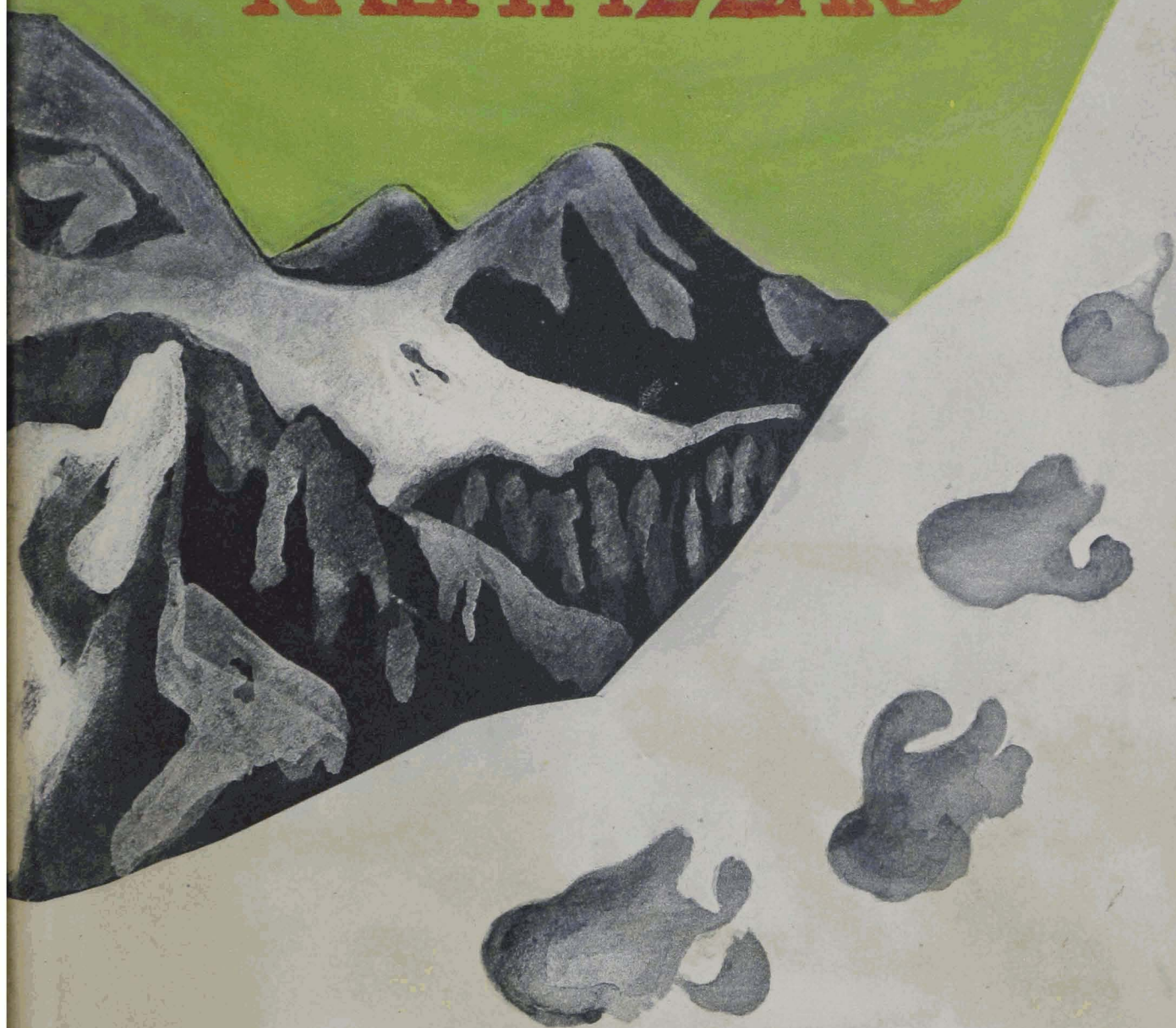
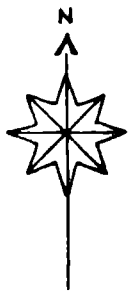
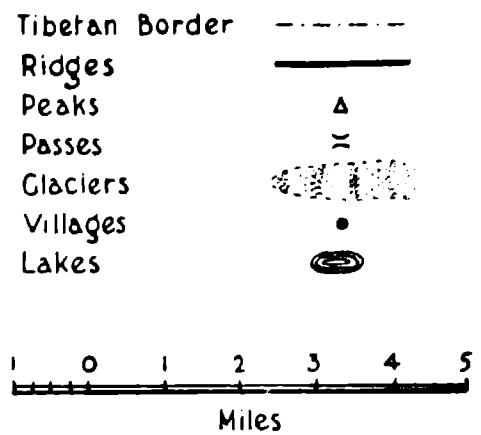
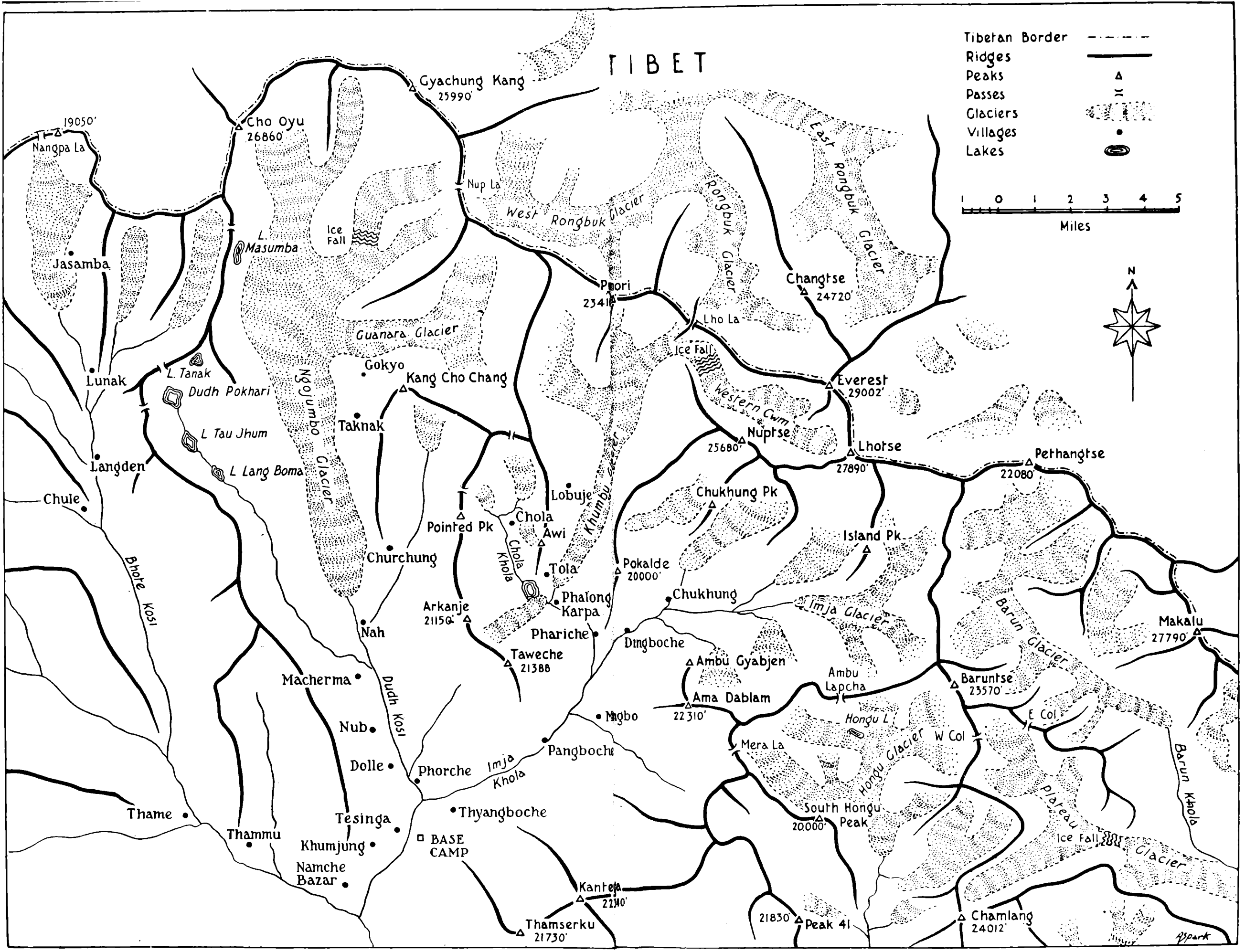


THE
ABOMINABLE SNOWMAN
ADVENTURE

by

RALPH IZZARD





TIBET

Gyachung Kang 25990'

Cho Oyu 26860'

Changtse 24720'

Everest 29002'

Pethangtse 22080'

Makalu 27790'

Baruntse 23570'

Ama Dablam 22310'

South Hongu Peak 20000'

Chamlang 24012'

Thamserku 21730'

Kantega 22340'

Arkanje 21156'

Taweche 21388'

Pokalde 20000'

Imja Glacier

Barun Glacier

Chamlang Glacier

Kang Cho Chang

Pointed Pk

Chukhung Pk

Island Pk

Nup La

Lho La

Lhorse

E Col

Hongu L

Mera La

plateau

Ice Fall

BASE CAMP

Macherma

Nub

Dolle

Phorche

Thyangboche

Tesing

Thammu

Khujung

Namche Bazar

Thame

Nah

Phariche

Phalong Karpa

Dingboche

Mogbo

Pangboche

Churchung

Lobuje

Chola

Awia

Tola

Chola Khola

Taknak

Gokyo

Guanara Glacier

Masumba

Ice Fall

L Masumba

L Tanak

Dudh Pokhari

L Tau Jhum

L Lang Boma

Lunak

Langden

Chule

Bhote Kosi

Dudh Kosi

Imja Khola

Khumbu Glacier

West Rongbuk Glacier

Rongbuk Glacier

East Rongbuk Glacier

Changtse

Western Cwm

Nuptse

Imja Glacier

Hongu Glacier

Hongu Glacier W Col

Peak 41

Barun Glacier

Barun Khola

Spark



The Head Lama of Khumjung Monastery unwraps and displays the "Yeti" scalp which is held there

THE
ABOMINABLE SNOWMAN
ADVENTURE

by
RALPH IZZARD

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FOREWORD

I HAD originally intended to term this book the "official" account of the *Daily Mail* Himalayan Expedition, 1954—the "Snowman Expedition" for short—but subsequently decided it would be unfair to my companions to do so. It must be borne in mind that this particular expedition was not concerned with flogging out a single track to the top of a major peak and back again; an adventure in which each episode is the common property of all members of the party. As soon as our nine-man team reached our Base Camp we split into parties of two, or at the most three, members and spread out over a very wide area. Sometimes we had as many as four parties in the field at the same time and some of us did not see others for weeks at a time. None of us had identical experiences and only rarely were all of us confronted with the same evidence. When it comes to pronouncing an opinion as to whether an Abominable Snowman really does exist or not it would thus be presumptuous for one man to speak for all of us. At least three other members of the expedition intend to go into print with their own accounts and an "official" book could only properly be described as all these books combined.

In my own story I have endeavoured to preserve balance by including as many as possible of the first-hand accounts sent back to Base Camp by the various search parties. I hope I will be excused for having included a disproportionately large number of my own adventures—I could not possibly have been in all places at once.

I am deeply grateful to all members of the team for their contributions to this book—some of which were written specially for me—and for the use of many of their photographs. The map is based on an original carefully prepared by John Jackson.

I also have to express my thanks to a number of outside contributors: to Reuter's News Agency and the British United Press for permission to reprint two messages each relating to "Snowmen" which were first disseminated by their news services; to Prince Peter of Greece and the editor of *The Statesman* (Calcutta) for permission to reproduce an article which Prince Peter originally wrote for that newspaper; to the Right Hon. the Earl Nelson and

the editor of the *Evening News* for permission to reproduce an article which Lord Nelson wrote for that paper and to Mr. Vladimir Tschernezky and the editor of the *Manchester Guardian* for permission to reprint an article which Mr. Tschernezky first wrote for the *Guardian*. After Mr. Tschernezky's article had appeared further evidence came to his hand to support his theory of the identification of the "Abominable Snowman" or "Yeti" and he generously suggested that I should include an additional paper of his upon the subject in this book. I was delighted to agree. Mr. J. P. Mills and Mr. F. H. Kingdon-Ward were both kind enough to write articles for the *Daily Mail* on scientific subjects relating to the expedition and these I have also included. Mr. G. Salisbury, the well-known lichenologist, has kindly contributed an appendix on the collection of lichens we were able to make at high altitude—the most comprehensive collection of its kind so far attempted.

The expedition as a whole is greatly indebted to Brigadier Sir John Hunt, C.B.E., D.S.O., and other members of the British Mount Everest Expedition, 1953, for much helpful advice regarding equipment and the terrain in which we operated; to Tenzing Norkey for choosing us a first-class team of Sherpas and to the Indian and Nepalese Governments for all manner of support and assistance, notably in the easing of Customs formalities. The *Daily Mail* Himalayan Expedition, 1954, was probably one of the best equipped and supplied expeditions ever sent to the Himalaya. In an appendix I include a list of firms which supplied us, firstly as acknowledgement of their services and secondly because at least three expeditions are now fitting out to continue the chase for the "Yeti" and I am constantly being asked which particular firm supplied this or that piece of equipment. We would all of us like to thank Mr. Stewart Bain of Messrs. Andrew Lusk, Wapping, London, who supervised the packing of our several tons of equipment and sacrificed his Christmas holiday with his family to ensure that we left England on time. Also Mr. H. S. Grainger, F.P.S., Pharmacist at Westminster Hospital, who assembled most of our medical equipment at very short notice indeed.

Finally I should like to thank my friend Colin MacFadyean for reading the proofs of this book and for legal advice, and my daughter, Christina, and Miss Louise Quinn for their patient and efficient secretarial assistance.

RALPH IZZARD.

Part One

THE CASE

“No man needs be the worse journalist for taking immense pains to be something beside.”

MAURICE HEWLETT

CHAPTER I

THE BIRTH OF THE YETI EXPEDITION

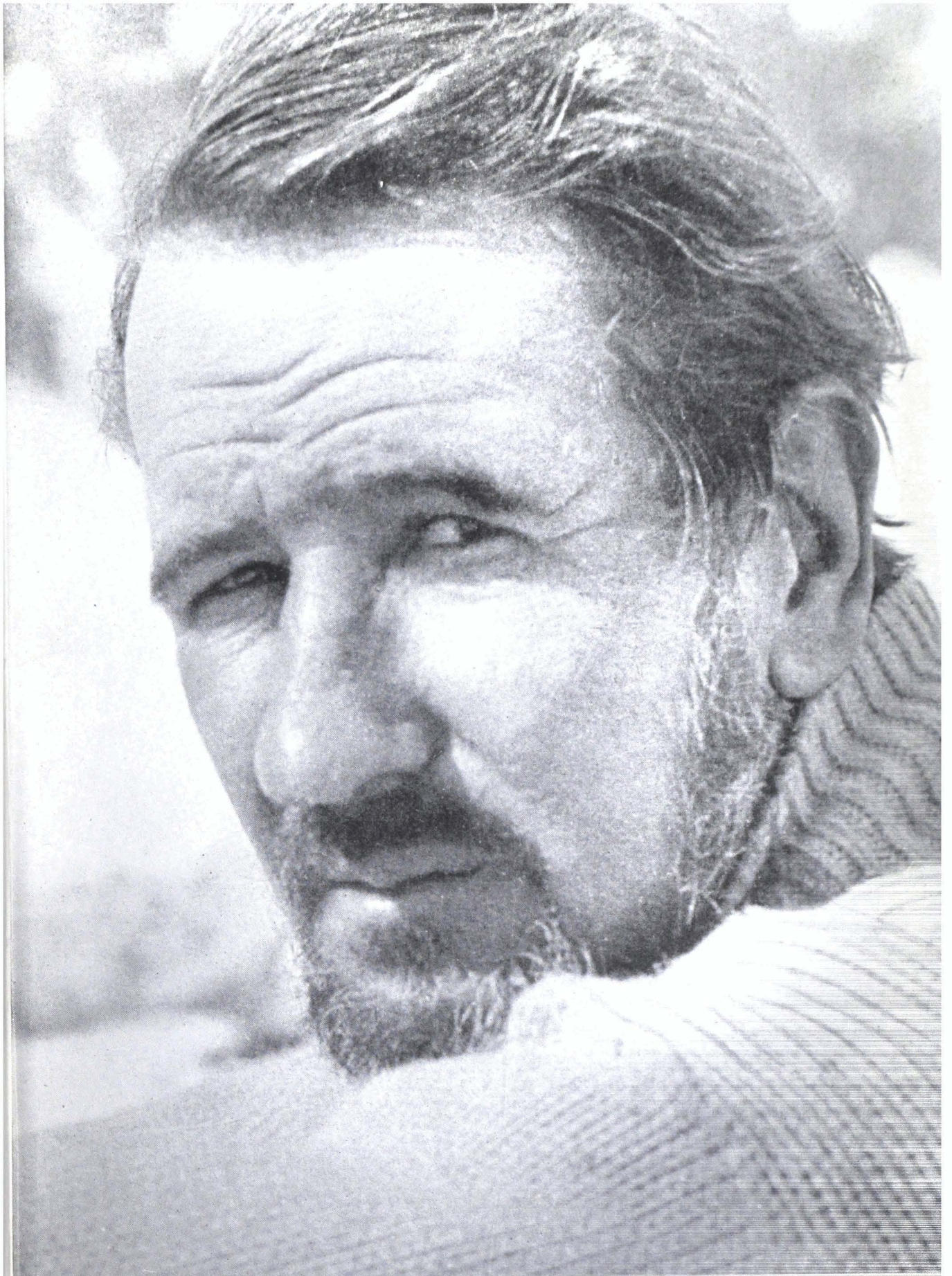
IT seems to be widely thought that the idea was mine. This is not strictly true. In the early months of 1953 I had no more ambition to chase Abominable Snowmen round Himalayan peaks than I had of becoming the Archbishop of Canterbury. From time to time I had read of Abominable Snowmen with the average reader's interest. In early 1952 in, I believe, an Egyptian newspaper, I had seen rather poor reproductions of photographs of Abominable Snowmen, or to use the Sherpa term, *Yeti* footprints taken by Eric Shipton on the Menlung Glacier during the Mount Everest Expedition Reconnaissance of 1951. Had I been then asked for an opinion of the footprints and had I been as articulate on the subject as H. W. Tilman I should probably have answered in his words: "If fingerprints can hang a man, as they frequently do, surely footprints may be allowed to establish the identity of one?"; but that would have ended the matter as far as I was concerned. My working area was the Middle East. I had left India in 1948 and never expected to be sent back there; certainly not to the independent Himalayan kingdom of Nepal which I had visited briefly as a very privileged guest in 1947, for in those days Nepal was almost impossible of access. It is true that during the leave I was granted in India I had made three treks through the Himalaya. I had gone strictly as a mountain traveller and not as a mountaineer. Not being an ardent climber I prefer to look up my mountains from the bottom rather than look down them from the top. I cannot remember one single occasion when I and my companions on those three excursions as much as discussed Abominable Snowmen. But the time was to come when for weeks on end I was to discuss and dream of nothing else.

In February 1953, because someone in my London office remembered that I had travelled in the Himalaya, I suddenly found myself ordered to report on the course of the forthcoming British Mount Everest Expedition. I was in Cairo at the time. I have described the emotions I felt when I heard the news in my book *The*

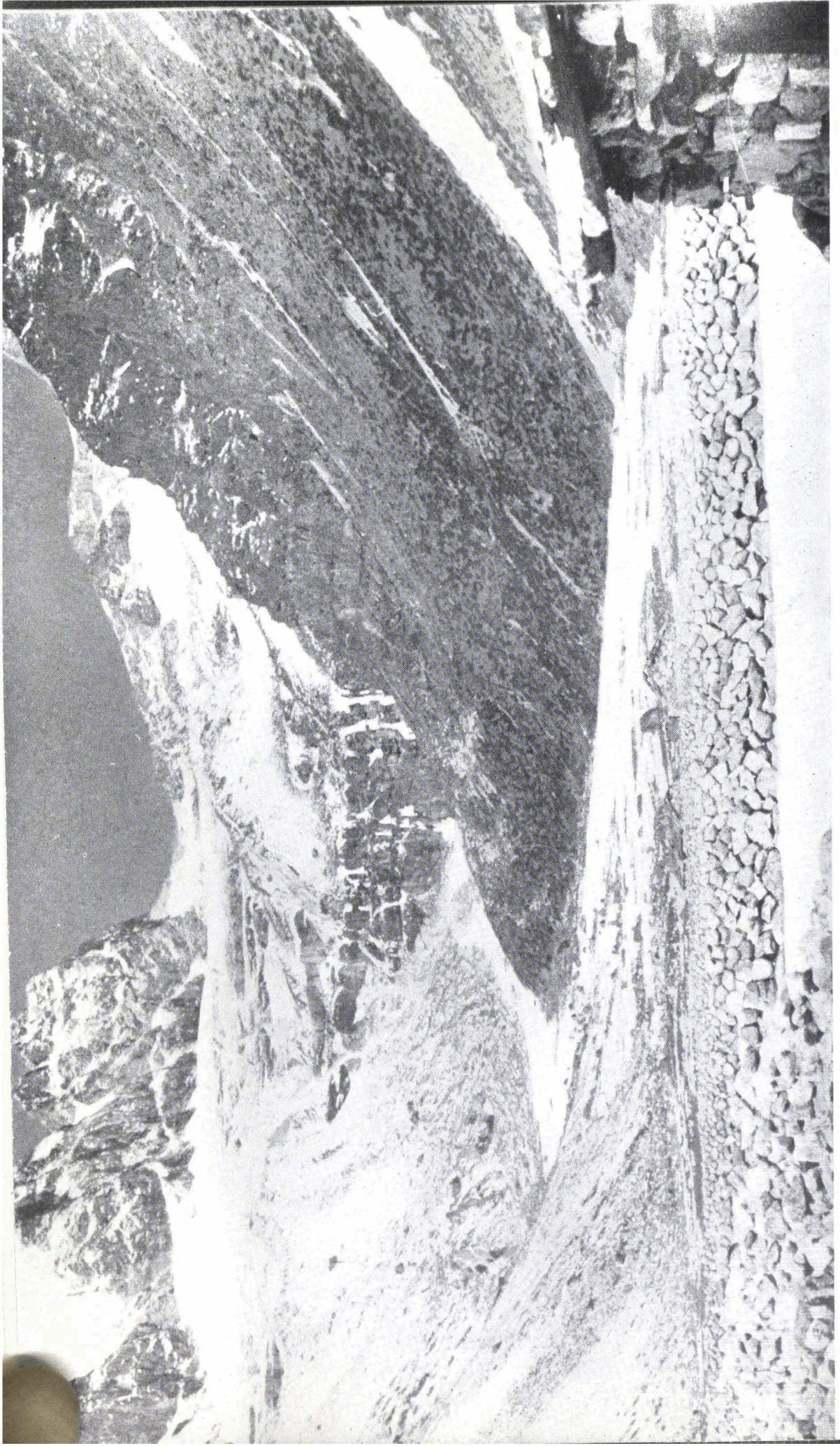
Innocent on Everest. For the purposes of this story it is only necessary for me to repeat that I was extremely dubious about the whole venture. I knew that all members of the expedition would be told to say nothing to the correspondents of any newspaper other than *The Times*, of London, who had bought exclusive rights to the Everest story. However, no foreign correspondent worth his salt questions his orders, so I packed my bags and with a heavy heart prepared to take a beating.

I arrived in New Delhi, where I had been instructed to pick up my visa for Nepal, towards the end of February. On 3rd March I was sitting in an aircraft bound from Delhi to Katmandu. With me in the aircraft were Colonel (now Brigadier Sir John) Hunt and Tom Bourdillon of the Everest Expedition. This was a complete coincidence, for their plane from London had been delayed twenty-four hours and by rights they should have travelled from Delhi on the previous day. It was the first of two coincidences. In Delhi I had suddenly become panic-stricken at my lack of mountaineering knowledge and jargon, and of Everest history in particular, and I had therefore bought up every book on the subject I could find. Among these books was Tilman's *Mount Everest, 1938*, which contains what has been described as the "notorious" Appendix B: "Anthropological or Zoological Department with particular reference to the Abominable Snowman." Yeti purists may argue that Tilman treats his subject with unbecoming levity, but it cannot be denied that the appendix is a vastly entertaining essay and at the time it appeared, 1947, it was the most comprehensive review of the theme ever compiled. Almost everyone—scientific experts excepted—who has subsequently written an Abominable Snowman has drawn liberally from Appendix B, either to quote some of Tilman's inimitable phrases or to cite evidence of existence contained therein. Many men have also faithfully copied certain errors which must, I feel, afford Mr. Tilman amusement, especially where no acknowledgment as to source is made.

Sitting in the Delhi-Katmandu aircraft I had become engrossed in Appendix B when the second coincidence occurred. I came upon a passage which relates the experience of a certain Captain John Hunt who came across Abominable Snowman footprints while exploring the Zemu Gap, in Sikkim, in 1937. It took no great intelligence on my part to deduce that the Captain John Hunt of 1937 must be the Colonel John Hunt of 1953 and accordingly I broached the subject with him at Lucknow, where we stopped to put down and pick up



Ralph Izzard



Macherma Valley where Tenzing Norkey's father was besieged in a yak hut by a Yeti

passengers. Talking to Colonel Hunt I was at once struck with the sincerity of his conviction that the Abominable Snowman exists and for the first time I began to take the matter seriously. He ended our conversation by saying: "In my opinion the time has come for the organisation of an expedition charged with the sole task of investigating the Yeti on a proper scientific basis." This, then, was the real genesis of what was to become the *Daily Mail* Himalayan Expedition, 1954. The idea was Colonel Hunt's; he put it into my head and in due course I communicated our conversation to London. It seemed to me that if a man of Colonel Hunt's standing felt that a Yeti expedition was justified, somewhere, at some time, a sponsor would be found. It was possible my London office might not be interested but I felt that at least they would like to be apprised of the situation.

Having written to London and having received no immediate reply on this subject I forgot about Abominable Snowmen for the time being. Other difficulties were plentiful enough to occupy me. In Katmandu contact with members of the Everest Expedition proved quite as difficult to maintain as I had anticipated. Within a week they had left Katmandu outward bound on the long trek to Everest. Despair at having lost touch with the story completely caused me to organise a rag-tag-and-bobtail expedition of my own to follow them. It was not until 26th March that I could complete my own preparations, hurried as they were. On 13th April, having walked straight through from Katmandu, with no pause for acclimatisation, I arrived at what was to become the Base Camp of the Everest Expedition at the head of the Khumbu Glacier and immediately beneath the forbidding ice-fall which leads up to the Western Cwm. When I arrived it had just been occupied by an advance reconnaissance party headed by Edmund Hillary. It was early afternoon and Hillary himself, accompanied by George Band and Mike Westmacott, were absent probing up in the ice-fall high above us. In the camp were George Lowe, Dr. Griffith Pugh and Tom Stobart. I could spend only an hour in the camp as I had to return to my own quarters half-way down the Khumbu Glacier by nightfall.

In some manner which I cannot now remember the topic of the Abominable Snowman cropped up as we sat drinking tea in one of the tents. John Hunt had infected other members of the expedition with his enthusiasm, although it had been made quite clear that on the present expedition nothing would be allowed to distract attention from the main objective—the ascent of Everest. However, Tom

Stobart—who has an Honours Degree in Zoology at Sheffield University—confessed himself to be a Yeti enthusiast and added that he and other members of the expedition were already thinking in terms of a second expedition to investigate the Yeti, providing the money could be found. Here I stated, with I fear very little justification, that there was a remote possibility I might find the money. We agreed to join forces if all went well. To be frank we were indulging in pipe dreams, or possibly more accurately high-altitude dreams, which amount to the same thing.

I might add that as regards the Yeti John Hunt had found a champion in Tenzing Norkey who on one occasion had aroused everyone's interest by relating a camp-fire yarn concerning his own father. I include the story at this point, although I did not myself hear the full details until many months later.

According to Tenzing, his father once had an alarming encounter with a Yeti at the yak herds' village of Macherma.¹ Tenzing senior had taken his yaks and goats to Macherma in order that they might profit by the summer grazing. One day he had taken his cattle down to the valley floor to pasture as usual when he suddenly saw them herd together in extreme alarm. He seized his staff, fearing a wolf or leopard, but on looking round was astonished to see that the cause of the excitement was what seemed to him to be a small man who was bounding down the mountain-side towards the central stream. The creature was covered with reddish-brown hair and was about five feet tall. The skull was conical in shape and the hair of the head being especially long, it fell over the animal's eyes. The features were those of an ape but the mouth was especially wide showing prominent teeth. The creature walked on two legs like a man. Tenzing senior was now a very frightened man; he was convinced he was confronted with a Yeti and rounding up his yaks, who needed no encouragement, he drove them into one of the stone huts and barred the door. This did not deter the Yeti which sprang

¹Macherma—altitude 16,000 feet—is a small collection of stone huts at the mouth of a narrow valley which runs into the major valley of the Dudh Kosi river. It is a good day's march upstream from Thyangboche monastery. Macherma valley is steep-sided and bounded by 20,000 feet peaks on either hand. It carries a small stream which emanates from two minor glaciers at its head. The col between the two peaks can be reached from the Dudh Kosi, or eastern side, but is unattainable from the west, where the cliffs fall sheer to the Bhote Kosi river. The valley is therefore a cul-de-sac. The stone huts are used by yak herds in late spring and summer but are deserted in winter when snow lies deeply. Although it seemed a unlikely place compared with the neighbouring country, Macherma was frequently visited by members of the *Daily Mail* Expedition, for Yeti footprints were often seen there.

on the building and began to dislodge a portion of the roof. (This would not be difficult for roofs in Macherma are constructed of shingles held down by boulders.) Hoping to drive the Yeti away Tenzing senior now lit a fire of damp dwarf juniper boughs and to increase the acidity of the smoke added a handful of dried chillies for good measure. This had the desired effect, for, after bringing down part of the roof on the unfortunate yaks, the Yeti jumped to the ground and ran in circles tearing up small shrubs and uprooting rocks from the turf, chattering with rage. Finally the Yeti retreated up the mountain leaving broad tracks in the snow. Shortly after this encounter, Tenzing senior became gravely ill, a development which was somewhat naturally ascribed by the local Sherpa population to "the curse of the Yeti."

So much for Tenzing Norkey's story, it being only necessary to add that he is not himself a superstitious man. Were he so, he would never have violated the stronghold of the gods by climbing to the top of Mount Everest.

I retreated down the Khumbu Glacier on 13th April, 1953, rapidly convincing myself that, whether a Yeti expedition ever materialised or not, it was my duty to collect as much evidence of the existence of the creature as I could. In this I was largely disappointed. I had no interpreter with me and when I arrived at Namche Bazaar, which I regarded as the probable centre of Yeti lore, I learned that the only man who would swear to having seen a Yeti at close quarters was away on a journey to another village. The local schoolmaster, a recent import from Darjeeling and therefore probably not the most knowledgeable authority, stated that there were two kinds of Yeti, a larger and a smaller. The larger lived "*there*," he said, pointing vaguely in the direction of Mount Everest, and the smaller "*there*," waving equally vaguely in the direction of the lower Dudh Kosi valley. So much for Namche Bazaar.

