and then we let loose: pictures from all directions, and distances. It is an incredible
sight - little dog keeps appearing in the foreground (and before, in church) but nobody seems
to mind. Then we bow low, express our appreciation and depart. Completely bushed! scene is
all so beautiful we can't stop, just move around photographing, sighting, looking at the map
and asking names of peaks. No jour de repos at all, says Oscar! Lunch is a real meal! O, is
a jewel. Then 0 and I go out and sit in the sun and soon a cowd gathers and we have school.
Head, nose, eyes, teeth, ear, 1, 2, 3 (etc) They recite the name of each after it is told
them and ask more words: what is elbow, arm-pit etc! Thats where I am now, O dozing beside
me. Andy is up in the hills and C & B scouting the S face. The big huptse ridge is right
across it, its going to be difficult to see, but so fine that the weather has turned! clouds
drift in oft across the incredible silver ridge above us (Tamussuru). Then we go back to
our little home as clouds gather across the sky and it gets cold. The mother of the head Lama
and a young woman bring us a large pot of Tibetan tea with rice, milk and potatoes. We sit
& drink and then they pour out more, keeping the cup full at all times. It tastes buttery
and faintly milky and tea-ish. I put a little perfume on the ladies, right by the ears - they
giggle and like it but won't look at themselves in the mirror. Cute. Clouds all over now
and we close the blinds against the cold air and have a nice fire. Chilly. We hear avalanches
roaring and the beating of the drum in the Gompa. Also bursts of the weird music.

PEAKS AROUND THE CIRCLE OF THE HORIZON; and altitudes (from Andy)

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notes: fast retreating

Glaciation

5) Tamsuru

7) Karyolung

8) Numbur

9) Kwangel

10) Kumbila

D-, I seem to be getting a cold. UGH.

Nov 17 Fri Dry &29

I took a digestive pill plus seconal and had a good night. Today took some penicillin from
the medicine box. Feel better already. Andy went off with Na Nuru about 8 to go up the
slope for pictures. I shall take today off; so will O. Afterthoughts about yesterday: in
ceremonial room, brass candles sticks (bowls) with candles burning. Upstairs in library 165
vols & cubards with masks: these are grotesques, some with hair, trimmed with small skulls.
The young lamas act just like young USA boys in the service, cutting up and having the
giggles. We have met quite an aggregation of old steering Sherpas; 3 ok, fine looking men
turning up in Namche to greet us. Here we ran into the 'foreign sportsman' (so dubbed by Til-

Because of his natty dress on one expedition) SONAM TENSING. He brought us a present of y'
milk. They present their porters' books and chits with great pride, signed by people like Shipton, Atledge etc. 0 & I spent this morning in our sun house (sun shines in just right in the morning) entertaining a large group. My leaf of my diary box has tibetan version (done by a lama) of place names I wrote in English. Everyone delighted with zippers. Cries of delight when I unsnapped the pocket at the back of my coat & drew out the hood. A rug is brought for us to sit on & a gift of 4 oranges. We walk down the little ridge (N W) - fine views -. Sit for a while longer in the delicious sun. More school (hand - fingers - sun - moon etc) 2 boys stand out; I just love them, so alert & bright. But some Nivea cream on a split lip but have to explain for other ills that Doctor Sahib will return in 7 days. Life severs to the whole line, eyes closed, hours out. Newcomers are brought in; much mirth if they peek through their fingers. Head acting lama appears & they all rush off for duties - doing a little dance as they go, skirts whirling - simply delightful. The lamas are dressed in shades of red homespun, yellow and rust colors, just too beautiful. In the services they have a piece, like a cloak, that they throw over the shoulder like a cape. Sherpa dress is the shoe (knitted woolen top leather sole, design in purple & red above the leather) tucked into this is a narrow pant. Long undershirt coming betw knee & waist (buttoning on side), long tunic, very full, bloused up with belt (they carry things in the bloused part). One sleeve hangs loose, no arm in it. The hats are terric; sometimes big, felt & fur edged in scallops (2 big scallops, small) - embroidery on crown. Or big peaked, domed hats of cloth. Mandarin style hut of pie shaped caps with a button on top. The faces are brown and strong - some are square and rosy, with beautiful eyes and strong straight teeth. Then some look very chinese (like little Gyalojen) with oval faces & more delicacy of feature. We all, gaiety, delicacy, humor, dignity and self respect are everywhere apparent. Delightful people!! 0 & I have had a nice lunch (soup, rye crisp & cheese, and a piece of Gyalojen's new atta cake with raisins). Then he takes us 1/2 hr up the valley - down a hill - to see the Buddhist convent. It is very small & simple, 17 monks, each with her own little house, stone wall, piled up firewood, we meet 3, all very cheerful though shy - take some pictures (one sister rushes off to put on her best clothes)!! Another takes up my hand, compares it with hers and giggles. They live in a sweet little wooded grove, cedar trees, rhododendron, birch, barberry. Our Guopa is to be seen on the hilltop above (25 lamas there, and much bigger and fancier). We go into the convent's main court, big room with great prayer wheel, with a bell that rings after each revolution. Our walk home was delightful. Tea with Andy whose climb had been disappointing & hard. Wonderful sunset. Gyalojen Jr comes; has read Sherpa little brother looking just like him but completely native! Discussion of plans. Gyalojen Sr says he will stay with us till we leave here - no time off. Nice men. (Gala sight: kids trying on my glasses!).

Sat November 13 - Day 20

Felt rather mean today; cold - sun in and out. Morning at our sun house. Rug brought out & constant stream of callers. Presents include (from a dear little girl) 10 hot boiled little new potatoes (we ate 5). Andy leaves at 11:45 to get on slopes of Taweche for pictures. Sherpa porter of Thomas' comes to call, bringing potatoes & arak (rakshi) which we drink & find very cheering. Then go up to the lamasery to see a dance rehearsal (special permission given for me). Hand plays on balcony (horn, 2 big horns 0 like alpine horns - drums, cymbals, low clanging). Then dancers come in on (4) and do slow figures, skirts swinging gracefully. We take lots of pictures. Everyone has a smile for us. The acting head lama is a splendid dancer. The best is the very smart young man who wrote the tibetan version of the place names for me. (Costumes are brilliant and elaborate - high gilded headdresses). Then home to a call from the senior lama bringing a beautiful piece of wood carving (type for page of one of their books, actually), as a present, we give him a mirror (shows you big on one side, small on the other). He is delighted. Then another lama calls with more potatoes and arak (we drink more; feel even more cheered) then serve him tea, Am style, which he likes. Give him the steel measuring rule. Andy back after good day. 0. ill with diarrhea - I dose him, and give myself penicillin. Feel poor. 0. feels the altitude. Good supper: chicken, cake, soup. (Afterthought: being entertained at tea at one of the lamasery houses: incense; little boy all dressed up in fine Tibetan suit, old gentleman & youngish woman wait on us).

November 19 Day 21 Sunday

2 Callers in before we are even up! With shutters drawn it is 40 in here - 20 outside. Clear & beautiful. M. little girl arrives after brkf with more potatoes (hot) and the bright young
milk. They present their poster's books and chits with great pride, signed by people like Shipton, Cutledge etc. 0 & I spent this morning in our sun house (sun shines in just right in the morning) entertaining a large group. My leaf of my diary now has tibetan version (done by a lama) of place names I wrote in English. Everyone delighted with zippers. Cries of delight when I unzipped the pocket at the back of my coat & drew out the hood. A rug is brought for us to sit on & a gift of l oranges. We walk down the little ridge (H-w) - fine views -. Sit for a while longer in the delicious sun. More school (hand - fingers - sun - moon etc) 7 boys stand out; I just love them, so alert & bright. Put some Nivea cream on a split lip but have to explain for other ills that Doctor Sahib will return in 7 days. Life severs to the whole line, eyes closed, homes out. Newcomers are brought in; much air if they peek through their fingers. Head acting lama appears & they all rush off for duties - doing a little dance as they go, skirts swirling - simply delightful. The lamas are dressed in shades of red homespun, yellows and rust-colors, just too beautiful. In the services they have a piece, like a cloak, that they throw over the shoulder like a cape. Sherpa dress is the shoe (knitted woolen top, leather sole, design in purple & red above the leather) Tucked into this is a narrow pant. Long undershirt coming between knee & waist (buttoning on side), long tunic, very full, bloused up with belt (they carry things in the bloused part). One sleeve hangs loose, no arm in it. The hats are terrific; sometimes big, felt & fur edged in scallops (2 big scallops, 1 small) - embroidery on crown. Or big peaked, domed hats of cloth. Mandarin style coat of pie shaped segments with a button on top. The faces are brown and swarthy - sometimes square and rosy, with beautiful eyes and strong straight teeth. Then some look very chinese (like little Gyaljen) with oval faces & more delicacy of feature. All very gaiety, aloofness, humor, dignity and self respect are everywhere apparent. Delightful people! 0 & I have had a nice lunch (soup, rye krisp & cheese, and a piece of Gyaljen's new atta cake with raisins). Then he takes us up hr up the valley - down a hill - to see the Buddhist convent. It is very small & simple, 17 muns each with her own little house, stone wall, piled up firewood. We meet 3, all very cheerful though shy. Take some pictures (one sister rushes off to put on her best clothes) Another takes up my hand, compares it with hers and giggles. They live in a sweet little wooded grove, cedar trees, rhododendron, birch, barberry. Our Gompa is to be seen on the hill top above (25 lamas there, and much bigger and fancier). We go into the convent's main court. Big room with great prayer wheel, with a ball that rings after each revolution. Our walk home was delightful. Tea with Andy whose climb had been disappointing & hard. Wonderful sunset. Gyaken Jr comes; has real Sherpa little brother looking just like him but completely native. Discussion of plans. Gyaljen Sr says he will stay with us till we leave here - no time off. Nice men. (Cute sight: kids trying on my glasses!).

Sat November 18 - Day ,20

Felt rather mean today; cold - sun in and out. Morning at our sun house. Rug brought out & constant stream of callers. Presents include (from a dear little girl) 10 hot boiled little new potatoes (we ate 3). Andy leaves at 6 to get on slopes of Tawche for pictures. Sherpa porter of Thomas' comes to call, bringing potatoes & arak (raksho) which we drink & find very cheering. Then go up to the lamasery to see a dance rehearsal (special permission given for me). Hand plays on balcony (horn, 2 big horns 0 like alpine horns - drums, cymbals, low chanting). Then dancers come in (h) and do slow figures, skirts swinging gracefully. We take lots of pictures. Everyone has a smile for us. The acting head lama is a splendid dancer. The best is the very smart young man who wrote the Tibetan version of the place names for me. Costumes are brilliant and elaborate - high glazed headdresses. Then home to a call from the senior lama bringing a beautiful piece of wood carving (type for page of one of their books, actually), as a present - he gives him a mirror (shows you big on one side, small on the other). He is delighted. Then another lama calls with more potatoes and arak (we drink more; feel even more cheered) then serve him tea, Am style, which he likes. Give him the steel measuring rule. Andy back after good day. O. ill with diarrhea - I dose him, and give myself penicillin. Feel poor. O. feels the altitude. Good supper: chicken, cake, soup.

November 19 -Day 21 Sunday

ZCallers in before we are even up! With shutters drawn it is l0 in here - 20 outside. Clear & beautiful. M little girl arrives after brief with more potatoes (hot) and the bright young
lama who dances so well brought me a present of beads, a small white image, and 3 colored drawings (I gave him a mouth organ). Then I go and sit in the field resting my back on a carved mani rock (we generally go here in the afternoons). O, so fine and warm. 2 girls come over and sing little songs. Giggle. I take a bath up in our house from water Gyaltse Jr has heated for me. Wash my hair. Fine effect. Then we have lunch - o, I forgot, 1st to a service of confirmation (or something) for Gyaltse Sr. Very elaborate. Much drinking of Tibetan tea and we are given handfuls of rice which we throw into the air at a certain point in the ceremonies. Cutting up of young acolytes we things we gave them (tin foil on teeth, blowing into plastic bags etc). Much giving and receiving of presents, much paying of calls. Gyaltse's cousin is so lovely, shy and restrained. At about 3 Bill & Charley return. Everest unclimbable from the S. they say. (Shall append an outline of their trip). They feel fine about their job, feel its been done right. Look weary. Give them a fine tea with rakshi. Callers. Fine dinner: lamb and roast potatoe, rice pudding with yoghurt. Slept poorly. In this little room, lots of snoring, poor air, cold. Before bed, C and I look at the moonlight on the mts - last touch of sunlight shines on and on on Everest.

Nov 20 Day 22 Mon

Wind up of our Thyangboche affairs. Pack. Good brief. Callers. Go to Campa for service, have amulets given us by the head lama. Photogr of us with the lamas, expedition photogr etc. Presents, we give everything we have that we can spare. Say goodbye and leave, going down the beautiful trail. My little child I love goes along; I give her a balloon I have, we walk hand in hand. Such dear expressions on the little face! The walk is the loveliest of my life, warm and fine. Lunch on a fine rock - views of Taweche, my peak (Tamursuram) Aumlunna, and the wonderful trail going down to the Kosi and then up the opp. wall of the valley. Look back at Thyangboche on its hill top, Gorge very wild and precipitous. Pick gentians (pale blue & mauve). The walk along by myself until met by bells and the little ponies again. I ride a while then get off and join C for pictures. Then in to Namche. Usual goldfish bowl life! Good dinner. Write messages for courier to take ahead tomorrow. Cold, cloudy, in late aft. We all have coughs and sniffles (so has everyone else). Our coolies have all turned up dressed up warm - hardly knew them, so wrapped. Tonight is obviously right out for our staff. Charles gave the head man his hat - terrific.

Nov 21 Day 23 Tue

Cold night. Good brief with sheep livers (just bought a sheep - carcass is coming along with us looking vast and bloody & simply wild!) Start off early with O. Touching parting with head man (wearing C's Knox hat) C says he put his (C's) hand to his head and said "My house, your house" Then (say C) he brought out his family all fixed up, wonderful jewelry, and they all had their pictures taken. Headman brought bottle of rakshi with flowers fixed in the cork, to me. 0 & I go down the hill - last views of Everest. Down to the Kosi and cross. A such a beautiful day. Snow peaks everywhere. Lunch by the Gumba camp place. Bathed in stream, clean clothes, took off long red underwear, felt marvelous. Walked on with Bill & C. Early stop. People congregate. Women with prayer wheels. Bargaining for bowls (O doing a big business). C doctors everyone. Delight over my zipper hood. Girl ties me all up in my hood and then salams 3 times and gives me an orange. They hold my hand, see its cold and one opens her coat and puts it inside to warm. Bill buys me a Tibetan bowl. Ten with the headman's rakshi. Throat is sore. Buying and bargaining for Tibetan bowls. O buys 7! A good dinner with much nice talk (leg of our mutton). Laughter over the rakshi, complaints of me (stealing all the life savers etc) our health being so poor etc. C does more doctoring - much goitre, coughing etc. (from us too). Big flea and/or lice hunt - I HAVE NONE, hurray. Town camps down by our campsite. Feel warmed and cheered. Think that they like us & that I've been useful. (Picked up a third of a day). Camping place GOMAT (saw a mt sheep).

Nov 22 Day 24 Wed

0 & I off at 6:10. Food trouble for coolies and delays at Chhumrikarka, and Surkya. Meet pleasant smiles everywhere - people been so much friendlier than on our way in. Stop at sunny corner for lunch - meat for sandiv. Most lovely trail & forest & streams. Views up the valley towards Namche and high peaks. Moss hung holl forest. It starts to cloud up Cold &
Nov. 23 Day 25 Thurs

Start: 6:30. (Ate more brisk than ever before in my life.) Most beautiful day. We called it "Naulah" day (so many naulhas). Around the 1½ hr naulah and on up to pass from which we first saw the rise of the Kosi. Then in & out of more nullahs (up and down) to lunch place (where we had camped going in) Salmon sandw and lovely last looks at the Kosi valley. An hr stop (Andy late) and then we climb past PUNANGU (town) and on over the pass (10,300) going just fine. On down ½ hr to lunch place going in - look over the Innukhu valley and think we'll make pass #2 tomorrow. Whoops! We are seeing the effects of our fine accumulated training. Feel very strong. Oak and ilex forest and mossy stunted rhododendron trees. A druid forest, says Oscar. Fine streams too and the terraced hillsses are beautful in the sun. Heavenly. Much more traffic (coolies with corn, main cargo) and the character of the people changing from essential Sherpa to more of the Nepalese look. Hill gave me some raspberries. Good. Jamadar ailing but backs up under treatment from C. Morale of the coolies is excellent. Ours too. Surprises (pleasant) of the trip: no leeches, no leopards, no clouds of mosquitoes (though some at Jogbant). Also how fine my feet have gone - not one ache or blister or sense of soreness. My Bates boots! Clouds close in on us. Good fire and cozy here though and general sense of mirth and joy. Coolies fix themselves real comfortable. Sit by the fire and write. Discuss how we shall write the Mahabharata in detail our appreciation, and the interest of the trip. Find Nov. blooming prisms, lovely. Remember: the lovely blue gentian of Nanga; above and the boy who picked me a bunch. (Tucked it - I remember - into the hollow of a rock for a centerpiece for our lunch). (I am sitting looking at the back of C's head - the flimsiest, cutest wool) B is telling of his 1½ yrs in Kenya (1919-1934). Also climbs in Persia. C describes the Luklel Taylor episodes on the Afghanstani trip in '38. Very funny. Find more prisms. Good dinner.

Nov. 24 Day 26 Fri 6:15 - 1:30

We are above PANGU. C what a fine day! Down the hill from Pass #1 in 2 hrs, cross Innukhu Khola bridge (fire scars, recent, on hillside) and up 3000 ft to pass #2 going like a house afire. Crossed the pass at 12:30 and an hr later at beautiful camp site before the chortan. Said goodbye to Innukhu valley (and Lost Dr Pass) and now in Nongu valley. Bando-bust going strong. Sickness in village near deserted Compa here so we keep everyone off (they keep themselves off - Nepalese system of voluntary quarantine). Flea and louse hunt. Sherpas love it. Bill has it; I haven't. Much laughter. And wood tick fastened to me last night. Note: Sherpas only live at 10,000 ft or over. Note: S slopes so different (arid & dusty) from N slopes where one finds moss and ferns and streams. We are back in the mica belt, all pulverized, no big hunks. Bill finds a quartz crystal. More rhododendron trees here and mossy stumps & trunks. Low clouds and cool. C says this clouding over has happened all along, but I have not felt so - lately - yes. Across the valley on the Salpa side it is warm and sunny. Innukhu valley and wild gorge (like Nadi) very fine today. Rough trail. Lunch in mad meadow. Tomorrow we are going to get as high as possible on the Salpa. Then, that pass over, the rest of the trip is just a coast! Our muscles are terrific. Think I never before have had the power to walk so strongly. Estimates that we do the eqiv of climb Mt. Wash 5 days a week for 5 weeks. Fish day today for Andy (not promising, I thought ahead of time, but guess what)? It turned out to be wonderful. Fig pudding, very fine. Good Urdu words: TACKLEEF (trouble) and TOMASHA (big goings on).
November 25: Day #27

Camp above Gudel (6:30 to 3) Our hard day to date. Long descent through beautiful mossy woods to start with to BUNG, which left the same inhospitable impression as on the way in. Almost 4 hrs to the Hongu Khola which we cross on the same rickety bridge. Then we poke right up the hill (lunch at a wonderful Aussichtspunkt) past Gudel for 1\frac{1}{2} hours. Beautiful warm day and fine soft breeze. O. gets tired but we look forward to crossing the Salpa La tomorrow. Hongu Khola: 4700 ft (about). Now we must be at about 7700 ft with 3000 ft ahead of us still to the pass. Wonderful terraces; the Bung area is very prosperous & thickly settled. No Rackshe. Cold now the sun has set and our things are damp - my tent covered with drops. Bill's poem: in dreadfulness naught can excel, the journey from Bung to Gudel, yesterday 8 am (after 0 and I left) a military escort arrived BUNG at camp saying they had been looking all over for us, going from village to village "no sahibs", fixing roads for us etc. Across from our camp here is the steepest green hillside we've ever seen - a precipice; one feels that if it were possible to get hold of a corner of the green covering, the whole thing would rip and peel off. A huge holly tree is near us, moss and vine covered, very beautiful. Numbar in distance, marvelous. As usual clouds over us in afternoon and evening, then at night it clears and the moon comes out.

November 26: Day (Day #28) Sunday

A hard day (6:25 to 3) Over the Salpa pass via the great valley that winds and winds and is so very beautiful with hamlets on the steep hillsides across from us. Great holly and rhododendron forest and then the great spruces begin (85 ft tall and 4 ft through). We lunch beside a fine stream in the sun. Everyone is suffering a little from sense of anti-climax, I think, and Tilman is grumpy so I leave him alone. After lunch, I climb to top of the pass alone and love it. Cold and fine. Say goodbye to Numbar and the whole range. Clouds thick on the Arun side. We pass old campsite and meadow below; camp on lower hillside. Lots of wood; lots of holly. I feel that the work of the trip is over now. Cold weather clothes off and back in the tropics tomorrow, I expect. The passing of the month's interval will make count for comfort. We decide to break out some brandy for tea - all very cheerful & gay and our campsite is marvelous. On a side hill with the valley below - big holly trees everywhere. Clouds come down; we have a wonderful fire; talk.

November 27: Day (Day #29) Monday

Off at 6:00, sun just rising behind distant hills, clouds are lovely and eerie and the outline of the great holly trees wonderful against the mists. Start down to Phedi - our last big descent. Out of the mani wall country now and passed, during the day, our lazy mani stone, a great hoary aged looking rock, covered with ancient carving. Down steeply to Phedi and on down the Irukha Khola. Whole character of the scene changes. We are low now (750 ft) and camp at TINTAM. In the hot sun we wash and bathe and its marvelous to be clean. Organize my gear; tent and sleeping bag get dried out. Right now the sun is behind clouds and all the ice axes are out with clothes draped on them to dry by the fire; sherpas holding others also to dry. Quite a sight; esp little C with my pink nylon nightg hanging in front of him. He got a scolding today; late twice for lunch with the picnic basket. (C: Sherpa attention on cold mornings: heating the ice ax handles) (C: hardest thing when he gets home: having to walk without his axe). Now down again into the marigold-agerat m area. We chew sugar cane, nice. Supplies are rather low. Brought rackshe today - supper good, fine fire. C, A & I talk about poetry and say a few poems. So amazing and luxurious to be warm! Moon (which hasn't helped us very much due to clouds) shines brightly late at night. I lie awake thinking about getting home.