Arrived back in Katmandu at the end of that month, I asked Mrs. Proud, wife of Colonel R. R. Proud, First Secretary and Gurkha Recruiting Officer at the British Embassy, for her opinion. Mrs. Proud, although primarily an ornithologist, is entitled to be regarded as an all-round naturalist and she gave me her view that the mysterious footprints seen in the Himalayan snows at high altitude were probably those of a bear. (This was a sensible answer for there is little doubt that some European travellers, inexperienced in animal tracks, have in the past mistaken bear tracks for Yeti footprints and have claimed them as such. Therefore Mrs. Proud can be regarded

as partly right. She is certainly nearer the mark than certain British Museum experts who held, and possibly still hold, the opinion that Yeti tracks are made by langur monkeys. If the *Daily Mail* Expedition proved anything at all it is that whatever animal may leave Yeti footprints it is certainly not a langur.)

From Katmandu I went down to Calcutta for a medical check-up. I had lost a lot of weight during my five weeks' trek to Everest and back and I had also suffered severely from fever. The check-up required a number of tests to be made, of which the results would not be known for a week. As I sat in Spence's Hotel awaiting the result (I was subsequently passed A.1 and in need only of food and sleep) I had a brainwave regarding the Yeti. The headquarters of the Zoological Survey of India are in Calcutta and it occurred to me that they must have either an Abominable Snowman file or an official who would have some worthwhile views on the Yeti. Accordingly, I called on the Director, Dr. S. L. Hora, only to find that he was absent on tour. I was, however, most hospitably received by the Acting Director, Dr. K. S. Misra. Courteously refraining from laughter when I mentioned the subject of my visit, Dr. Misra confessed that he was not a specialist on Snowmen and referred me to Dr. Biswamoy Biswas, Curator of the Mammals Section of the Calcutta Museum. He provided me with a messenger to show me the way to the museum. I found Dr. Biswas surrounded by innumerable bottles (scientific), jars, specimens, reference books and papers of all kinds—the paraphernalia of a practising zoologist.

I cannot remember all the details of our conversation; it began spontaneously and continued to flow easily. I soon learned that Dr. Biswas, still only 30, had travelled widely. He had studied at both the British Museum and the American Museum of Natural History, New York, and all-important from my point of view, he had taken part in a number of collecting expeditions in India, Sikkim and Nepal. He had in fact only recently returned from spending an entire winter season in Sikkim, the hill state which adjoins Nepal to the east. Now Sikkim has in the past provided quite as good evidence of the existence of Yeti as Nepal and it is there that most of the sightings of Yeti by Europeans have been recorded. Dr. Biswas had heard many Yeti tales while in Sikkim, but he preserved an open mind as to the possible identity of the creature. When I asked him whether the Zoological Survey had ever contemplated sending out an expedition to attempt to clear up the mystery he replied that all available funds were needed to complete work already on hand. It was there-

fore impossible for the Survey to allocate funds for what, in the best of circumstances, could only be regarded as a pure gamble. I then asked him whether, if the money could be found elsewhere, the Survey would be prepared to nominate an officer—if possible himself, for I had taken an immediate liking to Dr. Biswas—to a Yeti expedition. He answered, with that rare sparkle in the eye which denotes the true adventurer, that provided he could obtain permission he would be delighted to join. We were, of course, still talking in hypotheses but I could not help congratulating myself that, if ever a Yeti expedition were to materialise and I had any part in it, we already had a sound nucleus in Tom Stobart and Biswamoy Biswas, two expert zoologists, men of action and experienced Himalayan travellers. Before we parted, “Bis,” as we came to know him, made the sound suggestion, to which I at once agreed, that we should attempt to obtain the services of a second mammalogist from the British Museum. If it so happened that we made a discovery of supreme importance to the scientific world he would prefer to have a second opinion when it came to definite identification.

From Calcutta I returned to Katmandu to wait out the anxious days of the final assault on Everest and to take part in the general rejoicing when on 2nd June news of the successful ascent reached us—via a radio broadcast from America, for *The Times* copyright precluded the immediate announcement of the conquest in the kingdom to which the mountain physically belonged. I did not wait long enough in Katmandu to greet the returning climbers. I had still far from recovered my health and I flew home to Cyprus for a brief convalescence.

I arrived in London early in July. Up to the time of my arrival I had heard nothing at all from my London office in reply to my suggestions of a Yeti expedition. I had begun to imagine that my proposals had been read and then dismissed as too fantastic to merit answer. It would not have surprised me in the least had this been the case. In fact it was by no means the case, as I was very soon to find out.

CHAPTER II

THE YETI DOSSIER IS STARTED

ALMOST the first words spoken to me by Mr. Leonard Curtis, foreign editor of the *Daily Mail*, when I entered his office at Northcliffe House were: "If you are still keen on that Abominable Snowman expedition of yours I believe 'they' would consider it favourably." ("They" meant our superiors.) Mr. Curtis, I may mention, was the man who had first thought of sending me to Everest. This excursion had been rated a success and, being of an adventurous turn of mind, he was already prepared to risk another gamble. Whether we could launch the new project depended, he said, on how well I could present my case.

On the same day I was able to outline my scheme to the then editor, Mr. Guy Schofield, who listened with lively interest. It thus came about that in due course I found myself repeating my story to Mr. Stewart Maclean, the Managing Director. Mr. Maclean was sympathetic and, when I left him, it was with the promise that he would seek a favourable opportunity to place the scheme before the chairman, Lord Rothermere. It was, however, becoming obvious, and quite understandably so, that the higher the altitude one ascended in Northcliffe House, the more pertinent were becoming the questions regarding finance, composition of a possible party, and so on.

After some days had elapsed, during which I was occupied with other work, I was suddenly asked for a paper containing the best available evidence of the existence of Abominable Snowmen. A scientist confronted with a similar request would no doubt modestly have answered, that given, say, three months he might possibly be able to prepare a short précis on the subject. But newspaper offices work under high pressure and with disconcerting speed; noon the next day was the deadline I was given by which to produce my paper. In some despair, I had recourse to Tilman's well-thumbed Appendix B, drew from it liberally, added an extract or two from his *Nepal Himalaya*, a paragraph from Eric Shipton's *Mount Everest Reconnaissance, 1951*, and a few observations of my own, completed my

essay and presented it some hours before the deadline. I was far from happy with the finished work and during the time it was circulated for consideration it occurred to me that if ever a Yeti expedition were to materialise it would need as complete a dossier as possible on its subject. I therefore set about compiling such a dossier in the hope that it might prove useful and in the knowledge that, whatever happened, it would afford me much amusement. In this last belief I was not wrong, for I soon found myself combing through a mass of fascinating material.

Many more years ago than most of us care to think of—in the Miocene Period—great apes *did* exist in the Himalaya and their fossilised remains have been discovered north of Simla. I quote from Dorothy Davison's *Men of the Dawn*:

“The Miocene [period] is of unusual interest. It was a great land and mountain building age, when the Himalayas and the Alps were fashioned. The climate was cooler than in the previous age, but warmer than it is today. By this time apes had developed enormously. The Sivalik Hills in North India seem to have been their headquarters, and thence they spread to Africa and as far west as Europe in great numbers. Amongst them are generalised types such as *Dryopithecus*, which became extinct, and others which eventually evolved into chimpanzees, orang-outangs, and gorillas. These fossil apes had shorter faces, more rounded skulls, and more human teeth than modern apes. The adults looked very like the young apes of today, which pass through an ancestral stage before they reach the more specialised condition of adult life.”

I believe I am right in thinking that comparatively recently in time the orang-outang, now confined to South-East Asia, once enjoyed a far wider distribution than at present and was found as far north as parts of China. Turning to modern history, there is a popular and quite erroneous belief that the first recorded occasion on which tracks “like a human being's” were seen at great altitudes was during the first Everest reconnaissance of 1921, when Colonel C. A. Howard-Bury saw them at nearly 22,000 feet close to the Lhakpa La. In fact, the first reference which I have been able to find to footprints and *Yeti*, *Mi-go*, *Kang-mi*, *Shukpa*, or whatever one likes to call them, for the endearing term “Abominable Snowman” had not then been invented, dates from as long ago as 1887—Colonel W. A. Waddell mentioning them in his book *Adventures in the Himalaya*. I am

informed that the first white man ever to have seen a Yeti was Henry Elwes, the noted Himalayan explorer, most of whose journeys were made at the turn of the century. He was primarily a botanist and horticulturist and on the slopes of Everest he discovered the giant snowdrop now marketed commercially as *Snowdrop Elwesii*.

H. J. Elwes encountered the Yeti in Tibet in 1906. He was in the habit of making copious notes and careful sketches of all he saw; he made very complete records of the haunts and appearance of the creature and the footprints it left in the snow and gave geographical references as to where it might be found. The original handwritten notes were seen by members of the Royal Botanical Gardens before the 1914 war. They were also seen by members of the Royal Geographical Society, of which Elwes was a Fellow, and by members of his family all but one of whom are now dead. Most regrettably the notes have been mislaid, but it is believed that they may still be stored among thousands of books and records in the Great Library of the family home, Colesbourne House, an old mansion set high in the Cotswolds, or in the Estate Offices. Should the notes ever come to light they may supply us with the most complete data concerning the Yeti ever compiled.

Mr. Elwes' name recurs once more in connection with Yeti history. It is recorded in the "Proceedings of the Zoological Society for 1915" that at a scientific meeting on 27th April of that year, he read the following extract of a letter from Mr. J. R. O. Gent, Forest Officer of the Darjeeling Division, on the possible existence of a large ape unknown to science in Sikkim:

"I have discovered the existence of another animal but cannot make out what it is, a large monkey or ape perhaps—if there were any apes in India. It is a beast of very high elevations, and only goes down to Phalut in cold weather. It is covered with longish brown hair, face also hairy, the ordinary yellow-brown colour of the Bengal monkey. It stands about four feet high and goes about on the ground chiefly, though I think it can also climb.

"The peculiar feature is that its tracks are about eighteen inches or two feet long, and toes point in the opposite direction to that in which the animal is moving. The breadth of the track is about six inches. I take it he walks on his knees and shins instead of on the soles of his feet. He is known as the *jungli admi* or *songpa*. One was worrying a lot of coolies working in the forest below Phalut in December; they were very frightened and would not go in to work.

I set off as soon as I could to bag the beast, but before I arrived the forester had been letting off a gun and frightened it away, so I saw nothing. An old *chowkidar* of Phalut told me he had frequently seen them in the snow there, and confirmed the description of the tracks.

“It is a thing that practically no Englishman has ever heard of, but all the natives of the higher villages know about it. All I can say is that it is not the Nepal Langur, but I’ve impressed upon people up there that I want information the next time one is about.”

There is no record that any further information regarding this unwelcome visitor ever came to hand.

Other pre-1921 references to ape-like creatures could however be quoted, and the sole significance of Colonel Howard-Bury’s report of footprints like those of human beings on Everest, is that it was following this discovery that the term “Abominable Snowman” came to be foisted on the author of the prints. According to H. W. Tilman, the creator of this phrase was “a certain Mr. Henry Newman of Darjeeling,” who was translating the Tibetan words *metch Kang-mi*, *Kang-mi* meaning snowman, and *metch*, filthy or disgusting, hence abominable. To insert a small quibble here, I feel Mr. Henry Newman would have preferred to be described as “of Calcutta,” which was his permanent home. A wit, and possibly something of an eccentric, for many years he contributed a charmingly written series of essays to *The Statesman* (of Calcutta) using the pen-name “Kim.” I quote from *The Statesman*’s own appreciation of a valued servant. “No notice of the many men who have been associated with *The Statesman* would be complete without Henry Newman. Originally on the staff of *The Englishman*, he contributed to our pages, after transferring his allegiance, a daily column over the signature ‘Kim,’ which became perhaps the paper’s most popular feature and was widely quoted abroad. It revealed a knowledge of Indian life almost unique, written lightly, but with a scholar’s touch.

“Newman had seen service as a war correspondent in every Frontier campaign. He could display on occasion an array of medals rivalling those of a general. He knew the Frontier and the Army, was a master of more than one Indian tongue, and a deep student of Indian literature. His work was not confined to his daily column. On occasion he could write a brilliant leading article on one of the many sides of Indian life with which he was familiar.

“When in 1935, failing sight compelled him to retire from India,

he continued to contribute his column for several years from his new home in Kent, dictating to a secretary. He died in 1942."

Where Mr. Tilman is more seriously at fault is in using the word *metch*, which I now know does not exist in the Tibetan language. Almost everyone who has subsequently written on the Abominable Snowman (including myself in earlier writings) has perpetuated this error. In my case I suffered the deserved fate of the copyist. Soon after I had used the word *metch* in the *Daily Mail*, Mr. N. E. Odell—whose heroic efforts to locate Mallory and Irvine after their disappearance on Everest in 1924 has won him a permanent place in the history of the mountain—wrote to Tom Stobart, who was to become the leader of the *Daily Mail* Expedition, pointing out that the word should be written *metoh* and not *metch*. In this he was supported by Mr. B. Leeson, who, however, stated in a card to me that his Nepalis translated *metoh Kangmi* as "Demon Snowmen." Mr. Leeson added that during his forty years in India he had "*heard* (not seen) your snowmen." He concluded: "Good luck to your Expedition—but they are easier to meet in September or October in the lower hills, for they come down to the deep gorges to feed on the berries and little apples, etc."

To try and clear up the *metch*, *metoh* controversy I later approached Professor David Snellgrove, of the London School of Oriental Studies, and a recognised authority on the Tibetan language. He at once dismissed *metch* stating that it was impossible to conjoin the consonants "t c h" in Tibetan. He threw an additional spanner in the works by adding that he had also never heard of the word *metoh* although it was unobjectionable as regards construction and might possibly occur in some near-Tibetan dialect. The important thing is that, whatever effect Mr. Newman intended, from 1921 onwards the Yeti—or whatever various native populations choose to call it—became saddled with the description "Abominable Snowman," an appellation which can only appeal more to the music-hall mind than to mammalogists, a fact which has seriously handicapped earnest seekers after truth.

It cannot be denied however that Mr. Newman put the Yeti "on the map." During the twenties and thirties sightings both of prints and of the animal itself occurred right across the Himalaya from the Burmese frontier to the Karakoram, not all of them by credulous witnesses. The most arresting account of a sighting is that given by Mr. A. N. Tombazi in his "Account of a Photographic Reconnaissance of the Kanchenjunga Massif." In 1925 Mr. Tombazi, then a

member of the firm of Ralli Brothers in India, was camping in Sikkim near the Zemu Gap. He was suddenly summoned from his tent by his Sherpas who excitedly claimed to have seen a Yeti. "The blinding sunlight made it impossible at first to see anything, but I soon perceived the object, two or three hundred yards down the valley. There was no doubt that its outline was like that of a human being; it walked upright, bending down from time to time to pull out a few dried-up rhododendrons. Against the snow it looked dark, and apparently it wore no clothes. Within the next minute or so it had moved into some thick scrub and disappeared. I examined the footprints, which resembled those of a human being, although they were only six to seven inches in length. The five toes and the instep were clearly visible, but the imprint of the heel was very slight. The prints were undoubtedly those of a biped. From enquiries I gathered that no human being had been in this area since the beginning of the year. The coolies naturally trotted out fantastic legends of demons and snowmen. Without in the least believing these delicious fairy tales, notwithstanding the plausible yarns told by the natives, I am at a loss to express any definite opinion. I can only reiterate with certainty that the silhouette of the mysterious being was identical with the outline of a human figure."

I include the above account because it is a classic of its kind which it would be difficult to omit. As Mr. Tilman later wrote in *Everybody's* magazine: "Mr. Tombazi, with his 'fantastic legends' and 'delicious fairy tales' is evidently a hostile witness and his testimony is all the more valuable. One cannot but regret that these tracks were not followed up; perhaps the rhododendron scrub was too thick or the porters too scared."

Regarding the sightings either of footprints or of the creature itself which have been recorded in recent years I leave Sir John Hunt, Mr. Eric Shipton and Mr. Slavomir Rawicz to tell their stories in their own words later in this narrative. There have been other remarkable encounters with Yeti since the last war.

Writing in *Argosy* (February 1954) a member of the Second Swiss Mount Everest Expedition of 1952, Mr. Norman G. Dyhrenfurth, claims that on 4th November, 1952, a Yeti interfered with his tent where it was pitched at Camp V, altitude 23,000 feet. The incident, he says, occurred at one o'clock in the morning. He awoke with a sense of suffocation, to hear crunching sounds on the snow, the rattling of cans and stertorous breathing. His feelings of suffocation he attributes to an overpowering musky stench, which pervaded the

atmosphere in spite of a hundred-mile-an-hour gale blowing outside. Unable to stand the suspense any longer Dyhrenfurth unzipped his tent and stepped outside with his ice-axe. He found nothing, nor were any footprints visible the next morning when he examined the snow—it had been packed too hard by the wind. But his Sherpas confirmed that the camp had been visited by a Yeti. Dyhrenfurth adds that that same spring members of the first Swiss Everest Expedition not only found tracks between Lobuje and their base camp but also came upon what looked like the sleeping quarters of several Yeti. He continues: “On our own second Swiss Expedition, that fall, one of the coolies was attacked by an Abominable Snowman. His yells for help brought the others running. They chased the Yeti away before any of us could see or photograph the creature.” In fairness to the Yeti, and in order to escape the charge that I am including only favourable evidence in this summary, I may say that none of the Swiss Expedition’s Sherpas to whom I subsequently spoke can recall this incident. In the same spirit of objectivity, I now add an extract from *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. CXIX (part 3):

“The First Expedition to Mount Everest, 1952,” by Dr. Eduard Wyse-Dunant, the Swiss leader:

The Abominable Snowman.

“On April 18, the snow still covered the moraines from a height of 4,500 metres along the Khumbu Glacier. A heavy fog hampered the observations of the patrol which was sent to reconnoitre the exact spot of the Base Camp, and it came back without realising that it had unwittingly put to flight the mysterious being which haunts the mountains of Himalaya. There it was that I discerned traces crossing the icy surface of a small frozen lake, and on the same evening Professor Lombard arrived at the Base Camp announcing that he had followed Yeti traces for a long way. These traces all came from the West Col, which we dubbed the ‘Yeti Col,’ and which connects the Lobuje Valley with the Western Valley. We began by examining the traces on the frozen lake. They were somewhat blurred and much smaller than those we followed afterwards in the valley towards the col. I then discovered several tracks, three of which were undeniable, and of which we took the measurements. The plantar surface was 25 to 30 cm. long (according to the age of the specimen) and 12 to 15 cm. wide, which corresponds to the dimension

given by Shipton; the traces on the lake did not exceed 20 cm. in length. The stride was 35 cm. long and the steps absolutely rectilinear. The depth of the track indicated an animal of good size but not enormous, and we reckoned the weight of the beast to be between 80 and 100 kilos. On examining the tracks closely, although they had been altered by wind and by snow fallen between April 18 and 23, you could distinguish five toes, only three of which showed claws. The thumb was generally turned backwards and deeply marked; on two tracks I noted at the back of the heel two triangular imprints, probably tufts of hair. We finally stopped before an obstacle in the animal's path, a rock behind which was the deep mark of three paws close together, the fourth being suspended for the next jump over another rock. Beyond this, the same traces of three paws together recurred, while the fourth marked the first stride. The track that followed was rectilinear. Farther on, I saw three tracks, one coming from the moraines and the others from the vale; they met and continued as though a single animal had pursued its way. These Yeti are true alpinists, walking in each other's footsteps.

"The following conclusions can, I think, be drawn:

- (a) We have to deal with a quadruped; this is proved by the jump over the rock.
- (b) The Yeti doesn't live alone, but in a family: the converging tracks, the footprints of different size confirm this, as does the track on the lake which indicates a young specimen.
- (c) Its weight may be reckoned at about 100 kilos.
- (d) The footprints belong to a plantigrade with five toes.
- (e) Behind the footprints are found, in certain specimens of evidently adult footprints, the double triangular mark of tufts of hair.

"This last mark, not without importance, is not visible on the excellent photograph of the fresh track taken by Smythe, nor on Shipton's photograph.

"I could find no trace of meals, nor yet of excrements, and this confirms the hypothesis that the animal is only passing through and that it does not frequent these heights; we should at least have found a place of refuge if not a lair if the Yeti was living and hunting in the neighbourhood. I rather think it passes over the cols only when, having scoured one valley, it tries to reach another. This bear is a wanderer, avoiding the zones inhabited by men and making for the high altitudes haunted by the panther—a wild beast of which the Yeti

appears to have no fear. I don't think one can say more. The information given by the natives is always inconsistent and it is difficult to distinguish legend from reality. Let us therefore await patiently the day when explorers will come back with photographs of the beast itself or, maybe, the very skin of the bear *Ursus arctos isabellinus*, according to the conclusion of the late P. E. Pocock of the British Museum."

The last instance I intend to mention in this chapter is the only known physical encounter between a European and a Yeti. (There are a number of tales of Sherpas being either mauled or killed by a Yeti and one tale of a Yeti wrestling with, and being defeated by, a Sherpa strongman.)

Professor G. O. Dyhrenfurth, father of Norman G. Dyhrenfurth, relates in his book *Zum dritten Pol*, an astonishing story of a battle between two Norwegian prospectors and two Yeti which occurred in 1948. The Norwegians, Aage Thorberg and Jan Frostis, were searching for radio-active minerals in Sikkim on behalf of the Indian Government when, on 11th June, their Sherpas sighted the footprints of Yeti in the vicinity of the Zemu Gap. The two prospectors, each with an automatic rifle, and accompanied by their two Hindu assistants and two Sherpas, followed up the tracks. Several hours later Thorberg sighted two silhouettes above the party and through his glasses made them out to be two "apes" with brown hairy backs and heads of human shape. Splitting into two, the party executed a pincer movement and Frostis and one Sherpa having approached the animals, and got above them by using a hidden pass, sped down towards them on skis. Re-telling the story afterwards in *Argosy* Norman Dyhrenfurth continues: "Taken by surprise, the two apes came to a halt and stood up on their hind legs. Long shaggy hair covered their entire bodies with the exception of their faces, which remained curiously bare. Their eyes were half-hidden beneath bushy brows. Their height was that of a medium-sized man, and they had long furry tails."

Frostis had been able to approach close to the animals and he was joined by Thorberg. Showing no signs of fear the "apes" reared up, growling deeply and baring yellowish fangs. Signalling his companion not to shoot, Thorberg took his climbing rope, tied a running noose in it and dropped it over one of the creatures. The animal at once jerked the noose loose and at the same moment its companion jumped on Frostis knocking him over and mauling his shoulder

severely. Thorberg now dropped the rope and seizing his rifle fired one shot which wounded the animal attacking Frostis. The report of the rifle so frightened the "apes" that they broke off the fight and took flight over a neighbouring col. The fact that Frostis was badly injured precluded any idea of immediate pursuit and when the chase was taken up the following day a heavy snowstorm blotted out the trail and caused the hunt to be abandoned. The only comment I have to make on this incident is that according to all other accounts describing Yeti that I have come across they do not have long furry tails; nor, for that matter, do apes.¹

At this stage I do not propose to recount any further stories concerning Yeti or to sum up our conclusions as to their identity, for I feel it will be more amusing for the reader to draw his own conclusions as the evidence unfolds itself before him at the same pace as it unfolded before us.

¹Since my return I have tried to obtain further proof of the authenticity of this story both in India and Norway. So far I have failed and, until I succeed, am personally inclined to treat it with reserve. R.I.

CHAPTER III

THE EXPEDITION TAKES SHAPE— MORE EVIDENCE

TOWARDS the end of July I received the glad news that the *Daily Mail* Management was prepared to launch a Yeti expedition. Their agreement was, however, subject to two conditions. Firstly, overall expenditure must be limited to a certain ceiling; secondly, all members selected to take part must be experienced men of standing and repute in the scientific world. In other words, the expedition was not to be allowed to become merely a Himalayan holiday for a party of climbing enthusiasts. It was hoped that a number of the members of the successful Everest Expedition would accept invitations to join and also that the approval and support of the British Museum would be forthcoming.

Tom Stobart had now arrived back in England and I was thankful to find that he was as enthusiastic as ever about participating in a Yeti hunt. As a member of the Everest team Tom was, however, rather an exceptional case. For some years past he has specialised in filming expeditions in many parts of the world. As one expedition finishes the problem of his future employment merely resolves itself into which of a number of forthcoming expeditions he shall join. The remainder of the "Everesters" are all working men with no such freedom of choice and in the majority of cases it was unreasonable to suppose that they would be able to obtain lengthy periods of leave for two years running. This was certainly so in the case of Sir John Hunt whom we should have liked very much as leader. Sir John could not accept, but during our period of planning and throughout the expedition itself we were much heartened by the continuous encouragement he gave us.

Tom and I spent many hours over this problem of personnel. At length we decided that rather than issue a blanket invitation we would work out exactly who would be required in terms of professions. It was obvious that if we were to present a watertight case to the world, checked and re-checked, we should need at least two, if

not three, zoologists. If none of these were particularly experienced in the tracking, trapping and capture of animals we should also need a hunter. But what if the Yeti proved an ape-man rather than a man-ape? We also needed an anthropologist. If there was difficult climbing to be done we should also need an extra climber. I had never been on a rope in my life and Tom, although experienced on rock and ice in Britain, the Alps and the Himalaya, was not anxious to accept the responsibility of being sole available "leader" for a party of novices in Everest country. We would certainly need a doctor. We had no idea how aggressive a Yeti might prove, but we were already clear in our own minds that in probing into caves and chasms after one we would be just as likely to disturb bear, wolf, snow-leopard or other potentially dangerous animals. To be mauled at high altitude was not a risk we cared to accept without immediate medical aid being available. Tom was also strongly in favour of fitting ourselves out with walkie-talkie radio equipment. He was convinced that instantaneous communication between search parties might mean all the difference between success or failure. That meant the addition of a radio officer. I was myself most anxious that the expedition should be carried through in a spirit of complete political harmony both with Nepal, where we should be operating, and with India, which now has a "big brother" interest in its smaller neighbour on the northern frontier. I was therefore strongly in favour of including not only an Indian scientist, but a Nepalese scientist or observer as well. Finally, Tom, who as sole professional cameraman on Everest had found his hands more than full, was eager this time to include a film assistant (in fact two were finally taken). He felt that if he did not have some help with the cameras he would not be able to devote enough time to the all-important zoological work. Counting Tom and myself, we were therefore now planning in terms of an expedition of a dozen or so members when our budget really limited us to five or six.

The only solution was to try to find men who had two or preferably three strings to their bows, using Tom, a zoologist, climber and film operator as an example. An essential requirement for everyone chosen was perfect physical fitness and, if possible, proven ability to "go high."

One member of the Everest team, Dr. Charles Evans, had not returned to England with the rest of the party, having decided to spend the rest of the year exploring round the Everest area. As climber-doctor he had accompanied a large number of Himalayan

expeditions and during the assault on Everest he had, with Tom Bourdillon, reached the South Summit, barely one thousand feet below the true summit. Tom Stobart believed that Evans might be interested in joining the Yeti hunt and we both agreed that if he could be persuaded to do so we had found a perfect leader for our own team. Dr. Evans will, I hope, forgive our assumption; he is an example of the high standard we set ourselves. Our immediate problem was to contact him. He had left no indication of his plans and to send out a runner from Katmandu to chase him round the mountains seemed likely to be both pointless and expensive. We therefore sat back and waited for his return to civilisation. It was not, in fact, until very many months later that we were able to get in touch with him and when we did so we found that for personal, sentimental or romantic reasons he preferred to leave the Yeti undisturbed and the mystery unprobed. He also had other plans for the 1954 season.

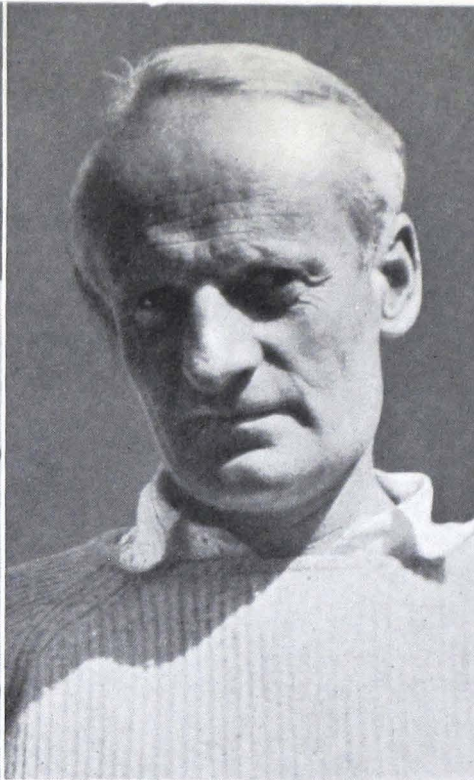
It was about this time that Tom left for a lengthy holiday on the Continent. He did so with my full approval. He had not recovered his strength after his exertions on Everest, where his general physical deterioration caused by life at high altitude had been further aggravated by pneumonia. Since returning to England he had been fully occupied putting his film *The Conquest of Everest* into shape; owing to the topicality of the success the producers were anxious to place it as speedily as possible before the public. He could not be expected to start another equally exhausting expedition without having a chance to build up his stamina.

As Tom was touring and therefore difficult to contact, the next move towards recruiting personnel was left to me. I had in my life come across two men who struck me as eminently well fitted for the chase. The question was, would they be available? The first was Charles Stonor, now aged 41, with whom I had kept in touch since an adventure we had had together in 1948, in the foothills of the Himalaya of Northern Assam.¹ We had then penetrated unexplored country in search of an unknown primitive crocodilian. I was thus aware both of his immense physical resources and of his capabilities as a scientist. Educated at Downside and the University of St. Andrews, of which he holds the degree of B.Sc., Charles had specialised in biology and anthropology. He had at one time held the post of Assistant Curator at the London Zoological Gardens and had

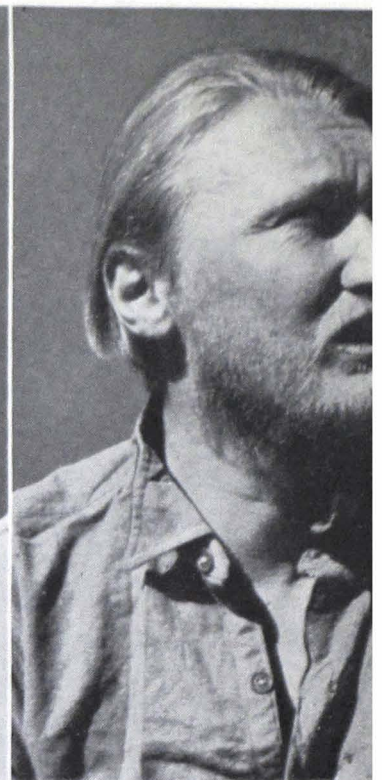
¹ See *The Hunt for the Buru*, Ralph Izzard: Hodder & Stoughton.