November 28: Day (Day #30) Tuesday

Early start and beautiful day, near the river for a while then along climb through the rain forest. Flowers. Then we reach the house of our dear old man - all is ready for us - little green leaf plates hold sugar, dahl, rice (token gifts) and there are two big baskets of oranges of which we eat tons - they are peeled and split for us; everyone so sweet and attentive. Earnest eyes fixed on us. (O has a chair brought for him - mat and rugs for us). We give
presents of a plastic flask, Mary Chess compact (1) balloon etc. Leave with many salaams. On to village. Are met with presents of oranges, bananas, flowers. Beautiful lunch place, very full of fruit but did well even so with bread and cheese and jam. On down to the Arun and cross again by the ferry – Dickie goes first, with many incantations. Trip easier (boat rocks less) than on other voyage. *atho* – and I learn (too late) that sophisticated people who know their way around do NOT sit down in the boat. C & I watch a round trip of the ferry – so neat how they hit the very spot they’re aiming for – then we get little lost and take an extra hr to reach camp. Bathe in the Arun, then a fine tea with rackshi. (Note: how sweetly everybody uses flowers: garlands on bridges, decorations on cows and yaks, decorate their haystacks with a bunch on the top, Sardi with a marigold bobbing on his hat). People bring me flowers, oranges, bananas. We have the sweetest feeling about everyone and about the region. Back over the bridge we thought so hazardous. Such a lovely grassy park-like spaces. Good bathe and dress up clean, in white blouse and red skirt, dinner very good; we very merry, watch the fire and say poems and read with C & A. (Day: 6 a.m. to 8.)

November 23 (Day 31) Wednesday

Start at 5:30. Up really early, brff in dark and had to wait around till it was light enough to see where we were going. Grass: meadows on side of Arun and the sections of sand and pebbles in the river. NONKET (Much chattering and monkey noise as they follow us in the branches). Yesterday was STILL DAY (we crossed about 6 – logs hollowed into little steps). Pass place where I thought I’d lost my glasses on the way in. And on up long hill to plateau with houses and rich crops. Fig and banyan trees and the rest places again, (set in center of big trees). Pass bamboo bazar (owner is teaching 4 little boys who are saying their lesson in a high sharp singsong as we pass). School stops while C buys lifebuoy soap, last cake in stock. This on-the-level going, plus the heat is wearying – just not used to not going either up or down! Reach end of plateau and drop to our old Tumlingtar camp ground Much less green and the river is low (this river and the Arun almost meet just above – narrow high ridge separates them, on which we walk, just above both). Jemadar, in fine form, says that fish jump from one river to the other. Lunch is meager (am saving up for Thankg) then off at 1:30 and ford our 1st stream, Gyaljen Sr shepherding me over. Da Namgyol brings Bluebell (one Shertette) and I get a cute shot of them. Dickie with Sardi is a sight too. Then we shoot up the hill and onto the badlands. Liking either up or down better than level going, I enjoy myself. Pass a cigarette wrapper with Engl printing and C sees a bit of camera film wrapping; we hear that an Englishman has been through here 4 days ago. Thomas? Make camp at small stream at 7. Tired, buggy day and no views. Amazing change in the weather – no chance to photog mts whatever – weren’t we lucky to have done it all on the way in? Passed (near Tumlingtar) the sunflower seed oil grinder, dismantled. Not the season. Tea is pleasant. B makes a Thankg cake for which I chop up nuts and dates. Bugs here. Four more days. How wonderful it has been.

November 30 (Day 37) Thursday

Thanksgiving. A lovely day walking along the Arun. Weather clears up and it is hot but we just bowl along. Rearguard and my sals meet us at the bazar with letter from Governor. Really splendid; all has been done that we asked and the letter is cordial and well-written. A letter with it for Thomas; we wonder about him; sounds strange. Decide to withhold judgment. Camp in a lovely spot by a stream, grassy and cool. Prepare for the celebration. (*Meherbani Day* we tell the Sherpas). All such fun; gaiety from everyone and great interest in the undertaking. Sense of group loyalty and affection. H & T so nice today. We decide we Americans are too gullible, we too suspicious. He agrees! Donu (Sherpa) holds on his balaclava helmet with a twist of his long black braided hair! Another ford today and such laughter and gaiety. The Sherpas are adorable with their mirth and high spirits. Camp at 1:30 at MAN MAJGA KHOLA. (5:15 to 1:30). In the semi cloudy weather, the Arun is simply beautiful. The mauvais pas of the way in has been mended. C whose cuteness, niceness and gaiety defly description says he is going to float down the Arun on his blown up rubber mattress. His fishing is a great joke; Sardi says there is a big MUCHLY in a pool nearby;
turns out to be minnows! Great guifias from all. Dinner is superb - hot rackshl toddies in which we toast the king, Truman, ourselves, etc. 0 gathered flowers (lovely lacey white vine) and I fixed the table with folds of mosquito netting for a cloth. Tibetan bowls for candlesticks and nut dishes, and after dinner mints as well. Napkins: Kleenex. 0 lifts the table (wooden packing box) up on stones; and gives us really high rock seats so we really feel we are sitting at a table. Sweet camp place with stream running through and many pretty leaves which I also use in my centerpiece. Manche B landlord (who is with us) gave me two tiny ears of corn he wiped from afield and two sprays of yello flowers I use on the table. Effect very fine. Drink from little silver cups of Andy's and he says a sweet blessing. I feel fine, very thankful, and have a wonderful time (menu: chicken and ham, rice, choc nut pudding, Bill's cake). Think a little about Thomas (is he crooked?) but it doesn’t bother our lovely mood.

Dec 1 (Day 33) Friday

Off at 5:35 (stopped at ?) - sun scarcely up and on up the hill to Pairibas. Beautiful morning, hint haze through which the mts appear (Chosling and Big Nak) as if hung in space. we go up 4000 feet in 1 hr flat and pause at the top to see last views. Houses are so trim and fine; air of great prosperity. Many cookie trains, bringing salt from India plus empty cans to bring ghee back. 0 speaks of the Nepal system: instead of cities and valley life as with us, valleys are unusable gorges and life is all up in the hills. Sarka brings me two roses; cute the way the entourage brings me flowers and presents. Lunch in a high meadow. This is a short cut to the confluence of the Arun, Tamur and Sun Kosi (seems one hell of a distance). The Jomadar is slow this way. We contour around the vast hillside in great style. A long hard day; my DOG are tired. Finally we arrive in the bottom of a little valley and will camp on a former rice terrace; no view, no wood, no water and d- COLD. We laugh about it. I'm sitting leaning against a bank waiting for tea - and just now heard MY DARLING CLEMENCE being sung in English from a passing (and hidden) Nepalese - we can hardly believe our ears! All laugh, (he must have learnt it in school in Dhangkuta). Cgaljen, our wonderful Sherpa, gets to work in marvelous style. He is so good; dinner is always prompt and tasty: tonight rice and chicken, green beans and little tomatoes. Cold. A small fire. To bed early.

Dec 2 (Day 34) Saturday (6:00 to 3:20)

A long and hard day (our hardest, we agree). 1st long contouring and ridge walking, simply beautiful with the mts very fine in our last views of them. Go through rich and cultivated country, houses clean and prosperous. Orange trees, eucalypts, nesting places as usual, with 2 strange and interesting wooden statues. (no film left to take). We lunch on a grassy slope. We pause at an orange tree where the Shemgas pick for us and have a lot of fun and monkey-shines. Then we begin to wonder where we're going - seem to be heading back for Pairibas after making immense arc, but finally we see the streams below, the Arun, Tamur and Sun Kosi coming together and (after a mean traverse on a bad trail) we start pelting down. Hot and mean. We eat endless oranges; they save our lives. Go a long way. Then trail turns and starts to go up - it is too much for us and we say to h- with it and drop to the Tamur where we find a nice camp site. I borrow soap from Andy and have a fine bath in the river; very refreshing. Tea. My tent is up instantly - the 1st! (was joking about it yesterday; how it was always on the slowest cocile) We love our whole bandobust and they love us, I think. Word from the governor of Dhangkuta today asking about Thomas, where is he, why not with us? We write an answer explaining we don't know. We talked a lot this morning about being victimized. About Paul. Think it is better to be a sucker now and then than always to be suspicious. This is our NEXT TO LAST DAY. The penultimate day - "thank god" (says H&T). Our all being late for brd' aroused all this. He is often dull and cross, and says biting things - but has been an essential on the trip I think. Good dinner. Great big roaring fire. Sarka brings me some kind of clabber-jogurt stuff as a treat. Delicious.

Dec 3 (Day 35) Sunday 5:15 to 1:30

Off early and the hill to climb ("thought we were going downstream" says H&T) You always
go uphill in Nepal, we answer. The junction of the three rivers is below us: Sapt Kosi and Arun join first, then the Tamur. Beautiful wooded rocky gorges. The ferry across the Tamur turns out to be a little car on an overhead cable (sensationall) plus a big boat that runs on the river below on a track. Fun to watch the Sherpas take the aerial trip to try it out; then Andy and I have the 2nd voyage. You slide downstream at first, then have to pull like mad on the other side as the car has to go uphill. The cooies went by boat; all the boatmen have to do is steer, the current does it all. Two police-men in red flares are with us, sent by our friend the Governor of Dhankuta to see that we get across the ferries and down the roads all right (there has been a revolution, it seems, lots of trouble). On the other side of the river we get onto the most wonderful path imaginable, built right into the side wall of the gorge. Some detours for rock slides. Markers showed us when we were nearing the damsite; finally, there it is. The tunnels are large, 750 to 300 ft deep a man we meet tells us. 2 boats in the river are dredgers, digging down into the river bed. Big heavy compressors (brought up by boat, we learn) and gas drums are beside the main path - no real road yet. It all shows effort but is only in the experimental stage as yet, has not yet been passed on as a project. If built, will be 1000 ft high (highest dam in the world) and will back up the waters of the Arun 50 miles, the Tamur 35 miles and the Sapt Kosi 80 miles. The power is for India (is an Indian project). We are invited to tea by the staff at Barakhetra (headqu) and have a fine time. The staff Dr comes, talks interestingly of malaria work, cholera, we have tea and good things to eat in the guest house, sit in chairs; electric lights; the Nepalese captain appears and tells of the hunt for us in Oct when our habildar and sepoys failed to show up in Dhany. The Capt is very cute and cordial, as everyone is. We go on down the path which is now wide enough for 2 people to walk together. C takes off down the river on my rubber mattress and we don't see him again until Chakra. A marvelous trip, he says. We walk through a fine forest. Orchids. Heat. The town of Chakra is a dump; we go through it and are pitching camp in a field with the river nearby. The trip is OVER. I can scarcely believe it. We are sunk at what they tell us of the war in Korea. Had hoped it was all over. Bill returns from telephoneing Jogban (about sending for us tomorrow) saying he was late because of being tied by a rhinoceros 3 times (!) (lie) and that Thomas is waiting for us at Jogban - surprise & relief. I go rafting with Charley to the amazement of the populace and shoot the big rapids holding on to his feet. A thrill! We are busy drying clothes all eve as a result. Pay day for everyone but the Sherpas in the aft. Fun. All seem delighted. Then general picture taking. C poses the Namche boys with bones and skulls we find around (roars of mirth). I give little Marit the face with the electric nose; he is delighted. I give clothes away, decide to take very little back. Last night around the fire, such a nice talk. Bed.

Dec 4 (Day 36) Impossible to sleep late as Dhankuta boys tune up at 7:30 and when we rise we find them gone. The Musketeers go at 6, fond farewells and handshakes. Brkf. Meticulous lessons (for Tho as meeting) and raising-eyebrows practice. Everyone so jolly. I am trying to taper off on food (ate no cereal). Clothes very loose, I find. Item: the 1 hr of chanting at Hiley by Sonam Tensing (before we get up). Also: Sherpas at Namche asking for bills with Queen Mary's picture on them. (All Indian money in this part of Nepal - native women with necklaces from which Indian rupees dangle, jingling. We send books to Dhankuta via the Jemadar. Then such fun when the Sherpas start cutting up as, the work done, we wait for the cars to come. Domu climbs a smooth tree just like a monkey and plants skulls and bones on topmost branches for target practice. We sit around, leaning on sleeping bags rolls and duffle bags, watching. Time passes, watch B & C shoot the rapids. No cars. Read Kontiki aloud. Then, when beginning to get really worried, truck arrives and Thomas gets out, has been en route to us all day. He is so helpful. We load up and start off. Meet command car and switch. Part with Jemadar sadly at Dhany where we pick up tea and rackshi - back seth is VERY jolly! arrive in Jogban at 7 (T tells us all about revolution, abdication of king, border troubles) !!! Dinner at the Law, he engineer of the jute mill. Scotch. Sweet time. Then we all bed down in one room (Sherpas in room below) at guest house. Doge bark. Last night sleeping with 4 men (2).
Up before dawn to bathe (cold shower; delicious). Early brkf. Thomas comes. Lots of arranging, packing, paying off. Mts in sight, most beautifully. Everest and Kanchenjunga with their plumes. Sit in sun. Andy tells story of shipping Vipers. I go to call on the Laws, then back and we loaded up in the command car & off to the station. Only thing that shows this forbidden border is a small stupa - no sentry, nothing but a stretch of dusty road! This country, so difficult of access is the only one where we have never been asked to show our credentials! the uprising apparently is dying down. The king sought sanctuary at the Indian Embassy in Katmandu, then was flown to Delhi where he now is. His grandson has been crowned. The insurgents tried for the RA station at Baxaul (Birganj) - where O & Nell and I were earlier - and at Birinagar (where we just last night came through). India appears to favor the anti Rana movement but retreated when it didn't go well. We wonder: did Indir wish to take over Nepal?

**Dec 6**

We are on the train en route to Lucknow. Instead of an ordeal (which it was in the heat) the trip is being delightful. O, C, Thomas and I inhabit a tiny rundown little saloon car at the end of the slowest train (60 hrs worse than the other) but it is cool, we are having fun, and meals and tea are being served up to us at each station due to T's knowing the ropes so well. It is really funny, us all being here, sleeping, eating, using the funny dirty little washroom - ! The wind up yesterday was moving. Parted at Katihar after much drinking of whiskey, port, and much gaiety and fun. The Katihar station at night is something never to forget. The big platform filled with sleeping people, hundreds of them, all prone and covered with white swathing garments, in the dim light. Barely room to walk by; you have to step over arms and legs. This train ride is very amusing: we managing to get into my nightg and into my sleeping bag, along with my 3 gents (C does a funny imitation of my fight for modesty). The coolth changes everything; we talk and read and look out. Due to Thomas, we order tea and toast at stations, very good and heartening, and eat Gyaljen's cooked chicken he sent with us. Supper (curry) at Gorakpur and train whips off on last lap of the trip. Sleep well (took a pill) and we arrive in Lucknow on the button, cold in the early morning. T rushes around fixing everything while we eat a good egg brkf in the station. Confusion on the platform, tips, porters, trick monkey, big jars, faceless man (etc). Yesterday we all got our names engraved on fountain pens etc by a man who held them betw his toes and beat with tiny hammer. Trip left is 1½ hrs to Delhi. T is a man of mystery, answers no questions about himself.

Delhi now and our flying. Possible air reconnaissance of K2. We know all about Thomas now and like him better and better. He is to fly with us, also John Hotz, a Pakistani officer, Bob Trumbull of the NYTimes. We are besieged by reporters, find ourselves very famous.

**DIARY ENDS HERE.**
Dear Everybody:

This is #1 of a circular letter that I hope is going to make each one of you feel in touch with our adventures, as I need to have you be. It makes me feel badly not to write to you all separately but I shall not be able to - even in the comparative quiet and ease of Karachi there seems to be absolutely no time at all, I am so busy looking, listening (and recuperating!) Please everyone read into what I write the messages I'd be sending to you yourself, and the many things I shall not adequately describe. It is all so new and so terrific, I shall be constantly feeling my inadequacy in writing about it. This is just going to be a stop-gap between now and the time when we shall all get together, beside an open fire, and talk the night away about Sept-Oct-Nov-Dec, 1950 and all that the days held. So: apologies in advance for confusion, and misspelled words and too many exclamation points. And lots of love to you all, my dears. I have had the strongest sense of your affection and good wishes.

We are in Karachi. It is sizzling hot. The sky is blue and a steady soft wind blows through this large, high ceilinged marble-floored house. Even with your eyes shut you would know you were in a strange and faraway place - the sounds (birds and bells and distant calls in a strange tongue) and the smells (it is spicy and sandy and musty). A soft footfall makes you look up and there is a little brown barefooted man in a white cotton suit and red fez (with the American Eagle on it) who puts down a pile of laundry on the bed, saying "2 hankies, 2 stockings, one petticoat, one mightie, salam" and leaves. A minute before, one left you a plateful of beautiful green grapes. We are staying at the American Embassy as guests of Ambassador and Mrs. Warren, who are great friends of the Houstons. On the 21st we whipped in from Karachi's wonderful modern airfield in 2 large Cadillacs behind American flags - it was just sunset and the rows of white figures were kneeling down for the evening prayers. Our trip from London had gone wonderfully, once we finally got started, 6 hours late. Stops at Munich, Istanbul, Damascus; dark night for the 1st two, sad, as we could see nothing, but for #3 an early morning creamy light on that green and beige scene - little match box houses against low tan hills whose color and outline reminded one of the New Mexican desert. Here at the Embassy, we just had time to bathe and dress in our best clothes hastily snatched from suitcases, off to dine in the moonlit garden of Wedg'd Ali, spelled (like everything else you will read) exactly as it sounds. He was a delightful courtly very handsome gentleman and the garden filled with white dinner jackets and long evening dresses, with here and there an occasional sari. Mrs. Ali did not appear, is still in Purdah, it appears! Almost too dark to tell to whom one was talking or just what one ate but I had a lovely time with a soft spoken lovely mannered Pakistani and then a British colonel staying on after partition to help with the organization of the army. The food: curyish, highly seasoned and delicious! Home and to bed at 2 a.m. in this high ceilinged room as big as a barn with huge fan above, pretty beat with all I'd been doing, seeing and feeling for the last day or so.

Next day (22nd) hot as you-know-where but one learns soon to move slowly, wear as little as possible and take a cool bath whenever you have a minute available, which isn't too often. I am doing pretty well with the heat but it's hard to believe I'm the one who had the energy to hoof day after day in the Alps only a little over a month ago. If the Matterhorn was plopped down in the middle of Karachi, bet it would be unclimbed still,
by Whymper or by anyone (anyway by me)! A succession of callers this morning, including a creamy-faced beauty from Burma in a pink silk longhi (skirt) and a Pakistani gentleman and his daughter, she with a diamond in her left nostril! In the afternoon a brief drive around the city. It is all sand and low buildings and bursting with people and vehicles - men selling and crying their wares, women in purdah (muffed to the eyes), windows, draped in black, endless little agile brown people whipping about on donkeys, camels, bicycles, and then the taller, bearded tribesmen with their turbans of glorious colors. You can pinch yourself black and blue and still not believe it is you in such a place and seeing such things. A sacred cow strides by and everyone makes room for him, you included!

A large party at the Embassy that night. Out on the terrace we have drinks with a big moon hung up in the sky and a heavenly evening coolth over everything. Fun to see how the social side of an Embassy works - and it is something - everyone is easily (somehow) introduced to everybody, and not a title but is given clearly and in all its parts. So one moves about very freely and pleasantly. Everyone is terribly interested in our excursion and quite a few of young attaches say "TAKE ME ALONG". An English general who had been to Katmandu said the view across to Everest from above the city was the greatest sight he had ever seen, and a beautiful princess in a rose and gold sari told me her lovely jeweled bag had come from there. I sat between the Khan of Shewa (he is in charge of all the Pakistan railroads and has just bought 20 diesel locomotives from the USA complete with men to run them) and a little Scotsman in a Kilt ("Call me Scotty" he said), terribly cute. He is here building buildings in Karachi; said (with a terrific burr) that they were working great guns and had been ever since partition. Fell into bed at 2 a.m. again. Dears, - see what a pace? Next morning Oscar and I got the maps out and began marking our route up to Everest in red pencil. Sometimes we follow a camel track or wagon road (the map says) sometimes a foot path - 122 miles into Namche Bazar, last town. Then we will go from there to Dingboche and beyond, past the region for tracks of any kind. The altitudes vary from 1000 feet at Chatra (where we start on foot) to Namche Bazar 12,000 feet. The map indicates 16,000 in the area just below Everest's SW ridge. (We'd like to get somewhere near here.) Please realize this is being written by a non-geographer - I'll amend as I get better educated! The big blow has been that Walter Wood has just been called into the Army and so will not be able to go with us. Various other possibilities exist and we will keep you in touch with all as it develops.