Bill Edgar



Charles Stonor



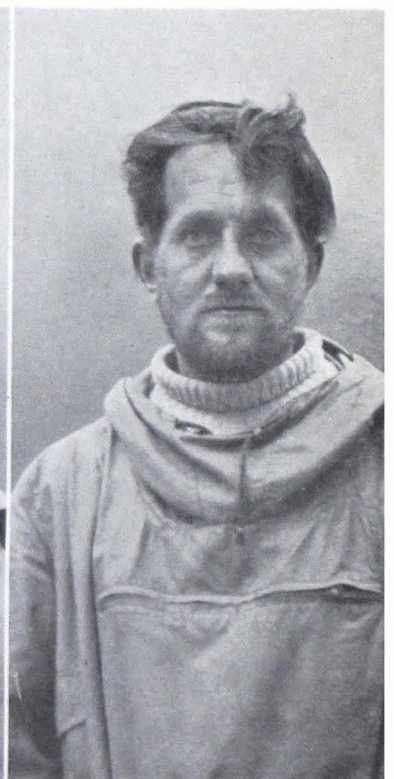
Tom Stobart



Dr. Biswamoy Biswas



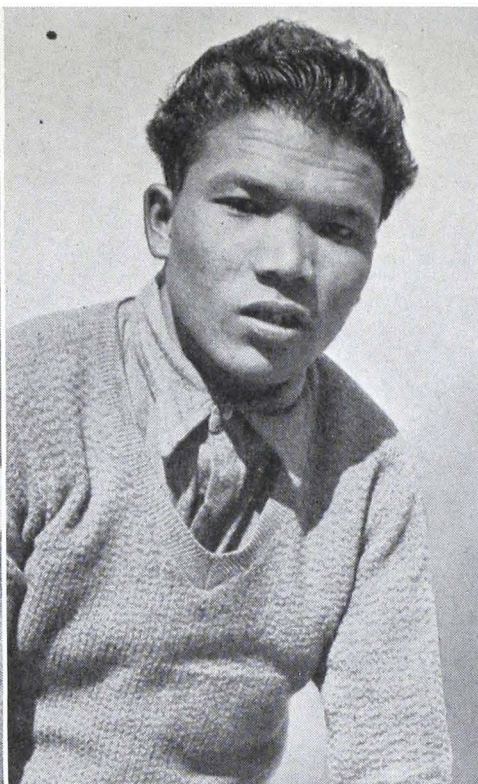
Gerald Russell



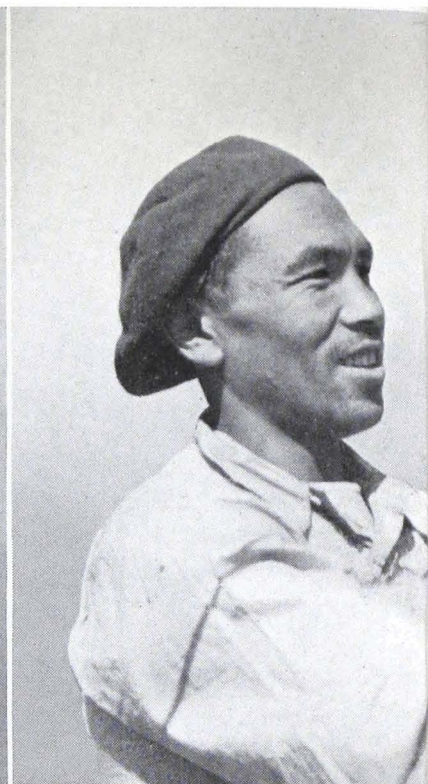
John Angelo Jackson



Sherpa Sirdar Ang Tschering.
His career on Everest began
in 1924.



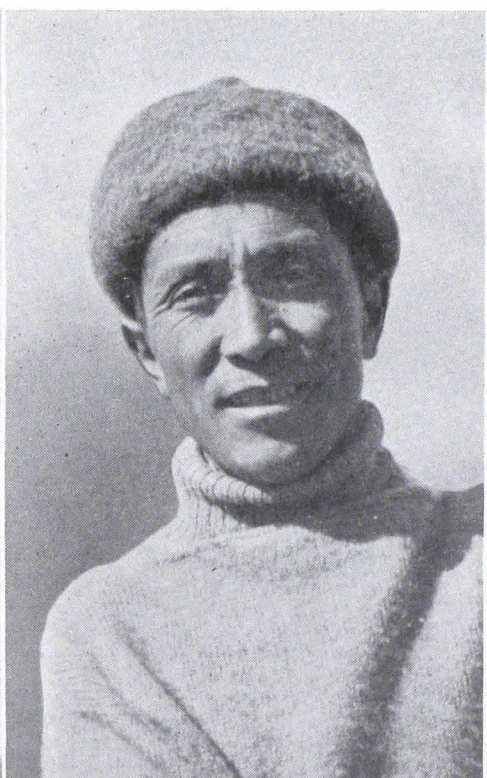
Sherpa Danu



Sherpa Nemi – brother-in-
law of “Everest” Tensing



Sherpa Ang Dawa



Sherpa Norbu



Sherpa Da Temba

served through the war as an infantry officer attached to the Indian Army. He had then been for several years development officer among the tribal peoples of the Himalaya of Assam and had also served a year in the Administration of Papua—New Guinea. He has written a number of scientific articles on the tribes of Assam and New Guinea and on zoological subjects and, to stress his versatility, has sent back to England valuable collections of birds, animals, plants and material of anthropological interest. For our purposes therefore he appeared the ideal scientific all-rounder. He also speaks fluent Hindustani, a language which is readily understood both by the inhabitants of Katmandu and by the more educated Sherpas of the villages of the Everest area. My second choice was Gerald Russell the American naturalist, now aged 43, who had been my close friend at Cambridge between 1928 and 1931.

Gerald, the undergraduate, I remembered as a beautifully built youth who had been a redoubtable lightweight boxer and Judo expert. On leaving Cambridge we had lost touch and it was not until 1945 that, both in naval uniform, we met again by chance in the lounge of a Hamburg hotel. It was there that I learned what had happened to him in the intervening years. In 1932, with Ivan Sanderson, another of our Cambridge contemporaries, he had been a member of the Percy Sladen expedition to the British Cameroons, which had succeeded in bringing home an immense variety of bird and animal specimens. He had then accompanied the two Harkness Asiatic Expeditions of 1933-34, and 1936-37 to the remote districts of the Sino-Tibetan frontier. It was on the second of these expeditions that he was associated with the late Mrs. Ruth Harkness in the capture of the first live giant panda. Gerald was in New York when the war broke out, but having made his home in France and having been educated in England, he was one of the first Americans to volunteer for service with the Royal Navy. This was when the war was still strictly a European affair. As a rating, he was wounded in the first action between British naval forces and the *Scharnhorst*; as an officer he subsequently saw service in the Mediterranean and the Normandy landings.

I saw Gerald briefly in the following year in England. I then lost touch with him again until we met, again by accident, in Cairo in 1951. On demobilisation he had once more set out for China in the hope of capturing alive a golden takin, one of the world's rarest animals. His plans had been frustrated and his expedition brought to a halt on its passage through India by the territorial gains of the

Chinese Communist armies. In Cairo he was taking a brief polo-playing holiday from the making of a series of motion pictures of native methods of catching wild animals both in Europe and Asia.

I had met Gerald again in Cairo in the winter of 1952-53, and in August of last year when I was building up the Yeti hunting party I had by pure coincidence come across his name among the teams then taking part in a polo tournament at Deauville. Gerald's value to our expedition was obvious. He had great experience of hunting and capturing wild animals and, although he had never worked at high altitude, he had had months if not years of arduous trekking experience through some of the worst country in the world. I also knew him to be a crack shot and firearms expert. He was also to take charge of our "secret weapons"—which I will describe later.

Neither Gerald Russell nor Charles Stonor proved difficult to trace and both, to my intense relief, at once accepted our invitation to join us. Charles wrote back immediately that he "would give his ears to go," although I learned subsequently that his acceptance meant that he would have to postpone for at least a year an appointment which he was about to take up, even if he did not lose his chance of it altogether. Gerald I found in Paris. As I was then living near Dover it was an easy matter for me to catch the boat train across the Channel and be with him the same evening. His reply, after I had outlined the project, was: "Of course the answer is, yes!" But he, too, had to abandon long-term plans. It was too late for him to abandon his short-term ones. These were to leave almost at once for America and then, returning through Europe, to go on without delay to India. He was thus lost to us for the vital planning stage and, in fact, was unlikely to be able to join us until we were actually on the way to Katmandu. That, as we reckoned it, would be the end of December or the beginning of January. He did, however, make the generous suggestion that he should be responsible for collecting all the necessary firearms, which he felt sure he could borrow from Indian friends. Poor Gerald! Firearms are the last things that can now readily be transferred from one part of India to another, let alone across the frontier to Nepal and back again. December saw him manfully battling his way through an entirely unforeseen thicket of red tape occasioned by the necessity of obtaining a whole fistful of special licences concerning temporary transfer of ownership, inter-provincial transport, export, import, re-export and re-import, a task which would have brought many a lesser man to his

knees. However, those troubles were then still to come and that late summer week-end in Paris was a delightful interlude, a success in every way. Each evening we sat up late eagerly discussing plans and rather marvelling that after twenty-three years, which had taken both of us to many remote corners of the earth, we should at last join forces in a great adventure.

I had also lost no time in writing to Dr. Biswas, asking firstly whether he was still available, and secondly what machinery we should have to set in motion to obtain his release. Bis wrote back very promptly stating that he would be delighted to join and advising that we write letters asking that he be seconded to us both to the Director of the Zoological Survey of India and to the Minister for External Affairs at New Delhi. Bis also raised another important point. Quite apart from the Yeti, if we were to collect other birds and mammals, which was our intention, we should need the services of a skinner. He suggested that we recruit Ahkey Bhutia of Gangtok whom he knew to be a man of much experience. Ahkey had been with Schaeffer in the hinterlands of Sikkim and Tibet for many months in 1937-38, with Kingdon-Ward in the Assam Himalayas and with Bis himself during the previous winter in Sikkim. Bis had found Ahkey not only useful as a skinner but also an excellent cook and camp servant.

We still had no leader, no doctor and no climber, but already we had the nucleus of a strong scientific team: Tom Stobart, Charles Stonor, Gerald Russell and Biswamoy Biswas. All had had considerable field experience. For my part, as well as being the official chronicler of the expedition, I had studied Agriculture and Forestry at Cambridge for three years and could thus be of some assistance to Charles Stonor in the botanical side of his work. I would also be making my fifth excursion through the Himalaya and could thus lay claim to being something of an Old Hand. From the inception of the expedition it had been the express desire of the *Daily Mail* that, apart from the Yeti hunt, as much subsidiary scientific work as possible should be undertaken in order that there should be the richest possible return for the money which would be spent.

Tom having returned to England in September, he, Charles Stonor and myself, constituted ourselves as a working committee. A letter requesting permission for the expedition to enter Nepal and to operate for six months in the Everest area was sent to the Foreign Minister in Katmandu. While we were awaiting a reply we occupied ourselves as best we could with a programme outlined in a letter by

Charles. It consisted of "some weeks of solid preparation, involving a great many contacts with explorers, climbers, former officials and missionaries with a first-hand knowledge of the region: as well as making ourselves thoroughly conversant with every angle of approach, ethnographic, climatic, botanical, zoological and so on which must be done if maximum results are to be hoped for."

The bulk of this work fell on Charles and Tom. We had still held a place open in the team for a scientist from the British Museum but here we met with a slight rebuff. It may be that we did not state our case very well. The Museum pointed out that we were already strong in zoologists while they themselves needed all their available mammalogists for an impending change of house of the mammal specimens then on exhibition. We were offered a botanist or an insectologist, but in view of the necessity of keeping the team as compact as possible we felt forced to decline. This slight coolness possibly originated from the fact that, following the Yeti evidence discovered by Eric Shipton during his Everest Reconnaissance Expedition of 1951, the British Museum had arranged a special Abominable Snowman exhibition which sought to prove that the Yeti is a langur. On paper there may be something to be said for this theory, but it makes no appeal to men who have experience in the field both of langurs and of the bleak storm-swept snow-fields at 19,000 feet or so where Yeti tracks are usually discovered. It may also be said with justice that Mr. Shipton quite clearly did not re-touch his photographs of Yeti prints in any way, and it requires some imagination to make photographs of langur tracks resemble them. Our search after knowledge also took us to the London Zoo where we were told, with equal certainty, that the Shipton tracks must have been made by a bear. On balance, these two interviews rather heartened us. For if two learned societies held such diametrically opposed views regarding the identity of the footprints the owner of the foot could just as well be neither animal as either; and this, if anything, strengthened the case for a third candidate—animal "X."

After a few further interviews Charles Stonor sat down to draft out the expedition's first statement of policy. It ran:

"Evidence for and against the Snowman or Yeti.

"In summing up the pros and cons for its existence, it seems most necessary to bear in mind that its rejection by museum experts has been on slender grounds, based largely on the intrinsic improbability

of any large ape or similar beast surviving in the region. And, now entrenched, the experts are naturally determined to stick to their opinions. Since every mountaineer who has gone through the area concerned has been puzzled by the tracks and accounts of the Sherpas, there seems a very good case for a final probe. It appears also to have been ignored that no expedition has really been interested in proving or disproving its existence, and has been completely climber-minded to the exclusion of any diversion.

“Ethnographic interest of the area.

“The Himalayan region is one of the least-known parts of the world from the angle of its Anthropology and the culture of the peoples. In the more eastern ranges, across Bhutan and to the Burma border, there are tribes never yet visited by Europeans and others whose existence is little more than a name. The same may well be true of the remote areas of Nepal, which we should visit; and, indeed, Nepal as a whole is not at all satisfactorily known; it is doubtful if any good map of the border-land in the north exists. Any information that can be got in a few months is accordingly of genuine value.

“Institutions and museums are also keen to get specimens of Nepalese craftsmanship, such as wood-carving, and any textiles and other objects of the material culture of the region.

“On a rather different topic, it would be of much interest to spend some time at one of the larger Bhuddist monasteries to study and record the way of life and to try and get a comprehensive film. If technically possible, sound records of the Bhuddist liturgy might be got. It seems likely that this Tibetan Bhuddism is on the verge of collapse and that in a few years it will never again be possible to study it.

“Zoological interest.

“In addition to the fascination of hunting for the Yeti, there is a great deal of collecting that can be done, particularly of birds and small mammals, for the higher zone of the Himalayas is not all well known. There are a number of animals in the area never yet in captivity and also others such as musk-deer, and mouse-hares, which have very seldom reached this country. It may be stressed that the establishment of an air-service up to Katmandu makes it more practicable to get live animals out from the Himalayas than ever before.

“Botanical interest.

“A botanical expedition went up to Western Nepal a year or so back and returned loaded with new and valuable plants. They were working at a lower altitude than we should and the botanical prospects should equal or surpass the zoological. The authorities at Kew Gardens fully endorse this.

“General.

“Every expedition which has visited the Himalayas in recent times has gone with one specific object, to climb, or to collect plants, or to survey, and has excluded everything else. So that no party has ever brought back a composite or overall picture of the region and its various aspects, both human and otherwise. The proposed composition of this expedition should make it possible to build up a fascinating generalised account of the remote Himalayas, starting with the way of life of the peasant Sherpas and of the Bhuddist monasteries, and coming down to the flora and fauna: showing how everything blends and hangs together—as it does in the English countryside in a very different form. A most attractive and valuable colour film could be produced, especially in view of the uniquely picturesque features of the Himalayas, such as the rhododendron forests, the scenery and the colourfulness of the people.

“The proposed composition of the expedition should make this a very real possibility. Thus, of the suggested members (excluding Izzard), *Stobart* is already familiar with the area, is a trained zoologist and expert photographer. *Russell* is a sportsman, big-game hunter and traveller with liberal interests. *Stonor* is a trained biologist turned anthropologist and traveller, has studied the tribes of the Assam Himalayas, and has collected birds and plants both in this region and in New Guinea. In short, the nucleus of a team is already got together who, by previous experience of the area, training, liberal interests and enthusiasm for the project, could make the trip very well worthwhile even if no trace were found of the Abominable Snowman.”

It will be noticed that Charles makes no mention in his policy draft of what we intended to do with a Yeti if we found one. Looking back I doubt if at that early stage we had made up our minds on the subject, except that none of us much liked the idea of shooting a specimen. Firearms had to be taken to protect both ourselves and our Sherpas from possible attack not only from a Yeti but also from

other wild beasts, but the responsibility of shooting one of the world's rarest animals—it could even turn out to be a primate—was not one which any of us cared to undertake. Gerald, now in America, appeared to be devoting much thought to this subject. In one letter to me he wrote:

“The pattern of catching the rarer wild animals is well established. Shoot one of the parents if necessary and grab a young one. In our case this seems to be out of the question. Our first aim must be for the ideal. Catch a male and a female, bring them home, encourage them to have young. The thought of our expedition being able to pull this off—especially at a first attempt—would require a miracle—a whole series of miracles. Just one parent would do. One would eventually compromise with an infant, a ‘snow-girl’ preferably, providing one didn’t have to shoot a primitive mother or father. I can say from experience that the recollection of shooting one of the big apes, or seeing one shot, never leaves one. Once a young one is caught it could be used as a bait for a parent. But how are we to get one without some slaughter and unholy luck in the first place?

“We could try a big reward for the first local man to bring in a specimen. This policy is sometimes successful, but what usually happens is that in spite of showing good photographs of the specimen—providing they are in existence—any large animal is brought in in the hope that you may have been wrong after all, and really wanted theirs, or that you may be tempted to buy. After about a month all such traffic ceases, as the people get bored, and one then leans on the native hunter.

“Although I have not been on the Himalayan ranges where killing animals is so frowned on owing to deep religious convictions, I have not in my travels come across a village, however agrarian or gregarious the inhabitants, in which there has not been a percentage, if only a very slight one, of men who hunt within the capacity of their limits, either because of atavism or a latent nomadic background.” (Events proved Gerald startlingly correct in this assertion. Even in the purely Buddhist community at Namche Bazaar we discovered two Nepali plainsmen, whom we named Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, who make a living by catching local animals and birds and carrying them down to Indian dealers. Their ambition, however, fell short of a Yeti.)

“These men (the hunters), brought up in the surroundings, know their country intimately. From one single track a good man can

tell how long ago the animal passed; give a reasonably accurate figure of its age; whether male or female; if a female he can tell whether she is carrying young or not, and if so how many months will elapse before she will drop her young. He will have a shrewd idea as to where the animal was going, why, and from where. Then, in time, and with luck—maybe weeks later—one may get a sighting of the animal. But this will be as far as the local hunter can go. Bringing in big game alive is outside his experience, unless he has already had demands and some training from Europeans. His traps are all intended to kill, never to catch alive. Our own types of trap are unsatisfactory as the mechanism freezes—there lies the whole crux of high-altitude animal catching.

“We must also try to play on the Snowman’s curiosity. Curiosity—the final ruin of so many bruins, many leopards, and of some monkeys. The chances that some animals take, especially the above, in exposing themselves through sheer curiosity appear extraordinary, judged by our superior mental processes, although most animals are well endowed with brain for the purpose of their existence and environment. So, bells fixed at man’s height on the branches of trees, tinkling in the wind. Small mirrors hanging from bushes, glinting in the sun. Small coloured pennants. Bright objects. Anything to bring an animal out over well-prepared ground to one’s camera-blind, one’s cage, one’s net. Nets! Always with one, but difficult to use, are nets. A drop net furled over the lip of a cage. A fine meshed net to cast at the Yeti followed quickly by a heavier meshed one. Lassos if he is going away from one, *bolos* to tangle his legs if he is coming towards one. Continuing down the list of the old classic lures: honey, aniseed, a lump of salt.

“Perhaps the time has come for the hunter’s dream; a rifle or air-gun firing a short dart smeared in a soporific or a sedative.

“But cheerful and optimistic as I feel, and leaving luck—whatever that may be—apart, there is no short cut to success except hard, long, patient, uncomfortable and often discouraging work.”

I learned subsequently that Gerald wrote this letter after a meeting in New York with our old friend Ivan Sanderson, now established as a naturalist of repute. Ivan was particularly keen on the idea of the soporific dart, in fact he thought it might well be the only way of going about painless capture. It is alleged that darts were used during the war to knock out German sentries. They are known to be used by certain men who have to handle awkward and dangerous

animals although their employment may still rank among "trade secrets." The difficulty is that it is essential to know the exact size of the animal one is treating. Too potent a soporific might literally stop a Yeti dead in its tracks. Too weak a charge might have a delayed effect, if any effect at all, an important point when the weapon would have to be fired at close range. In the end we decided against taking any darts. On the "secret list" we also investigated the possibility of acquiring a trap which would operate when an electronic beam was broken. We abandoned the idea when we found that the necessary accompanying equipment would be too cumbersome for porters to carry. Of more orthodox methods we discussed the use of hunting dogs. Hounds ruled themselves out as too noisy even if they could have held a scent over the country in which we were to operate, which was more than doubtful. German police dogs were offered, but it was considered essential that one of us should go to Germany for not less than three months for training with the animal selected. Unfortunately none of us could any longer spare the time for what I am sure would have been a most interesting experience.

Ivan was very enthusiastic about the main objective of our expedition. For some years he had himself been collecting evidence regarding the Abominable Snowman and apparently allied creatures which had cropped up in other parts of the world. According to Gerald, he pointed out that a cave in Northern Italy had recently been entered after it had lain unopened for 70,000,000 years. Within it were found the tracks of bear, early man and prints closely corresponding to those of the Abominable Snowman, all more or less alongside each other although separated each from the other by possibly many millions of years. In another letter to me Gerald advanced Ivan's theory that the Abominable Snowman followed the withdrawal of the ice, going northward, and gradually became extinct in the German plains and the Scandinavian hills, while still being able to subsist to this day in the colder and higher Himalayan mountains.

Two or three weeks later another letter arrived from Gerald announcing that, as it was obviously becoming increasingly necessary to co-ordinate our plans, he proposed to fly from New York to London and spend two days with us before travelling on to France and India. He arrived on 21st October.

This was an important day for us in many respects. It saw the première performance before the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh of Tom's film: *The Conquest of Everest*. A large number of Himalayan experts and veteran Everest climbers were in London for the

occasion and we at once recognised a unique opportunity for information gathering. The editorial policy of the *Daily Mail* at that time was to supplement our announcement of our expedition—when we were ready to make it—with as many opinions of expert witnesses as we could compile. On the evening of 20th October we had traced Eric Shipton to his hotel. He courteously informed us over the telephone that he would be pleased to give us his views for publication. But he had a very full programme for the 21st and could only see us early in the morning. As I was then living in the extreme east of Kent and could not get up to London in time this unfortunately ruled me out of the interview. It was arranged that Charles Stonor should go, accompanied by Ronald Downing of the *Daily Mail*. They took with them copies of Mr. Shipton's photograph of Yeti footprints enlarged to life-size.

"That photograph is particularly good," said Shipton, "because it was left on a thin layer of crystallised snow lying on firm ice. There was therefore a minimum of distortion as the creature moved its foot forward.

"At the point where we came across the tracks there was evidence of two of the creatures moving together. That was above 18,000 feet, well above the tree line. The tracks were side by side for part of the way and then criss-crossed.

"The tracks were extremely fresh—probably they had been made only a few hours before we found them and certainly on the same day.

"They showed a stride of about 2 feet 6 inches and moved towards a crevasse.

"What has never been mentioned before is that I particularly noted where one of the creatures had jumped a crevasse, a distance of about three feet. There was the mark of its take-off and on the other side a clear imprint of where it had dug its toes in on landing. I rather wish now I had had a picture of that print on the far side of the crevasse.

"I was impressed and mystified by these prints. But my Sherpas looked and had no doubt. Sonam Tensing, a highly sensible fellow who I have known for many years, said, 'That is the Yeti.'

"I have an open mind. I have formed no opinion. But it must be assumed that the Sherpas know bear tracks and monkey tracks exceedingly well. There was no hesitation about calling this a 'Yeti'—what we call an Abominable Snowman.

"At a reception at the British Embassy in Katmandu Sonam Tensing was besieged by people who wanted to talk to him about the

'Yeti.' He steadfastly assured them all that we had seen the prints of the creature.

"He is one of the very few who claim to have seen a Yeti. He said he saw it two years before the 1951 expedition near Thyangboche monastery.

"He described it as of man-height, about 5 feet 6 inches, and covered with reddish-brown hair, with a hairless face and no tail. The head, he said, was tall and pointed.

"It moved mostly in an upright stance but when in a hurry dropped on all fours. He and his companions, he said, beat drums and made a lot of noise to frighten it away but it was not easily frightened and stayed around for some time.

"As for the tracks, I have seen them and examined them on about five different occasions. On one occasion, in Garwhal in the Central Himalayas, we followed them upwards for a considerable distance. The creature which made them had zigzagged its way up a fairly steep climb.

"The trouble is that the evidence is so flimsy and scanty. But what there is has been sufficient for people to ask me to go and search for the Abominable Snowman. I had one such request from an American University.

"People like me who have seen the tracks have always been engaged on other pressing business at the time and could not spare the time to investigate.

"One comes across the tracks haphazardly, but it does seem to me that their appearance is seasonal and that an investigation starting at the time of year and place where previous tracks were seen might be successful."

After the interview Charles had returned to his hotel where a room had also been booked for Gerald. Gerald had arrived and by mid-morning I was able to join them. We at once went into conference. It was, I think, Gerald who first urged that we should lose no time in making up our minds what we intended to do with a Yeti if we were lucky enough to capture one. He maintained that whether it was an ape-like man, or a man-like ape we might well start a public outcry if we brought one back to Europe. The creature was unlikely to live long; the *Daily Mail* might be accused of having promoted a "stunt" rather than a serious scientific expedition; we would undoubtedly be assailed from many sides with charges of cruelty. We then formulated our master plan. It would be to attempt to capture a specimen alive, but we should hold it for study and photography in its own

environment. If it proved a really first-class discovery we would try to detain it long enough for any interested expert to be flown out from Europe. But finally we would let it go. I may add that the editor of the *Daily Mail* was at once in agreement with this policy when we outlined it to him. For my part I rather favoured the possible quixotic ending to the story. The opened door of the cage; the Abominable Snowman taking a last look round his quarters and then shuffling off into the distance in imitation of the fade-out of a Charlie Chaplin film.

From what he had heard in America Gerald was also, at that time, inclined to the view that the Yeti might still turn out to be a very primitive species of man. It was therefore fortunate that we were to dine that night with Mr. J. P. Mills, the noted anthropologist, who had been associated for some years with Charles Stonor in Assam. Mr. Mills had been kind enough to help me with my first book *The Hunt for the Buru* and he readily agreed, on this occasion, to write us a paper on the anthropological aspects of the coming expedition.

The next morning Charles, Gerald and myself had arranged to interview H. W. Tilman at the United Services Club. I had always much admired the light easy style of Mr. Tilman's writing, particularly on the subject of Snowmen, and I had high hopes that he would contribute another of his inimitable essays on the subject. We were, however, disappointed. Mr. Tilman was kind enough to answer a number of questions which had occurred to us on reading his previous work, but he felt that having already put the sum total of his knowledge regarding the Yeti on paper many times it would be purely repetitious to add anything further. It was obvious that he also belongs to the school which considers that the mystery of the Yeti should be left uninvestigated; that once the unknown becomes known the glamour is dispelled, the interest evaporated. Some days later, however, Mr. Tilman very kindly sent me his last writing on the Abominable Snowman, an article which had appeared the previous year in *Everybody's Weekly* and which I had not seen before.

We had now established "secret" expedition headquarters on the top floor of a building owned by the *Daily Mail* in Queen Victoria Street and giving a fine view over the Thames. I use the word "secret" because we were not ready for our own announcement of the expedition and we wished, if possible, to avoid a leakage of information. For some time therefore we were anonymous characters who came and went from the building on mysterious errands. The enquiring mind might well have discerned that something unusual

was afoot: I was well known to the staff and Tom, by reason of the fact that his face had regularly been appearing in newspaper photographs and on the television screen, was soon recognised as an "Everester." It was thus scarcely likely that we would be confused with the staff of the *Daily Mail* Knitting Competition who occupied the top floor with us. Piquancy was added to the situation by the fact that the Baynard Castle, the public-house across the street, where many of our plans were laid, is also used by members of the staff of *The Times* whose building stands two blocks away. Until we intervened, stories of the Abominable Snowman and pictures of his footprints had been almost the exclusive property of *The Times*.

Beyond Queen Victoria Street it was no longer possible to guard "security." In pursuing enquiries we had had to make contacts in many different fields. The secret could be picked up for the taking if anyone was interested. In fact only two references to the expedition were made in other publications before we were ready to disclose our plans. One was in the *Spectator* who welcomed the prospect of an Abominable Snowman appearing in London society wearing a "smog mask." The other was in the *World's Press News*, who admitted in a subsequent edition that they scarcely believed the story when they heard it.

On the afternoon of 22nd October we retired to headquarters to check through lists of clothing, equipment and stores which Tom was already compiling with the help of lists drawn up for the British Everest Expedition. We also contacted Brigadier Sir John Hunt and arranged to meet him on the following morning. This interview took place at the offices of the Royal Geographical Society, Gerald, Charles, and myself being present. Sir John welcomed us all most warmly and showed the keenest interest in our adventure. He also gave me the following statement for later publication.

"In general my attitude is that there is an interesting problem for an enterprising party to investigate. I am not a zoologist, therefore I prefer to remain non-committal as to whether some unknown animal does, in fact, exist.

"My own interest in the problem of the Abominable Snowman, or 'Yeti,' is based initially on the sets of tracks I saw in 1937 while climbing the Zemu Gap (19,000 ft.) in North-East Sikkim. Two animals had crossed over the pass ahead of me. The prints left in the snow were similar to those of human beings: so much that I took it for granted that the prints were those of a German party who were

in the region at the time and whom I assumed had got in a few hours ahead of me. My first feeling, possibly understandably, was one of annoyance, but on checking up afterwards I found that I had not been forestalled. *No member of the German party had in fact proceeded up the Gap.*

“On consideration, it is not my impression that the tracks were man-made, as two sets of tracks were there. Sometimes they were parallel, sometimes they crossed over each other. Had they been human, they would inevitably have been in single file and have trod in each other’s footmarks.

“I have subsequently asked Sherpas about the existence of the beast and find their accounts tally well and to be suggestive of some large animal which does not fit in with either a bear or a langur monkey. This year, when the Everest Expedition was at Thyangboche monastery, I was present when the second senior Abbot was questioned about the ‘Yeti’. He described, with much pantomime, how a year or two previously one of the beasts had appeared out of the rhododendron bushes hard by the monastery and had wandered about in the snow some two hundred yards or less from his cell window. It was a largish animal, five feet or more in height, covered with greyish-brown hair. It went mainly upright and occasionally dropped on all fours: it was also seen to scratch itself monkey fashion. Its appearance caused much alarm and the monks turned out blowing conch shells and trumpets to scare it away. Finally it made off into the woods again.”

From this time onwards Sir John gave us the greatest encouragement and all of us remember with affectionate gratitude the series of postcards, letters and cables containing good wishes and advice which he sent us both before our departure and while we were in the field.

On the evening of 23rd October Gerald and I travelled down to my house in Kent and on the next day I motored him to Folkestone where he caught the Channel steamer to France, the first stage of his journey to India.