Mon. Sept. 25 - Three days have passed, dear people, and I am still bursting with new impressions. The Warrens left on Friday - big farewell party with (besides us and them) handsome pale-tan ladies in saris, cute little American attaches' wives, olive-skinned Pakistani gentlemen, British army and navy men, and (this time) two Scotchmen in kilts. After dinner a blaze of fireworks and four swarthy bag-pipers from the Pakistan battleship "Himalaya" playing Auld Lang Syne. All out to the airport and a big goodbye to the Warrens whom everyone loves, me included. One cannot imagine the USA represented more superbly or in a more truly American fashion. They hearten everyone they deal with, I hear, and these Pakistanis with their terrific national burden need it very much right now. We stay on here at the Embassy till Thurs. (Sept 28) when we fly to New Delhi and will be at the Hotel Cecil for long enough to get set for Katmandu and to get our instructions.
Just wish you could see the scene here these last few days - the big high ceilinged house, the Houstons and me beginning the day with trays in their sitting room, great fan rotating above. Am doing real well with the heat, and no longer mind the roaring of the fan overhead at night (sounds just like a S. American condor about to pounce) or the little salamanders that whip around one's room (they eat insects and so are good to have in this buggy land). Have had a swim in the Persian G and found one COWRIE (Em please notice.) Water is warm but refreshing and fine waves. Camels parading up and down the beach. I always thought you perched between the humps but mostly you hang on the very rear, it appears, balancing by putting your feet against the inside of their back legs. Sorry I cannot explain by drawing a picture of this! Now a word about food - it is marvelous - long cool drinks appear like magic and trays of delightful things like minced chicken wrapped in steaming little pastry envelopes, crescents of broiled buttered shrimps (seafood is a specialty here). All soups are wonderful, and you are usually handed rice to put in and a lime to squeeze. Goes fine! Curry in Karachi is so unlike a USA curry as hardly to merit the same name. Can't go into this now but will when I have had time to get my operatives to work on the matter. Fine fruits, like papaya, and a pale cream melon, new to me, and wonderful juices of lime and lemon, and big green grapes. Lunch at 2, dinner at 9. Nobody ever goes to bed; you just sit for hours out in the evening cool and listen to endless talk about Nehru, Jinnah, Liaquat Ali Khan (Mr. Big around here), Kashmir, the refugees (there are 800,000 right here in Karachi and 150,000 are sleeping out on the streets at night) and the superhuman task of making things go, that faces Pakistan today. We visited their Museum this afternoon - most beautiful sculpture and colored tiles and drawings. How long has the Museum been open, we asked, expecting some answer like "50 years". "Six Months", said the earnest slight young man who was taking us around. Everything is like this, - just beginning, just planned, just being built. People are just learning, just being trained. It is a thrilling story to hear, - from the Ambassador to the Pakistani you sit next to at dinner - how they are starting from scratch, determined to learn, determined to stand alone.

Dear pets - this is being writ in bed as you can see. We are just home from an Air Corps party. We are getting to know people and can say "Hellow Commodore Hill, Good evening Colonel Miller, Hi Mr. Wadget" etc. Everyone so pleasant, soft spoken and well mannered, whether he be an American or Pakistani. Tomorrow we arise at 6 and go to the Mogul ruins at Tatta - will tell you about them in letter #2. Hope you don't want your money back for letter #1! Know I've been so SPEECHLESS over all that is happening as to make our correspondence hard to bear for you. But - - I do love you all and feel we are in touch - now - even though only through this ill-expressed letter. Hugs to all, and so much love,

Betsy.
October 2, 1950

Hotel Cecil,
Delhi.

Mrs. Elizabeth S. Cowles

Dear All:

This is Delhi. Lots has happened since I wrote last. We had a quickie (3 hr.) flight here from Karachi on Thursday and now are established at the Cecil Hotel in old Delhi with shade trees about, fans blowing and every English pre-partition comfort. Things about Delhi that are like Karachi - it is just as full of smells and sounds and colors; and HOT! Things different - it is beautiful and well laid out, with handsome buildings and residences, avenues lined with trees (instead of new and raw and with air of having sprouted up out of the desert overnight). It is much crowdeder and more Mother-Indiaish. The hordes in the streets are beyond description, and a small mob follows one from car to shop and shop to car, pressing wares on one's attention or begging for alms. Being now in Hindu country, sacred cows abound, roaming around in great numbers through the streets - hard not to butt into one as one drives about! The heavy sense of teeming humanity never leaves one, everywhere you look (if you succeed in forgetting the mass for a moment and concentrating on the single face or group) there is something striking or poignant or beautiful or unbearable to see. I am not suffering about the horrors as much as I feared I might - perhaps you will think me callous. But the immensity of it all is so incredible. Also I may still be a bit punch-drunk from the newness of everything. And then too, amazingly, the young, the strong, the hopeful element is here too - one sees it constantly in the bearing of the young men, the Indian officials, the soldiers and policemen. The groups of girls whose faces, full of beauty and intelligence, stand out in a crowd. This is (of course) what is keeping the country going - this new India. One can only hope will be enough as against the huge, the inert masses.

Dears: I have the whole attention and command the entire services of one man, dark brown and name of Harry. He is called a bearer. Funny business this not lifting a finger. There are armies of other servants at our disposal - clothes are washed or pressed (in split seconds if you desire it) by a DOBI, things mended by a DARZI. Oscar tells me that on the trail water is brought by a BISTI, food by a MONGI. Everyone has his little private job, except for the head bearer who is supposed to oversee everything. He usually wears a spotless white suit and turban or fez. At the American Embassy here (where we had lunch Friday) we were waited on by the stylishst costumes you ever saw, sashes of red, white and blue, and red turbans with bands of the same stripes and American Eagles in gold (could have been designed by Lily Dache). Though not as intimately linked with the Embassy here as in Karachi, they are helping us enormously and our food and gear, sent in their care, is piled high off in a side room on the premises. Ambassador Henderson has been very cordial - had the Indian Ambassador to Nepal at lunch to meet us. His Excellency is going in to Katmandu a day or two ahead of us, all the way by plane (which is how we are hoping to come out. For the trip on we want to go the traditional way, over the 2 passes and on our own hoofs). Also on Friday we were received by the Nepalese Ambassador to India, a delightful little man who told us Katmandu was very different from New York City and hoped we should not be "bored"! Except for these gentlemen and the officials one deals with in travel arrangements we have not seen any Indians and shall not, I imagine. Too bad. Seeing and being able to talk freely with the Pakistanis was one of the great features of our stay with the Warrens in Karachi. But, my Pets, I wish to say here and now that I do not (and shall not) feel that a brief stay in these countries will fit me to speak as a political expert. Am terribly interested and shall continue to have my ears pinned back about everything BUT am not going to fool myself or you into supposing I know anything whatever about the incredible complexities of the political situation here.
I cannot imagine how I have been able to write all this time (½ hour) and not mention as yet the great news that we went to Agra yesterday and the day before and I have seen the Taj Mahal! Yes, by moonlight and by early morning too, with the soft shadows making the marble shimmer like an opal. We visited it first at night, everything so hushed and quiet, our only light (the moon just coming up) the lanterns of the guides. All you knew was that you had never imagined anything so lovely and that no great sight you had ever seen before prepared you for its color, its outline and the beauty of the setting. It took the light of the next day to show the perfection and delicacy of the detail, the wonderful color relation of the greenery, flowers and trees to the marble structure itself and contribution made by the side buildings with their minarets and towers, all in exquisite balance, to the perfection of the whole. The Mosque on one side and rest house on the other are red sandstone with creamy domes. And behind them and the Taj is the green-grey Jumna river, wide and smooth as a lake. O, dears, must stop trying to describe the indescribable and heart sinks to tell you that I mixed up my kodachrome film and brought exposed rolls instead of new, so could only take 2 color shots. (Ugh). Blasted away with the Rollerflex to beat all, though. And must tell you: 3/4 up the inside of one of the tall Taj minarets (in pitch dark) Oscar and I were assailed by one million bats. Most dreadful experience of my life!

After the Taj we went through the Agra fort, seeing the Jasmine tower where the Emperor Shah Jahan (who built the Taj) spent the last 7 years of his life in captivity looking down the river to the building he had created to the memory of his favorite wife. The huge fort, all red sandstone, with moat and drawbridge and scalloped pierced rampart was astonishing. I was surprised to find the Moguls were cloister-conscious and there are beautiful enclosed courts with scalloped arches. Then brass turrets and marble pools, carved marble screens and inlaid work (carnelian, jade and turquoise set into the stone) of unbelievable beauty and delicacy. What made me see stars most was the bathing establishment of the ladies of the harem, a succession of rooms of all-over carved marble inlaid in tiny convex mirrors. If you waved an arm it was multiplied in each of them! There were pools and fountains and channels in the polished floor for cascades of rose water. And there were hollow panels in the wall against which (in varying pitch) the dance rhythm was beaten out by hand. Can't you imagine how those mirror walls would shimmer and gleam with one billion dancing girls reflected in them? Makes me swoon to think of. Other items of our Agra program worth mentioning - a snake charmer piping to a python (twined round his neck) and bevy of cobras (in his lap) and a magician who amused and mystified us with his sleight of hand at the hotel after dinner. No Indian rope trick however!

Now a word about our plans and I will close this. We leave day after tomorrow (Oct. 4) for Katmandu - (1) plane to Lucknow (2) overnight train to Raxaul (last stop in India) (3) a night at R. before starting off on the Nepal side of the border. Beginning the 5th we shall be on the historic route to Katmandu. The night of the 5th will be spent at the Sisagar pass rest house (see Jan. National Geographic) and we should have crossed Chundragini pass and be in the valley of Nepal on the afternoon of Oct. 6. Be thinking of us! The moment when we see Evereast from the top of the pass should be one of the great gifts of life. Shall be seeing it all with eyes for all of you and feeling to match. Many letters here in Delhi and they meant so much. Thank you, thank you. With love to all

Betsy

Cannot remember if I said in my last letter that Oscar and Nell Houston are a complete joy to be with. And nearly forgot (heavens!) to add the biggest and best news of all: which is that Charley Houston is going on the Kosi River trip with us taking Walter Wood's place. He will fly to meet us here on our return from Katmandu the last part of October. We are still hoping (and expecting) Andy Beckett will also be a member of the party. Signing off for now, Dears!

Your most affectionate Betsy
Dear People:

We are in Katmandu! It is October 8 and a cool early morning. I have just waked to hear birds singing, people talking a strange tongue and have just looked out the window to see a sunny court yard full of trees and flowers. Across a brick wall some handsome tiled roof houses are visible. It seems like heaven!

We are in the Maharajah's guest house. I have a big room and bath room with the usual big tin tub but running water in other respects. The Houston's live upstairs where there is also a sitting room and terrace. The dining room is opposite me from which soon will come (I hope, I hope) my breakfast. We arrived at about six last night after four days' travel from Delhi, the last two spent coming over the historic mountain way into this valley. On October 4 we flew from Delhi to Lucknow. There in a small branch station seething with heat and humanity we met up with Abdul and our luggage just in by train. Abdul is recent, our previous bearers having been thought unequal to the strains of rough travel. Abdul looks like a brigand and we suspect that he is but think his qualities will be useful in getting us around North India. At about one we climbed onto an old-style Sahib car, attached to a little narrow gauge train. Also embarking with us was a company of Gurkha soldiers, small, alert, neat and spry. We enjoyed our first view of these native sons of Nepal with their Mongolian cast of face, and got several quick smiles as they went by. The Sahib car, antiquated but fairly comfortable, is like a Pullman compartment, only it extends the width of the train with two bunks down each side (one a double-decker) and has a small washroom at one end. Three electric fans beat on us all day and all night and believe me, you need them! Just a word here about health precautions. With our arrival in India we've been careful not to eat or drink anything that hasn't been cooked or boiled, nor do we touch fruit unless it can be pealed or has been soaked in potassium permanganate (known locally as "pinkly water"). We've taken the new Malaria preventive pills and of course were shot with every known tropical germ before leaving the U.S.A. There's no question of the need for all this: with all the heat, people, flies and filth, you can just see the bugs lined up, ready to pounce. But it is very limiting to one's diet - Nell and I worked out that we'd had just 2 square meals in 4 days getting to Katmandu, the rest being mostly nibbles from a cracker box and swallows from a thermos.

Rickety as the little railroad seemed (how we bounced and swayed from side to side) and many the times our car got switched from one train to another, but we arrived at Raxaul at 2 the next afternoon, right on the button, which is more than can be said for many fancier trains and smoother road beds. There was complete bedlam on the sizzling platform and amid the turmoil it was hard to know what to do next and how. Finally we located the official Nepal guest-house and made for it, a line of porters leading the way, our baggage on their heads in Indian style. Here we stayed for the rest of the day, finding it cool, quiet and clean (at least relatively). Cool baths in big tin tubs were refreshing and a good dinner came in about 8, very welcome.

At 8 next morning we climbed onto the little Nepalese train, the only railroad in the whole country. It goes just 18 miles, from the Indian border at Raxaul to Amlekganj. Hardly had the train started at its snail's pace (it takes 4 hours to cover the route!) than we had the surprise of our lives. There, across the rice fields, we had our first view of the Himalayas! Nobody had told us they could be seen so soon. Wonderful in outline, white and shimmering, they reached higher up in the sky than you'd ever imagined anything doing, and seemingly so totally unrelated to the heat ridden country through which we were passing. It was like a vision; something so beyond all previous experience. We kept looking (gulping and breathing deep) until we had passed the open lowlands and the deep forest began,
shutting us in completely. This is the terai, the country where no visitor is allowed to stop overnight because of the danger from wild animals (it is the greatest big game region left in the world) and/or disease (a particularly virulent brand of malaria flourishes here). Glad to be in a train and in broad daylight and so free from all its terrors. We looked out fascinated at the dense jungle with its close-woven green pattern. Orchids were growing in profusion and Nell swears she saw a cheetah disappearing into a thicket! At Amlekganj (the end of the line) the usual uproar met us. An incredible number of people and animals (and insects) were milling around all but swamping us and the station wagon that was to be our next conveyance. In this we drove the 26 miles to Bhimpedi. Still the Terai to begin with, but then things began to open up, fine streams appeared and steep craggy slopes. Wonderful to find the heat retreating and that we are starting to climb. In an hour and a half we were at Bhimpedi, our first truly Nepalese village. The people are a delight, cheerful, busy, full of humor and responsiveness. Dignified too, and a little shy. A bevy of little boys were occupied with their kites, tremendous fun to watch. The kites were miles up and the boys busy letting out and taking in line on big spools with great deftness and skill. This is one of Nepal's national pastimes, we are to find. Ahead of us now was the steep mountaineast leading to Sisagarhi Pass. We could see the path mounting in great zigzags. This is the beginning of the high road to Katmandu, the historic (and the only) route to the capital city of Nepal. How wonderful we felt! Just imagine, Dears, cool for the first time in weeks, high country in front of us and looking forward with all our being to what lies ahead. Lively little gray Tibetan ponies were awaiting us and the 7 or 8 coolies who will carry our baggage. The ponies are wonderfully sure-footed and need to be: soon we were going up steeply, often on what amounted to stone steps of a rough and tumble variety. The coolies, piled high with our possessions, fell into a slow and steady pace, knees always bent a little, faces serious and tranquil under the tump-line. They are mostly barefoot as are our pony boys. It gets more and more beautiful as we rise; the late afternoon light makes every leaf shine by itself in that vast forest. (Here I am in the present tense again! having terrible trouble with it; a new disease! but it all seems to be happening again as I sit writing about it). We cross a spur and see the Sisagarhi fort high above. At about 4:30 we pass it and mount the steep stone steps that lead to the guest house. Here we are met by a dignitary and ushered upstairs where we have 2 large adjoining rooms. Dinner, for which we are more than ready, is curryish and chickenish, as most of our meals have been and will be for some time. Also we have chupattis, a round flat meal affair shaped like a pancake. They are marvelous, spreadable with jam, cheese, whatever you have. (I eat several). Then, dear People, a wonderful night's sleep in the cool and quiet.

Next morning we were on our way by 8. A beautiful clear post-monsoon day which we are told we can expect at this season from now on. At 6000 feet we cross Sisagarhi Pass and there again are the Himalayas! All across the horizon and clear as crystal - we think we locate the Gosinthau group (furthest left) and the Ganesh Himal (next over) and suspect that the long, less punctuated and more distant like of mountains furthest to the west must include Mt. Everest. Tried some pictures here but without a telephoto lens they may not show much. Next we drop 2000 feet (and no nonsense) into the valley beyond. What looks like a ski lift operating beside and above us is the rope-way that carries loads into Nepal. But the human back is still the main burden bearer. We pass hundreds of coolies bent nearly double under mammoth loads. Here are some of the things they carry: great trunks and boxes piled high; huge clusters of tan pottery stacked up in 2 baskets that swing at either end of a pole balanced on the shoulders; bales of cotton material in bright colors. Sometimes the coolie is barely visible under a vast mound of hay or load of wood, and sometimes they actually mount the steep track with a man
A woman in a basket on their back! These human loads lie inert as dead people and usually have a cloth spread over them from under which arms and legs hang limply. We pass women load carriers too, and children. All have impressive physiques. They are small, wiry and muscular, and move in perfect balance and rhythm. The mood is cheerful, too, both on the path and in the villages we go through. Smiles follow us everywhere and it is clear we have lots of comedy as well as news value. But everyone is friendly and well-disposed. We share in little homely scenes—like seeing 3 Nepalese boys caught playing cards on some temple steps by an irate little woman (their grandma, probably) who scolds them for slighting the family chores and busts the game up. We understand every word; it could have been in English and happened in Keokuk, Iowa. Our way through the valley has been following a fine river. Water buffalo are in it, and little boys bathing and having a wonderful time. Fishermen fix large nets across the stream, weighting them with rocks on the bottom. We cross the river several times, by narrow suspension bridges that Oscar's pony doesn't like at all. Then we reach the head of the valley and start climbing up to Chaudagiri Pass. Here we have really steep and rough going but the horses are wonderful and we plug right along. The view from the top is superb—we are 8000 feet and the valley of Nepal is below us with Katmandu gleaming with its turrets and towers in the golden afternoon light. The high peaks are mostly hidden in clouds but the foothills are beautiful and ring the valley completely around. As we start the descent of the pass, we see far over to the left a beautiful group of high summits clear, shining and white. The descent goes fast and far easier than the various accounts of it had us to expect. In fact, dear readers, we think our predecessors "took on" a bit over this journey. This second day is long but by no means really difficult or dangerous, and what it has of weariness is entirely offset by the interest and beauty of everything. I loved every minute and it was every bit as wonderful as I had expected, and much, much more. Lovely flowers were growing on the north slope and I walked down, picking one of each variety and making a lovely bunch which I have on my table here at the guest house. At the bottom of the hill the road widened and went over broad grassy slopes with fine trees. In the lively village where the motor road begins there were crowds whose big entertainment obviously came from watching what comes over the hill. A car was waiting for us—how wonderful it looked! Our bones were aching somewhat and we were glad to have arrived. About six, after the baggage was sorted and the coolies paid off, we started on our way down a broad avenue to Katmandu through the gathering darkness and arrived soon after at our new abode. So here I have you up to date, my Dears. xxx

The crosses mark elapsed time and now it is the eleventh. Tomorrow is the first run of the Air Service between Katmandu and Patua and I want to send this letter off by it. Hope it arrives! and hope Uncle Phil who will get the letter first will get a thrill from the postmark.

Lots has happened since I wrote the above. Katmandu and the beautiful valley are more wonderful than I can describe (but will try to in my next). We have been widely entertained and have met the Maharajah—we think we are a social success here, hope so anyway, and Nell and I have been wearing all our best clothes. Shall describe all the finery, all the doings, in Vol. 4. Much love, My Dears! Do wish I felt I had done better in my writing but writing, I find, is easier when your eyes, ears and heart are not so full. Nose, too! There are some amazing smells. You’d love the sounds—little pipings in odd melodies are heard constantly, and rhythmic beatings and bursts of distant singing. And the birds warble their lungs out all the time. The foothills that border the valley look like piles of stiff blue-green taffeta set about in folds (Nelly noticed this). Clouds are billowy against the blue sky. Days are warm, evenings cool and a soft wind is almost always blowing, fine for the kites and fine for us. It is a heavenly, milk and honey spot and we feel incredibly lucky to be here. Did I tell you we are #75.76 and 770f all Americans ever to visit Katmandu? And of course, on the Kosi, we shall be the first of any sort, except the natives. Goodbye, Dears! I think lovingly of you all and feel you are of me. (Please do!) Betsy.
Dear People:

Did you know that letter #3 had quite an historic journey? It went to you on the first commercial airlift out of Katmandu in all of history. Quite an event for the valley and quite an event for us. We were invited to the festivities at the airfield north of town where there were gay little refreshment tents, servants in turbans and fancy liveries and a brass band. The musicians, all ferocious looking soldiers, amused us no end by producing the softest, most plaintive music imaginable! Although you'd never think it to hear them blow the tuba, the Nepalese army has the fiercest fighters in the world. In both world wars there were regiments of Gurkhas in the Allied forces. They carried all the usual implements of modern battle but when they really meant business, they would pull out their kukris, the big, curved, razor-sharp knife that every Nepalese wears at his belt. No wonder the enemy always surrendered in droves when they heard there were Gurkhas in the opposite sector!

Along with a lot of gentlemen in uniform and ladies in bright-colored saris, we watched the plane come in very high over the mountains, circle like a silver bird overhead, and then land, stirring up clouds of dust. The first passenger to get out was his Excellency, the Indian Ambassador, hung with garlands. We had met him at lunch at the American Embassy in Delhi, you remember. He greeted us very cordially, then stepped into an automobile with his entourage and was whisked away. When the plane goes back to India next week on its second flight, guess who'll be on it? We shall. Although we'll be going by a round-about route via Calcutta, we expect to reach Delhi in less than 24 hours, quite a contrast to the 4½ days it took us to get here.

This is being written in the early morning again—that lovely time of cool and quiet, of soft light and sweet sounds. A Nepalese Frank Sinatra lives next door. His clear, true, strident little voice and odd, chant-like song suits this place and my early morning mood. So do the other sounds I am hearing at this moment: the twittering of birds and soft, distant tinkling of temple bells.

Katmandu, my Dears, is all we dreamed it would be, and more.

One finds here such an extraordinary combination of the very ancient, the very beautiful, plus much that is amazingly modern and up to date. The main drag goes right by our guest house gate. Once it opens, you are in the busy current of Katmandu life. It is simply jammed with people. There are coolies by the hundreds, their baskets piled high with all manner of things: fruit and vegetables, bales of bright-colored cotton cloth, stacks of brass and pottery bowls, nested together. There are lots of women in the crowd (no Purdah here!) and they usually have the family along, the baby straddling one hip or carried in a sack on their backs. Everyone looks healthy and cheerful. Groups of neatly dressed young men pass; these are the "white collar" workers. If it is midday and hot, they will probably be carrying a big black umbrella over their heads, a sign of gentility around here. They have on cotton breeches like jodphurs (tight across the knee and floppy above) with a long tunic to match. On top, very surprisingly, is a western-style tweed jacket—the effect is very odd! The universal hat in Nepal is a lop-sided cotton cap, like a fez. Lily Dache might try adapting this model for the American female; in pretty materials it wouldn't be bad at all. Everyone you pass, whether housewife, clerk or coolie, is slight and trim in build and their faces express dignity and composure. There are soldiers everywhere. They wear cotton uniforms and big-brimmed hats turned up at one side like the Australians. If off duty, they may be walking along barefoot, carrying their shoes in one hand! As this is also true of many of the civilians one sees, footwear looks to be a precious commodity in these parts.
There are almost as many animals in the crowd as there are people. Bullocks, water buffalo, goats and donkeys plod along and cows, who lead the same privileged life here as in India, wander about at will. Here and there you see a camel, or an occasional elephant, his flanks painted in lively colors and an elephant boy perched on top. It all sounds just like the Asiatic middle ages, doesn't it? but guess what: the next thing a Nepalese aristocrat dressed in correct British riding clothes trots by on a blooded horse and a canary-colored Cadillac goes roaring past, a uniformed chauffeur at the wheel! Lots of things pull you back into the 20th century here in Katmandu, from the electric street lights to the inner-spring mattresses at the Maharajah's guest house. But even so, my dears, you cannot imagine surroundings more like the Arabian Nights than those in which, at present, we are lucky enough to be living.

But I mustn't overwhelm you with details. To simplify things, how about my describing our life to you here in terms of a Sample Day. Understand, to begin with, that we are TOURISTS and out to see the sights. Each morning, promptly at nine, our guide arrives. He is not Mr. Mani Ram (who also calls daily, is the Maharajah's personal representative and in charge of us here) but a small, soft-spoken man named DITHA BHARAT RAM. His job is to take us around and see that we see everything. (Everything that's allowed, that is. Foreigners do NOT have the run of this valley, I assure you). Little Mr. R, arrives each day in a black Chevrolet of ancient vintage. You understand, dears, that every single thing that comes to Katmandu is carried in over the passes? It takes 124 coolies to get an automobile in, they tell us, and so even a jalopy like ours commands a lot of public attention and respect. This one appears to belong to us for the duration, plus its driver who knows NO English. Our guide knows very little, only enough to steer us around.

So, dear People, imagine that it is 9 o'clock on a sunny morning and we are climbing into our rattletrap bus en route to Bhatgaon, one of the three cities of the valley. A household servant (we seem to have hundreds!) opens the gate with a salute and we plunge into the maelstrom of the crowded thoroughfare outside. Our driver is skillful and he needs to be; we just creep along, managing miraculously not to run over anyone or anything. It would be a misfortune for us to damage a man, woman or child but, so we've been told, immeasurably worse if we were to flatten out a sacred cow! Luckily nothing of the sort happens and we have soon left the town behind and are out on the open road. We love these drives. Characteristic of the valley is the short grey-green grass that makes the whole countryside look like a park. Great trees (fig, peepul, deodar) sift the wonderful golden light through their branches, making dappled patterns on the wide, grassy expanses. Around us, full circle, are the misty, blue-green foothills. Of the high Himalayas beyond we have so far seen very little. The last of the monsoon clouds have hidden them most of the time; only occasionally have we had glimpses of the distant, shining, snowy ranges.

The road we're on is full of people, coming and going. A detachment of troops marches by. They look very smart and trim. Then a gang of coolies pass. They are carrying a huge box on a giant stretcher and sing as they go, a kind of Volga-Boatmanish chant of odd tonality. One sees a great variety of types. The delicately featured Newars predominate but there are also sturdy hillmen with broad, bronzed faces and slant-eyed Mongolians whose forbears must have come from north of the mountains.

Bhatgaon (8 miles away) is beautiful. Its Durbar square is edged with ancient palaces of soft-pink brick, the doorways and windows all intricately carved woodwork. There is also a profusion of temples, so many and so close they overlap. Considering the religious character of most of the buildings, we are surprised at how little we see that is religious going on in or near them. Instead a store-
keeper will be laying lengths of gay-colored cloth or piles of rice and tea on the steps of a temple, while a lively gang of kids dash by him in a game of tag. Big stone elephants, horses, gods and goddesses abound. Cuming how often a small Nepalese child will be riding one of the elephants or taking a quiet snooze resting against a goddess! We are simply fascinated by everything. On a high platform is a great bell that is being rung as we drive up. It has a deep, rich tone. And down some steps over at one side is a pool, fed by three carved water spouts. The village life congregates here. Groups of women fill their shining brass water pots and stop to talk to their friends in neighborly fashion. A mother scrubs her baby’s face at one faucet while at the next spout a Nepalese coolie has laid aside his basket and is almost (but not quite) giving himself an all-over bath. The Hindu temples around us are amazing with their double, triple and even quadruple roofs. The struts and eaves are elaborately carved. Sometimes the wood is painted, sometimes gilded, – or simply dark and ancient-looking (and perhaps most beautiful then).

We are anxious not to do anything improper or out of keeping with the tradition of the place so we are constantly asking Mr. Ditha Ram if we may go here or there, photograph this or that. The nature of the Nepalese reply – an affirmative-negative inclination of the head and ambiguous shrug of the shoulders – leaves us completely mystified. "May I climb up onto the platform?" I ask. (Mr. Ram seems to say "yes" – or is it "no"?) I try again. "Would it be all right for me to take a picture of the bell-ringer?" (Now he looks as if he were saying "no" – or is it "yes"?) In desperation I decide to move towards the objective in question. Mr. R. smiles happily, so I conclude that he meant "yes" all along.

At all times we are surrounded by a crowd of spectators, mostly children. Are they a nuisance? Do they beg, get in the way, bother us at all? They do not. We just love them. You can’t imagine any little people more alert, interested, amused and amusing than these Nepalese youngsters. Everything about us fascinates them, especially each detail of the photographic processes. They are very cute about posing for us; rush up to stand in the picture if we indicate that we want them to, and just as cheerfully move away if we wave them off. Not being used to "candid" camera work (mountains have such a nice way of staying put!) I’ve found it next to impossible to take advantage of the split second chances that are constantly presenting themselves. An enormous sacred cow, lowing loudly, sticks her head through the famous golden doorway in the Bhatgaon durbar square. The picture of a lifetime! – but I am too flustered to get it. Mme. Cow has retreated by the time I have the light measured, the focus right and the lens trained in her direction. Another fine shot that was lost forever: a monkey starting all the prayer wheels spinning one morning at Swayambhunath. One mourns so over these things! But mostly Oscar and I are having a wonderful time with our cameras (he is taking colored movies and I black & whites, and colored stills). We’ve developed quite a system as far as human interest is concerned: he takes my crowds and I take the people following him around. Works fine!

Swayambhunath, that I mentioned above, is one of the great Buddhist shrines of the valley. Above the vast dome-like structure of the main temple there is a square tower with a huge pair of painted eyes facing in each of the four directions. I wonder if you know (I didn’t) that Nepal was the cradle of Buddhism and that Prince Gautama, the Buddha, was born not so far from this valley? The country was largely Buddhist in the early days but the Hindu influence has worked northward from India and there are now many more Hindus and Hindu temples around here than there are Buddhist. Katmandu, Patan and Bhatgaon are full of these shrines but they are also found out in the country, in grassy parks and under big shade trees. Such a one is Balaji; we visited it late on a sumit afternoon. Here a many-armed statue of Vishnu lies half submerged in a pond, resting on a bed of stone-carved cobras (1)
while nearby a line of 21 waterspouts send 21 simultaneous streams of mountain water cascading into a crystal-clear pool. Also out in the country and very interesting: the 5 great stupas (monuments) built by the Emperor Asoka in 200 B.C. to commemorate his journey into the valley from the north. This (at last!) is a date for you to hang on to; it gives you an idea of the antiquity of so much that is here.

But now: a little about our Social Life.

We have met the Maharajah! This historic event took place a few evenings ago at the British Embassy where the Ambassador and his wife, Sir George and Lady Falconer, were "at home" to His Highness, his sons and brothers, to members of the diplomatic corps and to foreign guests. We were told to be there early as the company must be all assembled before the Maharajah comes. Everyone was dressed in his best, of course (Nell and I so entertained to think that her pretty lace dress and my pale blue number were carried into the valley by coolie-back!) At about 7 the first dignitaries arrived: the Commander-in-Chief of the Army, various other important looking Generals and Excellencies (you're bound to be one or the other around here), then a young man or two (these are the Rana sons and most attractive). At this point, a big car drove up and the Maharajah came in. Sir George took him around the circle of guests and introduced us all. We did not curtsey (this is saved for the King) but bowed and said "Good evening, your Highness". He responded with dignity and sweetness. He is small, elderly and low-voiced, and was dressed very simply in black with a fold of cream-colored silk at the neck. We were surprised at this; had expected something considerably fancier! He moved slowly around the room, saying a few words to each of us, and then was ushered into the next room. Lady Falconer who is charming, steered me from one Excellency to another and then down the line of Generals. They were all extremely nice and very interested in the United States, asking many questions including: "Kathmandu is very different from New York, is it not?" One, a great hunter, told me all about tiger shooting - he himself has killed over 60! I had a fine time with him, and with everyone. Then at 8.15 the Maharajah reappeared and went gravely around the circle of guests again, shaking hands. (We said, "Good night, your Highness"). The Indian diplomats and their wives made their sweet gesture of farewell: hands touching forehead, fingertips together, head bent.

A guest at the British Embassy interests us greatly. It is H.W. Tilman, the celebrated English climber and explorer, veteran of two Everest expeditions and of mountaineering adventures all over the globe. He is just back with a party from a 5 months' trip in western Nepal. And the big news of the century, my Dears, is that Tilman had lunch at the guest house with us the day after the soiree described above; we worked on him all afternoon about joining us on the Everest trip and HE IS COMING!!! He and Charley Houston were on Nanda Devi together and I expect that Charley's coming is what did the trick. But it might have been Oscar's salesmanship; he was superb, couldn't have been better had he been arguing an important case before the Supreme Court. Anyway: we are delighted. Tilman will make a very strong addition to the party and we feel beyond words lucky.

In the meantime, think of us as continuing to enjoy tremendously our stay in this wonderful valley. The Occidentals here number exactly nine: this includes the British Embassy staff and a delightful English couple, the Kilbournes, who have lived here for more than 20 years (he is in charge of the electric system). So: as you can well imagine, even temporary additions to the colony are made very welcome. Result: we are very gay and go out all the time. With our days full of sightseeing (like the day sketched above) and our evenings full of parties (will tell you more about these in my next) we are constantly on the move. In fact, as one of you wrote me, I seem to be living 17 people's lives, and all of them full!

Goodby for now, dear Dears. Wish you were all here with me. Betsy
Dear People:

This is installment #5 and will be the wind-up on Katmandu. Will you be sorry
to leave? We shall. The days here have been full to bursting, - and also full (and
running over) is MY CUP, the one the Psalmist tells about. I cannot imagine anything
more, more "wonderful, various and new" than my life the last five months. Expect
it will take the rest of my span of years to digest!

I am writing this in a large and pleasant guest room in the British Embassy
where we have been staying with Sir George and Lady Falconer for our last days in
Katmandu. The embassy is on high ground in the outskirts of the city - lots of
great trees about (a Norfolk Island pine by my window) and the hills showing through
the great stems. This sunshine is so wonderful! Makes everything look luminous,
as if lighted from within.

We lead a soft life here (bathroom like home, linen sheets!) and the Falcons
have been wonderful to us. Being under their wing has been a lot of fun. Reminds
me of Karachi and the Warrens. Yesterday there were big doings at the parade
ground. Wonder if I've gotten around to telling you about this vast expanse of
green? Would tell its size in acres but never seem able to remember how big one is -
anyway this is a huge space, all grey-green grass and big enough for an army to ma-
neuver, in fact one does. Nepal is a military state, wonder if I've gotten around to
telling you THAT? If not, you'd better get yourself a better correspondent. It is,
of course, one of its important features - and one of Katmandu's important features
is this parade ground or Maidan. Soldiers can be drilling on it, and boys playing
soccer, and a sq. mile of sheep and goats hard at work nibbling (they never have to
mow, and this is why) and still room and to spare. In the center is a great tree.
Back in the mid 1800s one of Nepal's heroes, Jang Bahadur, staged a neat coup d'etat
here. So here we were (on the Monday in question) standing under the big tree along
with all the dignitaries. The whole place was lined with soldiers and rows of can-
on. Then the Maharajah drove up. He had a handsome mounted guard with green-
striped turbans and prancing horses. 30 (count 'em) generals and excellencies
(all Rana brothers and sons and nephews and cousins) were standing at attention in
the order of succession, #1 candidate first. (No chance of this family line dying
out, there are dozens of them!) Two Brahmin priests in red and white flowing robes
and with gold crowns and staves in tone as His Highness stepped out of his carriage
and onto the platform (where you and I are). By now the Houston and I have seen
him several times and feel very friendly, which he seems to, too. He shakes hands
and smiles sweetly, eyes sparkle and so do quite a few diamonds which he wears in
great hunks on his cap. Next comes the King. He also is in uniform with shiny
boots (and shiny diamonds) but his eyes don't shine any and one gets the impression
that the life of a figure-head sovereign isn't much fun. Now we go up, one by one,
and get presented to him by the Maharajah who definitely is having a good time. When
I come up he says to the King: "She is the one who wants to go up the south side of
Mt. Everest" (a slight exaggeration, your Highness, I think to myself) but the King
only fastens a glum eye on me and says nothing. (He can't speak in public) We all
curtsey and say "Good afternoon, your Majesty" - doesn't it sound like a musical
comedy? It really was. I kept thinking I'd never had a chance to say "Your
Majesty" to anyone before and never would again - so spoke up good and loud and
tried not to fall down while curtseying (and didn't).

After the presentations, everyone stands at attention while 2 bands play the
National Anthem. This is an odd piece, made to sound odder by the fact that one
band is 2 bars or so behind the other (this is on purpose, Lady Falconer says -
which is oddest of all). Then with a roar like the last judgment, the soldiers all
fire their rifles and every blessed gun in the valley goes off. (This is called
a "feu de joie" and the Nepalese love it). The din is Fearful! Clouds of smoke
billow skywards. After the uproar dies down, the King and Maharajah sit for a while
and the Excellencies and generals join us and there is conversation. I talk to the Maharajah's son (he has two) who is a nice young man and teases me about jumping so when the cannon went off. Then we talk about photography. He goes up and asks the King if I may take his picture and next thing you know I have my Bantan up in front of their Highnesses and have snapped both of them. Jang Bahadur's tree is big and leafy and it was rather late in the afternoon and so a bit dark - but the diamonds were shining to beat all so maybe it will turn out.

Two days before, we had had a private audience with the Maharajah. On the button of 4 o'clock we drove up to the Singha Durbar (his palace) all white colonnades with a vast courtyard and endless formal flower beds. We were shown in, up some stairs and into a long succession of elaborate rooms. One had a mural of a tiger shoot on the four walls; another was a great state room, all crystal and mirrors, with a throne at one end and fountain in the middle. I kept picturing everything coming in over the passes by oolie back - especially a large grand-father clock, made of fancy cut-glass like a huge perfume bottle. Then came a real surprise (and laugh). A small ante-room next door was lined with Coney Island mirrors; you know, the kind that make you fat and thin, tall or wide. (11) No time to look ourselves over in these because we were being ushered into the Maharajah's sitting room and there he was. Hope you have gotten the idea by now (you should have) that he is a very fine and also a very able man? He seemed really interested in our Kosi river trip and told his son; 1/2, the Foreign Minister, who was also present, to see that we were given every assistance. We expressed thanks for this and for everything and told him we'd been having a marvelous time in Nepal, true, too! (He looked pleased). He talked about his country, its old isolation and the new trend; its effects and dangers. About the new parliament he said, "I sometimes wonder how many of the people have the faintest idea what a parliament is." He is interested in the U.S.A. (which everybody is). "I am one of the few in my family," he said, "who have never visited America." I told him to come to Colorado; that it is very like the valley of Nepal - one reason I feel so at home here. He gave me a sweet smile. He was dressed in the black, long-coated outfit the Nepalese gentleman wears, with a military hat (which he kept on) that had an immense diamond insignia in front. There was a huge rock in the middle, big as the Cullinan, and crossed diamond Rukris below. (This is the famous Nepalese curved dagger and appears on stamps and coins here as well as tucked in every man's belt you pass on the street. A ferocious affair! (I now own several and will show you). Our audience lasted about half an hour. Before we left, we presented our Land camera which Nell had wrapped beautifully in silver paper and ribbon. With it, as a sample of its work, we gave him a snapshot we'd just taken of the guest house we're staying in. He seemed pleased, and so did his son (had the distinct feeling the son was going to try his darnest to take it over!) As we walked out the door, his Highness called our attention to the Coney Island mirrors, said they'd been brought out from London in '08 and stood in front of one to show us the effect, which was, of course, marvelous. Said they always made a hit with people. Then we all shook hands and we left, going back down all the long rooms, feeling very warm in the heart towards Nepal and the man who runs it.

Now, this brings me pretty much up to the present, I guess. I won't try (you wouldn't recover - neither would I) to tell you everything about it. I've been going on the Sample theory - just a touch, here and there. I hope it has given you a little of the feel of things. The sight-seeing days (I described one) have been going on steadily - we've visited Patan and Bhataon, the great Buddhist temples at Swayambhunath and Bodhnath (the ones that have the great eyes) and seen the burning ghat at Pashpati. This is where the Rana family (upstream) and everybody else of Nepal (downstream) is brought when dying and laid with his feet in the Bagmati River. After his death, he's put on the round stone ghat on the river bank and burned. None of this foolishness about cemeteries and burial plots! Ashes are
just blown away. (Although if you're a Rana, you may have a fine stupa built in your memory). The Bagmati is to the Nepalese as the Ganges to the Indian. Having seen both I vote for the Bagmati. The Ganges is dark brown, untidy and with all its advances and retreats, in flood and after, has pretty much messped up the country it goes through. The Bagmati on the other hand is a lovely clean brisk river and the happiest phases of Nepalese life cluster around it. Little boys are swimming and playing, women wash their bright-colored saris, water buffalo are a picture of contentment, on hot mornings up to the ears in its cool ripples. Even the funerals don't seem greatly to depress the Nepalese. No thing, in fact, does. He is the cheerfulest, busiest, strongest little person you can imagine and his wife and his children take after him. We are leaving him with the strongest respect and affection.

Social life here has been very pleasant, too. As there are exactly 8 Europeans in the community, you can imagine that at erry temporary addition are very welcome. There is also an Indian Embassy and staff. On Tuesday we went to a reception. All the official ladies had on beautiful saris and we all sat on red brocade chairs in a great long room with crystal chandeliers. Nell and I told the ladies we thought saris were the most beautiful and the most practical woman's dress in the world (which is what we think). We complimented them on having the sense to be above fashion changes but guess what - they say they aren't! Styles in saris vary from year to year apparently and when borders aren't the thing any more they chop theirs off and wear them plain! So I guess women are all alike, after all. Indian ladies think everything American is perfectly marvelous and are crazy to hear about nylon and plastics. We all agreed that a nylon sari would be a fine combination of the best in both lands.

xx Dears, there has been a gap of some days (this is now Oct. 20) and we are in Calcutta, the Black Hole of, which is what its best hotel, the Great Eastern, seems to be like. It is a fearful city and at the moment in the grip of the last of the monsoon, - the dark and the wet and the heat is especially trying after our beautiful valley we left yesterday. In this city we find the Mother India we have read about; I shall let Katherine Mayo do the describing, and you read it if you haven't already. Don't think it's my metier. It is perhaps enough to say that there is filth, unspeakable noises, hunger and disease. At every turn and nowhere you look do you see a trace of anything that is clean, or quiet, or healthy, or happy. It weighs heavily on the spirit.

The flight down from Katmandu was a tremendous experience. In his great spirals to gain altitude, the pilot gave us a fine last look at everything in the valley and the snow peaks (it was our best and clearest day) were dazzling in the distance. Oscar and I got the profile map out and identified all the big ones including - a terrific thrill - Mt. Everest itself over to the east. It is 88 miles away and fools you by not looking high, but as the plane rises it assumes its real importance and is still in view ages later when you've crossed the sprawling Ganges and are deep in India. The next biggest one we saw was Manesh (26,651) the tip of Gosainthar (26,291) and Hamelchuli (25,801). They are all terrific peaks, with outlines like the Dent Blanche though far vaster and whiter. One feels like the country boy accustomed to buildings on the scale of a Rexall store in a country village when he first lays eyes on Rockefeller Center. I had the thought (maybe I was wrong) as we flew S.W. that I might also be seeing the long ridge of Anapurna and (perhaps) the point of Dhauligiri.

It was quite a contrast: the trip out with the trip in. Three hours versus four days but of course we are not back in Delhi yet - we take a noon plane today and shall be in about 5.
0, must tell you (I know you have been wondering) that one of the Maharajah's menials arrived at the Embassy the night before we left, bent double under presents from H. H. fifteen in all (we counted)! Divided three ways that makes quite a haul. The loot included Rukris, a lovely ivory and sandalwood box, some fine brass figures, Nepalese jewelry for Nell and me and 2 evening bags. (1) No wonder excess weight on the plane ran to 65 lbs.

Lots to do from now on. Tilman is here in Calcutta and had dinner with us last night. Much talk about food, equipment, maps and plans. He will come over to Delhi in a few days and we all leave by train for Jogbani (last stop in India) on the 27th, where on the 30th we have a rendezvous with the following (1) Four Sherpa porters, (2) Eighteen coolies, (3) A Nepalese liaison officer, (4) 2 Tibetan ponies. The Sherpas, as you know, are the wonderful hill men who have played such an important and often heroic part in the great Himalayan Expeditions. The 18 coolies will lug our 900 lbs. of food and equipment in (and out) the 125 rough miles that will lie between us and Mt. Everest. The liaison officer is an absolute necessity and one of the Maharajah's helpful arrangements. He will act as sponsor and as go-between with the natives in the wild country we shall be going through. Through him, we shall be able to get sheep, chickens, goats, eggs, flour, rice and such, to augment the stores brought from America. The ponies are also H. H.'s special present (very difficult to get over here) and should be of enormous help. We plan mostly to walk, of course, but it will be a fine thing to have them available to alternate with. The Sherpas make and tend camp and do the cooking - I am to oversee this; shall be Head Housekeeper. I want to be of real service to the expedition here. Hope very much to earn my keep and fix it so they eat better, live better, and have a nicer, cheerfuller and more comfortable time than if it had just been men. If it doesn't work out so I shall be really sad and apologetic and promise to stop bothering people to take me places.