CHAPTER IV

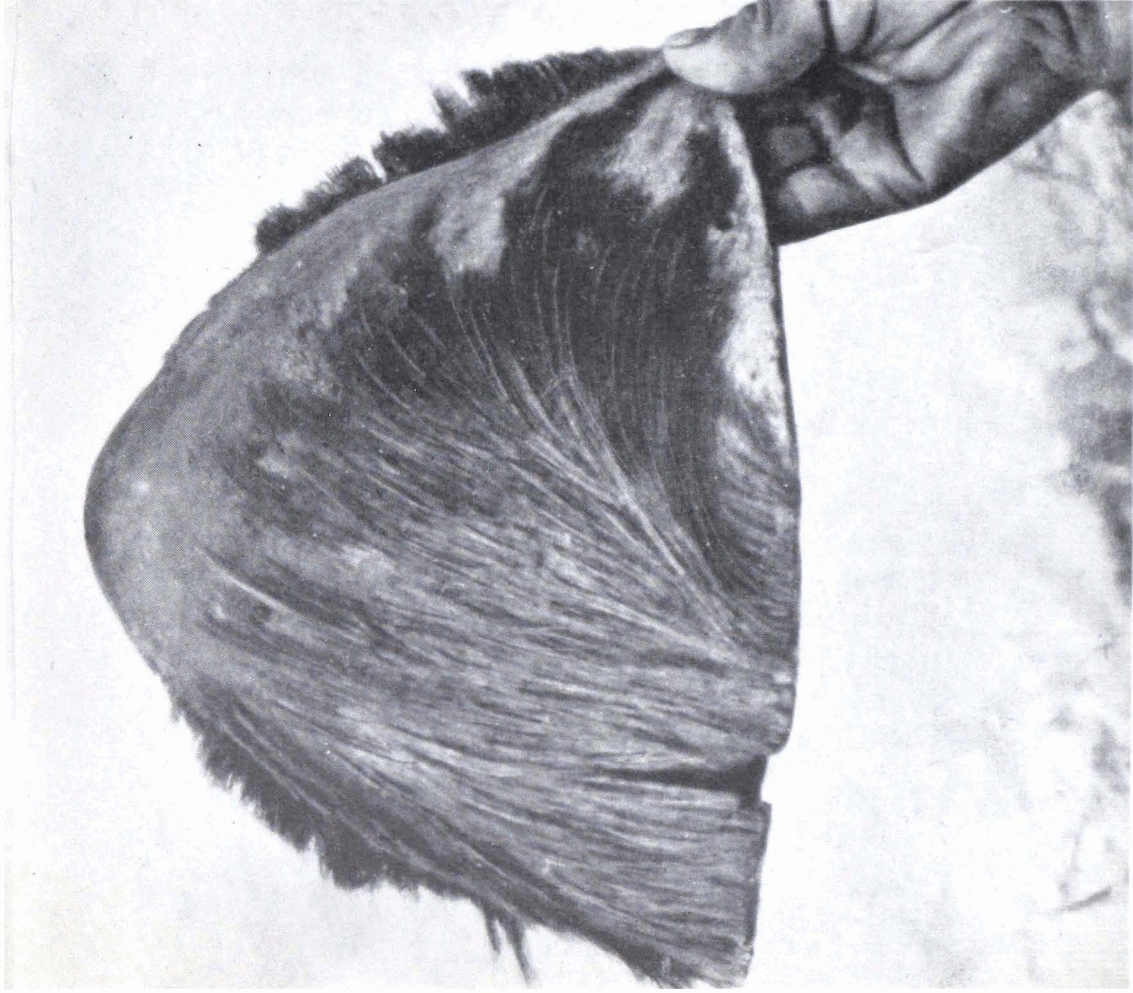
SET-BACKS—MORE INFORMATION— FURTHER PREPARATIONS

IT was at about this stage of our planning that we became slightly uneasy as to the fate of our application to the Nepal Government for permission for our expedition to enter the country. Since the present policy of the Nepalese is to welcome expeditions we had not anticipated any particular difficulty. As we were not a climbing party we knew we should not be clashing with any other team on any particular mountain as the British had threatened to clash with the Swiss on Everest in 1952. We had heard vaguely that the Swiss were planning a 1954 expedition, but had imagined that they would again be attempting Everest or some similar peak. But a month had now elapsed since we made our request and there had been no reply. The *Daily Mail* has a correspondent in Katmandu, N. K. Saksena, who had been of great assistance to me in my journey to Everest and back the previous year. We therefore cabled to Saksena asking him to enquire whether our request had been received and when we were likely to get an answer to it. A cryptic but none the less disturbing cable reached us from Saksena on 25th October. He informed us that we were requested to ignore a letter from the Nepal Foreign Minister—which we had not yet received—but which apparently expressed his regrets that a 1954 expedition was no longer possible. The Prime Minister, Mr. M. P. Koirala, had ordered that the whole matter should again come up for review. A brisk exchange of cables clarified the position to the extent that we soon learned that the cause of the delay was the fact that the Swiss had booked the entire Sola Khumbu district for the whole of the year 1954. To anyone familiar with the vastness of the area and the supreme difficulties of the terrain this seemed, to say the least, an extravagant departure from normal Himalayan climbing procedure, which is more usually to “book” a single mountain for two or three months at the most. However, there was no disputing the fact that the Swiss had staked their claim first. Fortunately for us the Nepal Government relented

in its attitude that two expeditions could not be permitted to operate simultaneously in the same *district*—as distinct from “upon the same mountain.” But the Foreign Minister was insistent that as there was a porter shortage we must on no account arrive in Katmandu at the same time as the Swiss. If necessary, as we were the second party in the field, we were to give the Swiss preference. We were asked to enquire on what date the Swiss planned to arrive in Nepal and to adjust our own plans accordingly. We were also asked to estimate how many coolies we should require.

Enquiries in Zurich resulted in the information that the Swiss expected to reach Katmandu at the earliest by mid-February and at the latest by early March. This suited us well, for at that time we still hoped to be in Katmandu at the beginning of January. This would leave time for the coolies we required to carry our equipment up to Namche Bazar and then return to Katmandu to enlist again with the Swiss. I hope the Swiss will believe me when I say that when we made our first request for information in Zurich, we had not the slightest inkling of the objectives of their expedition. We still believed it would be a climbing one. It was a distinct shock, and an embarrassing one, to us when we learned some three weeks later that they intended to sacrifice all mountaineering enterprise for purely zoological and scientific interests—with particular reference to the Abominable Snowman! When we received this news an attempt was made to form a joint expedition, or rather the Swiss suggested to us that we scrap our own expedition and attach a single one of our members to theirs. In fairness to the members we had already recruited, and who had given up other employment, we could not possibly accept this proposal and it was refused.

The suggestion was then made by the Swiss that before we left Europe we should divide up the territory the two expeditions would cover. In principle I was not at all averse to this proposal. As I saw it, the total area was so vast that both expeditions could easily lose themselves within it. But I was opposed to the idea of making an arbitrary division from a point thousands of miles away from the field of operations. To begin with, all published maps of the Everest area are highly inaccurate and straight lines drawn across them with ruler and pencil could become more a cause of friction than otherwise. We would be bound to use a number of the same focal points and probably a number of the same approach routes to get at different valleys or glaciers. I was in favour of a joint conference on the spot, which we on our part were willing to undertake in a



The Yeti scalp of Pangboche Monastery



When the tracks crossed a crevasse we could see clearly how the creature, in jumping across, had dug its toes in to prevent itself from slipping back

R. G. S. and A. C.



The God of Vengeance—Katmandu

Noon at Bhatgaon



spirit of the utmost goodwill and in readiness to make any reasonable concession.

I was personally prepared to go so far as to agree to a complete exchange of information and the sharing of results. I had no illusions about the immensity of the task and I felt that the more men employed on it the better. The Swiss, however, stuck to their demand for a division of the map and finally broke off negotiations on the grounds that there no longer appeared to be any "basis for agreement." As a parting shot we were informed indirectly that in view of our challenge the Swiss had decided to advance their arrival date by two months and could be expected in Katmandu early in December. This decision we had to accept without reply. It was quite impossible for us to advance our own sailing date. We had not yet received our official written permission to enter Nepal and until that was to hand we could not even begin ordering our equipment and stores. Owing to the unavoidable delays we were if anything behind rather than before our own schedule. We therefore refused to let ourselves be panicked and decided to push on with our own plans as if no outside challenge had occurred. We did, however, decide to send Charles Stonor to Katmandu early in December, not to forestall the Swiss, but to have on hand there a responsible member of our own expedition to represent our interests and to negotiate an amicable agreement if it was suggested. In our own hearts I believe all of us were rather exhilarated that the element of international competition had entered into the Yeti hunt. As it turned out, the Swiss threat never materialised. Without informing us, they apparently decided to postpone their expedition indefinitely. It was not until we returned to Katmandu from the Everest area that we heard of this decision. Throughout our six months in the field we were anxiously awaiting their arrival. Only one other gesture was made; a rather unnecessary one, we thought. It took the form of a letter from the Swiss to the Nepal Prime Minister alleging that they had heard that our expedition was to be purely a "shooting party" bent on destroying wild life in the Sola Khumbu valleys. It was urged that we should at all costs be prevented from carrying out our intention. Mr. Koirala, the Premier, very fairly awaited our own explanation. He readily accepted our own statement that the sole objective of our expedition was scientific investigation. If further proof was needed it was furnished when our meagre arsenal of weapons arrived in Katmandu. It consisted of two .375 rifles—one of which, an Indian-owned weapon, was completely unserviceable,

for the ammunition brought from England did not fit it—one Winchester .22 repeater; two 12-bore shot-guns, one of which was a collector's piece of Bis. Far from considering this excessive Mr. Koirala expressed some concern that we were too lightly armed to protect ourselves efficiently.

Owing to the complication of Swiss competition and delays in Katmandu caused by a reshuffling of the Nepalese Cabinet, it was not until 14th November that formal permission to launch our own expedition was received. It came in a cable from the Prime Minister reciprocating our good wishes and assuring us that we might go ahead with our preparations pending the arrival of an official letter confirming the Cabinet's decision to allow us entry into the country.

Prior to 14th November there had been two important developments. On 4th November a Reuter's message from Bombay was received in our London office announcing that an Indian mountaineering party had discovered the presence of a 'Yeti' scalp in the monastery of Pangboche, which lies in the Imja Khola valley between Thyangboche and Everest. I quote the cable:

"BOMBAY—Nov. 4 Reuter. Buddhist priests in a Himalayan temple have shown Indian mountaineers a scalp believed to be that of an 'Abominable Snowman,' the mysterious creature said to inhabit the region. An expedition, now returned to Bombay after an unsuccessful assault on Mount Pumori (23,190 feet), described the scalp as 'very thick' and covered all over with 'reddish-brown hair.' The priests, whose temple is 14,000 feet up in the mountains, refused to sell the scalp to the party, but Mr. Russi Ghandy, their leader, said that a number of photographs were taken of it and the expedition managed to bring away with it several hairs. Mr. Ghandy said that Dr. Evans, one of the members of this year's British Everest Expedition, was present when the party visited the temple on October 9 and was impressed by the scalp."

There was enough of interest in this story to attract the attention of all newspapers but it obviously demanded a special effort on our part. It would be galling indeed if even before our expedition had begun operations we were scooped over the scalp. Instructions were therefore sent to Mr. R. Malhotra, *Daily Mail* local correspondent in Bombay and to Gerald Russell, who had now reached India, to contact Russi Ghandy and obtain any further information, photographs and if possible, some sample hairs. Reuter's story had also

given us an important clue regarding the whereabouts of Charles Evans, and N. K. Saksena was therefore told to redouble efforts to contact him. Malhotra replied almost immediately:

I am glad to say that I managed to track down Mr. Ghandy late yesterday evening. Here are his own words about the incident you enquired about. "We were a five-man purely amateur expedition. We left Katmandu on 22nd September. We reached Namche Bazar a fortnight later. We changed porters and took the services of six high altitude Sherpas and six Sherpa coolies. We went up a rough path for 5 days until we came to the Khumbu glacier which falls from Mount Everest. Establishing a base camp we then went up the western ridge of Mount Pumori. On the way from Namche to Khumbu we stopped at Pangboche monastery. Here we were informed that they had a scalp of the 'Yeti' or 'Abominable Snowman.' They were reluctant to show us the scalp because there is a tradition that whoever sees it will fall down dead. Finally, after much persuasion, they dug it out of a dark corner of the monastery but refused to part with it. Dr. Evans, of the British Mount Everest Expedition also met us here (he was returning from a reconnaissance of the Taweche region) and he assisted in the negotiations for the scalp. Whereas I took a cine-colour shot of the scalp, he took many photographs in black and white. My cine shots are with Kodak for developing and will be available after a week or so. I offered up to 500 rupees for the object but they refused this as ill-luck is supposed to attend all those who give it away. No one quite knows how it first came to be in the monastery. The scalp has a thick tough skin and is covered with heavy reddish-brown hairs. *The wonder is that it is conical in shape.* I have brought back with me two or three hairs from the scalp."

To this information Gerald, who also saw Russi Ghandy, was able to add that Christof von Fuhrer-Haimendorf, an Austrian anthropologist well known to both J. P. Mills and Charles Stonor, and whom I also had met, was present during the examination of the scalp. Gerald understood that he would be back in Katmandu in the first week of December. Saksena came through on Friday, 13th November, with the rather gloomy news that Charles Evans, who had arrived in Katmandu the previous evening, regretted that he would be unable to join our party as leader. He also preferred to reserve any opinion regarding the scalp. At least the news from Evans put an

end to another of our uncertainties. We were now definitely committed to finding another doctor and another climber.

Our climber was soon found. He was John Angelo Jackson, one of the finest mountaineers in Britain today. John, aged 32, had been first reserve for the successful British Everest team. He had had wide climbing experience in the British Isles—notably in Scotland, Skye, Wales and the Lake District—and had also climbed in the Swiss and Italian Alps. In 1945 he had served for many months as Chief Instructor at the R.A.F. Aircrew Mountaineering Centre in Kashmir. He had been a member of the British Expedition to the Garhwal Himalaya in 1952, making a first ascent of “Avalanche Peak.” As a science teacher at Redcar Secondary Modern School he was in complete sympathy with the main objectives of our expedition. John was indeed most anxious to join and we were delighted when the Board of Education informed us that they were willing to give him leave for the period we would be away.

The problem of a medical officer was not so easily solved. If we had been able to advertise we should no doubt have had any number of applicants, as was soon proved when on 3rd December the first announcement of the expedition appeared in the *Daily Mail*. Within twenty-four hours at least a dozen doctors applied for the post. In November, however, we were still working under a security ban and our enquiries had to be conducted by private canvass. None of us knew many doctors and those we did know were either not mountaineering types or were unable to take leave. It was fortunate that another stroke of good luck finally brought us, by a process of elimination, to Dr. William Edgar, M.B., B.Chir., who was just completing a term as Junior Registrar of Westminster Hospital. Bill Edgar, aged 30, had had no previous Himalayan experience, but he is an enthusiastic walker and bird watcher and a former member of Cambridge University Mountaineering Club. He had served during the war with the R.A.M.C. in East Africa and had climbed Mount Kilimanjaro (19,700 feet). We were held in suspense for some days while Bill made up his mind whether he could spare the time to join us. We were able to announce his acceptance on 4th December.

The last two weeks of November were a hectic time for everybody. Charles now had the task of rushing through his preparations for an early start as well as continuing his researches. After minor rebuffs suffered at the hands of the British Museum and the London Zoo, it was a great comfort to all of us that Charles was able to enlist the sympathetic interest of Dr. F. Wood Jones, F.R.S., F.R.C.S., D.Sc.,

the Honorary Curator of the Hunterian Collections of Human and Comparative Anatomy in the Royal College of Surgeons. Professor Wood Jones very kindly offered to identify any specimens that we might obtain and to give an opinion on any reports sent back by the expedition. It was arranged that all such material should be submitted to him for critical analysis. After the discovery of the Yeti scalp at Pangboche there was a good possibility that we might have something really worthwhile to send him.

Tom Stobart took on the immense task of ordering and assembling our equipment and stores. Anyone who had not had his considerable experience of expedition work would probably have thrown up the task as hopeless. We had been forced to put back the sailing date of the main party to 30th December, when accommodation had been booked in the P. and O. liner *Strathaird*, but Messrs. Andrew Lusk of Wapping who had been engaged to pack, crate and dispatch our requirements informed us that, owing to the Christmas holidays, everything must be in their warehouses by 12th December at the latest. This gave us barely three weeks in which to assemble between six and seven tons of assorted goods. Tents had not only to be ordered, they had to be made. The same applied to climbing boots and high-altitude clothing. It is impossible to list one thousand and one separate items which had to be thought of. In "hardware" it ranged from ammunition and Verey lights and pistols for signalling, to traps of all sizes, to wire and wire-netting, right down to the humble darning needle. "Soft goods" included mosquito netting, nets for hunting, lightweight tarpaulins and polythene bags of all sizes, including one huge one labelled "Abominable Snowman" in case we came across a dead specimen. Tom paid particular attention to food. A magnificent cook himself, he has very decided opinions as to what expeditions should be expected to eat while undertaking strenuous work at high altitude and, with the aid of Dr. Griffith Pugh, physiologist with Sir John Hunt's Everest team, he worked out a special diet for us. One can, I think, say confidently that no Himalayan expedition has ever eaten better, and to this we largely attribute the fact that our expedition was almost entirely free from illness.

My own time was occupied in attending a succession of policy conferences at our head office, in dealing with a flow of cables from Nepal and India, in drafting our opening announcement and in collecting material for publication from Himalayan experts who were in support of our project. One of the first papers to come to hand was from Mr. J. P. Mills. I reproduce it.

“By J. P. Mills CSI CIE MA ICS(retd.) past president of the Royal Anthropological Institute, and Adviser to Government on the Assam Himalayas.

“It is welcome news indeed to all interested in the study of man that a party of scientists is to visit the Sherpa country in the Himalayas. Everest expeditions have passed through it but have been unable to pause and turn aside and it remains, except for the main tracks, one of the least-known countries in the world. The Sherpas themselves are famous as porters, but we know little of their way of life. Their Buddhism is of the Tibetan type and very different from that of Burma and Ceylon. While we know much of the great state ceremonies of Lhasa, centering round the Dalai Lama, the life of the ordinary Tibetan villager has been little studied, and now that the Iron Curtain has closed on Tibet itself it is important that scientists should study some of the simpler Buddhist communities still accessible. We can confidently look forward to the collection of much valuable information on their way of life and beliefs.

“Among the beliefs of the Sherpas which will receive special attention is the firmly held one in the existence of the Yeti or Abominable Snowman, as it has been dubbed, though all the evidence points to it being an inhabitant of the high forests, only crossing snow when moving from one feeding-ground to another. Evidence of the Yeti is found from the Karakoram Range in the West to the Upper Salween in the East, but nowhere is it more plentiful than in the Sherpa country. Who will deny that 5,000 square miles of appallingly steep and difficult forest country may well hold secrets? The Natural History Museum contains the skins and the skulls of a new civet and ferret badger collected by myself in an isolated patch of Assam hill forest, less than 20 square miles in extent. Nor will any open-minded anthropologist hastily reject as fiction the firmly held beliefs of people to whom the forest is an open book. Stories of pygmies in Central Africa trickled through to the ancient Greeks; two thousand years later European explorers met the pygmies of the Congo.

“But there is evidence of the Yeti more concrete than tribesmen’s tales. As long ago as 1915 evidence of the existence in Sikkim of a large unknown ape was communicated to a scientific meeting of the Zoological Society. Tracks declared by Sherpas to be those of Yeti have frequently been seen and have been measured and photographed. Tombazi saw a Yeti and quite literally refused to believe his eyes. Finally a report has been received that a scalp said to be that of a Yeti

has recently been seen and photographed in a monastery. The arrival of the photographs and of some of the hairs which were secured is eagerly awaited and the coming expedition will doubtless be able to examine the scalp themselves.

“The evidence in support of the Yeti is very strong indeed and seems to indicate that it is either an ape more man-like than hitherto known or even a very primitive species of man. That Central Asia did in prehistoric times contain a primitive species of man is proved by abundant finds of remains of the so-called Pekin man, and it is possible that some very primitive strain still lingers in the dwarf race of serfs observed by travellers on the Tibet side of the Eastern Himalayas, but never scientifically studied. That a man-like ape or ape-like man once lived in the Himalayas is therefore not improbable. Whether the Yeti is a remnant of such a race, preserved by the absence of natural enemies and the inaccessibility of its habitat, remains to be proved. Should the expedition bring back such proof they will have made a contribution to the study of man and his ancestry beyond the power of words to describe.”

Gerald Russell, in India, was still inclined to the “Primitive Man” theory and began to bombard me with questions which I doubt if even Mr. Mills could have answered fully. The extracts from one of Gerald’s letters, which I reprint below do however at least show the thoroughness with which we attempted to conduct our preliminary enquiries:

“Did primitive man—hereafter referred to as ‘he’—have arms in the same proportion to his body as ours? Was he covered in long hair? Short hair? Did he shed his coat seasonally? Would its colour change seasonally or with age? Was the inside of his hands furry? Were the nails well developed and heavy for grubbing? Would the hair on his head be heavier than elsewhere? Would the toe-nails be necessarily well developed? Did he walk with his weight forward, or on an even keel? Did the female have big or little breasts? Were their eyes brown, hazel, grey or blue? Did he cover his dropping? If so how, and with what? To what extent would he be affected by rain, snow? Did he hibernate? If he did not sleep in caves where did he sleep? Did he sleep lying down like modern man, or sitting down like a male gorilla? Did he stretch and yawn on waking or did he nip off smartly to his chores? Was the old

male thrown out? Did he suffer from arthritis? Was he steatopygous? Did he have a rudimentary tail? How did his intelligence—as exactly as possible—compare with ours? Study of the developed and as yet undeveloped parts of the brain should give us a clue. Did the male eat alone, or first, or together with the female? Did he pull leaves and berries towards him so as to eat them, or break them off, or do everything with his teeth? How many times a day did he eat? How many pounds did he eat? What did he eat? The food is a matter to ponder over. Almost certainly, like the bear and the langur, he unfortunately eats everything—berries, leaves, roots, grass, maggots, insects and so on. This may yet be an advantage to us. The Abominable Snowman must have predilections. Certain berries may have a long season or a short one. What about their altitude?

“Note that a Vitamin D deficiency is supposed to be given as the reason for the werewolf legends of the past: symptoms, faces deformed and prognathous; hair growing in profusion over head and shoulders; craving for raw meat and fresh blood reaching insanity.

“I have a strong reason for asking most of these questions, others not, but I feel answers to all may help us later. We should try and reconstruct 24 hours in the Abominable Snowman’s life; a text-book which we can follow closely in the field. Some of it may be wrong but a surprising amount may well be right. We should become ‘zoolodetectives.’”

Apart from pondering these problems Gerald had been doing a lot of practical work. He had been in touch with the Chief of the “Identitée Judiciaire” in Paris, regarding a new French method of taking casts of footprints of criminals fleeing in the snow. He recommended that we should take at least five footprints in line. (The large bag of plaster of Paris which we finally took with us became rather a menace to our dinner-table for the Sherpa cooks continually inclined to mistake it for flour or baking powder.)

Gerald had also written to the Argentine where his friend Jack Nelson the international polo player is living, to procure some sets of *bolos*. Jack Nelson not only sent us two sets; he kindly sent us full instructions for using them. As their use may not be generally known I include some extracts from his letters:

“DEAR RUSSELL,

“Many thanks for your interesting letter which just reached me.

I shall be simply delighted to send you a couple of sets of *boliadoras* to the address you give me, and hope you will receive them in good time to take them with you on the expedition. To gain time I will send you the *boliadoras* from B.A. as the ones I have are out on the ranch, and it will take several days to get them sent to this city.

“When Winston and Raymond Guest were here playing polo some years ago, I took them on an ‘ostrich balling’ trip to one of my ranches, and they were so taken by this sport that they took with them several sets of *bolas* on a big-game hunt to Africa, when they went to join their father Freddy Guest, who had a hunting bungalow on the shores of Victoria Nyanza. The Guest boys had great fun with the Argentine *boliadoras*, and captured several ostriches, zebras, and even a giraffe. When they returned to Long Island, they wrote to me telling me about their experiences as I had been invited to go on the expedition, but unfortunately could not get away at the time.

“There are three kinds of *boliadoras*, the larger size for capturing horses and big game, the medium size for deer, guanacos and llamas, and the smaller ones for ostriches. They are thrown from horseback when one is going at top speed, you hold one ‘ball’ in your hand swinging the others above your head as you would do a lasso, then as you come into range you loose the *boliadoras* with a flinging punch, aiming at the upper part of his body, so that they will entangle him and wind round his legs. A bit of red tape should be inserted between the leather strands, permitting them to be clearly seen when they miss the target and fall to the ground. When out hunting the rider carries one set in his hand, and a reserve tied round his waist, enabling him to have a second shot, without halting to pick up his first missile.”

A later letter ran:

“DEAR RUSSELL,

“I sent you off the two pairs of *boliadoras* by air mail last week, to the address you gave me in Nepal, and I trust they reach you safely. I fixed everything this end, so I hope you will have no difficulty in having them handed over to you when they arrive. Please accept them as a very small contribution to the success of your expedition, from a friend in Argentina.

“When you receive the *boliadoras*, I suggest you practise throwing them at a tree or stake out on a lawn, so that you become efficient with their management before setting out in the snow.

“If you are chasing your prey on hard ground, or ice, you can aim

short of him, so that you tie him up on the rebound, on the other hand if the terrain is rough, or on soft snow, you have to aim high and direct at the object.

“The faster you can run towards your prey, the further you will throw the *bolas* giving them more impetus in the throw.”

Gerald Russell also wrote to another friend of his in France, Major L. de la Bastide, who is a foremost authority in that country on the principles of “radiesthesia.”

The explanation of this faculty is beyond me. All I can contribute is that it is a development of water divining in which, by using a pendulum, Eric Shipton’s photograph of a Yeti footprint and a map of the Himalaya, Major de la Bastide claimed to be able to identify the whereabouts of the owner of the footprint and its companions *at the time he was making his experiment*. He made no claim to be able to predict future movements. Thus as his information took at least three weeks to reach us in the field it could be taken for granted that the Yeti had moved elsewhere by the time we were able to examine the position. Although a pronounced sceptic myself I will say this much: in every case where Major de la Bastide informed us that he had located a Yeti, subsequent investigation provided unmistakable proof of the recent presence of one or more Yeti at that place. In the case of Mr. Shipton’s photograph Major de la Bastide added the information that this particular Yeti was not alone but belonged to a family of about five males and ten females. He believed it to be neither bear nor ape, but a species of sub-human.

To practical minds Gerald’s methods may appear over-fanciful, especially when compared to the painstaking deliberations of Tom Stobart’s preparations. I am, however, of the opinion that no Intelligence Service is the worse for the presence of one or two men of high imagination—always providing their suggestions do not impede or obstruct the main effort. I was in favour of trying everything.

CHAPTER V

WE ANNOUNCE OUR PLANS

ON 1st December Charles Stonor left by air for the East. Preparations had reached their hectic height at home but there were also important matters to be seen to in India. A hard core of Sherpas had to be engaged in Darjeeling; Dr. Biswas was anxious to confer with someone about the collecting gear we should need; Customs officials had to be contacted in order that all our stores should be passed freely from Bombay up to Katmandu. At expedition headquarters in Queen Victoria Street Tom and I had been reinforced by Percy Rowden of the *Daily Mail* Foreign Department to act as adviser and buyer; by two secretaries (including Miss Ria Jonkers who was acting in an honorary capacity) and by William, an office boy. Our room was now filling with all manner of supplies from the latest technical climbing gear to babies' bottles and patent baby food for young "Snowmen." The loss of Charles was soon to be compensated by the arrival of John Jackson from the north.

On 3rd December we were able to publish our first formal announcement of the expedition. It was a "splash" lead story running to two full columns and surmounted by banner headlines and portraits of all members so far recruited. The announcement began with a short account of how the expedition came to be planned. It continued with brief biographies of the members and concluded by setting forth what we hoped to achieve as regards both the Yeti and other scientific work. On an inside page the interviews given to us by Sir John Hunt and Eric Shipton were printed in full. The announcement was both impressive and dignified and had an obvious appeal for adventurous spirits. The next morning our two telephones were constantly being rung by men anxious to join the team. Many of the callers had high qualifications and would have been most useful if we had been able to find a place for them; others frankly admitted they had nothing particular to offer except unbounded enthusiasm. Many other persons rang offering advice or hitherto unpublished information concerning the Yeti. We were

especially pleased to welcome to the office Mr. C. R. Cooke, a member of the Alpine Club and a former climbing companion of Sir John Hunt in Sikkim. Mr. Cooke is possibly the only man who has seen and photographed the Yeti footprints in soft mud as well as in snow.

The telephone story was repeated when the cables and letters began to pour in. Happily on this day we were able to announce that the team had been completed with the addition of Dr. William Edgar. This curtailed the flood of enquiries from hopeful applicants although it did not cease entirely for some days. It was a heart-breaking task causing disappointment to so many kindred adventurers but with the best will in the world we could not expand our strength beyond the limit we had already set. It is true that two vacancies remained to be filled, but these were for Tom's two film assistants, skilled technicians whom Tom was anxious to choose himself. The *Daily Mail* expressed our thanks for the interest shown in a special leading article printed on 5th December and entitled: "Lure of the Unknown." It ran:

"Nobody need have any doubts about the lure which adventure still holds for the British people.

"Since the *Daily Mail* announced on Thursday that it is sending an expedition to the Himalaya to try to resolve once and for all the mystery of the Abominable Snowman there has been a flood of enquiries—and applications to join the expedition—from all parts of the kingdom.

"Alas! it is not possible to send divisions of ardent young Britons to Nepal, but we acknowledge their zestful spirit with great pleasure. It almost seems that the more urban and packed we become in our island the stronger grows the call of the wild.

"The party of seven are now complete, apart from a possible eighth in the person of a Nepalese nominee. Together with an appropriate detachment of Sherpas they hope, early in the New Year, to be penetrating that strange country which lies around the slopes of Everest.

"The hazards and difficulties of their undertaking will in some measure be aggravated beyond the normal since they will be operating in wintry conditions.

"It was felt right to start the investigation during the winter on the assumption that if there is such a creature as the Yeti it will be driven from the greater heights by intolerable circumstances.

“The Abominable Snowman may find the loftier peaks of the Himalaya at their harshest a little too abominable even for him.

“There are very considerable tracts of quite unknown country to be explored, and it is the resolve of the expedition to engage in concentrated field-work, quite apart from their aim of proving or disproving a fascinating tradition.

“Few parts of the world’s surface have by now failed to come under the scrutiny of responsible eyes, but this remote wilderness in Nepal is still largely uncharted. It remains aloof in its splendour.

“The *Daily Mail* team are very hopeful of more than justifying the enterprise by their researches in the spheres of zoology and botany. But, of course, to the wider public at home it is the adventure of their endeavour which makes the strongest appeal.

“Throughout the world the liveliest interest has been aroused by our announcement, in particular in all parts of the Indian sub-continent. All the important Indian newspapers have featured the news. In America radio and television networks have carried it across the country.

“During the months of preparation the *Daily Mail* has had the utmost help from the authorities in both countries, and we should like to put on record our indebtedness to them.

“The party will have all the latest equipment, much of which has been specially made. Nothing has been spared to ensure that they will be able to function efficiently and with the maximum possible safety.

“They are a well-balanced team, of great experience in exploration, mountaineering, and the sciences immediately concerned, and we hope so to overcome the difficulties of communication that readers of the *Daily Mail* will receive regular reports and pictures of their activities.

“Meanwhile we are delighted to realise the widespread interest which has been created by the project both at home and abroad.”

Among cables received was one which ran: “Your announcement intolerable interference. Referring the matter to UNO—the Abominable Snowman.” It was soon followed by another: “Come up and see me sometime—the Abominable Snow-woman.”

A leading circus offered us a truly fabulous sum for the exhibition rights of an Abominable Snowman should we bring one back alive to Europe.

This offer was, of course, at once refused for as I have explained we had some time before decided that if we did capture a Yeti we

would do no more with it than hold it for study for a short time in its own environment. Sincere scientific investigation is impossible to combine with circus showmanship. Another letter we received was much more in line with the spirit of our enquiry and is worth reproducing. It came from the Rev. A. C. Bouquet, Lecturer in Comparative Religion in the University of Cambridge and an ex-Vice-President of the Cambridge University Anthropological Society, and ran:

“DEAR SIR,

“As a reader of the *Daily Mail* of very many years standing, I am filled with delight at its enterprise in sponsoring the expedition which is to search for the Yeti.

“As a scientist, however, I feel bound to register a warning—which may of course be entirely unnecessary, but which I venture nevertheless to send in.

“I saw in your issue of yesterday the statement by the Prime Minister of Nepal that he hoped that whatever the Yeti turned out to be, if discovered it would not be killed, but taken alive. So far so good.

“But I venture to suggest that the matter must be carried much further than that, and that the issues involved are very serious ones.

“1. We don't know what will be found. Let us however assume that a new species of mammal, simian or otherwise, turns up. It will almost certainly be exceedingly rare, and probably just as important for zoologists as the recently discovered coelocanth. It will therefore need the most delicate handling, since shock such as trapping involves might cause it to cease breeding and to become sterile, or to rush away into some mountain fastness, and become extinct. It is most important not to have another *Dodo* episode. It seems clear that the Nepalese Government should be advised at once to prohibit in advance *all* exports of these creatures. If one country gets one, there will certainly be rivalry. Other countries will also want one, and a scarce species may be exploited until there are no more. The creature should be studied *on the spot*, and *if possible, at liberty*, with great care and circumspection.

“2. If the creature should prove to be an anthropoid, or a sub-man, the above remarks still apply, but with greater force; and must be followed by other considerations. British anthropology since the day of the great Dr. Haddon, my old friend, who laid the foundation

of its field-work, has always proceeded on the assumption that the *first* thing to do in dealing with very primitive human beings is to treat them with good manners and consideration, and to try to establish friendly relations with them, however humble and brutish they may be. Should your expedition discover a human survival of the type of Chelleau or Neanderthal man, or even of pithecanthropus, the above principle would apply more than ever.

“The creature, I repeat, whatever it is, should be studied in its own surroundings and *not brought to Europe*. If one set of people did that, others would want to, and we might get the horrid and lamentable spectacle of a very primitive relation of *homo erectus* exhibited as a freak at shows and circuses. At all costs that possibility must be prevented.

“I have thought it best to write to you direct, because I believe that the persons whom you have selected for your expedition will be wholly in sympathy with my points, though it seems to be possible that they may not have thought far enough ahead yet to see the full implications of what they are doing.

“I venture to suggest that the Nepalese Government should be urged as strongly as possible not to permit on any account the export or exploitation of the Yeti, should it exist, and whatever it may prove to be. You may be able to do this yourself, but I am sure that if you wanted any further support, you could get it readily from the anthropologists of the world, and, to start with, from the Royal Anthropological Institute on the one hand, and from the Master of my college, the President of the Royal Society, on the other.”

Many of the letters we received asked for fuller details concerning the “Snowman” and in particular why he should be called “Abominable.” I was therefore instructed to write a special article on the subject. I was considerably aided by notes which had been left behind by Charles Stonor. I pointed out that a great deal of prejudice against the possibility of the Yeti existing was undoubtedly due to the rather exuberant appellation “Abominable Snowman” foisted upon him by Mr. Henry Newman. However, Mr. Newman was merely following the lead of many other naturalists before him in literally translating a purely native name, in this case *metoh Kang-mi*, into English (as I have explained in Chapter II).

“In a precisely similar way the word orang-outang means ‘Wild Man of the Forest’ and gorilla is generally said to mean ‘Hairy

Savage': so that the fact that the natives of the North-East Himalayas have dubbed the Yeti with a man-like mane implies no more than that they regard it as looking like a man.

"Do not we ourselves (zoologists included) talk of sea elephants, sea horses, or hedgehogs, as being convenient labels for a seal, a fish, and an insectivore which have a certain superficial resemblance to an elephant, a horse, and a pig, although there is no question of the two being related?

"The name does not necessarily imply that the Yeti is a magical, legendary or mythological animal; and it is significant that no explorer who has talked at first hand with the Sherpas and other peoples of the Himalaya has ever been led by them to suppose that they look on the Yeti as endowed with human intelligence or as a magic beast, or, indeed, as any other than a dangerous animal of the high level forests.

"An 'oddity' which Sherpas will ascribe to the Yeti—and this is only in certain descriptions—is that it walks with its toes turned back to front to enable it to climb hills more easily. There could be a simple and logical explanation for this phenomenon—namely that, like the large apes, the Yeti may walk on the backs of its hands, in which case its fingers would be turned to the rear. A failure to differentiate between hands and feet of an animal with four extremities could account for the discrepancy.

"An *unbiased* (and scientific) study of the evidence will in fact prove that any 'impossible' attributes of the beast have been foisted on it—not by any traveller or Sherpa—but by arm-chair critics in this country who have been prejudiced from the outset by the most popular translation of the native name and whose outlook has been from then on conditioned.

"The reason why the *Daily Mail* expedition has chosen the Sherpa district of Sola Khumbu, in north-east Nepal, to make its investigations is that it is there, and in the neighbouring state of Sikkim, that most of the evidence regarding its existence appears to be concentrated.

"The photographs taken in 1951 by Mr. Eric Shipton continue to puzzle scientists in this country and attempts to fit the shoe to either a bear or a monkey—for lack of any more plausible animal—remain unconvincing to say the least. Sherpas will say emphatically that the tracks were made by neither animal, and they are very familiar with both.

"That the Yeti (whatever it may be) has not yet been sighted in

the Sola Khumbu by a European cannot be regarded as surprising. Until 1950, owing to the complete political isolation of Nepal, no white man had ever visited the district. Since that date four expeditions have passed through the country on their way to Everest. But mountaineering expeditions work to close time-tables and tight budgets and cannot allow themselves to be diverted from their main objective for what might be an indefinite period following strange tracks. It follows that their only opportunity of meeting a Yeti would be a chance encounter on some pass or glacier as the animal crossed from one valley or gorge to another.

“It is just this same chance, or mischance, which brings it into contact with Sherpas who, not being hunters, cannot be expected to have any appetite for tracking to its lair a dangerous animal which is alleged to have killed a number of them.”

At about this time we were informed of the presence of the Nepalese Court in Zurich, whither King Tribhuvan had gone for medical treatment. Among statesmen attending the King was General Sir Kaiser Shamshe Jung Bahadur Rana, who had been extremely kind to me during my visit to Katmandu in the previous year. General Kaiser is a leading expert on his country's animal and plant life and it occurred to me that his views on the Yeti would be well worth hearing. I was able to reach him in Zurich by telephone and he immediately agreed to give us an interview. I was myself unable to spare the time away from London, and Ronald Downing of the *Daily Mail* Foreign Staff was sent in my place. Downing later reported:

“As I sat with General Kaiser in his Zurich hotel, he recalled the first occasion on which he had become acquainted with the legend of the Yeti.

““It was 1904 and I was a boy of 12,”” he said. ““I had broken my arm in a riding accident and was receiving massage treatment from the Keeper of the Ayurvedic (Keeper of the State Medicines). He talked to me of Nepalese traditions and the need for insisting on and maintaining our independence.

““In telling me the legends of the past, he said one day that he knew the truth of the statement in our scriptures that there are eight immortals because he had come across the footprints of one of them—much larger than those of the present-day man.

““He said he found the evidence of these superhuman footsteps in

the dried bed of a river and had scooped out the sand in which one of them had been imprinted.

“He had carried this sand back because he thought it must be holy, and he kept it for good luck. He thought the immortal beings walked in the night.

“His description of the prints tallies with those of many Western observers since. I have read all the reports published since then, starting with Mr. H. J. Elwes in 1915 and then with increasing frequency in the newspapers up to the present time.

“I was present in the British Embassy in Katmandu on the occasion mentioned by Mr. Eric Shipton, the Everest pathfinder, when Sonam Tensing, one of the Sherpas with the 1951 British Expedition, was closely questioned about the footprints and his story of having previously actually seen the Yeti. His description accords with what is generally known about the creature.”

General Kaiser was quite clear about his expectations for the *Daily Mail Expedition*.

“I am thrilled to think,” he said, “that the challenge of these footprints is being met. I venture to think that they are made by an ape-man—I am less inclined to the idea of a bear that walks like a man—and that he will be traced.

“There is a creature which leaves these prints and it must live somewhere. The place, cave or whatever kind of shelter it is, must be found.

“These tracks can be followed. A tiger can be successfully tracked and so can these. I only hope that when the Yeti is found the Expedition will not kill it. I hope they are equipped with nets and lassoes so that it may be taken alive.”

There is every reason, added the General, why the tracks have never been followed by Nepalese. Natives of the Himalayan foothills are either terrified of the creature or invest it with a sacred aura, and the British searchers might find it difficult to enlist the help of local men. The fact was that the tracks had never seriously been followed because of the fear of what would be found when they ceased.

On the subject of tracking General Kaiser speaks with the authority of a successful career as a hunter of big game. In his home he has preserved the skin of a tiger he killed in 1917—probably the largest

ever bagged. It was 11 feet over the curve from head to tail.

This was his final message:

“The crowning success of the last Mount Everest Expedition, which planned its synchronisation with the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II, leads me to hope that this mystery of the Himalayan footprints will also be cleared in her reign.

“I find that in this world luck also counts and without it pluck many times is in vain. I therefore wish you luck.”

There was soon more work for Ronald Downing. Another letter we had received contained clues which finally led him to a Polish refugee, Mr. Slavomir Rawicz, now living near Birmingham. Mr. Rawicz had an amazing tale to tell of a personal encounter with a Yeti and I repeat it in full exactly as Downing later wrote it for the *Daily Mail* under the heading “The Snowman: the strangest story yet.”

Somewhere near the Chumbi Valley gap in the Himalayas on the border of Sikkim and Bhutan leading down to the plains of India, five men—gaunt, bearded, dressed in pitiful tatters of skins and cloth—paused and talked excitedly among themselves that clear, fine morning in May 1942.

Behind them was an appalling, dogged, struggling trail 2,000 miles back to a Russian forestry camp in that part of Siberia lying a couple of hundred miles north-west of Irkutsk and the great Baikal Lake.

All five had been political prisoners of the Russians. There were three Poles, an American, and a man from the Baltic States—survivors of an escaping party of seven which had broken out of Camp 402 fifteen months earlier.

Two had “just swollen up and died” climbing the forbidding last barrier of the Himalayas from the Tangla area on the Tibetan side.

The story of that escape, its plodding, month-after-month movement southwards and always southwards, was told me by Polish survivor Slavomir Rawicz, now 38, married to an English girl and living in the Midlands.

That May morning in 1942 high up in the mountains Mr. Rawicz remembers with great clarity even when some of the details of time and place of previous incidents in the long march to freedom have become blurred in the memory.

They had “crossed the ridge” in his words, and were descending

towards the country where at last they would find friends and civilisation they had known. They had halted here because their way down the mountain was blocked. And the cause of it was something none of the men had seen before in their lives.

This is how Mr. Rawicz told it: "From high up the mountain we picked out two moving black dots against a background of snow. Someone said: 'They must be animals—that means food.' In that clear air we could see for miles. We set off down towards the creatures.

"We finished up against a big overhanging rock at a point some 12 feet above and 100 yards distant from them. And when we examined them we knew there was no question of their providing us with food.

"They were massive creatures, nearly 8 feet tall and standing erect. They were shuffling around on a snow-covered shelf which formed part of the obvious route for us to continue our descent. Armed as we were with only one knife and one axe the whole five of us together would have stood no chance against them.

"We thought perhaps they would go away if we waited. It was obvious that the pair had seen us. They looked at us and were quite indifferent. They certainly were not frightened of us.

"I wanted to climb down the rock and get a little closer but my companions refused to join me. So we just sat there, our legs dangling over the edge of the rock, and watched them.

"For two hours we watched them. One of the party said that if we waited long enough we should be bound to see them descend on all fours. But they never did. They moved around quietly on their hind legs with an almost comical swinging motion.

"As a regular officer in the Polish Army in 1939 I was specially trained in assessing distances and heights for setting gun sights. I have not the slightest doubt that they were at least 7 feet high, but probably nearer 8 feet. One was slightly smaller than the other, and we decided they must be male and female.

"Their faces I could not see in detail, but the heads were squarish and the ears must lie close to the skull because there was no projection from the silhouette against the snow. The shoulders sloped sharply down to a powerful chest and long arms, the wrists of which reached the knees.

"Seen in profile, the back of the head was a straight line from the crown into the shoulders, as somebody remarked at the time, 'a typical Prussian.'

“I tried to decide what they were and the nearest I could get was an idea of a cross between a big bear and an orang-outang type of ape.

“The nearest I can get to describing their colour is a rusty camel. They were covered with a long loose straight hair, which, in the light, seemed to have a greyish tinge, but the bodies seemed to be covered also with a very short reddish fur.

“They were doing nothing but move around slowly together and occasionally just standing and looking about them, like people admiring the view. So eventually we had to move off in another and more difficult direction.”

Lower down the mountain the party found another shelf on which were the blurred footprints of the creatures. They were roughly oval in shape, like the mark of a snowshoe, about 20 inches long and 8 inches broad at the widest point, with what appeared the pressure of a pad-mark near the middle. Indirectly the creatures were responsible for the death of one of the surviving five. The deviation of route found the party creeping along a narrow ledge against a sheer face of rock and one of the Poles crashed to his death. That was two days after the encounter with the great beasts.

Towards the end of June the trail to freedom ended. They ran into a patrol of Indian soldiers.

“It was wonderful,” said Mr. Rawicz. “We were able to lie down and sleep in peace.”

Their tattered skin clothing was almost ceremoniously burnt. They were shaved and scrubbed. They savoured the ecstatic luxury of clean underwear. They were fitted out with shorts and tropical shirts.

In Bengal the party split up. The American, who gave his name as Smith, being the only member of the party who could speak English, told their story to the authorities.

“Whether Smith was really his name I do not know,” said Mr. Rawicz. “When he joined our camp in the forest he said that he had gone to Russia as an engineer and was sentenced to 25 years’ imprisonment. He said he had been working in gold-mines south-west of Krasnoyarsk. He was about 45.”

Mr. Rawicz spent some time in hospital in Calcutta. For days he found himself picking up and hiding in his bed any small scraps of bread he found in the ward. It was a long time before he could be convinced that it was no longer necessary to hoard food.

From Calcutta he went to Teheran to rejoin General Anders’

Polish Army and was taken on the staff at the big camp outside the Persian capital as a military instructor.

There, too, he reported his movements from the day in November 1939, when he was arrested by the Russians, through weeks of interrogation in Minsk and Kharkov to his sentence before a court in Moscow's Lubianka Prison to 25 years' hard labour in Siberia as "an enemy of the Soviet people."

He ended the war in Britain training to be an R.A.F. pilot.

Soon after publication of our announcement newspaper and news agency reports concerning Abominable Snowmen began to come in from far and wide. This was a natural journalistic phenomenon. Stories which might be "spiked" had they occurred singly and unsupported, at once become worth printing if a topical peg can be found on which they can be hung. I reprint a selection while hastening to add that they did not all appear within the space of a few days, indeed they were still trickling into our London office long after we ourselves had taken the field. It is, I think, desirable that they should all be disposed of at this stage in case they subsequently become confused with the more concrete evidence which we were later to discover.

Three of the reports concerned Himalayan Snowmen:

AUCKLAND, [date]. (British United Press):

"Hamish McInnes, a young Scottish mountaineer, who arrived in New Zealand today, is convinced that an 'Abominable Snowman' passed his tent at an 18,000 feet base camp in the Himalayas.

"McInnes with another Scotsman, John Cunningham, penetrated the Himalayas without porters and living on local food. They travelled through the same region as the recent British Everest Expedition and climbed Pingero, a dangerous rock pinnacle twelve miles from Everest.

"Describing the 'Snowman' incident, McInnes said that early one morning they heard ponderous footsteps outside their tent. The steps were slow and deliberate. Both climbers were certain it was the 'Snowman.' They were scared to go outside until the creature had gone and could not follow its tracks because of the rocky country.

"McInnes said the local people described the Snowman as about 5 ft. 6 in. tall and covered with reddish-brown hair and with a white face. They said it stood erect and had no tail."

KALIMPONG, 30th December, 1953. (Reuter):

“The ‘Abominable Snowman’ is an 8-ft. ape which not only lives in the Himalayas, but also in the jungles of the North-East Frontier of India and the Chari Hills of Assam, according to a Tibetan Lama who claims to have seen the bodies of two preserved ‘Snowmen.’

“The Lama, Chemed Rigdzin, said he had seen the preserved bodies in ‘God’s Zoo’ in the Riboche and Sakya Monasteries, where the bodies of all creatures from man down to a fly are kept for occult worship.

“‘The Yeti is a mighty ape 8 ft. tall with a thick flat skull, a dark brown face and body covered with hair an inch and a half long, with a short tail,’ the Lama said. He said the animal was a non-violent creature which attacks only when provoked. Proof of this was that his teacher, Tsultung Zangbou Lama, one of the greatest living scholars in Tibet, once came face to face with a Yeti while praying in the Chair Hills. The Yeti, carrying two large stones under its arms, passed by without harming the teacher.”

CALCUTTA, [date]. (British United Press):

“A Tibetan Lama, Chemed Ragdjiu Dorje Lopu, told the Calcutta newspaper *Zugantar* that a fellow-lama had spent some time meditating at the top of a Himalayan peak with an 8-ft. Abominable Snowman as a companion.

“Chemed Ragdjiu said his fellow-lama Tsultun Zambo, one of Tibet’s greatest scholars, told him he met the Snowman on a pilgrimage to some mountains across the Eastern Tibetan border. A *mirgu* (the Tibetan word for an Abominable Snowman) came along while he was meditating and Tsultun Zambo was quoted to have said:

“‘He not only did not harm me, but he positively helped me in my meditation. He was unable to speak, but he was very intelligent.’

“He also was quoted as describing the Snowman as an ape-like creature, dark-complexioned, with a body covered with hair 1½ in. long.”

A diversion from the Himalayas occurred when apparitions closely resembling Abominable Snowmen suddenly bobbed up in Malaya.

KUALA LUMPUR, 31st December, 1953:

“Hairy creatures with fangs which appear to be half human and half ape emerged from the dense jungle in Northern Malaya and frightened villagers, Radio Malaya reported tonight.

“Mr. Tony Beamish, Deputy Director of the Radio Service, who made the broadcast said the creatures were unknown to science in Malaya and he believed them to be ‘one of the most valuable anthropological discoveries for years.’ The creatures had been seen swimming and digging for food at the edge of the vast Trolak Forest Reserve in Perak. One of them, a female, put her arms round a rubber tapper and its companions laughed when he tore himself away in panic.

“Mr. Beamish broadcast interviews with two rubber tappers, a Malay child and a Malayan Home Guard Corporal, all of whom said they had seen the creatures. They said the creatures were tall, powerfully built and covered with unkempt hair which hung down from their heads to their waist. All had long dog-like fangs which protruded even when their mouths were closed. Both males and females had moustaches and an ‘animal smell.’

“Descriptions by the witnesses tallied perfectly except for the clothes which some described as skins and others as loin-cloths.

“The ‘ape-men’ were first seen on Christmas Day. They surprised a Chinese girl on the edge of a rubber plantation and sent her running back to her village in hysterics. Corporal Washib of the Malayan Home Guard went to investigate and found three ‘ape-men’ digging for tapioca with their hands on the banks of a river. The creatures dived into the river and hid under scrub.

“Next day a Malay child playing by the river came rushing back to her village sobbing with fright. She said she had seen the ‘ape-men’ swimming.

“On Sunday a Tamil (South Indian) tapper on the plantation was bending over a bole of a rubber tree when he ‘felt a pair of woman’s arms around him.’ He turned and saw the hideous face of an ‘ape-woman’ who smelled of animal. The tapper tore himself away, ripping his shirt and fell into some water. As he fled the creatures appeared to be laughing at him.

“Natives and European settlers in the region are positive that the reports of the ‘ape-men’ are true. They believe there may be colonies of them in the jungle, which is almost impenetrable.

“Mr. Beamish said tonight he believed a colony of strange creatures might have been forced from its jungle home by floods due to recent heavy rains in Perak.

“‘I do not think they mean harm, and they should be protected,’ he added. ‘In Malaya today there are too many trigger-happy people. We must do something to save them.’

“No authority in Kuala Lumpur or Singapore could identify the strange beings tonight. There are however old legends in Malaya that tell of strange hairy aborigines who once lived in the mountain jungles.”

This story caused Indian newspapermen in Calcutta to seek out Dr. Biswas and enquire what he would do if he suddenly found himself embraced by an Abominable Snow-woman. Bis gave a typically impish reply: “I should hang on.”

The Snowman now deserted Malaya to turn up once more in far western Canada.

VANCOUVER, [date]. (*Daily Mail*):

“At the same time as the *Daily Mail* Yeti expedition is entering upon its hunt for the Abominable Snowman in the Himalayas, similar big game is alleged to have been sighted in the high snow-covered mountains of the Fraser Valley Canyon and behind Kitimat on the Northern British Columbia coast.

“It is at this spot that an aluminium company is completing a smelting plant which is to be run by a 2,000 h.p. hydro-electric plant.

“Kitimat was originally an Indian village, whose inhabitants allege that older members of their tribe have long known of creatures 8 ft. high, shaped like a man, but covered with shaggy hair and smelling abominably, known as *Sasquatches*.

“Officials of the aluminium company tell me that younger members of this tribe of Haisla Indians are reluctant to discuss the topic, but their elders maintain that these sub-human creatures are of a race that has been driven to take refuge in the high mountains ever since the Spanish invaded Central America 300 years ago.

“The Indian name for these transatlantic Yeti is *Karakawas*.

“This information has been given me on the day of my departure for Kitimat but the aluminium company’s staff hold out little prospect of my sighting these mysterious beings.”

In Holland Dr. C. Visser, former Dutch Ambassador to India, announced his opinion that we might be searching for a “Flying Snowman”—namely that the author of the mysterious tracks in the snow might well be a giant eagle. A veteran of five exploratory expeditions in the Himalayas which he undertook between the years 1925 and 1935 Dr. Visser related one of his experiences: “One morning in 1925 when we were about to strike camp on the Batura

Glacier, in the Karakoram, having already crossed the Himalayas, we were all astounded to see what looked like huge footprints across the snow from the camp. Having proved that no member of our party had made them, we followed the tracks. At one point they jumped over a crevasse just narrow enough for each of us to leap over, and they went on into the whiteness. After about two miles we suddenly saw a darkish creature squatting, as it were, right at the end of the tracks. It made no attempt to move until we got quite close and then just hopped aside and remained so near that we could have touched it with our ice-axes. It was a huge Himalayan eagle, the largest bird known, producing tracks which had at first led us to believe they were made by a man."

A further reference to letters: they came from all over the world wishing us good luck—offering advice—propounding theories—relating personal experiences or those of friends. An American wrote to say that in 1901 a U.S. Army Officer had reported that men of the Bhutia tribe had been attacked and mauled by a huge, bear-like creature in the foothills of Everest. Two of the party were killed.

A correspondent in South Africa believed that he had seen the Yeti. He was climbing with two bearers when they saw a creature "about 5 ft. 6 in. in height and a reddish-brown colour—something belonging to the ape family."

Men who had spent years in the Himalayas wrote of the undoubted native fear that exists. One remembered being stopped by his guide from venturing away from his camp at night because of the danger of "an enormous animal."

From New Zealand, again, a writer said he had obtained first-hand information that certain valleys were the favourite haunt of the Yeti.

We were grateful for all these letters for, as usual, scraps of evidence which seemed unimportant when isolated, began to make sense when assembled together. It was also encouraging to find that so many men of good sense and experience were convinced that there was a prize in the Himalayas worth seeking.

One of the most interesting letters did not reach us until the expedition was completed. This was a pity for it put forward a theory which was new to us. It came from Mr. Richard Ford of Watkins and Doncaster, the well-known firm of entomologists, naturalists, taxidermists and booksellers. It ran:

"I have been very interested in the efforts to find the Abominable Snowman and given much thought to the subject.

“In my opinion this animal is most likely to be a species of *Mylodon*. I have not seen this idea suggested so I give my reasons for this below.

“1. The *Mylodon* or giant ground sloth is assumed to be extinct but is the last of the ancient animals to disappear, having however lived while man was well advanced.

“2. It would make the right-shaped-and-size footprints.

“3. It would be nocturnal in habit and therefore not seen by searchers.

“4. It has been shown to have lived in mountain caverns.

“5. It would feed on vegetable matter.

“6. It would almost certainly be able to hibernate for long periods.

“7. From remains found it had thick hair and could stand cold.

“If the expedition now sponsored by you can bring back hairs from the skin they have seen these could be compared with specimens from *Mylodon* in the Natural History Museum.”

To return to our preparations. It was not long before Tom had found the two men who were to help him with his film. They were Stanley Jeeves, who had made a special study of animal photography and had the additional advantage of having been John Jackson's climbing companion in many adventures both in England and Scotland, and Charles Lagus (from now on referred to by his nickname of “Chunk” in order that he shall not be confused with Charles Stonor). Chunk was not only a first-class cameraman, he was also an all-round technician who proved to be quite capable of coping with our complicated walkie-talkie apparatus. Chunk had never been to the Himalayas before, but in Europe he had won a Junior Ski-ing championship. Stan had not only never been to the Himalayas, he had never been out of England before. The voyage he was to make in the *Strathaird* was the first time he had ever been in a ship; his flight over the foothills into Katmandu the first time he had ever been in an aeroplane. His humorous, unsophisticated comments on these experiences, and indeed his remarks on every fresh sight he saw later, delivered as they were in broad Lancashire dialect, were a constant delight to all of us. I have seldom met a more good-natured man.

By 8th December a constant flow of stores was arriving at Andrew Lusk's warehouse. John Jackson had taken over the responsibility for assembling the climbing gear we should need. Charles Stonor had reported from India that all was well. He had found Tenzing,

who was recruiting our Darjeeling Sherpas, particularly helpful. Charles wrote: "I cannot praise his efforts on our behalf too highly. Every sort of machinery both direct and indirect is being set in motion for us to try and ensure our success. We already owe so much to him that some return is due." By chance we were able to make a very suitable gesture. A number of monks had arrived in Darjeeling from Thyangboche monastery, near where we should be operating, with the object of raising funds for the repair of the monastery roof. Tenzing had been appointed treasurer to the fund, to which we were happy to make a substantial contribution.

Tenzing also wrote directly to us. "In the attached list I send you the names and measurements of the Sherpas I have chosen for you—subject to your approval. I am sure our Sherpa friends who are to accompany you will be able to lead you to the right spots for Yeti." He added that he would have been "very much happy if I could also join with you, but my other preoccupations prevent me from doing that which I am sure you will please forgive. . . . I wish you all success in your mission and send my greetings to all members of the expedition." With the letter came a bill from a Sikh needleman: "To measurement of Sherpa knickers, Rs.5."

Charles Stonor moved up to Katmandu on 10th December. Behind him the expedition was already taking shape. Gerald Russell had joined Biswas in Calcutta and together they were handling the rest of the work Charles had been unable to complete there.

Charles found all in order in Katmandu. The Swiss threat to arrive in December had not materialised. As far as Charles could discover our rivals had reverted to their original plan—to begin their expedition in mid-February. Charles therefore cabled us his intention to push on to Namche Bazar as a one-man "advance party." There were some very good reasons for this move. We had no information as to what conditions we were likely to encounter along the 170-mile march to Namche in the depths of winter. At least one 13,000-foot-high pass—the Lamjura—had to be crossed. It might be snowed up; I have known lesser passes snowed up as early as the end of September. If it could not be crossed it was preferable that Charles and a small party of Sherpas should discover the fact rather than that our main expedition with its vast baggage train of up to three hundred coolies should suddenly be brought to a halt in the wilderness. If he could get through to Namche, Charles could save us valuable time by reconnoitring the district and pin-pointing

valleys where the Yeti was most likely to be found. Owing to the delays we had suffered, which in part could be attributed to the Swiss, our main party would be anything up to three weeks late in reaching Namche. We could regain lost time by having the search all laid on for us when we arrived there. Charles was therefore told to go on.

Charles performed his mission brilliantly. It is impossible to overestimate the value of the contribution he was able to make, as his three reports at the end of this section of the book will show. He was able to bring a trained scientific mind to bear on subjects which men who had no other thought but mountains in their minds had only vaguely apprehended. Until Charles arrived at Namche Bazar the Sherpas' vast store of knowledge concerning the Yeti had been scarcely tapped. When our main party arrived a complete working plan was ready for us. We not only knew exactly what we were looking for; we had an excellent picture of what the animal looked like, what its habits were and where it was most likely to be found.

CHAPTER VI

WE MOVE UP TO NEPAL

AS Charles had gone forward it was considered necessary to send another member of the expedition as quickly as possible to Katmandu. His work would be to complete our preparations, which included the recruiting of our coolie corps, and to form a relief party if Charles got into difficulties. I had vivid recollections of being stranded alone and desperately ill during my journey back from Everest in the previous year. It had been an experience I would not wish any man to have to endure. As no one else was immediately available it was decided that I should be sent. I was to tie up a few loose ends in New Delhi and Calcutta and then to go at once to the capital of Nepal. A passage was booked for me on 20th December. This premature departure entailed a sad wrench for me for I had still been hoping to spend Christmas with my wife and our four small children, but in the circumstances there was nothing else to be done. My spirits were not improved that Sunday night as my aircraft taxied off the apron on to the runway. We had hardly got into position for the take-off when a bank of thick fog rolled across the airfield. After waiting an hour for the fog to clear, which it did not, the flight was abandoned until the next day and the first night of my own expedition was spent in a chilly hotel at Richmond. I finally arrived at Delhi in the evening of 22nd December—the one “dry” day of the week.

Only two days now remained before the Christmas holidays, which, falling as they did at the week-end, meant that three full days would later be lost—in which no work of any sort could be done. I found there was plenty to do. Visas, particularly for our late-comers, had to be confirmed at the Nepalese Embassy: enquiries had to be made regarding the transport of our goods across India and Customs clearances; permission had to be obtained from the Postmaster-General to send Press messages on “pay on delivery” terms over the Indian Embassy telegraph system at Katmandu. A large number of purchases had to be made, including certain scientific reference books which were not easily obtainable elsewhere. In all this work

I was most ably assisted by Prem Bhatia of the *Statesman* who was to act for us as "back stop" in New Delhi in the same manner as Saksena was acting as "back stop" in Katmandu. But we would not finish the work before Christmas. This meant that it was impossible for me to leave for Calcutta before Tuesday, 29th December. In one way this was to the good for it happened that Tenzing was staying in the capital as the guest of Pandit Nehru, and as there were a number of matters concerning Sherpa pay, their food allowances, journey money and so forth which we still had to discuss with Tenzing I was spared an additional trip to Darjeeling. At the Premier's house—I had last entered it when it was the residence of General Sir Claude Auchinleck at the time when he was C.-in-C. Indian Army—Tenzing greeted me with his characteristic beaming smile. I found him very fine drawn compared with the time I had last seen him and he informed me that he was still twenty pounds under weight from his exertions on Everest. Our business was soon completed and for a long time afterwards we talked happily of men and mountains. He was enthusiastic about the Yeti hunt, so much so that for some time I felt he was genuinely on the point of throwing up the long round of humdrum business engagements upon which he was about to embark and join us.