We figure 12 days march to Namche Bazar, last real town before Everest. It lies at 12,000 feet (we begin, at Dharan, at 1000). Beyond Namche Bazar we don't know what we'll find except there is a small summer settlement about 8 miles further on (16,000 feet) named Dingboche. What happens here (and beyond) is what we're making this trip to see. No European has ever been here, or anywhere near. Some interesting climbing data should emerge about Everest itself. With Charley Houston and Tilman (no climbers anywhere are any better) the expedition will be in a position to establish some facts about the feasibility of attempting the mountain from the south. There are enormous advantages in favor of this. The approach through Nepal is all nearer and easier, and politically possible (with Communism threatening in the North access by Tibet will probably be closed for years.) The technical problem, too, would be simpler in certain respects. A season of settled weather (this one) could be used which is closed to the north side attempts where - as that face is in shadow - it is just too cold. From the Tibet side they have had to use the later, warmer and less settled season.

Does this begin to shape up to you as something wonderful? It does to me.

This will be all for now. I'll write again before we leave, as the clans gather and plans are further developed. Maybe you'd be interested in what we're taking in the way of food and equipment. All we have in the way of cameras will be - I think - seven! Mine are both acting up (ugh) at the moment and I am leaving them in hospital here at Calcutta - Tilman to bring them to Delhi with him next week. It is the only thing that has gone wrong at all so I can't (and don't) complain.

Much love! B.
Dear People, Dears:

This comes to you from Delhi. No big news this time, like meeting any more Kings but just that we are enjoying a week's breathing space between chapters of our Asiatic Adventures. Fine to have the lull, from which to look back, and look forward. I love so thinking of Katmandu. Did I tell you about the flocks of snowy egrets that used to fly overhead in the late afternoon? They call them "paddy-birds" there. Love to remember the long shadows and the sunset colors, and wonderful profile of the hills against the sky as we watched from the guest house porch. So like the evening sky-line of Colorado. I always felt nearer to it (and nearer to you) at that time of day. It's fun too to look ahead, to the real adventure that awaits us. Don't mean to sound as if we'd been sitting in contemplation, hands folded, during this Delhi interval; actually fur has been flying around here. Piled high in the Houston's room across the hall lies a great mound of food and equipment. There is 900 lbs. of it, in sacks, boxes, tins and crates, and let me tell you it is BEAUTIFUL. An American expedition is superbly mounted these days. One has the benefit of endless new inventions and devices - the light comfortable tents and sleeping gear (my double expedition bag is 9 years old - I love it - but my lightweight blow-up mattress is new and so is my Latex pillow, soft as a cloud). Nylon ropes, plastic bags and containers, and food supplies (lots of the dehydrated variety) that are a miracle of lightness, tastiness and nourishing qualities. Wish you could see our handsome pressure cooker! We're also taking a pressure lamp and the best in primus stoves. I have clothes problems licked (I hope). Have just been stowing away in my duffle such items as long underwear (red), flannel shirts and sweaters, mittens and heavy socks, as well as lighter things for the lower altitudes. Of course my mountain boots with Bramani soles are with me (they and I had a wonderful time together in Switzerland last summer) and I just bought a topi to save my face from the all-day, high altitude sun that can give one such a beating. I have a white tailored Nylon blouse, easy washed and fresh looking, that should be nice for fancy with a bright sweater, don't you think? One's beauty standards in mountain travel wouldn't pass with Liz Arden or Saks 5th Ave, but I've never been one to feel that the rough life became more and more delightful the worse you look. I shall have certain advantages over my companions (won't have to grow a beard) and it is a comfort that important essentials (a lipstick for instance) don't weigh too much to bring along.

In some ways this trip is going to seem easy. In South America, where no porters were to be had, load carrying was one of our big jobs. And in all western climbing, one has to step lively with cooking and camp work besides getting oneself up and down the peak. But here in this country you are a Sahib and a lot of things are done for you. Coolies carry the loads and the Sherpas act as personal servants, make camp, and do the cooking. Pretty soft!

Hope you haven't any false ideas about the mountaineering we're going to do. This isn't an expedition to climb anything, it's a trip to look at a situation over. But the way we are organized now (Tilman and Charley Houston being the best there is), if an obstacle of Alpine proportions were to interpose itself between us and what we want to see (the south face of you-know-what), we're strong enough - some of us anyway - to surmount it. But I do wish you could hear Oscar when people ask (as they constantly do) if we are going to climb Everest? "Oh, no," he says, with the sweetest smile, "we really do not expect to, that is unless it should be an exceptionally fine day."

Charley arrives Thursday by air from America. Friday he, Oscar and I start on the 3 day train trip to Jogbani, via Lucknow. A look at the map will show you (though you'll never find Jogbani, I'll bet a nickel) that to go to E. Nepal we
shall have considerable step-retracing to do. Tilman, who decided to go direct from Calcutta, and Andy Bakwell who is coming from Darjauling, will meet us at Jogbani on the 30th. A wonderful break for us was meeting (in Katmandu) the man who owns the big jute mill there. He also has a guest house and a string of trucks and has put both at our disposal. Very useful, especially the trucks which will carry us and all the gear to the end of the road at Dharan. Here we meet up with the Sherpas, the coolies, the ponies and our Nepalese liaison officer and start off - Deo volente!

With all this ahead, and no after-thoughts possible later on (you can’t pop into the A & P for any forgotten items up on the Kosi) we are trying to think of everything now. I nab Nell at every opportunity (she’s a superb housekeeper) for recipes and suggestions - mustn’t forget (I say to myself) mending things so as to be able to attend to everybody’s socks. And lots of bright ideas like: Wonder if they wouldn’t like Breakfast in Bed Sunday mornings?? (No days off, however. If we have any, they’ll probably come inadvertently when the coolies give out or a crucial bridge turns out to be missing).

The various jobs have interfered with extensive Delhi sightseeing (and with the wonderful letter I was planning to write you telling all about it). I know more about how to get to the Army-Navy Store, Mr. Thos, Cook’s and the American Embassy (where they’ve been doing a lot of trouble shooting for us) than I do about finding my way around places like the Friday Mosque, etc. We pass the Mosque often; it’s right on the way between Delhi (where the Cecil Hotel is) and New Delhi (where we do all our jobs and errands). It is a vast cream-and-red many-domed affair and so beautiful it makes you catch your breath. Across the road from it is the famous Delhi Fort which we have seen. There can be more to a Fort, my Dears, than places named Leavenworth and Knox would perhaps lead you to think. This one is Terrific: great red walls (same scalloped top and perforations to shoot out of us at Agra). Inside you find everything a Mogul emperor could possible ask for in his daily life. The fort, featured in many bloody wars, in the Indian mutiny of 1857 and in 2 or 3 earthquakes. But I shall be more apt to remember the quiet expanses of green and the big peepul trees inside those vast walls, and the graceful minarets of Shah Johan's tiny private mosque, each one tipped with a golden spire. This is our Shah Johan from Agra, the Jasmine Tower man, the gent who built the Taj Mahal. The same incredible inlaid work is found in these halls and palaces that we saw there (jade, carnelian, onyx and agate set in the form of birds and flowers). The walls and arches are covered with delicate carving and wonderful gold tracery. There is one screen, said to be the most remarkable piece of work of its kind in the world. It is all made of a single vast piece of marble and is as delicate as if the material were wood or metal. We were there on a Sunday afternoon (reduced rates) and I wish you could have seen the throngs pouring in. Some sweet pictures (noticed but not taken - cameras are all being mended in Calcutta): a young Hindu couple, she in a lovely rose sari, sitting on the grass absorbed in each other. And a tiny Indian babe, all by himself on the marble floor of the big Audience Hall, tracing out a flower pattern with one slow finger. This is the place, more beautiful than I could ever describe, that has the Persian inscription on its walls:

"If there is a Paradise on the Earth
     It is here, o, it is here, o, it is here."

(After thought about Saris: I said they could be worn anywhere? Well, almost. Just saw a lady on a bicycle in one - not so good.)

We love the Cecil Hotel where we are staying. It is cool, clean, quiet and comfortable, all rarities in a country which is overwhelmingly otherwise. There are green lawns and gardens, and a big airy porch (where we drink lemon squashes). Miss Hotz, who runs the place, is Swiss-English (fine combination!) and a great character. Just wish you could hear her go on about India (she’s lived here all
her life). Some grand stories, like the one about the servant surprised by his mistress straining the soup through his master's sock. "But, Mein Sahib, it was not one of Sahib's clean socks, it was a dirty one," Miss H. once discovered the native cook of the moment sitting by the fire at breakfast time, a piece of bread between each toe, comfortably warming his feet and making the toast, same time! Her stories are not all humorous, however. The account she gives of the Delhi riots of '47 is grim: Moslems hauled out of houses and cut up right before your eyes. The Cecil compound was never invaded, although there were lots of Mohammedan servants here. It was a real sanctuary throughout the violent period (people just poured in) and obviously it was the personal reputation of the place and the family that saved them all.

It is something of a temptation to sound off about the political situation here. Naturally we see a lot and hear a lot, and have been giving it a great deal of thought. But on the whole, I'll probably do better to leave summaries and diagonsis to people who know something and confine myself to keeping you (my dear family and friends) posted on the cheerful progress of our travels.

Lots of things occur to me to tell you about - like the flood of traffic that pours down the Delhi streets. It includes A) automobiles, B) carriages, C) bicycles with 1, 2, 3 or 4 people aboard, D) tuggas propelled by a 1) horse 2) motorcycle 3) bicycle or 4) man, E) enormous carts with huge wooden rough-hewn wheels pulled by 1) oxen, 2) camels, 3) water buffalo or 4) donkeys and F) people carrying all manner of loads or (unladen) wearing every possible kind of dress. Considering the variety of man, beast and vehicle that fills the streets, it is a wonder that the Delhi policeman can keep his head. But he does well and seems to love being in the thick of things. But the costume he wears builds him up - he looks very spruce in his trim tan uniform and crimson puggeri. Added complication we noticed today: a large cow taking a nap in the middle of the busiest street in the rush hour! And speaking of Puggeris (not sure I'm spelling it right) you people know what one is? A Turban. Besides as a head covering they can be put to a variety of important uses (and are). Need a handkerchief, napkin, washcloth or towel? Need a lead rein for your camel? (Just unwind five yards or so; plenty left to protect your bald spot from the sun).

Some interesting news (in re the people we meet). One of the best is a Mr. Thomas, Himalayan explorer and traveler who blew in yesterday, heard about us and looked us up. He's just back from a long trek into Tibet. He brought his Sherpa with him, young man, name of Gyaljen. He's wonderful: small, wiry, alert with eyes like bright little buttons set in an olive Mongolian face. Thomas thinks the world of him, is just letting him go home for a vacation, and where do you suppose he is? Namche Bazar - ever heard of that place before? It's where we are going, right in Mt. E.f's front yard. So guess what: Gyaljen's going along with us on loan from Mr. T, and will be MY Sherpa! Never had one before, like him immensely, and feel wonderful about it. (Just a sample of the many breaks we are getting. Have you been noticing?)

So one thing I am doing today is to make out a list of BASIC URDU - Thomas is coming to the Cecil to stay for our last day and I'm going to ask him to fill it out (in Block Letters). Thought I'd better equip myself so I can communicate with my nice bearer in some way besides smiles and nods! By the way, do you know about URDU? Oscar was telling me about it today. It is the only synthetic language that has ever worked, and is all due to the Emperor Akbar who found that his army was using 97 different languages and commanded that a new one be invented. His experts took Hindustani as a basis, omitted all declensions, conjugations, grammar and syntax. If the Hindustani word was too elaborate they picked something simpler from another tongue. When they had finished, Akbar told his army "now you
boys use this, or else ..." and so they did, and people still do. (And now I shall). Isn't it an interesting story?

Dears, I am dragging this out I know. Hate to let you go though as it is now Oct. 26 and we leave TOMORROW; a long gap in communications after that. What comes next is going to be the great adventure of my life and I feel wonderful about it. Hope you do too! *****

Betsy
Dear People, this which you will be reading first, was written last. We are outside of Chatra, on the edge of the Nepal Terai. The mountains are behind us. Tents and sleeping bags, ice axes and equipment are piled all around. (I'm leaning against two big duffle bags and feeling very comfortable). The Kosi River, which we saw up near its mountain source, is flowing by, a wide impressive river, on its way to the plains. We are waiting for a truck and command car to arrive to take us to Jogbani, the railroad town across the Indian border that we left just 36 days ago. The trip is over.

Difficult to believe.

For the past five weeks we have been in the wildest kind of country. We walked 250 miles. Most days we climbed and descended between 2500 and 4000 feet. Since Day #2 we've been following trails too rough for horses and the two we started out with turned back for good then. Also since Day #4 we've been where the hand of a white man has never before set foot (as Oscar is fond of saying). It gives one quite a feeling! (Can't help thinking it's too bad however that the first white woman the natives saw was me and not Betty Grable) But oh, dear People, we have seen what must surely be the most Beautiful Mountain Country in all the world! Lived (just imagine) for five days in a Buddhist Lamasary under the shadow of Mt. Everest, with celestial peaks on every hand. We forded rivers on foot, were ferried over in hollowed log boats and crossed on hair raising bamboo bridges. We've walked through druid forests of holly and great rhododendron trees, deep green and shadowy, carpeted with moss and ferns. Sometimes there have been wild strawberries to pick (delicious!) and lovely little purple primulas. Charley, Bill and I even shot the Kosi River rapids (this was yesterday) on inflated rubber mattresses, giving the populace (and ourselves) a great thrill. Yesterday, too, we all visited the site of the proposed Kosi dam which, when built, will be the highest in the world and back the rivers up as far as 80 miles, completely changing the character of some of the country we've just gone through. No leopards, no leaches, and NO accidents (Gott sei dank). We got coughs up high, but Charley smuggled us with penicillin and all recovered promptly. We have learned more than I can tell you - and we think Nepal the most beautiful land imaginable.

All this, and much, much more.

So beyond writing about that, all I can do is to hope we'll meet soon and talk the night through. And that the pictures will be good enough to tell their story. Until then, here is the last installment of the Round Robin Letter. It was mostly written in short and uncertain snatches and often when weary and always when unable to give it (and you) adequate attention. So please read between the lines. This has been the most wonderful journey in the world.

As I write, the Sherpas are cutting up like kids after school. Wish you could see them wrestling, climbing trees, having contests and playing jokes on one another. Right now they are seeing who can hit with a stone the large animal skull that one of them has just perilously hung on the topmost branch of a tall dead tree. Such laughter and gaiety! They are the dearest, most frolicsome people. (I intend to be as Sherpish as possible in future). Charley, at my elbow, is singing:

"Hi Diddly Dee
A Sherpa's life for me."

We shall miss their gay antics. I am going to miss Gyaljen Senior's good cooking too (my, we ate well) and little Gyaljen's thoughtfulness and good care of me. (I laugh to remember the clothes-drying routine. Ice axes around the camp fire acting as laundry racks and little G's gay chinsy face above the pink nylon nightgown he was holding up in front of him to dry!) All our entourage was hard working and loyal. The coolies (we had 16) have laid down their last loads and gone. We shall remember many of them with warm feelings. (I had a favorite, little boy, name
of AMRIT. Gave me a pang, always, to see the big load he carried. What I shall remember most was Amrit's bare feet and spare little frame in its cotton clothes trotting up the trail in the whirling snowy mist above Namche Bazaar. And his quick cheerful smile, as I passed.

I keep wondering to myself, as I sit here, how people fill their time when they aren't hoofing 8 hrs. a day? And how it's going to feel to sit in a chair, take a hot bath, wear a skirt or (Charley adds this) walk without an ice axe?

There has been a Nepalese uprising, we have just heard. No sign of any trouble or unrest where we were, except that we've been under police escort for the past two days, coming across ferries and down trails closed to travel by the emergency. And the Korean news has just reached us. It is appalling.

XX Now another jump, my Dears (there are going to be a lot in this Diary, so brace yourselves). It is Dec. 7 (Pearl Harbor Day) and I am on the train from Lucknow to Delhi, just roaring along across the Indian countryside. We parted from Bill Tilman and Andy Bakewell day before yesterday. Sad. You got so fond of the people you travel with. Said goodbye too to all but 2 of the Sherpas. Little Gyaljen and Pa Nurbu are in the next compartment on this train and appear at intervals to lay out sleeping bags, buy us bananas and oranges, etc. Railroad travel in India is really something! Here I've been incarcerated in this tiny little Sahib car for 3 days with 5 gents (Oscar, Charley and a nice man name of Brown we now have with us). Wonder how Emily Post would brief the Perfect Lady under these exacting conditions? Actually we've been having a marvelous time. The coolth changes the whole thing from the ordeal it was in the heat to something very pleasant and entertaining. The talk is grand: about the Himalayas (Brown has been places; so have we!), mountain equipment (you can go on for hours about this), past adventures and where it would be wonderful to go next. Fun to listen, which I mainly do. But fun too to put my ear in occasionally on the subject of food supplies (my job on this trip), Am working on a revised food list that should be just perfect. Be sure to consult me when you plan your next expedition!

The world situation has been a great blow; we'd been so sure that the war in Korea would be over. I wonder if the news from Nepal worried you. Up-country there was no sign of trouble, as I guess I said. Nobody knew or cared about anything except his crops and his farm and his family concerns. Tibet's having been invaded hasn't had any effect so far anyway - in Northeastern Nepal. We were within a day's march of the Tibetan border and saw no sign of refugees, infiltration or difficulty of any kind. There are some pretty effective natural fortifications up there, dear readers! Oh, those Himalayas! They bear about the same relation to other mountains as the S.S. Queen Mary to the tiny tug that gets her pointed right in N. Y. harbor.

And so, now, we are on our way home. Delhi at 9:30 tonight and then (on tho 11th, probably) we'll fly eastward across the Pacific via Pan American. Can't wait to pick up that extra day you get going in this direction. I can use it! Need the time for spiritual digesting. Am still in such a flutter about everything.

So, dear People, this winds up the saga of my travels, and when we meet (may it be soon) just remember to remind me that you've read it so as to protect yourselves from being talked deaf, dumb and blind. I shall be happy to be home. And to see you all.

With much, much love,

Betsy
Nov. 2 Day #4

Camp on the Arun River at Chenuwan

Dear People:

For 3 days of this trek (this is the 4th) I thought my correspondence with you was Doomed. So much time and energy is consumed in just hoofing the daily stint of miles (8 to 10), getting fed and slept and keeping things in some kind of order. But today went more easily. We made camp at 2 and the tents, sleeping bags and all our possessions are getting sunned and aired. We've been starting so early and getting in so late that they've been getting damper and damper (heavy dew falls each night). I have a lovely feeling of respite and so has everyone else. Bill Tilman is mixing bread (in up to his elbows). Charley is off with a fishing rod in search of Mahseer - that fighting fish we've heard so much about. Andy Bakewell is taking pictures and Oscar is smoking a pipe and looking at the map that, already, we are finding to be full of mistakes. I've done my laundry in the river and it is hanging upon bushes - hot sun drying everything fast. We've just had tea and feel fine and relaxed. These Sherpas are wonderful! You barely hit camp than they whip up the tents, blow up the air mattresses, lay out the sleeping bag and all your gear, give you hot water to wash in, and announce tea. (Tea is THE drink on a trip like this; you drink it by the gallon).

We have been living very well. Gyaljen Senior (we have 2 sherpas by the same name) turns out to be a wonderful cook. Marvelous curry last night! Pretty soon I'll go over and talk to him about tonight's menu, plan breakfast and tomorrow's lunch and look over the supplies. Gyaljen is a real veteran, has been on 8 or 9 expeditions, including 2 on Everest, on all of which he served with loyalty and distinction. Then there is Sarki; looks like a monkey and has a wonderful grin. Sarki went up to camp 5 on Anapurna with the French expedition last summer. We also have Dha Namgyol and Pa Nurbu, both experienced men, and my little Gyaljen who although only 19 and just beginning is doing wonderfully. Then there is a lady Sherpa (Sherpette?) name of Dickie. She is just coming along for the ride - lives in Namche Bazar (where we're bound for) and wants to go home to see the folks. Dickie is little and spry and packs a big load. As we have a lady coolie too, this is really a coeducational enterprise!

So far the going hasn't been especially rough but we climb a ridge every day (2500 feet or more) and drop about the same distance. On the passes we are already getting fine views of the Himalayas and they are Terrific! No sign of Everest as yet but Makalu is a great sight, like the Rock of Gibraltar hung way up in the sky. But the greatest thrill so far was our view of Kauchejunga the 1st day out. We saw it at sunset, by moonlight and tinged with the early morning colors when the sun rose. Worth coming all this way just for that, I thought to myself.

HAVEN'T said a thing about the train ride over from Delhi but it was hot, dirty and endless. Everyone in India seems to be enroute to somewhere, and if not traveling, they just seem to live on the station platform. Gyaljen looked in at every stop (so did everyone else) and brought us tea and bananas which is about all there is you dare eat. We lived off a picnic basket and actually weren't too uncomfortable in our little 3 bunk Sahib car. Bill and Andy met us at Jogbani at 11 P.M. on the 29th and we all spent that night (plus the Sherpas whom Andy brought along from Darjiling with him) in the guest house of the King of the town. This man runs the big jute mill and has a name I can't spell or pronounce. Next morning early a command car for us and a truck for the Sherpas and the baggage took us 50 wild bumpy miles across the terai to Dharan. (The terai, you remember, is the stretch of lowland across all of S. Nepal). At Dharan we met up with our coolies and 2 little Tibetan ponies, and started off bang in the roaring heat of noon by going up 3000 feet to our first pass. (Got in a fearful lather!) It was that night, camped 1000 feet down on the other side, that we had the wonderful view of Kanchenjunga.
The next day there was a long descent to the Tamur River and then up 3000 feet again to the marvelous town of Dhankuta. Here the governor of the province met us, fixed us up with new ponies, coolie replacements and gave us a Jamedar (officer) and four men to take care of us till we hit the next governor's bailiwick. Funny thing - we never did find the next governor and still have the Jamedar and the others who don't dare leave us without an escort. (Besides, they are having a very good time). No one around here has ever seen anything like us! I wish you could see the traffic jam on the path if we sit down to eat lunch or so much as pause to draw a breath. The way to Dhankuta lies along one of the great north-south trade routes and it is filled with lines of coolies carrying salt, potatoes, oranges and cotton cloth. One coolie would catch sight of us and a low whistle would go down the line - then they'd all stop and look and soon they'd be four or five deep and no room to move. In the populated lowland areas one feels great public curiosity and not much else, but now that we're off the beaten track we find warmth, humor and interest and not a day passes without a human experience that is interesting and touching. There was the sweet-faced woman at Fairibus, for instance, who took off her necklace to give me and just as our ways parted, brought me a large bunch of wonderful pink flowers. I shall never forget her or her telling me her daughter's age by counting 20 out on both fingers and toes!