When I arrived at Calcutta airport the following Tuesday I met Tenzing again, this time accompanied by his redoubtable wife and the rest of his family and entourage. He knew by then that he would not be able to come with us, but as a gesture of friendship he announced that he would send to us his brother-in-law Nemi, who is married to Pem Pem, his favourite sister. Nemi was an excellent acquisition. He is one of the few Sherpas who have served in the Armed Forces. He had joined the 1st Gurkhas and had then volunteered for the Paratroops and had made as many as eighteen parachute jumps with them. On demobilisation he had joined the Calcutta armed police. He was completely reliable and we had not the slightest qualms in leaving our Base Camp with its sacksful of silver coin in his charge when the rest of us were out searching the surrounding mountains.

From Calcutta airport I drove to Spence's Hotel where I was soon joined by Gerald and Biswas. Another arrival was Saksena from Katmandu. Charles and he had recommended that we should buy a second-hand jeep to facilitate our work in Katmandu and across the Great Valley of Nepal. It was felt that runners operating between Katmandu and Namche Bazar could be saved at least three

days on the round trip if they could be transported over the initial motorable section of the road. Time saving is often of the utmost importance where Press messages are concerned. Saksena had therefore been ordered down to Calcutta to buy a vehicle. Personally I was not in favour of buying a second-hand car of doubtful antecedents in Calcutta, particularly as Saksena intended to drive it up to Katmandu over the mountain road which had recently been opened up by Indian Army sappers. Few cars are sold in India while they have any useful life left in them and the few specimens we inspected all seemed to be composed of bolted-together spare parts probably obtained at cut-rate prices from Army surplus stores. At length John Dewar, of G. B. Dewar's Garages, came to our help by generously offering us a brand-new Land Rover on most advantageous terms. A few days were required to get the Land Rover on to the road and this time was spent pleasantly enough with Gerald and Bis in conferences which two friends from the *Statesman*, David Macdonald and Desmond Doig, frequently joined. I was, however, very impatient to be off. If all had gone well with Charles he must now be in Namche Bazar—as I learned later he spent his Christmas day at Thosé, the half-way stage, and reached Namche Bazar on 2nd January.

I was not to know this in Calcutta and could only console myself with the thought that if an urgent summons for help were relayed to us I could always fly to Katmandu, leaving Saksena to drive the Land Rover up after me. No message came and Saksena and I therefore set out together in the early morning of 7th January. That evening we drove into Patna having covered four hundred miles in the day. It had been a most comfortable journey, the pair of us driving alternate spells of 100 miles. Part of it had been across the great new industrial belt now under construction in Bihar which will be served when the Damodar Valley Dam is completed. There had followed a section through part of a huge Game Reserve of tangled jungle which both of us agreed looked fine tiger country. Here we caught a glimpse of an India of the past—a towering hunting elephant his tusks bound with silver bands, lumbering down the road in the charge of his mahout. The violet dusk was falling gently long before we reached Patna and as we drove through village after village our ears caught the chatter and clatter emanating from the tiny houses while mauve smoke from cow-dung fires hung like wraiths of mist at shoulder-height across the road.

From Patna the journey became quite an expedition in itself. It

had been arranged that as the Land Rover was brand-new it should be generally tightened up and fully serviced at Patna, for beyond that point there was no possibility of it receiving further attention for the whole of the time it would be with us. This work could not be completed on the next day in time to allow for a reasonable crossing of the Ganges. The Ganges is a formidable river and there is no bridge across it at Patna. The normal ferry is a lengthy business, requiring two days. On the following day we therefore chose the riskier but speedier expedient of having it rowed across on a country boat. These boats are scarcely bigger than a lifeboat but by no means have a lifeboat's stability.

About half an hour was spent in precariously balancing the Land Rover athwartships. Finally we pushed off with the vehicle projecting over either beam. The possible presence of crocodiles added somewhat to our trepidation, but it soon proved that our semi-naked oarsmen were used to this kind of work and were fully masters of the situation. As soon as our fears subsided we settled down to enjoy what turned out to be a very pleasant passage. Some idea of the size of the Ganges at this point can be gathered from the fact that it took us three hours to achieve the crossing, eventually being landed at a spot on the far bank fifteen miles downstream. Nine miles of deep sand track now brought us to Hajipur whence a long stretch of good metalled road led us to Muzzafapur. Here we lunched in the railway station. One of the pleasant surprises of cross-country travel in India is the fact that adequate meals can always be obtained in a railway refreshment-room. If one tires of the invariable fried eggs for breakfast and chicken curry for the rest of the day tinned foods in great variety are always held in stock. It may be argued that railways are not all that frequent in India, but neither for that matter are motorable roads and where one is found the other generally runs beside it.

That night we reached Raxaul on the Nepal frontier, our arrival being delayed until after dark by a final length of atrocious track cut by a number of fords which must be impassable in the rainy season. A slight administrative slip-up on Saksena's part caused us to appear unannounced at the Indian Embassy Rest House, but the custodian finally took pity on us and found us quarters in an overflow bungalow. The next day we set out for Bhimpedi, high in the Himalayan foothills and only thirty-five miles as the crow flies from Katmandu. Bhimpedi is the head of the new motor road built by Indian Army sappers. It is a quite remarkable feat of engineering but owing to

the difficult nature of the terrain makes over seventy miles of the distance to Katmandu.

The first fifteen-mile stretch of road from Raxaul is indescribably bad and frequently, to avoid the deeper watercourses, we took to the single narrow-gauge railway track, bumping over the sleepers while fervently praying that we would neither meet, nor be pursued by, the one train a day. This section brought us to the fringe of the Terai, a strip of jungle which hugs the foothills throughout the whole length of the Himalaya and is notorious for the fact that a particularly virulent form of cerebral malaria renders it a death-trap throughout the summer months. In the winter season, such as we were enjoying, it also provides possibly the world's finest tiger-shooting. The road through the Terai has been little improved since the days when it was negotiated solely by transport elephants, but the Land Rover made such light work of it that I am happy to record the fact. We saw no tiger although pug-marks in the sand showed that at least one had trotted down our route during the previous night. Once a fine sambhar stag crossed unconcernedly in front of us. Frequently we passed groups of langur monkeys, their flat black faces fringed with bos'n-type whiskers, playing beneath the taller trees. We arrived at Bhimpedi at tea-time to be greeted at the Indian Army sappers' mess by Colonel Grant, the Commanding Officer. We now had a serious set-back. The new motor road which had been ceremonially opened the month before had now been closed again. There was no doubting this fact; it had been deliberately breached at a number of points in order that it should be reconstructed and made fully "monsoon proof." Colonel Grant very courteously offered us comfortable quarters for the night. He also pointed out that there were two courses open to us. We could retreat back to Simra airfield in the Terai and have the Land Rover flown over the mountains to Katmandu, or we could have the vehicle dismantled and carried over the coolie track into the Great Nepal Valley. As time was pressing we decided on the air lift. It may also be observed that coolie transport, paradoxical as it may sound, is the dearest form of transport. We should have required anything up to 100 men to carry the Land Rover and at 3s. 6d. or half a dollar per head, per day, for a minimum of fourteen days, it would have been cheaper to have flown the vehicle from Calcutta in the first place.

Thus early next morning Saksena and I turned on our tracks and drove back to Simra in the Terai. We arrived to find the airfield enveloped in thick mist, nor was it until late afternoon that visibility

improved sufficiently to allow any landings to be made. Here Saksena made his second slip-up, although he could not possibly be blamed for the fact. It is flattering an almost non-existent service to say that there is telephone communication between Simra and Katmandu. After the unfortunate Saksena had been screaming into the ancient mouthpiece for half an hour the line went dead altogether, probably because some langur monkeys had begun swinging from the wires. The faint whispers which had reached Katmandu airport were misinterpreted by each of the two rival air companies which are there. Both regarded the message as addressed to themselves. This was a valuable freight and two aircraft lined up at the end of the runway waiting for the weather to clear. They took off together on the word "Go" from the control tower and they arrived wing-tip to wing-tip at Simra. Although I wished no harm to either company I considered it a merciful deliverance from the necessity of paying for two air charters when, in the ensuing excitement, one of the aircraft damaged a rudder. Hopes of reaching Katmandu that night were, however, dashed when the rival company failed to load the Land Rover into their Dakota with the equipment available. We were told to return on the next day and, not wishing to spend the night in the wattle hut which serves Simra as offices-cum-waiting-room-cum-warehouse, we retreated on Raxaul.

This time our quarters were rather less elegant than those offered us by the Indian Embassy. We shared a small hut with a gaping hole in the ceiling which reminded us unpleasantly of travellers' tales of possible cobras harbouring in the rafters. When morning arrived, however, we had only been bitten by innumerable mosquitoes. We set off back to Simra airfield at 8 o'clock. By now we were becoming fairly well known along the route but this did not explain why we were constantly being stopped and asked our fare to the next village. It was Saksena who hit on the solution. Dewar's garage in Bombay had painted "DAILY MAIL" across the front and along both sides of the Land Rover. We were calling ourselves what in fact we were not. We lodged a number of non-paying passengers into the back and it is as well that we did so for, crossing one of the streams, we slid off the track and bogged down completely. The passengers cheerfully disembarked, hitched up their loin-cloths and pushed us out of this predicament. The air company, who had assured us that they would be able to load the Land Rover into the Dakota, spent the entire day failing to do so. Officials of the rival company whom we had turned down and who, it turned out, had the

only possible loading equipment, stood idly by with "I told you so" expressions on their faces. As I dared not delay our arrival in Katmandu any longer, we decided to fly there together in the Dakota and allow the rival company to see what they could do with the Land Rover on the following day. As we rose over the green forests of the Terai the eternal snows of the high Himalayas appeared for the first time in all their glittering splendour, Annapurna being visible in the west and grim Everest far away to the east. It was impossible to suppress a great upsurge of excitement at the prospect of the adventure which lay ahead.

We arrived to find Katmandu charmingly decorated in honour of King Tribhuvan's safe return from his period of medical treatment in Switzerland. A succession of triumphal arches was adorned with offerings of fruits and fresh vegetables which I was glad to see were already abundant. Life in the narrow streets between the picturesque many-tiered pagodas and the temples with their guardian dragons, griffins and other fabulous animals was much as I remembered it, except that it was now additionally animated, for to escape the rigours of winter scores of Tibetans had flocked down from the mountains to trade. I noted that it was possible to buy a warm double blanket of pure yak's wool for as little as fifteen shillings.

By the kindness of the Nepal Government their official Guest House No. 2 had been placed at our disposal until the expedition was ready to leave for Namche Bazar. Here to my great delight I found Cook Narayan—my faithful "Jeeves" who had accompanied me to Everest the year before, awaiting me with tears of happiness in his eyes and a large bunch of flowers in his hand.¹

Guest House No. 2, where Narayan is the Government's official cook, is a most comfortable two-storied house with modern furniture, hot baths and the bedroom luxury of an electric fire. Saksena, who lives in Guest House No. 3, which is over the garden wall, soon returned with the news that during our absence the first message and films had been sent down from the Sherpa country by Charles Stonor. The message had been passed on to London unopened so we had no knowledge then of its contents, but I include it here for the sake of continuity.

¹ In my book *The Innocent on Everest* I described Narayan throughout as "Jeeves" because of his all-round excellence as a servant. As by an odd coincidence we now had a real Jeeves—Stanley—among the expedition members, Narayan must relapse back into the comparative obscurity of his own name.

Writing on Christmas Eve, Charles described how a chance encounter while on the march from Katmandu to Namche Bazar gave him what was probably the most realistic account of the Yeti so far obtained.

He wrote:

“I reached the top of a long and steep climb where I fell in with some Sherpas who had come down from their own valleys to trade. They asked me where I was going to climb and I told them that I had come to search for the Yeti. One of the party, Pasang Nima, a man of about 30 who comes from a village not far from Namche Bazar, at once showed interest and told me that about three months before—i.e. in September or October—he went to a remote area with fellow tribesmen to hold a religious festival in a sacred place. While they were there some people came in to say that they had seen a Yeti. A few hours later Pasang and a few others went to the spot to investigate. The area was flat and sparsely covered with bushes. When they reached it they saw a Yeti at a distance of 200 or 300 yards. It was the first Pasang had seen. He described it as of the size and build of a small man. Its head was covered with very long hair as was the middle part of the body and the thighs. The face and chest did not look so hairy and they could see no long hair on the legs below the knees. He said the colour was ‘both dark and light’ and the chest reddish. The Yeti was walking on two legs, nearly as upright as a man and bent down to grub in the ground for roots. Pasang watched it for some time and is emphatic that it never went on all fours. Eventually it saw the watchers and ran off into the forest, still on two legs, but walking with a sidling gait, almost running backwards. As it ran it gave a loud, rather high-pitched cry which was heard by all the watchers.

“I asked the local villagers who were listening to the conversation and also my porters and a party of Tibetan travellers, what they thought of Pasang’s account and they agreed he was speaking the truth. I asked Pasang whether the Yeti was a flesh-and-blood animal, or if it was a spirit, and he answered rather sarcastically ‘How could it have been a spirit since we saw its footprints after it had run away!’”

The next morning I had a number of official calls to make. The first was upon the British Ambassador, Mr. Christopher Summerhayes. Readers of my book *The Innocent on Everest* will need no

reminding that relations between Mr. Summerhayes and myself in the previous year had been cool to say the least. There may have been some justification for the Ambassador's attitude towards me then for I had entered Nepal as an "outsider" who Mr. Summerhayes may have considered rightly or wrongly would be an embarrassment to Sir John Hunt's Everest team. I hasten to add that this year when I was a properly accredited member of an officially sponsored expedition, the Ambassador's reception of me was most generous. All members of the *Daily Mail* Expedition are greatly indebted to both him and his wife for continued help and support and a multitude of kindnesses. While at the Embassy I also had a happy reunion with my old friend David Hay-Neave who was then still serving as Second Secretary there. I had a number of matters to clear up with the Nepal Foreign Secretary, Shri R. P. Menandhar and with the Finance Secretary, so I then drove to the Government offices. In this immense stucco-fronted palace, which would not be out of place in Monte Carlo and which was the former home of the Nepal Maharajas, I was received with the greatest courtesy. The complicated business of arranging duty-free import of all our stores, arms and the Land Rover was disposed of in a few minutes and I left with the warmest good wishes for the success of the expedition.

That evening saw the arrival at the airport of the Land Rover, which had finally been shoehorned into a Dakota at Simra and had only a few superficial scratches to show for the experience. The next day was also filled with routine business matters and a visit to the Zoo to ascertain whether there were any empty cages available should we bring any live animals—not necessarily a Yeti—back with us.

Back in London, that night saw the departure of Tom Stobart and Bill Edgar by Comet for Bombay, where the *Strathaird* was about to arrive, bringing the bulk of our equipment with John Jackson and Stanley Jeeves. In Calcutta, Bis and Gerald, who had been joined by Chunk Lagus, were making preparations to move up to Katmandu. The expedition was taking shape behind me.

Three days later I wrote my first dispatch from Katmandu. I began by outlining our movements so far and describing the work which had been allotted to each expedition member. I continued: "The task we have set ourselves must be regarded as fully as difficult, and—one hesitates to use the word—dangerous, as an attempt on a major peak, giants such as Everest excepted.

"A purely mountaineering party has some choice of route to the

particular summit it sets out to climb. We shall be committed to following a quarry which we must regard as being considerably more agile than ourselves and which will be picking its own route over its own country. Our chief safeguard is the fact that mountain animals in general have an instinct probably more highly developed than that of human beings, which protects them from dangers such as avalanches or treacherous snow bridges. The decision as to what will or will not be a justifiable risk will lie with our star climber John Jackson. . . .

“The task of the climbers is to present to our animal experts Dr. Biswas, Gerald Russell, Charles Stonor and Tom Stobart (who holds an Honours Zoology degree), such evidence as they can, to enable them to build up the at present flimsy dossier of ‘Animal X.’ The layman would possibly be astonished at the picture that a man such as Russell, to take one of us who has spent a good deal of his life in observing wild animals in their natural environment, can construct from a few scant traces such as a footprint or two, a few hairs, a tuft of fur and droppings. He could probably tell the animal’s approximate weight and size: possibly whether it was male or female, where it was coming from, where it was going to, what was the purpose of its journey and what it fed on. Hence he could tell where it was most likely to be contacted and held under close observation.

“As regards our own feelings, those of us who have examined the photographs of the Yeti prints brought back by Eric Shipton after his 1951 Everest Reconnaissance find them hard to reconcile with the theory that they were made by bear or langur monkey, especially as most of us, including myself, are familiar with both animals.

“In varying degree we are convinced that a new discovery is to be made which may prove of the utmost importance to zoologists or anthropologists. It is undeniable that a mystery exists, the solution of which will be eminently worthwhile, although it may call for the limit of our endurance and for the extent of our combined intelligence and ingenuity. While it would be presumptuous to anticipate total success, particularly at the first attempt, our expedition cannot end in total failure, for at least we shall write the first authentic chapter on the Abominable Snowman, though we may have to leave it to others to finish the job and complete the book.”

After I had sent this story—on Sunday, 17th January—I lunched with David Hay-Neave and later we drove out together to the great Buddhist stupa at Bodnath where an annual festival was in progress.

Many scores of Tibetans were treading the lustral path around the great white dome of this edifice from whose gilded summit umbrella multi-coloured ribbons had been stretched to the roofs of the surrounding houses, giving one the impression of a giant maypole. The scene was a very gay one and as we made our own sedate circuit we were followed by a quartet of musicians who accompanied their songs by strumming on yak-hide fiddles. We were later able to take recordings of some of their songs, which apparently vary from a calypso-style eulogy of Tenzing's ascent of Everest to a local version of the Communist Internationale set to Oriental music.

I returned to find a long cable from Tom who had now arrived in Bombay, asking for two trucks to be made available at Raxaul for Tuesday, the 19th. The trucks would take our equipment to Dhursingh, terminus of the Nepal Ropeway to the south. The ropeway would bring our stores into the Great Nepal Valley.

The next day I was received by the Prime Minister of the Government of Nepal, Mr. M. P. Koirala, who wished us best success in tracing the Yeti. The Premier talked entertainingly of small, almost unknown tribes which share the area in which we were to operate with the far more numerous Sherpas. The tribes include: the *Kushundas*, who refuse to touch, eat or drink anything connected with cows and wear "stone age clothes"; the *Hajus*, who are of Tibetan stock but quite distinct from the Sherpas; and the *Banjhankris*, who live in the depths of the forest and are very scarce, very shy and thus very seldom ever seen. The last named allow their hair and beards to grow long and are credited with great powers of healing—hence their name, which means "forest wizards."

There is possibly exciting material at hand here for anthropologists but Mr. Koirala is quite convinced that none of these tribes can be confused with the Yeti. I may add that throughout our stay in the Sherpa country none of us ever met a member of the three tribes mentioned and feel they must occur rather lower down in the forest country beneath Namche Bazar.

The next morning, 19th January, began with a cable from Tom Stobart to say that the baggage party had been delayed by one day. This hold-up was no doubt due to the complete disorganisation of rail traffic in India round Allahabad, for the Khum Mela ceremony of immersion in the Ganges was at its height. This is the world's biggest bathing festival and an estimated two million pilgrims from all over India were taking part. This meant that all our arrangements for the following day had to be re-timed. To compensate for

the non-arrival of the baggage party, all the Darjeeling Sherpas turned up on this day twenty-four hours before I had expected them. As they had preceded the tents in which we were going to accommodate them in Katmandu there was nothing left but to book rooms for them in the Himalayan Hotel in Joodha Street in the centre of the town. I now had my hands more than full, for I was suddenly informed that Chunk Lagus had arrived at the airport while it was also rumoured that the porters who had carried Charles' stores up to Katmandu had now returned and had a message for us. I therefore instructed our Sherpa Sirdar Ang Tschering to report to me on the following morning. Having collected Chunk Lagus we chased Charles' porters round the town and having run them to earth, received a letter and five further rolls of film. I can only describe Charles' note as tantalising, encouraging, and in some points—disconcerting. He wrote:

“Dear Ralph, Will you try and send word ahead when you and the rest are due so that I can arrange to be here.

“You will be well advised to try for Sherpa porters in Katmandu. The snow will be at its deepest when you come up and the ordinary Nepalis will quite likely refuse to come further than Junbesi (four days short of Namche Bazar). They have not forgotten the Swiss casualties. (Two Nepali porters died of exposure while carrying for the Swiss Everest Expedition of Autumn 1952.)

“On general matters I have collected a deal of Yeti gossip. I am almost certain that the larger type refers to the Red Bear, a rare beast in the Sherpa country, while the lesser is our quarry. I cannot make out what it may be: all descriptions point to an ape. But I would feel happier if they were seen more often and more than one at a time. We shall have our work cut out to run it down and *everything*—botany, ethnology, mammal collecting, and even filming, may have to be subordinated *in toto* until we reach a conclusion by field observation. A one-track programme comparable with the Everest climb seems the only hope. I am jettisoning all my own activities in favour of a series of reconnaissances and after a day or two's rest and clean-up, set out until the end of the month into the blue. So don't be distressed if I have not got back when you arrive.

“An important aspect is that there is widespread feeling against killing a Yeti and I have given our joint word that under no circumstances, except genuine self-defence, will we molest it. There is,

moreover, a genuine fear among the Sherpas against interfering with it and a no-meddling-with-the-Yeti school exists. I look forward much to seeing you and hearing all the news. I am not sending back any general despatch to London as I presume you will be in Katmandu by now. It will be pretty cold on the march up and you may be held up by snow."

I was relieved to find that Charles' porters had found the winter journey quite endurable. They at once volunteered to join our main party when we left in a few days' time. In spite of the delay to the baggage I still hoped that we might all set off from Katmandu on Sunday, 24th January. This would have been a most propitious day for it is the Nepalese festival of *Min Pachas*. In translation this means something like "The end of the 50-day period when even the fishes feel cold." More prosaically it signifies the end of the Nepal winter and the first day of spring. I felt that this would have a good psychological effect on the army of porters we should need, for at least according to local folk-lore every day onwards from the festival would be getting warmer. The psychological effect, however, would probably not last for more than two to three days outside the Great Valley of Nepal, for in the high mountains the iron grip of winter was not likely to be relaxed for at least two months.

Next morning I was at last able to have a long talk with Sirdar Ang Tschering. Ang Tschering first delivered another charming letter from Tenzing wishing us the best luck and success "from the very core of my heart." He added, "If I were free at the moment I would have been, believe me, very much happy to join with you."

In the matter of Sherpas I was more than happy with the team of fourteen whom Tenzing had selected for us. Although we had not asked particularly for "Tigers"—Sherpas who had carried loads up to 26,000 feet—as we did not want to deprive climbing parties who might be going to far greater heights than were we of their services, four "Tigers" had been included in our party. They included Ang Nyima, a slight youth in a brilliant check cowboy shirt who had belied his rather slender appearance by carrying a load up to 28,000 feet on Everest in the previous year, thus establishing himself as the highest Sherpa in the world after Tenzing. There was also Ang Dawa who had performed wonderfully well with both Swiss and Japanese expeditions and who has a highly developed sense of responsibility, which may make him the natural successor of men

like Tenzing and the redoubtable Ang Tharke when their climbing days are over.

Ang Tschering—he is the famous Ang Tschering—deserves mention, for if ever the history of the Sherpas comes to be written it will be impossible to exclude him. He must now be nearing fifty years of age but looks many years younger, so young in fact that it is almost impossible to believe that he is one of the Sherpas who accompanied General Bruce to Everest in 1924. This was the ill-fated expedition when Mallory and Irvine lost their lives in an attempt to reach the summit. On that occasion Ang Tschering, then a youth in his teens, acted as camera-walla.

His next major expedition was in 1929 when he accompanied Dr. Paul Bauer's German team in an unsuccessful attempt on Kangchenjunga which has been described by the editor of the *Alpine Journal* as "a feat without parallel perhaps in all the annals of mountaineering." Ang Tschering served as personal Sherpa to the climber Beizel.

In the following three years he was engaged with minor expeditions, until in 1933 he returned to Everest with Hugh Ruttledge. If for nothing else, Ang Tschering will always be remembered as the sole survivor of the high-altitude team of the German Expedition which was wiped out in 1934 on Nanga Parbat. In this disaster four Germans and six Sherpas lost their lives. A pitiless blizzard had severed communications between the men who had gone high and the lower camps. Of the high-altitude men, finally only Dr. Willy Merkl and the Sherpas Gaylay and Ang Tschering were left alive. Gaylay, the senior, elected to stay and die with Merkl his leader and sent Ang Tschering down alone on what must have seemed a thousand-to-one chance to save his life. Ang Tschering arrived at Camp IV snow-blind, completely exhausted and terribly frost-bitten. He had been at least a week without food, he himself claims it was ten days. It is scarcely surprising that following this experience Ang Tschering lost his nerve for work at extremely high altitudes. He spent nine months in hospital recovering from his injuries. As compensation he received a medal and a sum amounting to £22.

It was five years before Ang Tschering returned to the mountains, his next expedition being in 1939 to the peaks at the head of the Kulu Valley. He served with the Assam Rifles during the war and then started a tourist and pony hire business in Darjeeling. He accompanied General Williams to Kamet in 1951 and 1952 and also

in 1952 served as cook with the Swiss Autumn Expedition to Everest. In 1953 he was again with the Swiss on Dhaulagiri and with Mr. T. J. Fowle on the Kulu Peaks.

A measure of the toll which major expeditions take of Sherpa lives is the fact that Ang Tschering, with the veteran Gyalgen are now the only surviving Sherpas of the 1924 Everest Expedition. With Sherpa Dawa Tandu, he is the only Sherpa still living of the 1933 Everest Expedition, and of the Nanga Parbat Expedition of 1934—Tandu being then a low-altitude Sherpa.

An example of the complexity of Sherpa relationships is that the two Sherpa brothers Ang Dawa and Ang Temba, who served with us, were sons of Ang Tschering II who died on Nanga Parbat and was the cousin of our Ang Tschering I. The father of another of our Sherpas, Da Temba—English-speaking and able, although inclined to be superstitious—was also killed on Nanga Parbat, Ang Tschering I marrying his wife, and thus becoming Da Temba's foster father.

Two more of our Sherpas who may be of interest to the readers of mountain literature were Danu and Norbu who accompanied Tilman and Houston to Everest in 1950, the first time the mountain had been approached from the south side. Danu, who was still wearing a pigtail when with Tilman, appears in the pages of Tilman's book *Nepal Himalaya* as "Prometheus Danu" from his not unpleasant habit of always causing major conflagrations in place of the usually more modest camp-fire. Danu had spent the winter of 1952 to 1953 with Biswas in Sikkim and in November 1953 had accompanied Fowle to Kulu. By a typical stroke of Sherpa humour Norbu was appointed to me as personal Sherpa, I being the tallest Sahib (6 ft. 4 in.) and he quite the smallest Sherpa. But to make up for his diminutive size Norbu soon proved he had a great heart. He was a fine carrier, was always willing to take the lead in dangerous situations and was neat and efficient about the camp. He had the pleasant knack of thinking up scores of little additional services to add to my comfort.

It may be added that things are changing from the pre-war years when Sherpas from Darjeeling were prepared to accept possible mutilation and even death for as little as one rupee per day.

Present prices now are:—

Sirdars	..	..	Rs. 7½ Indian (about 12/-)
			daily.

Sherpa cooks	..	..	Rs. 5 Indian daily.
Sherpa porter climbers	..	..	Rs. 3½ Indian daily.

To these figures must be added between 2s. 6d. and 4s. daily as food allowance per head. In view of the risks undertaken this may still seem a trifling reward although it represents a huge advance on pre-war figures. As it is, few climbers can afford such money. The time may soon come when Darjeeling Sherpas will be regarded as a "luxury" which only a major expedition, with no budget ceiling, can indulge in, particularly as in addition to their pay and food allowances, Sherpas now expect from *each expedition* a full outfit of personal and climbing kit, no matter how many expeditions they join up with in a year. The cost of such outfits varies according to the type of expedition involved—that is, medium or high altitude. The outfit cost for our own expedition, which at the very most did not aim at anything higher than 22,500 feet, can be reckoned as between £40 and £50 per full-time Sherpa. The outfit cost for the British Everest Expedition was, I am told, something like £100 per full-time Sherpa (the cost of fur-lined high-altitude boots being alone £30 per pair). Owing to the policy "new expedition, new kit" the average Sherpa now tends on returning home to sell all of his gear, much of it never used, at cut-rate prices in the bazaar. All expeditions are finding this practice, which has been allowed to become a "right," particularly galling and it may soon eliminate the parties of two or three men who take a holiday to climb mountains "just for fun." It is likely to be a long time before a major expedition attempting a major peak will abandon the policy of recruiting Sherpas from Darjeeling. Many of the men are known to the climbers. They are fully trained, of proven ability and of known steadiness at high altitudes. But the outlook is black for "holiday climbers." If the Nepal Government cares to take the matter in hand, the time may come when such climbers attempting peaks in Nepal will prefer to recruit their Sherpas direct from the Sola Khumbu district, where such men as Pasang Phutar II and Phu Dorji, both of whom went twice to the South Col with Sir John Hunt's team, permanently reside. These "Tigers" are only two of a large number of experienced local Sherpas whom we ourselves later found it the greatest pleasure to employ. These men we took on as additions to our "hard core" and they were able to supply their own kit which they had saved from previous expeditions and had not sold. They also accepted considerably less pay. If a register of these men

were to be kept in Katmandu, the Nepal Government could save their country much money which is now being spent in Darjeeling. Until such a register is kept, no major expedition will, however, take chances on being able to obtain sufficient trained Sherpas on the spot.

I had just finished talking to Ang Tschering when a message arrived from Raxaul to say that our baggage had arrived there and was being moved up to Dhursing by truck. That evening saw the most welcome arrival of Tom, John, Stan and Bill who had flown in from Simra airfield. The detachment of Indian Army sappers stationed near Dhursing had most kindly volunteered to see our equipment and stores loaded on to the ropeway. Tom's party arrived looking as if they had come from Everest rather than from England. They all had some days' growth of beard and were covered from head to foot in dirt and dust. Travelling by plane and then by train, Tom and Bill had not slept in a proper bed for a week. Neither had John and Stan for the past five days.

The next day saw the arrival of a multitude of cases, sacks and boxes of equipment. These were unloaded for sorting in the Guest House compound and from this time onwards all of us were feverishly busy. All the equipment had to be broken down into 60-lb. porter loads and stores which were wanted immediately and for the trek up to Namche Bazar had to be separated from those which we should not require until later, when the search proper began.

It was a pleasant surprise for us to find that the only thing missing from the equipment after a journey of thousands of miles by ship, three changes of train, truck, ropeway and finally porter-back, was a single bag of nails. A possible hitch did, however, loom ahead because about 70 porter loads of stores, mainly comprised of our radio equipment and last-minute additions to the kit, had had to be flown from London to Calcutta and had not yet been passed through the Customs there.

That afternoon Gerald and Bis arrived by plane and Ahkey Bhutia—Bis's skinner, arrived on foot. All the members of the expedition had now reached Nepal. At this stage, Ahkey, who has a sergeant-major's figure and generous waxed moustache, was a tower of strength. He was here, there and everywhere, doing three men's work. It turned out that he spoke most Himalayan dialects as well as English and German. He also established himself as the camp humorist, although in fairness it may be said that Sherpas as a body seldom fail in this respect.

We were now overflowing the Guest House and we were most

grateful when Mr. Summerhayes offered to accommodate Tom and Bill, while Gerald became the guest of David Hay-Neave.

On Saturday, 23rd January, it had become obvious that we should not be able to leave on the following day, for the afternoon plane bringing our radio equipment did not arrive. It was therefore decided to delay our departure until the Monday. It was a last-minute decision which none of us liked, but it was forced on us. We did not want to split into two parties during the trek up and we felt that the walkie-talkie radio sets might become a vital asset on the approach march in winter conditions. At least one 13,000-ft. pass had to be crossed and we had planned, if the snow was heavy, to send on a reconnaissance party to the top who could report on conditions before we attempted to move our army of nearly 300 coolies—many of whom were to march the entire way in bare feet—across it.

It had been an unexpectedly easy task to recruit the coolies and after our requirements had been met there were still many hundreds more who would be available for the Swiss should they be needed. But in Katmandu there was still no confirmation that the Swiss were likely to arrive in the immediate future.

I had had an amusing time trying to decipher the document solemnly presented to me by the coolie contractor. One of its clauses ran:

“If any coolie has gone ran away leaving his load or ill on the journey way our sirda will restore other coolie and he will do expence when required.”

On Sunday, the 24th, which should have seen our departure, all was ready for the big trek, but we were still waiting for the radio. As we had nothing to do but wait, we allowed ourselves to be caught up in the Katmandu social whirl. We were entertained to lunch most handsomely by the officers of the Indian Military Mission and in the evening to a back-garden barbecue dinner by Boris Lesanowitch and his beautiful Danish wife. Boris, a White Russian, has been a master of many trades and professions in his time. Ballet dancer, soldier, night-club proprietor in Calcutta and now animal dealer, manager of a distillery and hotel proprietor in Katmandu, are merely a few of them. As distiller, Boris produces three brands of spirits—one might almost say animal spirits known as Elephant, Tiger and Rhinoceros—in ascending order of potency. He most generously gave us a five-gallon drum of Tiger—a coolie load in

itself—which went far towards eking out the small supply of imported liquor which we had brought for ourselves. Almost everyone of importance in Katmandu was present at Boris's party and we made many new friends.

On the next day we had to make our first serious decision. Neither of the two planes arriving from Calcutta had our radio equipment on board. There was now no alternative but to make arrangements for a second coolie team of 70 men to follow our main party. The 300 coolies we had engaged had all walked out to Banepa at the eastern extremity of the Great Nepal Valley on the previous day and were already waiting for our stores to be brought to them. Each had been paid an advance of six days' wages with which to buy the food he would need. If they were left languishing at Banepa indefinitely it was quite certain that most of them would drift back into the town with their money and not be seen again, thus involving us in considerable financial loss. In the afternoon we sent off the trucks loaded with our gear to Banepa where we intended to spend the first night. We chose Nemi to stay behind and organise the coolie transport for the radio. Somehow we would have to try and cross the high passes without its help.

We had sent John Jackson as O.C. Stores, with Akhey as Baggage Master, on to Banepa. Tom and I remained behind in the Guest House to complete our affairs and pay outstanding bills. Saksena was to drive us out to Banepa in the evening. We were about to leave when at the very moment of our departure another runner arrived from Charles Stonor bringing us better news than we could possibly have wished for as a curtain-raiser to the Yeti hunt. During a six-day reconnaissance in desolate areas over 15,000 ft. up in the region of Namche Bazar he had twice come upon what he considered to be genuine Yeti tracks and had been able to photograph them. In a covering note to his report Charles wrote: "I am, shall we say, 95% certain the Snowman exists and 20% certain we shall see him. Against us are two factors: first, we shall be exceedingly pressed for time to achieve anything by late May. Secondly, the weather. For the next two months snow and fog are liable to tie one down for days on end."

CHAPTER VII

FIRST SUCCESS

I HERE print Stonor's report in full and add to it two others which followed in quick succession. Together they complete the case for the Yeti, or rather they represent the sum total of intelligence which was available to our expedition when eventually we took the field. I cannot over-emphasise what a tremendous boost to our morale these three reports were. In England, I am sure that most of us had thought that we should be lucky if we even once came across tracks in the whole course of the expedition. Now we had registered a big success even before our full team was employed. We had something concrete to report. When I caught up with the other members of the main party at Banepa that night and told them the news, we all became greatly excited. Some of us, and I count myself among them, begrudged Stonor his luck in having been first in the field. We were impatient to be on the move and feared that the show might be over and the mystery entirely cleared up before we could go into action.

Stonor's three reports follow:

“Before I left England I was assailed from all directions by zoologists, scientific explorers and the whole gamut of ‘experts.’ ‘It can't be true.’ ‘You get the same story in Tibet.’ ‘The tracks have been seen from end to end of the Himalayas’ and so on. In spite of all efforts to discourage our expedition, I have now been a fortnight in the heart of the Snowman country, and have spent much time getting on friendly terms with the Sherpas, living in their houses as an equal, and gradually obtaining from them first-hand accounts of the *Yeh-Teh* in whose existence they believe so firmly. It has not taken me long to discover that nobody has so far made any serious investigation into the truth or otherwise of the story. A few sensation-seekers have seized on vague tales transmitted at third hand and from them have built up a fantastically-woven version of a musical-comedy beast. And at the outset I may say that these tales.

are just as strange to the Sherpas living *on the spot* as they are to sane-thinking people at home.

“From my contacts with the Sherpas I have found them a singularly calm, unemotional straight-thinking and straight-speaking people of much intelligence. Would they otherwise prove so stalwart in helping expeditions up the most difficult mountain ranges in the world? I have asked many of them about the Yeh-Teh, and have obtained many stories but never once have I been in the least suspicious that my informants were telling me something I wanted to hear, or were making up a good story to please me. Those who claim to have seen it or heard it will say what they have heard or seen and no more, while those who have not come across it say so at once.

“The Sherpas of the higher, colder parts of Nepal and the adjoining ranges of Tibet all believe that the Yeh-Teh exists; that it is a flesh-and-blood animal, and not a spirit or demon. To Tibetans of this region it is known as *TEH* (pronounced *Tay*), and from this is derived the Sherpa name. *YEH* means a rocky area. So that *YEH-TEH* means the kind of Teh which lives in rocky country. Both Sherpas and Tibetans maintain that there are two kinds: (i) the *DZU-TEH*: this is the larger of the two; it is very rare indeed in the Sherpa country, but said to be much more plentiful in Tibet. *DZU* means (roughly translated) ‘livestock’: so that the *DZU-TEH* is the Teh which is dangerous to livestock, such as yaks and cattle.

“It is a large beast, goes on all fours, and has long shaggy hair of a reddish colour. It preys on livestock. I have spoken to both Sherpas and Tibetans who have seen them and have very little doubt in my own mind that the *Dzu-Teh* is one and the same animal as the Himalayan Red Bear: the more so as they are said to be fairly often seen in captivity in Tibet. (ii) the *MIH-TEH*. *MIH* means Man; so that this is the Teh associated with Man, either because it is dangerous, or because it looks like him—I am not sure which. I have been given several accounts, some at first hand by people who have seen them, and I can say at the outset that they all agree singularly well in essential details. The *Mih-Teh* is the Teh *par excellence* of the Sherpa country and, when speaking of the Yeh-Teh, they normally mean this beast (I have already noted the rarity of the *Dzu-Teh* with which they are not much concerned): so that the two names are for all practical purposes interchangeable. It lives entirely in the huge region of rocky country which is too high for trees to grow and below the perpetual snow-line. Now and again it comes down into the valleys where the villages are situated. It is said to be about

the size of a fourteen-year-old boy, of the same build as a man; covered with light reddish hair, a little lighter on the chest: and with the hair longest about the head and the waist. The head is strikingly pointed. It has a loud wailing yelping call and when it is heard near at hand, often makes a chattering noise. Its call is frequently heard at night. During the coldest months of the winter, when there is snow everywhere, the Yeh-Teh comes down rather lower, and its call is often heard from Sherpa villages. It normally walks on two legs like a man, but when in a hurry or when going through deep snow it drops on all fours. There is no certainty about its food, but many people believe it to feed on rock-rats (*picas*) and other small beasts which abound in its home. It is not thought to be particularly aggressive towards man, but is very shy and very intelligent.

“An account of a Yeh-Teh seen at a Buddhist monastery in the area has already been published by Sir John Hunt and by Mr. Eric Shipton, which agrees well with this description: and I have also given a record of one seen by Pasang Nyima in the autumn of last year. In addition I have got other accounts, all at first-hand and given me by the individuals concerned in the incidents.

“Some four years ago a man named Lakhpa Tensing went up into the higher slopes above his village to round up some yaks which had strayed from the herd. He lost his way among the rocks and, while wandering about trying to find a track, he heard a noise like a puppy yelping. Going towards the noise he came on the mangled corpse of a freshly killed *pica* and looking further on he saw, only thirty yards distant, a Yeh-Teh sitting on a rock. It had its back to him and all he was able to see was that it seemed to be the size of a boy, had a very pointed head and was covered with light reddish hair. He was very frightened and crept away without the beast seeing him. He saw it in the afternoon and in the month of April when there was no snow in the area. I pressed Lakhpa for further details, but he was quite positive that he had been able to see nothing more than he had told.

“Again, several years back, a man by the name of Nima was returning from Tibet to his village near Namche Bazar, in the month of February. He had three companions and all had been buying salt. They were on the last stage of their journey, but found they could not make their village before dark, so prepared to camp the night in a deserted hamlet. While they were collecting firewood and getting ready for the night (it was then dusk) they heard a noise in the distance, which they first took for someone coming towards them and

calling out from afar off. As it came nearer they recognised the call as that of a Yeh-Teh and were so terrified that they immediately huddled into a semi-ruined house whence they dared not stir till morning. The Yeh-Teh came nearer and they heard quite clearly the well-known chattering noise. Nima and his companions were still not quite convinced that they had heard a real animal and not a spirit: but on coming out in the morning, they found, in the few inches of snow on the ground, a double set of tracks leading past the hamlet and up into the mountains. The tracks were those of an animal walking on two legs. The footprints were (as he showed me) about eight inches long, and showed clear toe-marks. They were very like those of a naked human foot except that all the toes seemed to be the same length.

“I have been given several other accounts of sightings of Yeh-Tehs, but as they were all second-hand I do not record them. None of them however disagree with the above or with those published already. And in my (admittedly short) experience there are few people in the remoter villages who do not fairly often hear Yeh-Tehs calling during the winter months and quite an appreciable number claim to have seen them at one time or another.

“The banshee wailing heard at night suggests a wolf. And I put this to several Sherpas. They replied that they know wolves well from their constant trading trips into Tibet and that very occasionally they come down into their country: but the call is quite distinct.

“After getting established in the Sherpa country, I resolved to go out into the higher slopes, above the tree-limit, and where the Yeh-Teh was said to be found. So, with a guide and interpreter, a servant, and three porters I zigzagged about for six days in a maze of rock-strewn valleys, cliffs and narrow ridges: in the summer a paradise of gentians, dwarf rhododendrons and other alpine flowers, but at this season as cold, bleak and uninviting a region as one could find to travel in. We were held up by dense fog and occasional blizzards, but managed to cover a fair deal of ground. For the first three days we found nothing beyond a great many tracks of musk deer, wild goats, and smaller rodents—proving the Yeh-Teh country to be well populated—and I collected some interesting seeds for Kew Gardens. The scenery was superb, with a clear view right across to the whole Everest range, with the peak itself standing out in full relief. On the fourth day I was crossing some flat ground at about 14,000 feet, which was covered with patches of shallow snow left from a fall of three weeks back. And in one such patch I came on a small maze of

tracks, each the size and shape of a small human foot. They were probably a few days old, and no toe-marks could be made out, but the shape was quite clear, and the outline was very much that of a small, stub-toed, stockinged foot. The average length of the prints was ten inches with a maximum breadth of five, and a breadth across the heel of three inches. All these measurements were taken on the spot. There were numerous tracks of wild goat near at hand, with the identity of the hoof-marks quite clear, and of about the same age as near as I could judge. By comparison with these I estimated the tracks to be enlarged by melting perhaps a third of their size (there had been very little sun for a few days past). They were pointing in several directions as though one or more animals had 'stood about' on the spot. I could not guess if they were of something on two legs. A hundred yards further on I came on another similar patch, but with the outline more obscured. My Sherpas were much mystified and agreed that the tracks must be those of a Yeh-Teh. By no possible chance could any Sherpa have been wandering about in these bleak heights in the winter: and a day's journey from the nearest village. Also the prints seemed clearly those of a naked foot, and the form much too sharply outlined for the shapelessness of the invariable Sherpa boot of an oval of soft leather.

"The rest of the trip was uneventful, except that on the last day I had sent my porters round by a short cut to make camp while I wandered round a more distant route: and on joining up with them found them much excited, as they had crossed a line of tracks, freshly made, and which they were sure had been made by a Yeh-Teh. Alas, even as they pointed out the place to me a squall of wind got up, and by the time I had reached there, the tracks were blown into mere smudges in the snow.

"On reaching home a report came in that several people heard a Yeh-Teh calling, only six miles from where I write, a few days back, a report I have not yet had time to investigate. And the same evening I was sitting in a Sherpa house when two Tibetans came in, recently arrived from over the border. I found them to come from the same area where Pasang Nyima and his friends watched a Yeh-Teh in the autumn. Without telling them of this I asked them if they knew of the beast. Both men had plenty to say. Their home is only a few days' journey north-west of Everest, and both were emphatic that the *Mih-Teh* is quite often seen in colder weather. They volunteered that it feeds on small animals and on a large insect found under stones. They described it as living in high, rocky country and their

account of its form was the same as given by the Sherpas. Quite recently some boys out tending yaks saw one at close quarters which they first mistook for a small man, but on closer view saw it to be covered with reddish hair. Also some years back, a mountain lake near their home flooded, and the corpse of a drowned *Mih-Teh* was found afterwards and seen by many people. The head was very high and pointed. It was not kept, as it was thought to be most unlucky. These two Tibetans added that the *Mih-Teh* is fairly often seen in the neighbourhood of Rongbuk monastery during cold or snowy weather (Rongbuk is to the north of Everest).

“Such is the state of affairs concerning the Yeh-Teh up to date. My own view is that we are concerned with some quite unknown and extremely interesting beast. To come to grips with it is quite another matter. Local information is emphatic that they are thin on the ground, and very elusive: avoiding contact with man. That they are not so often seen is not hard to explain. There is a vast area of rocks, cliffs and small ravines above the tree-line covering perhaps thousands of square miles. During the winter the Sherpas never go up there under any circumstances: there is nothing to go for except a dose of pneumonia. During the spring and summer they go fairly high and regularly follow their herds of yaks into this region to supervise their grazing. These yak-herds are said to see the Yeh-Teh fairly often: and in any case at this time of year the snow-line retreats so high that there is more than ample room for an intelligent animal to avoid contact with human beings. That there is ample food in the shape of mammals and birds I have myself proved on the spot. There seems to be no instance of a *Mih-Teh* attacking livestock.

“A serious objection is that nobody ever seems to see more than one at a time: Sherpas I have talked with freely admit this and cannot understand it. They say, however, that possibly the females and young animals live in remote caves and retreats among the cliffs and rocks, and the older males are apt to wander alone. Also, I have spoken with men who claim to have seen tracks of more than one crossing the same area.

“I have also discussed with them the theories held by scientists that the Yeh-Teh is either the red bear or the Himalayan langur monkey, or both. They say that the large *Dzu-Teh* already referred to is very likely the same as the red bear. but are emphatic that the smaller *Mih-Teh* is quite different. Since the large *Dzu-Teh* is so

little known to the Sherpas I am inclined to think that the more general term *Yeh-Teh* is applied to it rather at second-hand and that, with them at any rate, the terms of *Mih-Teh* and *Yeh-Teh* are interchangeable. They utterly deny that the big langur monkey could under any circumstances be mixed up with the *Yeh-Teh*. The habits and appearance of the two are totally distinct. The langur is essentially a tree dweller, while the *Yeh-Teh* is a rock dweller. Langurs come up regularly into the woods of the higher valleys in the spring and summer, but they go down to the warmer valleys by the winter, and I have yet to meet a Sherpa who has seen one in the *Yeh-Teh* country in the cold weather. (I am aware that in other parts of the Himalayas, where high-level forests are not so thin as here, langurs stay in the cold weather.) On my journey up I watched langur monkeys in the forest and also feeding in cornfields. Their appearance, even from three or four hundred yards, was most distinct. The big silver-furred head, framing a black face; the long tail, held upright when walking about, the cat-like walk always on all fours. It is perhaps the most distinctive animal of these mountains and I cannot believe that a child of ten would mix it up with any other beast.

“As I have already described, the Sherpas differentiate very sharply between two kinds of *Yeh-Teh*. The *Dzu-Teh*, dangerous to livestock, and the *Mih-Teh*, associated with man.

“Since my previous information, I have spoken to several Sherpas and several Tibetans who have seen the *Dzu-Teh*. And their accounts entirely confirm my previous impression that this beast is undoubtedly identical with the Himalayan red bear. It is very rarely seen in the Sherpa country, but common over most of Tibet. The rest of these notes are concerned entirely with the *Mih-Teh*, which is our ‘quarry.’

“I have enquired up and down the Sherpa country, and from Tibetans of neighbouring territory, and the more accounts and descriptions I am given, the more do I find them to be unanimous and to agree to an astonishing degree as to the manner of beast it is held to be. The pattern of individual accounts may vary, but the pattern of the animal they each add up to is completely uniform.

“The following ‘sightings’ were all (unless noted) given me at first-hand by the people who were there at the time:

“(1) About 1947, a man named Dakhu of Pongboche village was out in the mountains as a yak-herd. He temporarily lost one of the

herd and went up into rocky area above the pasture to look for it. He saw part of a hairy animal among some large boulders and, assuming it to be his yak, called out to it by name. After he had called once or twice, the creature stood up among the rocks, about fifty yards away from him, and he saw that it was no yak, but a Yeh-Teh. It advanced a few paces towards him, walking on two legs, and started pulling up tufts of grass with its hands as if agitated. Dakhu was very frightened and ran away down the slope. He could only tell me that it seemed to be reddish-brown in colour, the size of a small man, thick-set and covered with hair. He has never seen another, but has several times heard the call. He saw it during the afternoon.

“(2) In 1949, a man named Mingmah, also of Pangboche village, was out with his yaks a mile or so away. While taking them to feed on the mountain slopes, he heard a loud call, rather like ‘a man crying out,’ from the rocks some distance above him. Thinking it to be his friend, he called back ‘None of your yaks have come this way.’ The noise continued and he heard something coming down among the rocks towards him. As it came into view he saw that it was a Yeh-Teh. He was terrified and fled into a stone herdsman’s hut close by, where he was living. Mingmah shut himself in, but heard the creature calling and prowling about outside. He looked out through a broad chink in the wall by the door and saw the Yeh-Teh standing only a few paces away. It was about the size of a teenage boy, very thick-set and the general shape of a human being. It was covered with rather short and reddish-brown hair, which seemed to be stiff, as the hair on the upper part of the body all pointed upwards, while on the lower part it sloped downwards. The colour was paler on the lower part of the chest. The feet looked especially hairy. The hands looked like those of a man. The head was very pointed and the hair on each side sloped back as with a man. There was a narrow strip of short very stiff-looking hair running up the forehead and over the top of the head, apparently like a crest. The hair on the head was not long. The face was bare, flatter than a man, but not so flat as a langur monkey, and was a dark brown colour. The Yeh-Teh saw him looking out and bared its teeth in a snarl. Mingmah was very struck by the size of the teeth. It moved about on two legs, taking long strides, and rather stooping, with its arms hanging down by its side. He went over to his fire and taking a smouldering brand, thrust it out through the chink, whereupon the Yeh-Teh made off. He saw it during March, in the late afternoon.

“(3) In October 1952, a man named Anseering of Thammu village went up into the hills above his home to collect medicinal roots with his wife. They went up early in the morning and when at the top of the tree-line, a Yeh-Teh was disturbed by them from a rocky hide-out. It ran away, scrambling on all fours over the rocks, and all they could see was that it was a dark brown colour, smaller than a man, and thick-set. On returning back the same afternoon they both heard the loud call of a Yeh-Teh from the same area. Anseering told me he has several times heard the call from this area when up collecting bamboos and roots.

“(4) During the winter of 1952, when there was fairly deep snow, five people of Phorche village took their yaks to a small, clear area not more than half a mile away for pasturage. On the way they saw the tracks of a Yeh-Teh. They were fresh and were about the size of a boy's foot, with the toes fairly clear. They followed the tracks for a short way and came on a place where the creature had sat down on a rock. Its impress was clear, and the marks of its two feet were close together on the ground, just as a man would sit. On each side of the impression was a mark in the snow where it had pushed down its hands to lever itself up. In one or two places it had gone on all fours to climb over rocks, but otherwise had gone on two legs. They also saw where it had caught its foot in a cleft in the snow-covered rocks, and a small tuft of hair was left. It was a very few inches in length, reddish-brown, and all were struck by the very stiff, bristle-like texture of the hairs. Their fellow-villagers had heard a Yeh-Teh calling a few days back. I spoke to one of the witnesses.

“*The food of the Yeh-Teh:*

“I have asked about this up and down the country: the reply is always the same. That it feeds on small animals (marmots and mouse-hares) living among rocks, and also on large insects. There is a widespread belief that it catches its prey, bangs it on a rock to kill it and then disembowels it, leaving the innards, and eating the rest. Two yak-herds have told me how they found the very fresh innards of a marmot among the rocks and could see two large footprints nearby. On 27th January, I was out in Yeh-Teh country west of Namche Bazar and in a remote area came on fresh innards of a marmot. There was a very little fur close by. *Something* must have killed it. Tibetan foxes are common and feed on such animals: but I have yet to hear of a fox disembowelling its victim and thereafter carrying it off, leaving the guts behind. The same applies to birds of prey,

which either tear their prey to pieces on the spot where they kill and leave plenty of evidence, or else carry off the body at once. The Yeh-Teh is also said to swallow clay-like earth, perhaps for bulk or some mineral value. A few people believe it to take yak calves occasionally, and also young tahr and musk deer: also (probably) birds and their eggs. There is, as I have seen with my own eyes, abundant food in these mountains. I have twice found the excreta of a large animal, composed of fur and bones of rodents and a small amount of earth. This could (from the local fauna) only have been that of a leopard or of a Yeh-Teh. All to whom I showed it were positive that it was the 'remains' of the latter and that leopard's excreta would be sure to include traces of tahr or deer.

"The Call:

"Many Sherpas have heard the Yeh-Teh call: in fact there seem to be few people who have not: usually after dark, but not infrequently during the day and particularly in the latter part of the afternoon. As I have already noted, the call is always described as a loud (or very loud) 'yelping,' possibly like the mewling of a sea-gull: and when near at hand it chatters.

"Only six weeks ago (December 1953) two youths were up with their yaks and heard a Yeh-Teh call in the late afternoon in a lonely place. It seemed to be coming nearer; so they were frightened and, calling to their herd, shut themselves into their stone herdsman's hut. Soon after dusk, the noise came very near and they heard the animal moving about outside. Next morning they found tracks like a human foot in the soft earth of a small cultivated patch close at hand.

"The haunts and habitat of the Yeh-Teh:

"In expansion of information already forwarded, the Yeh-Teh is universally believed to live exclusively in the *vast* region of broken, rocky country that lies between the tree-line and the perpetual snow: between about 13,000 feet and 17,000 feet. It is believed to have its hide-outs in sheltered places, which can be known by the very strong and unpleasant smell. A man of Phorche village, now dead, is said to have come on a Yeh-Teh's 'home' a good many years ago. Two years back a Lama of the Thyangboche monastery went up alone to the crags above his home (I have been to the spot), and at about 14,000 feet he came on a rough 'nest' made of freshly broken and inter-woven branches of dwarf juniper of a size and form such as a man might construct for a rough shelter if lost at night. He did

not stop to investigate further. This was in April: the lama was looking for a flat stone to mend his house.

“*The Habits :*

“This has been largely dealt with, but comment is called for on the supposed roaming habits. Nearly every Sherpa will tell one that during the winter, when there is normally some weeks of snow, tracks are often seen not far above villages and at such times, when the snow is of course thicker higher up, the Yeh-Teh is thought to come down lower and to roam about after food, especially at night. It is very seldom seen in the summer months; but fairly often in the spring and autumn.

“*The Sherpas and the Yeh-Teh :*

“I have proved to my own satisfaction that the Sherpas believe absolutely in its existence as an animal of their country. When I have pressed this point, I have more than once been told—‘We do not invent any other beast or bird: why should we invent the Yeh-Teh?’ To see or hear one call is a very bad omen and a small ceremony is usually performed, to ward off the imminent bad luck, soon after the event: otherwise it seems to be given no attributes more unusual than those of the known fauna: except that there is a rather vague idea that its feet point backwards. No first-hand witness has ever confirmed this to me and many laugh at the idea. They have a very healthy respect for it, and regard it as dangerous unless left well alone. It is believed to avoid contact with men. There seems to be no known record or tradition of one killing a human being. All Sherpas will tell one that a man who sees a Yeh-Teh is overcome with terror. In many ways their attitude to it is comparable with that of an Indian villager towards a tiger. The people do not seem clear as to why it is called the *Mih* (man)—Teh: by no stretch of imagination do they look on it as a man—it is *an animal and nothing else*. In so far as it has a certain nuisance value they would rather it did not exist at all. The Sherpas live in the valley and go up into the higher ranges to pasture their yaks: the Yeh-Teh lives in the higher ranges and comes down near the valleys by reason of snow, or to catch its food. Only in this sense are there meetings between man and Yeh-Teh. Otherwise it seems to be ‘live and let live’ on both sides. The Sherpas are a relatively thin population and they have no *weapons whatsoever*: nor do they hunt or kill at all. As informants I have found them quite as reliable as say a Sussex shepherd or a

Highland gamekeeper. They are largely a pastoral people with yaks and cattle and sheep and have the placid unemotional character of such races. I can think of no race I have been among who would be less likely to invent a story such as the Yeh-Teh. They are intelligent, by no stretch of the imagination can they be called 'savages' and I find their knowledge of their flora and fauna to be excellent."

"THE YEH-TEH 'SCALP'"

"There is preserved in a small Buddhist temple at Pangboche village the 'scalp' of a Yeh-Teh. It is positively asserted by the Sherpas that it is from a *Mih-Teh* and not a *Dzu-Teh*: that it is genuine and not a representation: and that it was obtained locally.

"I visited the village early in February and examined it in some detail. It is quite obviously the skin from the top of the head of an animal, cut off symmetrically above the ears (of which there is no trace). The inside surface is quite clean and is absolutely entire, in that there is not the faintest possibility of its having been sewn together or fashioned into shape. I was utterly unable to identify it with any animal known to science. The description is as under.

"It is helmet-shaped, sloping sharply to a point: the dimensions are:

Total height	..	..	..	7.5 in.
Total length	..	..	..	9.75 in.
Breadth (at base)	..	..	..	6.75 in.
Overall measurement from back to				
front over the crown	..	..	..	17.25 in.
Girth at base	..	..	..	26.25 in.
Length (from back to front) at point				
3 in. below the crown	..	..	..	6.25 in.

"The texture is that of brittle leather: quite uniform throughout, and the skin blackish in colour. It is astonishingly thick, uniformly so, and 0.125 (or $\frac{1}{8}$) of an inch; it is considerably thicker than (locally cured) skins of wild tahr, or even of domestic yak. The shape at the base is a broad oval: it may be slightly misshapen from age and usage (*vide infra*), but, in view of the very tough texture, I do not think this to be the case.

"The outer surface is now largely bare and the skin fairly smooth: but it was quite clearly covered with hair in its original state and is still minutely pitted all over with hair bases. A fair proportion of hair still remains. The hair is foxy-red in general colour, barred

with blackish-brown. The individual hairs are a very few inches in length and are extremely stiff and bristle-like. It is impossible to say if there were formerly hairs of greater length. From what is presumably the forehead the hair slopes backward and slightly downwards along the sides, much as in man: while at the back of the head it slopes almost vertically downwards. This is quite noticeable and I think it to be the natural conformation.

“An extraordinary feature is a crest or ‘keel’ which runs from the base of the forehead straight upwards over the crown and down the back. It has a uniform width of almost exactly one inch. It is covered with bristle-like hairs of the same colour as the rest, which are no more than 1.25 in. in length and which slope inwards from each side so as to meet in the centre and form a crest, which is thus triangular in cross-section. In common with the rest of the hairs much of the crest is gone, but it is distinctly marked as a slightly raised ridge in the skin.

“The hairs are very firmly embedded in the skin, and even now take some effort to extract them.

“*History*

“The temple or Gompa at Pangboche is one of great antiquity. Its history is well known to the monks of the neighbouring monastery of Thyangboche and is recorded in detail among the books of the ancient Tibetan monastery of Rongbuk across the Tibetan border. It was founded either by or in honour of a local Lama of great traditional sanctity, named San-Dorje, who is personally reincarnated in the person of a hereditary Lama of the temple. The present reincarnation is the twelfth from San-Dorje: and details of every Lama are on record and are well known. It is recorded that the Yeh-Teh head was first obtained in the time of the fifth reincarnation, seven Lamas ago. As everywhere in this region the Lama is chosen as a child and stays in office until his death. It is reasonable to allot an average span of fifty years to each holder of the office: which would give an antiquity of some three hundred and fifty years to the scalp. In support of this, it is known that the first seven Dalai Lamas in Lhasa spanned three hundred and eighty-two years.

“The scalp is in a good state of preservation if we except the loss of hair. This is perfectly feasible, even after such a lapse of time. There are very few destructive insects at this elevation and in this climate. It is moreover kept with care in a cupboard within a well-built and dry temple.

“I have enquired among the Sherpa people as to its significance: and have concluded that it is not *in itself* (i.e. as being the scalp of a Yeh-Teh) sacred at all: but, in so far as it is preserved in a temple among sacred objects, it has a certain indirect sacredness: much as have the altar furnishings of a Christian Church. At certain festivals when semi-religious dances are held, by masked and adorned dancers, the scalp is worn by one or other of the dancers. And it seems that it is kept simply for this purpose. There is no question of its being an object of veneration locally and many, or possibly even most of the Sherpas, hardly know of its existence.

“They are perfectly willing to show it and allow it to be handled: but, in view of its indirect associations, do not wish to part with it.

“In conclusion, I am perfectly convinced that it is the scalp of some unknown animal: from the pointed, helmet form it is at least probable that it is of some beast that normally walks with an upright or bipedal carriage.”

I was particularly interested in this third report for I had just received a postcard from Sir John Hunt, which ran:

“DEAR RALPH,

“I fear this may be too late to catch you, but in case not, I strongly advise you to get hold of the Yeti Scalp shown to Charles Evans at Pangboche. It is clearly a *very* important clue. But you have obviously thought of it! Best of all good luck to you. I’ll be keeping my fingers crossed. John Hunt.”

Part Two

THE CHASE

“The Game and Chase are good for recreation,
But dangerous to make ’t an occupation.”

TAYLOR, the Seventeenth-Century “Water Poet”

CHAPTER VIII

WE ADVANCE AND MAKE OUR FIRST SORTIE

I DO not intend to waste time in describing our journey with nearly three hundred coolies up to Namche Bazar. To our great relief it was comparatively uneventful. The winter conditions we had dreaded proved surprisingly mild: snow was scanty even on the highest passes and, although most of our coolies were bare-legged and bare-footed and had only a blanket to protect them, none suffered from over-exposure. Five days behind us Nemi dogged our footsteps at the head of seventy coolies, bringing our radio equipment. I intend merely to sketch in the highlights of our journey.