We loved Dhankuta so. It is a lovely town, scrubbed and shining - streets get swept twice a day and houses replastered twice yearly (had just been done). The street lights are Japanese lanterns hanging on high bamboo shoots. We visited the school and met its staff whom we liked tremendously. There are 400 pupils and all grades from the 5th on are taught in English; isn't that astonishing? A sheaf of excuse notes were tacked up in one of the humble little schoolrooms and we read one. This is what it said: "I beg most humbly and respectfully to state that I could not attend my class 31st due to my domestic business so please kindly grant me leave of absence for one day. Your obedient pupil, J. Shastri." Most of the classes are held out doors but there are a few little rooms with blackboards on which we saw problems in compound fractions none of us would have cared to tackle. They have a lending library with a few English books, like A Life of Theodore Roosevelt, David Copperfield and - guess what - A. A. Milne's "Now We Are Six." Fun to think of books to send them, which we mean to do. What would you suggest? Outside the school entrance written in chalk on the wall were these words in English: "Gather courage. Don't be a chicken hearted fellow." Not a bad motto, we think, - for a school or an expedition, or a troubled world for that matter.

Nov. 3. (Day 5) Now, Dear Readers, another day has passed and we are further up the Arun. Came to a place today where the track became mere footholds on a cliff face and the ponies had to turn back. But as the going gets rougher it's really less harrowing to walk, I find, and I have been. You know me and horses! Now, more about our life: The short winter day really limits us (5:30 to 5:30 actually). We are up about 4:30, breakfast around 5 and this morning Oscar and I as advance guard were underway well before six. This gives us four hours of coolth (it's hot down here in the Arun Valley) and we have fine fast going till our 11 o'clock stop for lunch. We ate this noon on a hillside above the river from which the snow peaks were wonderful. (We keep going up and down!) Each day brings its adventures: two fords today. The first really fast and deep, water half way between knees and waist and absolutely glacial. The 2nd ford was wider and shallower and by then the day was so hot (110° in the sun, Andy reported) that it was a pleasure to sit right down in the middle. We're low again in this valley (in altitude not spirits) but in a few days we'll start working up towards the 12,000 foot Dalpa Pass and after that will be on high country. This will please us all. We have had fine views of the Himalaya at various high points but still no sign of Everest. It lies behind Chamlang (25,000 ft.) and won't be visible for sometime. But we're getting to know Makalu intimately. It is superb! Midway along the ridge of Chamlang we've noticed a cloud streamer. We sus-
pect that this may be Everest's characteristic plume and that it is directly behind, which is how the map shows it. (But the map shows so many things wrong that we don’t dare trust it around the corner).

Nov. 7 (Day 9) Now it is Tuesday and we are at this moment camped at 9700 feet and will cross the Salpa-La tomorrow. It is beautiful up here. There are big trees and a grassy meadow where our tents are arranged cosily. Two wooden boxes (they hold biscuits) make a dining room table. We sit around it on the medicine chest, Andy's instrument case and assorted rocks. Our gasoline lantern goes on the table when it gets dark (which is soon) and we have a fine camp fire at our elbow. Five o'clock is dinnertime and before 6 it is pitch dark. By 7 everyone begins to think of bed. The last few nights I’ve been reading the "Kontiki Expedition" aloud. We love it because it's such a change from this. When we have coolie worries or food troubles or wonder about the distance ahead, it's a great tonic to think of that little raft sailing across the Pacific. It's been along hard pull today; 4000 steep feet up from our rather too centrally located camp at Phedi. The main path to the town ran right under one of my tent ropes (level places were scarce). Rather awkward for the citizenry but no casualties, not even after dark when a line of men and women carrying the rice harvest on their backs and with lighted brands in their hands wound their way up to the village. A lovely sight! Now, 4000 feet above Phedi, we are higher up in the world than ever before and it is suddenly very cold. We've put on warm clothes for the first time. My long red underwear is marvelous!

Nov. 8 (Day 10) Over the pass all right and a long descent to Gudel where we landed, weary, at 4. Now we are looking across the Hongu River (miles down in a rugged gorge) to our next pass beyond. A little dispiriting to contemplate when your legs still ache from the previous one!

Nov. 9 (Day 11) Descended fast and furious today to the Hongu River and then had a dizzy bridge crossing. These bridges! They are usually made of bamboo logs lashed loosely together. They bobble around as you walk across, holding on to 2 banister logs (that also bobble). The whole business sags and swings, especially when you're in the middle, with the torrent roaring below. Quite sensational! No wonder that the Sherpas, who are good Buddhists, always go through a little incantation before they start over.

Nov. 10 (Day 12) Another crisis today (we have them daily). We lost Charley! He had gone ahead to the top of the pass and was missing (got on the wrong pass) for 2 hrs. Reunion was very happy for everyone. It is really difficult to find your way here and we do not go alone, generally, without one of the Sherpas with us. We are in real Sherpa country now and a finer and more vigorous people you cannot imagine. I pass out life savers to all the kids we meet and have the friendliest conversations with them (we have quantities of life savers along but none of the expedition gets to eat any - they're all used for Public Relations). Wonderful what you can get across with gestures, intonation and a pleasant expression. It is no time before we are all friends and if I wave and say "goodby", ten to one they wave back (though it's a new gesture to them) and say "goodby" too. They are wonderfully imitative - bet you could teach them English in a week. Now that we're in Sherpa land, things are going more peacefully for us, fewer crises. But it is a characteristic of travel in wild country that things are always going wrong, or threatening to. Our troubles have been either 1) the coolies (that there aren't enough, or that they won't go far or fast enough) or 2) food (that we can't find enough en route to augment our own stores, and feed the entourage) or 3) that it is turning out to be a far longer and harder trip than we expected and we wonder if we'll be able to make it). As for #1, our worries seem mostly to be over. The coolies are getting attached to us and the military escort also loyal, are carrying heavy loads to help. #2: We have 3 days Sahib-Sherpa - coolie food at this writing and so feel rather relaxed. You understand that we brought food for ourselves from U.S.A., but had counted on fresh meat.
and vegetables enroute and haven't been able to get much. All the other food for the caravan has to be picked up as we go along and it's been difficult to find. We had our first fresh meat last night: Roast Goat. Tasted marvelous; nobody minded one bit that it was tough. Tonight Gyaljen and I have planned Goat curry, with rice and dall. (Dall is a kind of bean sauce.) Hurray! #3 has really given us concern. The schedule we were going on and the map we have are neither of them very realistic or dependable. This is a long, hard, rough trip. The time element has entered in, too, in that we have just 36 days for the round trip and if we take too long either coming or going, our time above Namche Bazar for the look at Everest may be too short to get anywhere. However, every day that passes increases our confidence in the future and in ourselves - and also in the bandobust (Urdu for the caravan). So - everyone is cheerful and optimistic. But lots of work, Dears! I am getting as Hard as Nails. Have I told you that the weather is wonderful, very clear and fine, just as we had been led to expect? Only one more pass to cross. It's a lulu and right ahead. But as we have been warned that one foot in front of the other does it, sooner or later, nobody is at all depressed.

Can't remember if I described our days? That we rise in the dark and have breakfast in the very dim light? Starts are usually around 6 and we walk till 11. Young Gyaljen, my Sherpa, is always with me and has the lunch. We pick a scenic spot and then lay out the supplies. We have a loaf of Tilman bread (Bill makes it daily) with cheese, jam or sardines. Cookies, may be, and an orange. We also carry that fine mixture of nuts-raisins-chocolate that works so well in the mountains. The oranges have been wonderful. They grow in the Arun Valley and are like tangerines. We've eaten hundreds. We make camp between two or three in the afternoon; any later is a poor idea, we find. I have the nicest green tent, very roomy. Can put my pants on standing up - very luxurious! My old expedition sleeping bag is as good as ever (double and very warm) and I have a new light air mattress and latex pillow. I get what I'm going to need laid out before night-fall so as to be able to find things in the dark of evening and early morning. Right now I'm sitting in my tent, supper time is about 3/4 an hour off. Wish you could hear the laughter and cheerful sounds that come from our lively entourage. The Sherpa personality is so gay and endearing! All the people from miles about are here, too. It's just as if the circus had come to town. They stand around and watch our every move with the greatest absorption and interest. Rather awkward at times! But they are a wonderful people and match the beautiful, open, rugged country in which they live. Their houses are delightful: thatched roofs and plaster walls, built tidily and with style and always placed for the view. All over, on the trail, one finds flat resting places, with big trees for shade, benches to sit on and a beautiful outlook. The same load carrying that we saw on the high road to Katmandu fills the main paths here in East Nepal. The Nepalese is a load carrier and a walker. You wonder what would happen to one with a sacroiliac, or fallen arches. The women walk and carry, too. We've had a lady coolies off and on. They pack big loads and have nice bright faces from which one gets an answering smile always. Wish you could have seen our Sherpetta Dickie's expression on the Arun ferry. Or Mine! It was an experience. You get paddled into the middle of the fast-rushing river by 3 oarsmen in a long hollowed-out log boat. When the current gets you, they paddle like mad and you finally reach the opposite shore about 1/4 mile further down than where you started. The log boats seem about to roll over any minute but nothing happens and you make it fine, the boatmen maneuvering with great skill. The government maintains the ferries and people ride on them free; all you have to do is to slip the crew a couple of annas (about 1¢) for a tip.

Nov. 11 (Day 13) No bad luck whatever, Dears, despite the fact that it's our 13th day in the wilds. In fact an absolutely wonderful day, start to finish. We have crossed our last pass and are camped above the Dudh Kosi river. We all feel marvelous about it. Beautiful snow peaks on every hand and a crystal clear sparkling blue
day. Namche Bazar is just 3 days up the valley and somewhere - not far away now, but still hidden behind the intervening ridges is Mt. Everest. Or is it purely mythical? We're really beginning to wonder! A 7000 foot climb today after a steep drop to the rugged gorge of the Innukhu River which we crossed on another of those nifty Nepalese bridges. Coming down on this side of the pass, we walked through a most beautiful holly and rhododendron forest, with fine streams and water-falls. (I stopped behind the caravan and had a wonderful bath in a pool). As soon as the slope levels out at all, the ubiquitous terracing begins and little settlements appear. The Nepalese unit is the homestead, the little house with its own fields and terraces. There are very few real villages around here, just clusters of farms. As we come in sight, everyone turns out. I continue to have the most wonderful time with these people. Such fun earlier today. The bandobast had paused at a farm to see if we could get some rice and maybe a sheep. While the negotiations were going on, I sat on a knoll writing in my diary. I looked up to find a row of little children around me, watching intently. I got out life savers and we had some conversation about how good they are to eat, please try one, and who was whose sister or brother, and what pretty bracelets, beads and nose rings everyone had on. Two boys were perfectly dazzling with bright eyes, sweet expressions and rosy cheeks under their brown color. A pair of little girls had their small brothers on their backs. All wear woolens here (its cold) and every foot has on the woolen leggings, leather soled Tibetan boot, trimmed in bright colors. Wonderful to find one can tell by gestures and inflections and arrive at complete friendliness and understanding. We had all become very fond of each other when the rest of the cavalcade appeared. (There are 27 of us, makes quite a show). When I rose and said goodbye, all my little people said goodbye back, in the sweetest little imitative voices. I just loved it. Have I told you these people all have fine strong white teeth?

We are getting great feelings of affection for our entourage (and they for us). My little Gyaljen is a dear, has a gay little Mongolian face and enjoys all the doings tremendously. We converse half English, half Urdu. Urdu is the cutest tongue. One quickly learns such essentials as GURUM PANI (hot water), OOPER (up), NEECHE (Down) RHASTA (path) and KHOLA (river). As you can imagine OOPER and NEECHE feature a lot! There are some words with a wonderful ring, like MUCHLY (fish) - which Charley has only caught one of, despite all his efforts, and SUB CHEESE which means "all these boxes". While we are learning Urdu we have everyone else working on English and you can frequently hear mutterings of "six, seven, eight" behind you on the trail. Our Jamedar (officer in charge of us) had a headache yesterday for which Charley gave him a pill. Today he is cured. Result - at tea time the whole outfit turned up asking for treatment for assorted ills! Now the word has reached the village that there is a doctor in the house and Charley's waiting list is large. Everyone is strong and vigorous that we see, however, though there is much goitre in the high country and a good many colds and sniffles.

Today we have been seeing the big Tibetan dogs. They look like huskies - and also a lot of the spry little Lhasa terriers - they are like cairns and bark like mad. (We'd like to take one home).

Nov. 16 (Day 18) My dear Dears, I am sitting in the sun in what must surely be the most beautiful place in all the world. We are one day's march above Namche Bazar, at the Buddhist lamasery of Thyangboche. Mt. Everest is just ahead, perhaps 12 miles away. On every side there are peaks like nothing I have ever seen before, or dreamed of. No Alp can touch them. They vary from 22,000 to 27,000 feet; the tapered summits and fluted snow faces shine in the sun against a wonderful blue sky. Hurts your neck to look at them! So high up! All around me are the buildings of the lamasery, and the llamas, young and old, are going about their business in dark red woolen robes that look wonderful against the snow on the ground. Lots of yaks laying around make black accents against the snow and an army of crows fly about cawing and perchimg on roofs and walls. Oscar and I are sitting in a little plaster
house with one open side into which the wonderful warm sun is pouring. It is just heaven. There are 12 people (ages vary from 8 to 50 years) within distances of from 20 feet to one foot of me, this very minute. Mostly they are young lamas but we also have one old lama with a sweet peaceful face. All are delightful and delighted. In between these sentences I am writing, I teach them ONE - TWO - THREE - FOUR (etc). Then point to my nose and say NOSE (and they all say "Nose")! This has gone on for hours! We progress to SHOE, SOCK, TEETH, HAIR - they only need to hear once and they have it. If my train of thought seems jumpy, Dears, it's because I have just finished demonstrating to my audience how zippers work. Wish you could have heard the amazed chorus that went up when I unzipped the little pocket at the back of my mountain coat and pulled the hood out! (Now they are trying on my glasses). A tiny creature has just brought us 4 small (hot) potatoes as a present. Delicious!

In all there are 25 Lamas here at Thyangboche. The older Lamas treat the younger ones with the greatest warmth and affection. This is a very happy place. The little Lamas are just like any young fry: they rough house, chase each other and go off into roars of giggles. In the services (we've been to several) there are two, especially, who carry on to beat all. (Reminds me of the old Sunday School days when the only reason I didn't get bounced was I was the minister's daughter). Music features a great deal in these ceremonies. The Lamas chant, led by one of the patriarchs with a deep rich bass. Then, at intervals, everyone picks up some kind of instrument and absolute bedlam bursts forth. There are two great horns (like Alpine horns) and conch shells with a deep throary tone. There are various small horns and pipes, cymbals and bells. There are three vast drums (one Lama let me beat his). We hear these drums often. At 4:30 in the morning they announced the beginning of the lamaisy day.

The head Lama (reincarnation of Buddha) is a 16 year old boy to whom we have been presented and who looks as if he'd like to give a friendly grip if only it were proper. The Lamasy has a library of 600 books. Each volume consists of a pile of loose sheets wrapped in a rose silk cover, placed between pieces of painted wood and labelled at the end with writing on colored tabs of silk. This, stacked in a painted cubby-hole beside many other cubby-holes, makes a pretty handsome library as you can well imagine. Everything in the ceremonial room was brightly decorated and there were many banners hanging about, and rows of brass bowls with candles burning. We were generally given Tibetan tea, which is thick and buttery and has been stewed for hours. A big pot goes around the room and your bowl (and everyone else) is filled over and over. It's a cold climate and a very warming drink but we learned only to take small sips so as to keep from being completely drowned. We gave the head Lama a present (gathered in haste) of money for the Lamasy, a ball point pen (25¢ drug store variety) and my tan Swiss silk scarf. Wonder what he made of all the little green chalets on it, and did they turn it into a banner to hang up? We had a picture taking session one day and how they loved it! Lots of decorating and primping and all the big Lamas in their best outfits and the head Lama very fine in a big bright red hat. Great laughs when we told people (by making solemn faces) not to be too dignified and they all wore broad smiles, including his Grace who looks to be a dear boy.

We are quartered in a house nearby - how it would astonish you! We live upstairs in one room, fireplace at one end (no chimney; smoke goes out a hole in the roof). Sleeping bags are laid out on the floor for us at night, and rugs set about day times, for us to sit on. At night it is good and cold up here (13,000 feet and lowest temperature 18° so far), so we close everything up that is closable and are very cozy with our fire smouldering. The Sherpas have the next room which is the kitchen in the day time, fire burning on a small clay platform on the floor. Through our doorway comes a flood of visitors beginning before we're up in the morning and ending long after we've gone to bed. Everyone brings presents, like more hot potatoes (from the same cute little creature with the bright eyes), milk, yak butter,
oranges, pots of Tibetan tea. We've been given nice things too, like beads and fossils and a beautiful holly block with symbols carved on it for printing. I give life savers to everyone (they're getting the habit) and we plan to hand out everything we can spare as parting presents when we leave.

About Everest: Dears, you will have to brace yourselves. It is not much of a mountain, has absolutely nothing but height— all the other ones around are infinitely more beautiful and impressive. Not that it isn't a thrill to be so near the highest mountain in the world and to be able to see its great hulking form in all lights and at all times of the day. As the sun goes down, the last rays shine on Everest long after the rest of the mountain scene is in darkness.

Bill and Charley are off reconnoitering and will spend four days examining the south face close to. Oscar, Andy and I are staying here. Andy knows all about maps and surveying and is getting telephoto shots of Everest from the slopes around. Oscar and I, who are picture taking like mad, think the rest and respite after our 17 days' march is simply heavenly. O, this wonderful spot! We walked down the hill yesterday and visited a Buddhist convent about a half hours walk away. The ladies of the faith lead a simple life, but their little houses were neat and attractive (each of the 17 has her own) and are set in a delightful grove of birch, rhododendron and cedar. And, of course, the wonderful mountains! Everywhere you look, simply beyond belief. My favorite is called Tamusurum. It looks like the Milan Cathedral in mountain form. Not one summit but 4 or 5, and all connected by the most delicate and graceful, shining, airy and fluted snow ridges, of the kind one sees nowhere but in the Himalayas. There is also a wedge-shaped beauty called by the Lamas Andumlungma. It is a Matterhorn raised to the 8th power, and one cannot imagine anyone but a supernatural being over reaching its summit. Everest and Lhotse (27,000 ft.) fill the whole V of the valley on the north. They look to be almost the same height (Lhotse is nearer) and their south faces—on which we are the first Europeans over to have looked—are amazingly free of snow. Bill brief you on the news Bill and Charley bring when they return tomorrow, after their trip to reconnoiter. That will be the 19th of November. (Day #21 of this trip). On the 20th we return to Namche Bazar and on the 21st the long trek back begins. We hope to take some days off the 15 it took us to get in, and are expecting to reach Jogbani on December 5. Deo Volente!

Haven't had a chance to tell you yet about our arrival in Namche Bazaar on the 14th. Oh, my Dears, it was something! We had been plugging up the Dudh Kosi valley for several days, and had left the river and were toiling up a steep zigzag trail on the big 3000 foot pull up to Namche. At every bend we'd been stopping to puff (12,000 feet up now and hard work) and to look at the great peaks that were on every hand. Then we heard the sound of bells and over the hill came five lively bell-hung little Tibetan ponies with bright saddle blankets and trappings, each led by a Namche Bazar dignitary. It was the Reception Committee. We made polite speeches. So did they. Everyone bowed and smiled and salaamed and we all got on the horses and entered the town like William the Conqueror. Namche is a wonderful solid winter town, made to fit its rocky amphitheatre and for the storms that must assail it. Row on row of white stone houses with dark roofs and windows— and in every window, every door and on every inch of every street were all the townsfolk. What a parade! Everyone we passed followed along after and it was all you could do to keep moving and not run over somebody. We were led to a house where we disembarked and climbed some stairs into the upper room that was to be dining-living room for us for the next 24 hours. Out a side door was a terrace (in the Nepali sense) on which our tents were pitched for a period of gold-fish-bowl life like nothing I ever lived through. Imagine it! Every move watched with complete absorption by the whole population every minute of the day and night. (You had the feeling all Namche life and business was suspended and that the families all had brought picnic meals and their bed rolls along so as not to miss anything. It was like being on the stage
for a show to which every orchestra, box and balcony seat had been sold. As you can imagine, it was something of a relief to say goodbye to Namche Bazar despite its charms and picturesqueness, the next day.

But when we awoke, it was snowing and our trip up to Thyangboche (where the lamery is) was in the twilight of a cold winter day, the limits of our world only a few feet away in the swirling snowy mist. Nothing could be seen of what we knew must be terrific scenery, just a few glimpses now and then of crags and slopes and the Dudh Kosi in its wild gorge far below. As on all dark days, certain of the colors were unforgettable - like the red leafed barberry bushes with green Spanish moss clinging to the branches and soft white snow dusted over all. At noon we arrived at Thyangboche - cold and high now (13,000 feet) and snow still falling. We were all a bit oppressed with the change in weather and after parting with Bill and Charley the stay-at-homes felt rather down in the mouth. But then, the next morning, we awoke to the sun and the blue sky and this celestial scene and began to realize then the fact that has been becoming more and more apparent to us all: that the days here will be numbered among life's most beautiful and most rich, when we look back.

Nov. 23 (Day #25) Dear People, as you see, a lot of time has passed and we are now on our way out (Day #3 from Namche Bazar). We're already left the valley of the Dudh Kosi and are expecting to cross Pass #2 tomorrow. We're going like a house-afire, almost a day ahead of our time coming in already. Our altitude at the moment 10,100 feet. The Innukhu River is below (we'll begin tomorrow with a steep descent) and already - although snow peaks are still in sight to the North - things seem less mountainous and rugged. We are sad about it. Must bring you up to date a little. Bill and Charlie returned on schedule on the 19th. They had done a superb reconnaissance job. Their report is that there is not a good practicable climbing route up Everest from the south. There is a tangled mass of precipitous ridges and steep faces up there and two large glaciers that do not even appear on the map. The north route, hitherto used by the British climbers, is much simpler and easier, despite its disadvantages of weather and position. Charley and Bill went to over 19,000 feet and worked hard for four days. They looked weary and thin but of good cheer about everything. We are all very pleased; with them, with things, and with ourselves. The training in which we now find ourselves is like nothing most of us have ever experienced. We're reaping the reward of our hard days and can walk tirelessly for hours. We now go from four to five hours at a stretch without stopping, even when a long steep ascent is involved (as it practically always is). I have never felt so strong.

xx Another day has now passed and it is Nov. 24 (Day #26). We have crossed Pass 2 and are looking down into the Hongu Valley. The Salpa-La (the 12,000 foot pass) lies just ahead and beyond it the Arun Valley. We feel it will all be coasting after that. With the Salpa-La we shall have left Buddhism and the Sherpa country behind. It will be sad not to see Mani walls or chortans, and no prayer wheels any more or the little religious flags that flutter in the breeze. As I write, here in my tent, the usual sounds of laughter and cheer are to be heard. I also detect the clatter of pans (dinner is being got ready) and the rustle of a load of bamboo being dragged along the path. The Sherpas are gathering wood for our fire and the kukris (the curved Nepalese knife that everyone carries) are being used to good effect on nearby trees and bushes. In the village just below our camp some kind of epidemic is going on and they are practicing a voluntary quarantine (this is the Nepalese custom) until the infection is over. Not a bad system. None of them has been near us. Did I tell you about how we all came down with severe colds up high? Quite a surprise. But thanks to penicillin and lower altitude everyone is mending.

Nov. 29 (Day #31) Camp on the Arun. Dears: No time to write. We are just roaring along, 2½ days faster already than on the trip in. This gives us a fine sense of
leeway. Seeing everything again in reverse has been wonderful. I think now I shall never forget the lay of this marvelous land. Four more days to Chatra, where we are coming out (instead of Dharau) in order to see the site of the proposed Kosi dam. Three great rivers flow together above it: the Arun, the Sun Kosi and the Tamur, and if it is built, it will be the highest dam in the world and change radically the character of the country we have just visited. Tomorrow is Thanksgiving. While you are all sitting down to you-know-what with stuffing and cranberry sauce, we too shall have a gala dinner and our feelings of thankfulness will equal anyone's, anywhere, I know. Want to hear what we're going to have to eat? Chicken and ham with rice, a touch of cheese in the sauce. Little tiny tomatoes grown around here and Gyaljen cooks them marvelously. Think I'll use a few layers of mosquito netting for a white table cloth and see what wild flowers I can find to decorate. Bill is going to bake a cake (just fixed a date and nut mixture for him) and we'll have chocolate pudding to end up with. Think it sounds good? So do I.

Today was Monkey day - what a chattering on the trail! Whole troops of them were doing aerobatics on the trees beside us. Yesterday was Stille Day. We crossed quantities of fences via these, tilted logs with steps cut in, quite a test of balance. Yesterday we had the loveliest warm welcome from a venerable old gentleman whose house was on our route. Mats were laid to sit on and baskets of oranges brought to us with the greatest air of hospitality and courtesy. On green leaf dishes were piles of rice, dhal and sugar, symbolic of the resources of the household being put at our disposal. It was all very touching. We ate oranges till ready to pop and then said goodbye to our host, his family and friends - there was a big assembly - with feelings of warmth and friendliness. People on the path bring us bananas, honey, oranges, flowers. I decorate myself with the flowers and look like a walking orchard with sprays of cosmos, marigolds and zinnias (they all grow wild around here) waving about. You see nosegays everywhere: twined in the horns of cows, soes and yaks; in garlands on the bridges; laid in bouquets before shrines, and as cheerful trimming on a coolie's basket. Every Sherpa picks a flower and wears it, as we go along. (Sometimes they pick two, and give me one). Wish you could have seen the bright cluster of yellow marigolds bobbing along on Sarki's cap today.

There has been a real weather change: everything is cloudy and overcast. Now, very different from the clearness and blueness of the trip in. Makes it a lot easier for us down here in the hot belt but we miss the wonderful views we had coming in and are thankful to have gotten our pictures all taken. There has been lots of photography! Andy and Bill with black and white stills, Oscar with colored movies, Charley and me with kodachrome and me with my Rollerflex as well. Charley also has had a large aerial camera especially for the Everest views. We must have taken over 1000 pictures among the 5 of us.

I wish you could see our camp now - it's dark (I'm writing by a candle) and all over the hillside the little camp fires are burning. Every unit has its fire and the scene is like the night before Agincourt in Henry the Fifth. Gay sounds come from each group. We've had a fine curry meal, an after-dinner cup of Nescafe and have been talking around the fire. Now it's late: 7:30! We'll be up at 4:30 so I'm turning in.

Dear People, I think I shall wind up the Round Robin series with this. The trip is almost over. It has been the great adventure of my whole life. Hope your Thanksgiving tomorrow is as fine (and as thankful) as mine is going to be!

With so much love to you all,

Betsy
Nepalese Youngsters at Bhimphedi
Looking West from Bim Sen's Tower

Katmandu
Maharajah's Palace, as seen across the Maidan

Katmandu
looking down from Bum Sen's Tower
Katmandu

Elizabeth Courtes
Temple in Katmandu
Temples at Pashupati
The Houston Expedition--1950  L to R: Anderson Bakewell, Oscar R. Houston, Elizabeth S. Cowles, H.W. Tilman, Charles Houston
Our Sherpas

L to R Back Row: Do-Kyi (Dickie), Sarki, Gyaljen Senior, Pa Norbu, Sonam Tsering (Foreign Sportsman)
Front Row: Da Namgyal, Gyaljen Junior, Dawa Norbu (Danu)
This was the Lieutenant assigned to us by his Hon. the Governor of Dhankuta. He and 3 soldiers were instructed to deliver us to the next governor's men but we missed our rendezvous with these gentlemen and the Jemadar, not daring to leave us unescorted,--came along for the whole trip (and had a wonderful time!)
The Governor of Dhankuta
Welcome Oscar Houston & us
1950
Grinding Linseed Oil

The Himalayas

In the Arun Valley
Nepalese Swing

with Gyalje, my Sherpa, on board
Salpa Pass
Our caravan
The King of France and 40,000 men
Marched up the hill, and then marched down again....

We have just descended 4000 ft to Gudel from the Salpa-La (11,000 ft). Have 2500 ft more to go to the valley floor--and then another 11,000 ft pass ahead!

Tilman's Poem
In dreadfulness naught can excell
The view to Bung from Gudel
And words die away on the tongue
When we look back at Gudel from Bung
My Palace on The trek in to Everest
Outside my Tent
(The audience)
Just a couple of Himalayas
on the way in to Goraksh
Circus has come to Town.
Nga Wong Tchetem, Headman of Namche Bazar

Never seen without this Tibetan style hat except when Charley gave him his own NY felt model as a going-away present. Headman was completely transformed by the switch and entirely delighted!
The Gompa with Mt Everest in background
The Himalayas, Thyangboche, Nepal
The Gompa at Thyangboche
The Three Musketeers
whom we meet when most needed
Tamusurmu
from Shangboche
Lama at Jyangboche
A Lama
Lamas at Thyangboche
Lamas at Jhyangboche
Head Lama of Jhyang boche
Looking S.W. from Tshangboche
The Humo Layas
Everest, across Nuptse ridge
Lhotse to Li
(Jilmar)
All boys together
Decorating for Thanksgiving Dinner
on the way out
Roadside Hospitality
on the way out
Sherpa Antics
First commercial air flight to Kathmandu arrives on Oct. 12, 1950 from Patna
North to Everest

North to Everest

EASTERN NEPAL, 1950

Elizabeth S. Cowles

IT was a lucky thing for all of us that the request Oscar Houston made in 1949 for permission to visit Katmandu and the main valley of Nepal had not been granted. In the interval between that year and the next, the interesting possibility of a trip into eastern Nepal came to his attention. For the first time in history it appeared likely that official Nepalese approval might be forthcoming for a small expedition to the virtually unknown area south of Mount Everest. Native trails could be followed northward from the Indian border right up to the peak itself. As Mr. Houston well knew, the possibilities of a climb from this side had never been measured. That clear and settled weather could be expected throughout the fall was another very attractive feature.

Since this sounded like the chance of a lifetime, Mr. Houston again applied for leave to enter Nepal, now including the eastern area in his request. And when His Highness the Maharajah Mohan Shumshere Jung Bahadur Rana graciously gave his approval in the spring of 1950, permission to visit the region south of Mount Everest was granted also. Mr. and Mrs. Houston arranged to go to Katmandu in early October, and plans began to take shape for an expedition into eastern Nepal immediately thereafter. I was very lucky to be included.

No one associated with the Houstons in these ventures will be found complaining about fate for years and years to come, if ever. For everybody concerned, the lucky chain of events continued. That Charles Houston was able to leave a busy medical practice in Exeter and add his strength and experience to his father's undertaking was one tremendous break. Another was our running into H. W. Tilman in Katmandu and being able to persuade him to join us. Tilman, who probably knows more about the Himalayas than any man living, was just out from five months in the mountains of western Nepal. Obviously, he and Charley, friends from the Nanda Devi days, would be the ones to make the Everest reconnaissance toward which the whole trip was pointing. The fifth member of the party was Anderson Bakewell, who lives near Darjeeling. We were fortunate in having Andy on the spot, as he was able to do a great deal of advance work for the undertaking, gathering much essential information and personally selecting a fine group of Sherpa porters. I suppose it cannot exactly be called luck that the expedition was so splendidly equipped and supplied. All the endless details of planning were in Oscar Houston's hands, and they could not have been better cared for. But fate was kind in a lot of other ways: we were blessed in weather, in health, in congeniality and in the extraordinary kindness we were to meet everywhere. Everything combined ideally to give us an unforgettable experience.

On October 27th, Oscar, Charley (just off the plane from America) and I took the train at Delhi with some 1000 pounds of supplies and equipment. Our rendezvous with the others was to take place at Jogbani, the last railway stop in India south of the border of eastern Nepal. The little narrow-gauge train averaged, we figured, about ten miles an hour for the two and a half days we were on it—quite a slowdown in pace for Charley, who had not taken nearly that long coming from the U.S.A. Andy and Bill met us at Jogbani. Andy had brought the Sherpas with him from Darjeeling, including—to everyone's amazement—a lady Sherpa! She hailed from Namche Bazar, the last town before Everest, and was going home to see the folks. As we later found ourselves with lady coolies from time to time, this was really quite a coeducational enterprise! Gyaljen, the head Sherpa, was a veteran of two Everest expeditions and various others besides. Sarki, too, was an old hand and had gone up to Camp V on the French ascent of Annapurna during the summer. There were also Da Namgyal and Pa Nurbu, both experienced men, and another Gyaljen (no relation) who was scarcely more than a boy but very bright and promising. We met and liked them all, the Sherpette included.
Everyone spent the night of the 29th at a guest house of the big Jogbani jute mill, run by a man we had been lucky enough to meet in Katmandu two weeks before. His command car and lorry transported us and all our belongings across the 50-mile band of low country that lies between the border of Nepal and the hills where our trek was to begin. It took the whole of the morning to do this piece; a more punishing road could scarcely be imagined. Great confusion followed in Dharan, the last town before the hills, where Sahibs, Sherpas and baggage were all dumped about noon. It seemed impossible to distinguish between the people who were supposed to belong to us and the mob just hanging around to watch the fun. When the cumbersome caravan finally started, it was long after midday and steaming hot. What followed was a real chore. Nobody was used to anything: not the 16 coolies to their loads, nor the Sherpas to their new bosses, nor we to the trail, the heat or the public attention. This last was terrific! Being on one of the main north-south trade routes, we passed literally hundreds of heavily-laden coolies, their tapered straw baskets filled with salt, potatoes, cotton cloth, oranges and the like. If we paused for so much as a split second, the crowd would pile up around us six deep, and all traffic would come to a standstill. Nobody was unruly, nobody was impolite; they were just intensely curious and, one felt, considerably amused. Although the path was rough and steep, walking seemed easier on the whole than trusting oneself to one of the little Tibetan ponies that were—very temporarily, as it turned out—at our disposal. When, four days later, the ponies had to turn back for good at a place above the Arun, where the track became mere footholds on a cliff face, no one was sorry. The horse is out of place in Nepal. He has no job really. The universal load-carriers are the Nepalese himself, his wife and his children. Everybody carries in this country and seems to like it. One wonders what would happen to someone with fallen arches or a sacroiliac.

Our first camping place was a thrill. We had crossed, with much effort, the Siwalik Ridge and dropped halfway down the other side. The beautiful Tamur Valley lay below with its hills clustered around like stiff folds of blue-green taffeta. In the sky all along the north rose the icy summits of the Himalayas. Makalu was there and Chamlang and, far over to the east, Kangchenjunga—the only view that we were to have of it. We saw it at sunset, by moonlight, and bathed in the early morning colors as the sun rose. This was worth coming a long distance for! Here, I remember, we came across our first Nepalese swing, an ingenious ferris-wheel contraption. These swings are very airy, always placed with an eye to the view and characteristic of a land whose people have a real gift for enjoying life.

Next morning we dropped to the Tamur River, crossed it by a fancy steel suspension bridge and ascended about 3000 feet to Dhankuta, the dream town of all our lives. Imagine to yourself a clean, happy, prosperous village, built with taste and style, beautifully situated on a ridge where poinsettia and bohinnia trees are in bloom. Its streets are swept twice daily, and its houses replastered twice yearly. We visited the public library, the school (where English is taught) and the parade ground where, when the garrison is not drilling, the children play soccer, volleyball and badminton—amazing sports to find in a town in faraway Nepal! None of us will forget Dhankuta and its bright cheerful people, or the words we saw written in English on one of the school buildings: "Gather courage; don’t be a chicken-hearted fellow." Not a bad motto for a school, we thought—or for an expedition.

The Governor of Dhankuta was extremely kind. He arranged for coolie replacements and food for the caravan, gave us directions about the next stages of the route and supplied us with a Jemadar (lieutenant) and three soldiers for an escort. Their job was to take us to the next province and turn us over to the next governor’s men; but, owing to a misunderstanding about the rendezvous, everyone missed connections. Not daring to leave us unattended, the four Dhankutans stayed with us for the whole trip.

It was a steep climb above Dhankuta to the crest of the second big ridge where, near Pairibas, we had another superb view of the mountains. No sign of Everest yet, although we wondered if the cloud streamer midway along the ridge of Chamlang might belong to it. This would have been possible, as Everest lies directly behind. Camp III was part way down the vast terraced hillside, with the Arun Valley lying just below. Next morning (November 2nd) we dropped down to the river, went on up for a bit and pitched an early camp that afternoon right beside it.

By this time we were beginning to settle down into expedition routine. After swims all around, everyone involved himself in characteristic pursuits. Bill Tilman, champion bread-maker, was mixing dough, in up to his elbows. Charley went oil with a fishing rod in search of mahseer, the fighting fish we had all heard so much
Two more days were spent working up the Arun, and on November 4th we crossed it at Kattegegat in a 20-foot dugout canoe. Three accomplished oarsmen maneuvered us neatly through the swift green current. Next came two days on the Irkua Khola, a tributary of the Arun, which we followed to Phedi. This was a small settlement at the foot of the long hill leading to the 12,000-foot Salpa Pass. Here we began to have troubles. Many of the lowland coolies were turning back now that high country was ahead; and all efforts to get replacements, as well as food for the entourage and supplementary meat and vegetables for ourselves, seemed unavailing. The next days were anxious ones. At several points a complete halt threatened. Everyone was packing a load now, even the Jemadar and his men, and the bandobust (Urdu for caravan) was beginning to wear a lean and hungry look. Added to these anxieties was the realization that the journey was proving considerably longer and harder than we had expected. We had just 36 days for the round trip; if we took too long either going or coming, the time left for the mountain might be too short for us to accomplish anything.

These were also our hardest marches to date. We crossed the Salpa La on November 8th and made a long descent to Gudel through great forests of holly and rhododendron. The short winter day was hampering. It was not light much before six, and dusk began to fall about 5.30. It took a good bit of doing to get in the eight to ten miles that seemed to be our daily limit and still have time in the afternoon for the relaxation that is so important for an expedition’s well-being. From Gudel it was rather dispiriting to see the Hongu River apparently still miles below, and, on the other side, the long ascent to the next pass. But what wonders just putting one foot in front of the other can accomplish! Two days later we found ourselves safely over pass two and able to face pass three (for there was another) with growing fortitude. We just plugged along. The river crossings were a thrill because of the variety of bridges, usually made of bamboo and very wobbly; and the ascents to the passes were enlivened by arguments among the experts as to altitude and distance. Nobody seemed able to decide whether it was better to expect the climb to be longer and higher than it actually was or to regard everything with undaunted optimism. (I inclined to the latter view.) On November 10th we crossed the Innuku River and in one long Spartan day surmounted the last ridge remaining between us and the Kosi Valley.

Things were beginning to look up. Being in Sherpa country now, we could obtain food far more easily, and we had been lucky enough to find some strong hill men to help carry for us. The high mountains were very near. Up every side valley we saw new groups of magnificent snow peaks. Below us was the Dudh Kosi, the river that drains the south side of Everest; but of the monarch himself there was still no sign, although we thought and talked of little else and never came around a bend without hoping. Namche Bazar was three days’ march up the valley. The Sherpas showed us where: on a high plateau at the foot of a handsome rock peak called Kum-bila. We were really getting places.

On November 14th we reached Namche. The day, clear enough at the start, was rapidly darkening, and a curtain of clouds was drawn across the high country ahead. It was a wonderful solid winter town, row upon row of stone houses, with dark roofs, doors and shuttered windows. A reception committee had met us a mile or so down the trail with a flock of small, bell-hung Tibetan ponies. Everybody bowed and smiled and salaamed, and we mounted the horses and entered the town like Alexander the Great. Then followed a period of goldfish-bowl life beyond description. Our tents were pitched on a small terrace (in the Nepali sense) around which the entire population gathered. It was like finding oneself on the stage for a 24-hour show, for which every seat had been sold for weeks. Despite the charms of Namche and its people—and we did like them all—it was something of a relief to be going on up to Thangboche the next day.

But when we woke up on the morning of the 15th, it was snowing. We were 12,000 feet up now; and, although the temperature did not go below 18°, this represented, according to Andy, a 100-degree drop since the midday sun of the Arun Valley. We walked along shivering in a winter wind; but we found it impossible to complain, warmly dressed as we were, while our coolies in their flimsy cotton garments and bare feet were trotting along.
faithfully in front of us. Everest lay right ahead, we knew, but all we had was a hint now and then of distant crags and slopes through the mist, and of the Dudh Kosi in its wild gorge far below. At noon we reached Thangboche. Here there was a lamasery where Oscar, Andy and I were to stay while the advance party continued on toward the mountain. It was still snowing. A lama greeted us and very kindly put a small house at our disposal for the five days of our stay. After a farewell lunch together in our new domain, Bill and Charley left, taking Sarki, Danamgyal and two Sherpa coolies, with supplies for six days. If they were not back on the 19th, they said, we were to return to Namche, and they would catch up with us. I must confess that the stay-behinds felt rather low after they had gone. The thought of the storm worried us all. Good visibility was an absolute necessity for the reconnaissance. Could it be that our luck had changed, and that a real break in the weather was in store for us?

What a lifting of the hearts the next day! We awoke to blue sky, bright sunshine and an outlook that must surely be one of the most magnificent in the whole world. Everest was just ahead. Its vast bulk and that of Lhotse beside it filled massively the whole great V of the valley. People have said that Everest is not beautiful — and they are quite right. But there is something profoundly moving about having the biggest hill on earth right in front of you, yours to see day after day, in all the lights and in all the moods. The south wall was rugged as a fortress and amazingly free of snow. Nuptse’s long dark ridge cut right across it like a rampart and then mounted steeply to join Lhotse on one side. Everest flew no cloud banner that day, but we were to see its ice plume later on and marvel at the force of those high, cold winds. Of course, the mountain does not begin to look as high as it is, but that evening the setting sun was blazing away on the huge incredible face long after the rest of the world was in darkness. That told us a lot.

But Everest was not everything. On every hand there were peaks like nothing I had ever seen or dreamed of, and their tapered summits and fluted white faces shone in the sun against the deep blue sky of that marvellous day. Yesterday’s snow lay everywhere around. A flock of yaks made dark accents against it. And the lamas made bright accents against it as, young and old, they went about their business dressed in their bulky, red homespun gowns. There were 25 lamas in all here at Thangboche, ranging in age from about eight to well over 60. This was a very cheerful, happy place. The little lamas were bright and responsive, and giggled and cut up like any other small fry. The older lamas had sweet, peaceful faces and treated the younger ones with warmth and affection. All were exceedingly kind and attentive to us and showed enormous interest in everything we did, said, ate or wore. English lessons were very popular. In no time the whole lamasery could count up to 30 and knew the words for nose, eyes, teeth, hair and the like. They went about shaking hands and saying, “Good Morning,” in exact imitation of our inflection and tone of voice. In return, they taught us their names for the mountains and wrote them down for us in beautiful, careful Tibetan script. Chomolungma meant Everest and its satellites, Nuptse, Lhotse and the rest. Andumlungma was the spectacular wedge-shaped peak on the right side of the valley, with Kantega next to it and then my favorite, which was called Tamusurmu. It was like a cathedral, with a cluster of lofty spires connected by delicate, graceful and shining snow ridges. We were picture-taking like mad. Oscar and I worked around the Gompa mostly, but Andy went farther afield. He took telephotos of Everest from high up on the neighboring slopes and one day went over to Taweche with Pa Nurbu for valuable shots from the west.

From time to time we were invited to services at the lamasery. These were very interesting and impressive. The 16-year-old Head Lama, believed to be a reincarnation of his predecessor, and through him of the great Buddha, sat behind a sort of pulpit on one side of the ceremonial room. Books lined two sides of the room; the other walls were brightly painted and decorated. Sacred banners hung everywhere. In rows of squat brass bowls, candles were burning. After we were seated, the lamas marched in, each kneeling and touching his forehead to the floor before an altar in the center. Then everyone sat down, the older ones around the sides of the room and the youngsters in two rows down the middle. Next a kind of intoning began, led by a patriarch with a deep, rich bass. At intervals everybody would pick up an instrument, and a weird, strident music would burst forth. This was rhythmic rather than melodic; it was given range and color by the contrast of tones joining in. There were two immense horns, like Alpine horns, and conch shells with a deep, throaty note. There were smaller soprano horns, and pipes, cymbals and bells. There were three vast drums. We had heard these drums often: at 4:30 every morning they announced the beginning of the lamasery day.

Sometimes Tibetan tea (very strong and buttery) was served as part of the ceremony. We were each given a cup that was filled over and over from a great silver pot that went the rounds. Or a few grains of rice would be
handed around that everyone tossed into the air as prayers were chanted. We presented the Head Lama with gifts, using the white silk scarves of Tibetan tradition as channels of communication between us. He gave us presents, too—amulets to wear, a packet of little colored pellets to ward off misfortune, and more of the long white scarves. One afternoon, word was sent down for us to go up to the Gompa to watch one of their dances. This was just what we had been hoping for. The dance was held in the open center courtyard of the lamasery with the warm sun pouring in. The four performers had costumes that were all brilliant reds, blues and yellows; and they wore wonderful high, gilded headaddresses. The musicians were placed in one of the open upper galleries and provided the strange strident background to the slow, graceful, stylized motions of the dancers below. Another day we asked the lamas if we might take their pictures—and how they loved it! Lots of decorating and primping and all the lamas in their best outfits, the lamasery treasures set around so they would show, and the young Head Lama very fine in a large, bright red hat.

When day succeeded day and the weather still held fine, we began to feel wonderfully hopeful and encouraged about the reconnaissance. Excitement mounted as the 19th approached. That afternoon all eyes were riveted on the path. At about three o’clock we saw them coming slowly up the trail, a very weary-looking party. Sarki, helpless with an attack of malaria, was being carried by one of the Sherpas at the rear. But despite the grim look that this gave things, the news was splendid. Charley and Bill gave us a complete report of their successful undertaking around the tea table in our little lamasery room. It was a happy reunion. The lamas dropped in to hear about everything, and Gyaljen served a meal worthy of the greatness of the occasion. As for Sarki, he was dosed with appropriate medicines and was his old self in a few days.

The morning of the 20th was clear and fine as we wound up our Thangboche affairs. Everyone gave everyone else presents, and we all waved and smiled and said goodbye as the caravan started down the steep trail on the return journey to Namche. The low-country coolies, who had been vacationing below, presented a transformed appearance, with warm blankets around them, knitted caps on their heads and an air of having been completely Sherpa-fied. The bandobust was a real unit now. There was loyalty and good feeling among us all. You never passed anyone on the trail without getting a quick, friendly smile; and cheerful sounds of laughter and conversation abounded. Back at Namche, we enjoyed about the same measure of privacy as before; but the warmth of our welcome pleased us all, and the goodbyes next morning were touching. Charley gave the head man (with the wonderful name of Nga Wong Tchetem) his American hat as a parting present. The effect on that gentleman of switching from a Tibetan bonnet of fur and brocade to the Knox number was something! Then we started down the descending path with last looks back at the sturdy little town and at Everest, still grandly in view up the valley.

The trip out went very fast. We were in the best trim of our lives and could walk tirelessly for hours. Seeing everything in reverse was wonderful, fixing the lay of that marvellous land firmly in our minds. First, goodbye to the Kosi Valley and back over the passes—then goodbye to Sherpaland, to mani walls and chortens, and the little Buddhist prayer flags fluttering in the wind. To Phedi again, and down the Irkua Khola, and then the Arun once more, on November 29th, just a week away from Namche. Down here it seemed very warm, relaxing and civilized. People along the path brought us oranges, bananas, honey, flowers. What a delightful land! We thought and talked a lot about its endearing qualities as we passed for the last time the familiar terraced hills, the trim little thatched houses and the many shady resting places on the trail, well-remembered from the journey in.

We left our old route near Pairibas to go out via Chatra and the site of the proposed Kosi dam. On December 2nd we reached a point near the confluence of the three great rivers, the Arun, Tamur and Sun Kosi. It was just above here that we heard for the first time of the revolution in Nepal. We had been met by two men in uniform sent very kindly by our friend the Governor of Dhankuta to see that we got across the ferries and down the roads closed to travel by the emergency. But all went quite peacefully for us. We crossed the river by a little open car on an overhead cable (very sensational!) and swung down the broad smooth track toward Chatra, passing the Kosi dam site on the way. This was very interesting. If it is built, it will be the highest dam in the world and will back up the rivers as far as 80 miles, radically changing the character of much of the country we had just gone through. At Barakshetra, where the headquarters of this project of the Indian government are, we were pleasantly entertained by the members of the staff. From them we heard of the abysmal turn that world events had taken. It sobered us considerably. The contrast between outside reality and the free, simple, vigorous life we had been leading struck us all with great force, as it must all those who return from the wilds.
Endings are always sad. December 5th brought the wind-up of the expedition at Chatra, and the members began the long process of getting themselves back to where they came from: to Dharan, Dhankuta, Namche Bazar and Darjeeling, back to England and to the United States. Coolies, soldiers, Sherpas, Sahibs—what a variety of people to have shared for a time the responsibilities of a common enterprise! I should like to think—and do—that, as it was possible for this oddly assorted group to live and work happily together, on a tiny scale, one can reasonably hope for our world that big groups, varied though they may be, will one day be able to work peacefully together on a big scale.

SOUTH FACE OF MOUNT EVEREST

Charles S. Houston

When Tilman and I set out from the lamasery of Thangboche on the afternoon of 16 November 1950, we had six days in hand—six days in which to examine the unexplored south side of Everest. Obviously in this brief time we could do little more than form an over-all impression of the climbing possibilities and bring back all the photographs we could take. It was disappointing to have reached this heretofore unexplored area without time for a proper reconnaissance, but we had known from the start that we should be unable to do anything like the splendid job which the first party to the northern side of Everest accomplished in 1921. Our party had been perforce hastily assembled; it was small, lacking in personnel and equipment; and we were squeezed by the lack of time, for all of us had unbreakable commitments early in December. It was up to us to make the best use of what little time we had.

The great rock wall which is known as the Nuptse-Lhotse Ridge fills the upper end of the Kosi Valley and dominates the view from the lamasery of Thangboche. As may be seen from the photograph and rough map, the actual summit of Everest lies to the north, well behind this formidable rampart from which it is separated by a confused maze of ridges and icefalls. Our first thought—that Everest might be reached by climbing the southern face of Nuptse—was obviously ridiculous: the climb would be extremely difficult and would only land one on a high ridge (26-27,000 ft.) some two miles from the summit cone of Everest. Nor would the ascent of the southeast ridge of Lhotse, a more attractive climbing route, be much more helpful. The 1921 and 1922 parties had looked at the Lhotse-Everest saddle (the so-called South Col, 25,850 ft.) from the Kama Valley below Pethangtse (see photograph). Although the route from there to the summit seemed climbable, they saw no way to reach the South Col short of climbing over the top of Lhotse (27,890 ft.), and then descending 2000 feet before attacking Everest itself. These considerations, together with inspection of the massif from Thangboche, persuaded us to devote our attention to the western side. We hoped to pass around and behind the western end of Nuptse, enter the West Cwm (part of which had been seen from the north) and examine the true south face of Everest.

The magnitude of this task was much in our minds as we trudged up the valley that afternoon, through lightly falling snow and in fog. It was discouraging to have our first bad weather on the first really important day, and our camp that evening in a shepherd's hut was rather cheerless. The wind rose during the night, however, and we woke to a crystalline morning, bitterly cold but cloudless. As we walked up the cattle trail, the Nuptse-Lhotse ridge towered above us. It was obvious how easily the natives could mistake this subsidiary ridge for the complete mountain, calling the massif by the name “Chomolungma” (Goddess Mother of the Snows).

Beneath the foothills leading to this ridge, the Kosi River divides, part coming down from the glaciers below Pethangtse and Lhotse, while the large part drains the western valleys. We turned up the western branch and soon came out on a large flat plain, perhaps one mile by two, obviously the dry bed of a now defunct lake. On each side rose moraines, three levels in all, the uppermost 500 feet above the valley floor. We camped about noon in a summer grazing alp called Phalong, and after lunch Tilman and I left our three porters and climbed up the grass slopes to the north of the valley, hoping to reach a rock ridge from which we could see the south face of Lhotse in profile.
The afternoon was perfectly beautiful—cool and clear and cloudless. About us were magnificent peaks, unnamed and unclimbed. To the east the immediate spectacle was a 22,000-foot peak of exceptional steepness which we called the Matterhorn Peak because of its close resemblance from several angles to the peak above Zermatt. We could see no feasible route up this mountain. At its foot lay a glacier (receding rapidly, as we judged by its moraines), near which was a summer village named Dingboche, where there was a small monastery. To the left of the Matterhorn Peak and some 20 miles to the east rose the reddish-brown bulk of Makalu, speckled with snow and very impressive because it rises almost alone and is not belittled by surrounding satellites. We could not positively identify the north side of Chamlang, the great snow ridge which hides Everest from view during the entire approach from the south. Farther to the left (north) were smaller snow peaks which mark the Tibetan border and which have been examined from the north by several British expeditions.

Looking due south down the Kosi Valley, we could clearly see the ridge of Thangboche with the triangular ice spire of Kantega rising above it and Tamusurmu farther east. We could even see Kwangde, the rounded rock mass coated with ice, which rises across the Kosi below Namche Bazar. Directly across the valley from us, and only a few miles away, was a most inspiring, peak—Taweche (21,390 ft.), which seemed almost as unclimbable from this side as it had from the south. Continuing to the west in a series of giant steps were several smaller but no less precipitous peaks, until one’s eyes fell to the Solah Glacier, which comes in from the west.

Despite the magnificent scenery and weather, we made slow going of our climb. For nearly three hours we plodded up grass slopes too steep for easy climbing but steep enough to be very wearying. Always the next “ridge” seemed to promise our view; inevitably there was another dip and a farther ridge beyond. Toward the end of the afternoon we dragged ourselves up a sharp rocky ridge of granite slabs only to find a deep “gunsight” notch separating us from the main ridge, which was still several hours distant. This finished us: there was nothing to be seen of our objective from the point we had reached, and no chance of going farther that day. We wearily returned to camp, though not before the indefatigable Tilman had shamed me on the way down by climbing an extra thousand feet to a small saddle—the view from which was again frustrating.

Our porters greeted us with steaming mugs of tea as we staggered into camp at dusk. We were both very tired, and I for one had a splitting headache, though our camp was at only about 14,000 feet and we had certainly climbed no higher than 17,000 feet. That night, around a roaring fire (of wood brought up by the porters, for only scraggily gorse and juniper grew here), we reminisced about Nanda Devi and the Karakorum; and Tilman brought out odd tales of Sinkiang, Hunza, Sikkim and other exciting areas where he had climbed. By bedtime our talk had made us considerably stronger.

In the morning we started early, planning to establish camp four miles or so up the Khombu Valley. For a mile we followed the northern side of the valley, then turned north, climbing steadily over old moraine to reach the lower end of the Khombu Glacier. This, like all the others we saw, seems to be dying rapidly. Very little ice is visible beneath the rubble that covers it. Consequently, the lateral moraines are unpleasant to march over, and we were glad to camp on a sand bank near a frozen lake about four miles above Phalong. The temperature, even in the warm sun, was below freezing; and, since there was a light but chilling breeze, we did not linger over our luncheon but set off early to continue up the valley.

We hoped to reach and look around the “corner” of a great rock rib which seemed to separate us from the West Cwm, and which we estimated was three miles from camp. If we could see into the West Cwm, from the Khombu Glacier, we could form some idea of the character of its headwall and get a profile view of the south face of Everest itself.

Members of the 1921 expedition to the northern side had looked from the col below Pumori directly across the upper Khombu Glacier into the West Cwm. Mallory (1921) described the glacier as being “terribly steep and broken,” and he did not think it possible to reach the South Col from the floor of the West Cwm. They did not have an unobstructed view of the south face of Everest; nor could they see the southern face of the Lho La, the 20,000-foot saddle below the western buttress. The reconnaissance of 1921 reached the Lho La from the upper West Rongbuk Glacier and considered the southern side of this 19,000-foot pass very difficult, though they did not try it. Both the 1922 and 1938 parties had reached the North Col by climbing up the western slope from the West Rongbuk Glacier, a route less dangerous from avalanches but more laborious than the eastern slope.
Three questions were before us: (1) Was there a new direct route to the summit of Everest from the floor of the West Cwm? (2) Could we see a feasible route over the Lho La, from which we knew a route was possible to the North Col and thence onto the usual climbing route? (3) Was there a possible route up the western shoulder of Everest, originating near the mouth of the West Cwm, and eliminating the need of crossing the Lho La? We hoped to answer these questions in the two days that remained to us.

Again we were travelling slowly. The footing was poor, and there was much up and down over the nasty sliding gravel and boulders that make up moraines the world over. It was clear by three o’clock that we could not hope to round the corner that day. Tilman, who was well ahead of me, turned west to cross the Khombu Glacier; and I did so at a lower level.

Here, some three miles above camp and five miles below the Lho La, the glacier shows more ice; and hundreds of pure white pinnacles, many over 200 feet high, rise from the flat moraine-covered glacier like the “ice ships” of the Baltoro and Rongbuk Glaciers. We stopped on separate ridges about half a mile out on the glacier and realized for the first time that our “corner” was in reality a broad rounded face which gave into the West Cwm only gradually and which we could therefore not look around without a great deal more travel than we had reckoned. Sadly we turned back to camp, frustrated in our effort to get a decisive view. Again we were both worn out when we reached camp after dark and huddled around a pathetic fire of gorse which the porters had spent the afternoon gathering. As usual, a cold evening wind blew briskly up the valley. We retired to our sleeping bags about seven, and spent a cold and restless night.

Our final day, November 19th, was cloudy—a disappointment, for we had hoped for blue sky behind our peaks. After directing the Sherpas to break camp and return to Phalong, Tilman and I started up the route of the previous day, again finding the moraine unpleasant going, and crossed the Khombu Glacier about two miles above camp. This took some time: there was still a dusting of powder snow over the ice, and our rubber-cleated boots were dreadfully slippery. Both of us were tired and slow, and it was not until nine that we reached the western side of the valley and started up the lower slopes of Pumori (“Daughter Peak,” named by Mallory in 1921). Fortunately, the weather was clearing somewhat. We knew we would have our views, though without the blue-black sky which makes color photographs of high mountains so spectacular.

Again we trudged painfully up the steep grass and rock slopes for several hours and finally, about noon, came out on a rocky ridge just below the snow line, at an altitude above 19,000 feet. Here we stopped for lunch. We could now look northeast to the Lho La (20,000 ft.), about two miles away (see photograph). Directly above and behind it was Changtse (North Peak, 24,730 ft.). The North Col was out of sight behind the western buttress of Everest, which rose steeply and bluntly to the West Peak, much foreshortened in our photographs. Behind the West Peak, we knew, lay a long ridge leading gradually to the final pyramid. The southern side of the Lho La, as can be seen in the photograph, is a steep and broken rock face, swept by icefalls from above; and up it we could see no route which would not be dangerously exposed to falls from above. Once on the Lho La, should it prove climbable (a dubious possibility), a party might conceivably work out a route up the western buttress, or it could cross the West Rongbuk Glacier and climb to the North Col, as mentioned earlier. To us, seated on the ridge of Pumori, neither of these routes seemed feasible.

We could see across the north face of the final pyramid to the First and Second Steps, which were conspicuous on the skyline; and we could easily identify the great snow couloir above the yellow band, which marks the high point reached on the northeast ridge. To our great surprise, there was very little snow on the north face, though the monsoon had probably ended only six weeks previously. This observation gives some support to those advocates of post-monsoon attempts on the mountain. We had, however, noticed high winds blowing across the mountain, usually from due west, during most of our approach. These steady blasts had probably swept the rocks as clear as they ever are. The south face of the summit pyramid was also surprisingly free of snow, but it seemed to us considerably steeper than the north. There we could again see the yellow band continued through the mountain, but higher on the southern face, where the strata slope inward instead of shingle-wise as on the north.

Unfortunately, we could not see far into the West Cwm. Only the lower quarter was visible from where we sat. What we could see confirmed the estimate made by Mallory in 1921: passage up the West Cwm would be very
difficult or impossible. Though neither he nor we could see the headwall which leads to the Lhotse-Everest saddle (South Col), this does not seem a reasonable route by which to climb Everest.

The south face of Everest and its western shoulder shown in the photograph do not seem much more promising. Though a route might be found for seasoned climbers, we could see nothing which seemed practicable for the establishment of a chain of camps. In estimating the climbing possibilities of any mountain over 25,000 feet high, one must always remember not only that a climber can perform less well, but also that a porter train is forced upon him, and that campsites as safe as possible in fair weather and foul must be found. No route which satisfied these requirements was visible to us on the southern wall of Everest.

In studying these possible routes, I was continually brought up short by Tilman’s reminder that a satisfactory route has been worked out on the northeast ridge, and that any route chosen elsewhere should promise to be at least as feasible. If some of the world’s finest climbers have failed on a route which is not exceptionally difficult, who is likely to succeed on one which is more difficult and uncertain?

Early that afternoon we started down for our camp at Phalong, following the western side of the Khumbu Glacier, which proved to be considerably easier though slightly longer than our ascent on the eastern moraines. On the following day we returned in one march to Thangboche, carrying one of our Sherpas, who had developed a recurrence of old malaria. There we were warmly greeted by our comrades, who had had an exciting and heartwarming stay with the lamas. Bakewell had made two fine expeditions, one up the eastern and one up the western wall of the Kosi Valley, climbing to about 17,000 feet and taking a number of exceptional photographs.

After a tour of the lamasery and an audience with the head lama, we all returned to Namche Bazar, gathered up our coolie train and marched back to India. The return trip, a happy picnic, took 14 days. We arrived in Biratnagar, the frontier of Nepal, on December 4th, just 36 days after the start of our trip.

Norman Collie has expressed very well the emotions which are stirred by such a trip as ours: “The chance of wandering into the wild places of the earth is given to few. But those who have once visited the Himalaya will never forget either the magnificence or the beauty of that immense mountain land, whether it be the valley country that lies between the great snow-covered ranges and the plains, where wonderful forests, flowers, clear streams and lesser peaks form a fitting guard to the mighty snow-peaks that lie beyond, or the great peaks themselves, that can be seen far away to the North, as one approaches through the foot-hills that lead up to them. ... One may be contented and busy with the multitudinous little events of ordinary civilised life, but a chance phrase or some allusion wakes the memory of the wild mountain lands, and one feels sick with desire for the open spaces and the old trails.”

So far as the ascent of Everest is concerned, we have little encouragement for climbers. The northern approach through Communist-dominated Tibet appears to be closed to us indefinitely, and only the southern route through Nepal offers even a remote promise of being opened. This approach would have several advantages over the northern route: it is short (two weeks); it lies through fertile, populated country; and it entails no prolonged exposure to the wind and dust of the Tibetan plateau, with attendant respiratory ailments. But the southern route is passable only before or shortly after the monsoon because of the flooded rivers during the rainy season. A comfortable base camp could be established at Phalong, supported with ease from Namche Bazar or by an air drop on the old lake bed. The advanced base could be placed on the western bank of the Khumbu Glacier, which has pleasanter surroundings than the eastern bank. All these plans depend, of course, upon the discovery of a practicable climbing route on the south side of Everest, a discovery which we have certainly not made.

Our entire trip was made after the monsoon was well over, and we saw the north and the south sides of Everest in late November. During the entire five weeks of our trip we had two bad days, and on only one of the days when we could see the high mountains were they clouded. As we were leaving Nepal, the mountain weather appeared to be deteriorating; perhaps the “Christmas snows” were beginning. There was very little snow on Everest in late November, but we saw winds of very high velocity sweeping across the mountain, and even at 17,000 feet the temperature was well below freezing. It is possible that the high mountain temperature is not much lower than that in the valleys; this was our experience on K2 in 1938. But wind is a terrible enemy, and the Everest climber must be prepared to face killing winds and blown snow and intense cold, regardless of route or
season. From our experience I believe the post-monsoon season would be no worse, and might be much better, than the uncertain period between winter and the beginning of the monsoon.

We had been for five weeks in an area never previously visited by Europeans or Americans. We had marched some 175 miles along rough valley trails, over three 10,000-foot passes, across rude bridges to reach the foot of the highest mountain on earth. There we had found a small community, centered in religion, self-sufficient, self-respecting, happy and healthy. Surrounded by scenery beyond description, this small lamasery and attendant village seemed to us a beautiful oasis in a troubled world. In all our travels we met nothing but friendliness and courtesy, and some of the people we met were extraordinarily kind to us. Our eyes were opened to a different way of life, a different religion. It was hard to return from this happy primitive land to a world in which our first news was of the U.N. reverses in Korea and of political unrest along many borders. It seemed at least debatable that we were returning to civilization. As we came back to the worries, the pleasures and the responsibilities placed upon us by our own way of life, we could not forget the motto over the public school in our favorite town of Dhankuta: “Gather courage; don’t be a chicken-hearted fellow.”


1 Mount Everest: The Reconnaissance, 1921, p. 214.

2 Mount Everest: The Reconnaissance, 1921, pp. 304-5.
BETSY COWLES PARTRIDGE
MOUNTAINEER

Janet Robertson
To Kay Graber with gratitude
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