Tom, Saksena and I arrived at Banepa at night on 25th January. At the camp on a turf plateau just above the town we found a scene of chaotic confusion for which nobody could be blamed. John Jackson reported that the radiators of the four battered vehicles carrying our stores had boiled at every other bend on the journey and, with four or five truly perilous bridges to negotiate, the convoy had not arrived until dark had fallen. The trucks had then been emptied as quickly as possible and a vast mound made of all the equipment. Before anything could be sorted out the case had to be found which contained the electric torches. It was one among two hundred and sixty odd and could be at the bottom or the top of the pile. After that it was a matter of finding something to eat, something to sleep in and something to sleep under. In the end we compromised with one of the large tents intended for the Sherpas and all nine of us curled up in it.

The evening meal had consisted of steak and kidney pudding and spaghetti, a rather stodgy meal in any circumstances, but the most eatable combination which came readily to hand. There was nothing particularly ill-organised about our own party; these first-night troubles affect every expedition. It invariably takes two or three days to shake down, to find a place for everything and to put everything in its place.

It was a bitterly cold night with heavy frost on the ground in the morning but this did not worry us for we had plenty of spare clothing and bedding to ensure comfortable sleeping in the future. Our army of coolies arrived before dawn but, what with making up the roster allocating loads and all the usual first-day chores to be gone through, it was not until shortly before noon that we were able to move off.

I cannot recommend Banepa as a good camp site. The villagers are more than inquisitive and, although we had plenty of Sherpas available to safeguard the stores, a number of useful items of kit disappeared as soon as general attention was diverted by some unusual occurrence.

For the rest of this journey to Namche Bazar I shall rely on extracts from despatches I wrote at intervals along the route.

“Chyabus, 28th January.

“The third day of our march has brought us to this mountain hamlet 7,400 ft. above the sea. We are still at least fourteen days from Abominable Snowman country but we are deliberately moving slowly in the hope that Sherpa Nemi, Tenzing’s brother-in-law, will catch us up. In his charge he has the stores and equipment which had not arrived in Katmandu before we left. So far the marching conditions have been utterly unlike anything we expected. The nights are certainly very chilly but the days are warm and sunny. The well-cultivated country through which we have been passing has even at this season provided oranges, lemons, pineapples (4d. each) and a large variety of fresh vegetables. It is difficult to visualise the possibly many weeks of rigorous winter conditions which lie so soon ahead.

“Our first march brought us just below the village of Hukse and morning brought the first of those administrative slip-ups which afflict nearly every expedition at its outset. We had sent Cook Narayan on ahead to prepare breakfast but he kept on walking and it was well past midday before we finally caught up with the bacon and eggs. Our second night’s camp was on a stretch of stony beach in a wooded gorge at Dolalghat where the Sun Kosi and two other rivers meet. Here we were able to clean up and I to bathe. My performance lasted about one second dead and no one followed my example. We were sitting around relaxing, watching the great variety of bird life and generally enjoying ourselves when a sombre incident occurred. Wailing notes blown on a conch shell announced

the arrival of a male mourning party stripped to the waist and bearing a corpse wrapped in a ragged winding sheet and slung from a pole. The party passed through our camp shouting 'Smallpox, keep away' and stopped about fifty yards from us where with due ceremony they launched their grisly burden into the swiftly moving stream on its last journey. It bobbed twice before disappearing in the torrent. The mourning party then totally immersed themselves, emerging as if all their sorrows had been washed away and after laughing and splashing each other they set off once more up the hillside.

"This incident caused us much concern, for the dead man came from the very village upon which our coolie train of nearly three hundred men had descended for their food and to pass the time of day. The prospect of an outbreak of smallpox among our coolies of whom few, if any, can have been vaccinated is not one we care to contemplate.

"Today we have climbed up from the river for 4,500 ft. to reach our present altitude. The climb coming so early in the march has been quite a test. However, we have all arrived in good order, though with different paces. Our climbers, John Jackson and Stanley Jeeves stormed ahead, being used to this kind of work and being anxious to get speedily back into condition.

"Bill Edgar, our medical officer, keeps up with them. Gerald Russell with myself are best described as honest toilers, but Gerald has hit on the interesting innovation of walking with the aid of a stout length of sugar-cane. This affords him both support and refreshment, for all he has to do when he feels in need of a reviver is to cut an inch or two off the top. Tom Stobart, who can stride out with anyone, has been pausing to collect seeds and plants, in which I have assisted him, and Dr. Biswas has paused to identify birds and make notes of their environment. The site we have chosen for our third camp is truly magnificent. From this altitude we have a view to the south over range after range of brown, blue and purple mountains. From the top of the hill just behind us the snow and ice-capped Himalaya stretches like a foam-crested wave the whole width of the horizon.

"It has been decided, not exactly with my consent, that this shall be a bearded expedition. On my journey to Everest last year I shaved every day, only to be greeted by the bearded Everesters, when I caught up with them, with accusations of 'one-upmanship.' The truth of this matter is that three years ago in Korea I discovered that my beard—known respectfully on the lower deck during the war as

'Black Bess'—was already so grizzled as to be more suited to the Ancient Mariner than to the considerably younger man I still feel. But after voicing dissent at the general agreement over beards, I subsequently found that my stock of razor blades had vanished and I am now left with no choice. We shall soon present an interesting colour range in beards, varying from the golden fleece of blond Tom Stobart, through the Barbarossa of Ginger Russell to the enviable black of Dr. Biswas.

"Tarsa, 1st February.

"Tomorrow, the eighth day of our march, we are due to reach Those, a fair-sized village, roughly half-way to Namche Bazar.

"Last year I gave Those the name of Palam, which was that used by Cook Narayan. Both names are correct. Practically every town and village on the way up to Namche Bazar has at least three names, the name used by the inhabitants, the name used by the Sherpas and the name used by the Nepalese of the Great Valley. Occasionally a fourth name is employed by the mapmakers of the Survey of India.

"Another two or three days at most should see us well into the Sherpa country. In our west to east progress we are marching against the grain of the country and our days have been a series of seemingly interminable ascents followed by equally lengthy descents, giving us all ample opportunity to comment how height so laboriously gained is so easily lost again.

"Two 8,000-ft. passes now lie behind us and tonight we are bivouacked in a wooded fold of the mountains about 1,500 ft. below our first 9,000 footer. At the top of each pass I scan the horizon eagerly in both directions, behind us to try to discern whether there is any sign of our rearguard party led by Sherpa Nemi, and before us in the hope that another runner may be approaching from Charles Stonor, now at Namche Bazar, who last week gave us the encouraging and exciting news that he has already come across the tracks of Abominable Snowmen in the desolate wastes above the Sherpa capital.

"Whether the weather we are now experiencing is normal for this time of year, or whether we have been specially favoured, I do not know, but so far we have certainly had no cause for complaint. The days have been so warm that we have been able to bathe on three occasions, the last in a rock pool at 5,000 ft. where the sun beat down so fiercely that the shirts and underclothes we had washed in

the stream were perfectly dry and ready to wear again within an hour. Certainly some of the nights had been bitterly cold, but we have been able to counteract the two extremes by filling our water-bottles with boiling lemonade before going to bed. The bottles keep us warm in our sleeping-bags throughout the night and then provide us with cooling refreshment during the following day. Our main concern has been for the welfare of our train of nearly three hundred coolies who scarcely seem to have a warm blanket among the lot of them. We have therefore to regulate our marches so as to arrive each night in the vicinity of some village which can provide adequate food and shelter. We have appointed one Sirdar for every fifty coolies, the whole being supervised by a Sirdar-in-chief, an imposing figure with tartar moustachios, brown balaclava, cerise muffler, blue serge jacket, jodhpurs and an umbrella as wand of office. We have also sent two men on ahead to warn the neighbourhood of our coming. This system worked so well that peasants have flocked down to the track offering for sale trays of oranges, lemons, bananas, garlic and fresh vegetables, rice and meat, coolie cigarettes, priced at forty a shilling, and above all *chang*. *Chang* (it rhymes with bung) is a form of beer brewed from rice or millet and is best described as a kind of alcoholic porridge which is swirled into a state of suspension with the aid of a cumbersome wooden swizzle-stick. It is an acquired taste and I doubt if any westerners would care to cultivate it.

“So far not a single coolie has dropped out, nor have there been any casualties, although one man and his load nearly came to grief on the notorious bridge below Charikot. This ‘Blondin Bridge’ as I described it last year, consists of two chains of locally forged links from which depend wire hoops bearing a foot-walk of loose 6-in. wide planks. The whole swings about 60 ft. above the Charnakola river. After half our coolies had crossed in safety a bad spot developed where a plank had become more than usually loose. It was not long before a coolie placed his foot exactly on the danger spot, a plank soared upwards and the unfortunate man, with his load on his back, was left hanging from one of the chains. Luckily a ‘policeman’ had been posted at the critical point and he pulled the coolie upwards to safety by his head-band. After this incident the remaining coolies were directed through the river, a detour to which no one had the slightest objection.

“*Junbesi, 6th February.*

“We arrived here today having crossed the Lamjura Bhanjyang

Pass this morning. This pass of between 12,000 and 13,000 ft. is the highest point we shall have to climb between Katmandu and our destination, Namche Bazar. It might well have been a grim ordeal, especially for our coolies, most of whom are marching bare foot. We had expected snow and only two weeks ago Charles Stonor, now at Namche, had warned us that at the time of our crossing snow was likely to be at its deepest. In fact the sun shone brilliantly, even fiercely, from a clear sky and most of us had stripped to shirts and shorts. What snow there was lay in patches of shade and was barely an inch deep. Individual rhododendrons were already in bloom with raspberry-red flowers. We found clusters of blue and mauve primroses and half-way up the pass Gerald Russell came across some fully ripe wild strawberries. So far—and now we are only four days' march from Namche—we are all agreed we have much to be thankful for.

“The crossing of the Lamjura Pass has brought us to an entirely different countryside. We have left behind us the terraced hillsides of the agrarian Nepalese and are penetrating into deep gorges whose sides are magnificently wooded with pine, fir and cedar. The aspect of the cottages has changed; thatched roofs are a thing of the past and here the roofs are of shingles held down with boulders, such as may be seen in the Alpine villages of Switzerland. We are now well into Sherpa country.

“Probably the hardest worked member of the expedition when our daily marches are over is Bill Edgar, our medical officer, who nightly is called upon to deal with anything up to twenty cases of every description.

“So far we have lost one day on this march for, owing to the winter conditions, we deemed it advisable to give the coolies a rest day at the half-way point in the village of Those. This pause enabled Tom to show his prowess at bread-making. Although he had taken a baker's course in London specially for this expedition most of us were dubious as to how the experiment would turn out. We need not have worried for the result was excellent. The following day saw our two climbers, John Jackson and Stanley Jeeves, in action for the first time. A Himalayan golden eagle's nest having been discovered high up on a cliff face, our pair roped down to it, the opposite cliff face forming a fine natural grandstand for ourselves and the coolies who were not slow to shout encouragement and advice. This performance, which lasted nearly two hours, finally produced a single egg of a deep gold colour richly flecked with brown. A party of

Tibetans who had joined the spectators now insisted on touching their foreheads to the egg, this obeisance to a rare and treasured article ensuring them a period of good fortune."

Just near the eagle's nest an incident occurred which Gerald and I missed as we had gone on in order to supervise the pitching of the next camp. This is Tom Stobart's account of what happened:

"Beneath a cliff overhang, a hundred feet above our heads, hung some enormous bees' nests, six feet across and seething black with bees. Wild bees are very dangerous, often attacking and stinging to death, but I had taken such nests in India and my mouth watered at the thought of the honey. I suggested that we should try and shoot down one of the nests. Then suitably wrapped up I would go in and collect.

"We hid behind some bushes about seventy yards away and Chunk Lagus fired three shots at the nests. A ripple went through the bees but nothing more happened. Bill Edgar trained his field-glasses. 'They don't seem to take any notice,' he said.

"At that moment pandemonium broke loose. Lagus began tearing up the path, beating at his head. Phu Dorje, a tough Everest Sherpa, followed. Stanley Jeeves sat calmly until a cloud of bees settled on his umbrella. Then it became a rout. Coolies dropped their loads and scattered. One man fell off a bridge into the river and the whole expedition went mad trying to get away, half of us shouting with pain, the other half doubled up with laughter. It was half an hour before we could creep past the spot and even then some of us got chased. The bees had defeated us."

On the second day after leaving Junbesi we climbed down into the gorge of the Dudh Kosi river, the "Milk River," so called because its waters are whipped to white foam by a series of cataracts which stretch unbroken for many miles.

After two days' march up the true left bank of the river we came to Ghat, leaving us an easy march to Namche Bazar on the following day. This last night was a bad one for the coolies. We were camped in the open with no village within miles. Snow was falling and the night was very cold. The coolies could only keep warm by lighting innumerable fires round our camp site and we were thankful that our march was now almost ended, for such conditions could not have been endured indefinitely.

At noon the next day we came to the bottom of the 2,000-ft. ascent up the cliff-side to Namche Bazar. We had hardly climbed a third of the way up when we met the first party of Namche Sherpas who had been alerted by Charles and who had hurried down to meet us. They had brought large wooden bottles of *chang* with them and we stopped to drink a welcoming cup before all going on together. At the next bend another little party of friends greeted us with more *chang*, and then another. It was not long before we were all very merry. Suddenly, as we rounded a bend about half-way up the slope, we came on Charles Stonor, looking bronzed and very fit, carrying a long staff and wearing red Tibetan boots. Our progress had now become a joyous procession and it continued thus until we reached our site on a saddle above the Sherpa capital. That night the clouds lifted and the ice-peaks towered all around, shimmering in the moonlight. We sat in the mess tents absorbed in Charles's story of his solitary search for the Yeti.

We were to spend two days in Namche Bazar, the time required to pay off the Katmandu coolies and to recruit Sherpas to carry our equipment up to the Base Camp. Both Tom and I had many friends in the village and it was interesting to meet them once more and to hear their gossip. I had a happy reunion with Kirkia, the Sherpa who had accompanied me up to the Everest Ice-fall in the previous year. He told me, however, that Gyalsen, who had acted as Sirdar on that occasion and had collapsed at the foot of the Khumbu Glacier, had died during the winter while on a journey to some hot springs in Tibet. Another death had been that of the Sherpa runner who had brought news of the ascent of Everest to Katmandu in the incredibly short time of six and a half days. Last year I took thirteen days to get back from Namche Bazar to Katmandu, which I believe was at that time a record for Europeans; but during my own march this star runner had passed me three times, twice coming up and once going down. A succession of these incredible performances had obviously ruined his health, for he had collapsed some months afterwards and died of heart failure. Another friend was Sudhir Chandra Mukherjee, who is the agent of the Indian Government at Namche Bazar. In the months to come Mukherjee was to be of immense assistance to us, particularly in relaying short radio messages to Katmandu from his radio station. We were happy that we could be some assistance to him by supplying medicines and other small comforts.

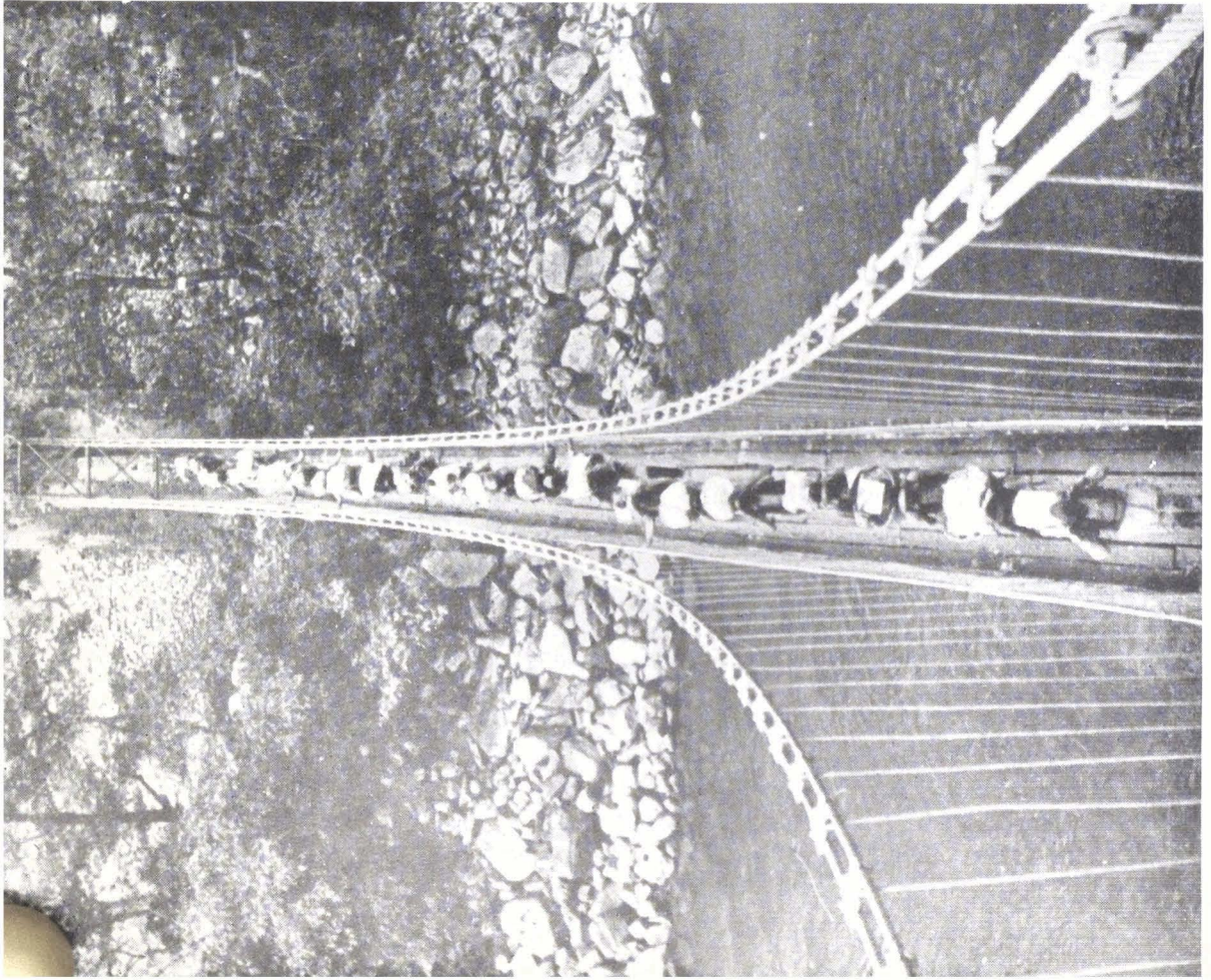
From Mukherjee I learnt that the Namche Bazar schoolmaster



The Yeti team at Base Camp. Seated front row *l. to r.*: Jackson, Stobart, Author, Stonor, Edgar, Jeeves. Second row includes Biswas holding mascot between himself and Russell to his left. Akhey Bhutia stands behind Russell. Lagus is taking the photograph.



The Lower Dudh Kosi Valley



Porters crossing bridge over Bhoté river near Charikot



The Lower Dudh Kosi Valley

Expedition's main party prepares to leave Banepa. Chunk Lagus to right; Tom Stobart centre; "Bis" Biswas to left, behind him Bill Edgar holds his hand to his head.





First Camp above Namche Bazar

First reconnaissance—*l. to r.*: the Author, Charles Stonor, Gerald Russell



Tshiring Dorje, who had been of great help to me on my last visit, had closed down his little school in the courtyard of the Namche Gumpa and left the town. The worthy citizens of Namche Bazar, who must be one of the most prosperous communities in Nepal, had been anxious that their children should be educated, but were shocked when they learnt that they were expected to pay a small contribution towards such education; thus the small scholars of Namche once more have to rely on the scraps of conversation they can pick up from expeditions—not always the most suitable talk.

On Saturday, 13th February, we held our first major council of war. It was decided to find a Base Camp—we had varying ideas as to the site but most of us were agreed that somewhere near Thyangboche monastery would be the most suitable—and then to divide into three teams of three men each to begin our first sortie. We chose as leaders of the three teams John Jackson, Tom Stobart and Charles Stonor. The question of who should accompany each leader largely solved itself owing to the necessity of appointing a qualified zoologist and an expert still, and motion-picture photographer to each party. We thus reached the following line-up:

John, Stan and Bis in Team 1.

Tom, Bill and Gerald in Team 2.

Charles, Chunk and myself in Team 3.

It was now a question of dividing up the area to be covered. It was finally agreed that John's party should proceed up the Imja Khola Gorge past Thyangboche monastery and Pangboche village to the junction of the Imja Khola and Chola Khola streams. They would then turn left up the Chola Khola valley to establish an advance base at the summer yak-grazing village of Phalong Karpa, which lies just below the snout of the Khumbu Glacier which leads up to Everest. According to the Sherpas whom Charles interrogated, Yeti had been heard calling on the slopes above Phalong Karpa as recently as six weeks before. It may also be recalled that the Swiss Expedition of 1952 found numerous Yeti tracks on the Khumbu Glacier itself, although the Swiss leader, Dr. Wyss Dunant, later expressed the opinion that these could have been made by a bear.

Tom's party was to be in company with John's as far as the junction of the Imja Khola and the Chola Khola. Tom then intended to work up the Imja Khola valley to establish an advance base at the grazing village of Dingboche. From there he was to probe up a small

valley lying in the shadow of Ama Dablam towards a small collection of huts known as Mingbo. As Charles has already recounted, it was here in 1949 that a Sherpa named Mingmah of Pangboche village was besieged in a hut by a Yeti which only took to its heels when Mingmah thrust a firebrand towards it through a large chink beside the door. That very day a touch of reality had been brought to our search by the arrival in camp of Mingmah himself. Although obviously a shy and unimaginative man, we finally persuaded him to parade up and down imitating the Yeti's slouching gait and emitting its mewling, yelping call.

Charles's party was to work up the flank of the Upper Dudh Kosi Gorge to Macherma and possibly beyond to the Dudh Pokhari (the Milk Lake). Charles told us that Yeti calls had been heard frequently in this area and that in the past season local herdsmen had often seen tracks.

Within the past six months two yak calves had been slaughtered near Macherma, the killings being attributed to Yeti, although it seemed equally probable that the work was done by wolves or snow-leopards. (Our later experiences provided almost certain proof that the killings were by wolves.)

None of us expected spectacular success in this our first attempt. We were quite resigned to the fact that it would be many weeks, and not until we had completed innumerable patrols, that we would have something concrete to report. From Charles's interrogations we had learnt enough of the character and habits of the Yeti to know that it has keenly developed senses of smell and hearing and is quickly put to flight by the sudden appearance of unusual objects. For this reason we intended to use our tents as little as possible and to sleep, as Charles had already been doing, in shallow caves and crannies in the cliffs and under the shelter of rocks. We decided to limit this first sortie to seven or eight days, to enable us to get the feel of the country and to complete our acclimatisation before we tackled more spectacular heights. We all went to bed that night excited by the prospect that at last we should be in action in the chase. It was a Saturday night, the night which Tom suggested we should keep each week for a celebration dinner, when the food would be provided from the "luxury box." For these dinners, which became something to look forward to throughout the dreary weeks which lay ahead, Tom himself supervised the cooking. That night we had sardines on toast, onion soup, chicken à la hongroise and stewed apples and cream, accompanied by two large tots of gin per head. Stan's

contribution to the compliments to the cook for this excellent dinner was—"Aye, and it'll be better with a warm sleeping-bag wrapped round it!"

On Sunday morning, 14th February, we set off from Namche Bazar, our equipment and stores now being carried by about two hundred and fifty Sherpa men, women and children. We followed the path up the true right-hand bank of the Dudh Kosi, about 1,000 ft. above the river, towards Thyangboche monastery. Charles had thought that some fields near the riverside and below the village of Phorche would provide an ideal site for the Base Camp. We had gone about two-thirds of the distance, when, over the other side of the river below, we saw an even better spot near the foot of the great wooded spur on which Thyangboche monastery stands. This was a narrow shelf on the mountain-side, part of which had been cultivated in the previous year, and part of which was yak grazing. We climbed down to investigate and the more we saw of it the better we liked it. It was a most beautiful place surrounded by pine, fir and cedar, while two streams of good water came down the hillside at either end of the shelf. Infinitely remote, above the site, towered the great ice-peak of Kangtega. Here we were to live for the next four months.

So far the weather around Namche Bazar had been mainly foggy, it being an unpleasantly damp, raw type of cold. The nights were registering about 20 degrees of frost. Now, just as we were about to set out on our first sorties, it began to snow heavily. All of us had planned to leave on the Tuesday, but we now decided to delay our start until Wednesday the 17th. This day began with the news that Da Tensing, one of the Darjeeling Sherpas, was ill with a rapidly mounting temperature. Bill Edgar decided that he could not be left alone and our three search teams had therefore to be reorganised. Gerald, who was eager to be out on the chase, changed places with Chunk Lagus, so that in Team 3 we now had Charles, Gerald and myself. This was a convenient arrangement for that morning Nemi and the rear party bringing the radio equipment arrived. The two or three days' delay caused by Da Tensing's illness would give Chunk, our radio expert, time in which to unpack the equipment and set up our transmitting station.

Charles, Gerald and I set off in mid-morning to penetrate into the Upper Dudh Kosi valley. We began by climbing some distance up the Thyangboche spur before leaving the path and making an awkward traverse through the forest until we were able to descend to the Imja Khola river, which we crossed by a plank bridge. We were

now at the foot of a second spur, beyond which lay the village of Phorche. There was a large herd of tahr (wild goat) on the slope, so tame that we were able to approach within a hundred yards of them. We called this slope "Tahr Spur." Both Gerald and I, who were by no means yet acclimatised, made hard work of this stiff ascent.

Phorche village is possibly the highest permanently inhabited Sherpa village, the population chiefly being occupied in yak grazing. It stands on a small plateau overlooking the Dudh Kosi. Compared with Namche Bazar and Khumjung it is not a wealthy community. We did not stop here but pushed on through another patch of woodland and beside long straggling *mane* walls, until we came to a great open stretch of heathland. As dusk was falling we halted beside a single isolated yak-hut which was then inhabited by an obviously indigent couple with a very large number of children. All had identical round, flat, cheerful faces and, dressed in homespun as they were, they reminded us irresistibly of peasants painted by Pieter Brueghel. The Brueghel family were only too happy to turn out of their house to make room for us for the night for a trifling rent. Delighted with this unexpected windfall they all trotted off happily back along the path to Phorche. Inside it proved to be a very small house indeed and there was only just room for our three sleeping-bags between the mounds of potatoes and great heaps of dried yak-dung fuel; but they proved warm quarters and we spent an excellent night.

The next morning we continued our trek among the rocks and beneath great cliffs of the eastern bank of the Dudh Kosi until our path finally came to the river's edge. Here we crossed and began an appallingly stiff climb for possibly 1,500 ft. straight up the western side of the gorge. Charles soon outdistanced the rest of us, leaving Gerald and myself floundering in the rear. I shall never forget that climb; I was to make it twice more and each time I found it equally unpleasant. The turf was slippery with fresh snow and I doubt whether Gerald and I would have got to the top had it not been for Danu who stayed behind to cut steps for us with his ice-axe. This ascent brought us at length to another path which made a long ascending traverse up-river. The snow was thick here and beside the path we came on our first wolf-tracks. In mid-afternoon we came to the deserted village of Nub, with possibly a further two miles to go to Macherma. All day thick clouds had been built up behind us and over the last stretch to Macherma our party, which was now strung out over about three miles, was suddenly overwhelmed with

thick fog. It was snowing heavily again when we finally got to Macherma after one of the most tiring days that I can remember. Macherma was also deserted and we chose one of the larger huts as our headquarters.

Next morning we were able to study the lie of the land. Macherma, comprising about a dozen huts in all, stands at the mouth of a small natural valley which opens into the Dudh Kosi gorge. Two 20,000-ft. peaks stand sentinel at either side of the head of this valley, while between them is an almost perfect semicircle of sheer cliff hundreds of feet high. Towards the left-hand peak, however, a vast mass of scree and glacier debris has poured over the cliff, providing a natural, if steep "staircase" to the snow-fields above. Charles had hoped that we would be able to take our party up this "staircase" and pitch the camp among the snow-fields on top. But now the Sherpas objected. Pemba the Cook mournfully surveyed the climb and declared that it would not "go." The coolies—we had about a dozen with us—agreed to a man with Pemba. In the end we compromised by taking the party right to the head of the valley where we pitched our camp on a narrow ledge under a broad overhang, hard against the right-hand cliff, Gerald and I sharing a single pyramid tent, and Charles sleeping in the open. We went to bed with high hopes for the next day. We awoke, however, to find snow falling thickly; visibility was nil and it became impossible to stir off the ledge. For a while we were safe enough under our overhang, although minor avalanches were rumbling down all around us. It was an indescribably desolate scene. For six hours we sat on a rock apiece, dodging the pungent smoke from a fire of sodden dwarf juniper boughs. At 2.30 that afternoon, with the weather worsening, we went to bed. There was nothing else to do. There was no point in wasting fuel when we could keep equally warm in our sleeping-bags.

Next day was clearer and while Gerald and I explored the caves and gullies round the cliffs, finding abundant evidence of small game, as well as of fox and wolf, Charles, thoroughly acclimatised by now and the fittest man in our whole party at that time, tackled the scree staircase only to be turned back near the summit by deep powder snow. From the other side of the valley Gerald and I watched Charles's lone progress upwards, marvelling at his doggedness and endurance.

In pushing along the cliffs the pair of us had come upon one steep gulley leading upwards, which appeared as if it continued right up to

the top of the cliffs. It was choked with loose rocks and boulders and covered with snow, which made it look far more difficult than it probably is. I learnt later that it is used by yaks in the summer. With Gerald in support I climbed about two-thirds of the way up, but here the rocks became so loose that I became anxious lest the whole lot should suddenly start moving and roll down in a snow-and-rock avalanche, with me on top of it and Gerald beneath. We decided to turn back. Returning to our camp on the ledge we came upon two small caves which Gerald entered head first, squirming through the narrow entrance, which was too small for myself. There was no evidence of any animals inside, probably a lucky thing for Gerald!

Upon Charles's return we studied the scree more carefully through binoculars and decided that, given better snow conditions, a gully rather to the left of the route he had taken might "go," giving access to the snow-fields above and the col beyond. Next day being fine, Charles and I both tackled the scree, and after an exhausting three-hour struggle with the snow, succeeded in reaching the top. But here the snow above the cliff was waist-deep, covering jagged boulders, among which we stumbled in considerable danger of breaking an ankle or a leg. A further hour's effort resulted in a bare two hundred yards' progress and, utterly worn out, we gave up the struggle and retreated. We had seen that there is a natural bowl above the cliff and below the ice-fall and glacier, which comes down from the left-hand peak; Charles considered this area excellent Yeti terrain. The sun had been shining brilliantly and both of us were painfully burnt. Looking back down the Macherma valley and over the Taweche Range, the summit of Everest stood out magnificently, almost bare of snow, and on this occasion blowing no plume.

The next day—our seventh—snow again set in as steadily as if it might last for a week and, with limited food supplies, we decided to turn back. This had been merely a test sortie and we hardly counted it as part of the search proper. But we could not help feeling that it might be the pattern of many similar sorties. We had found that, of eight days spent in the field, only two could be put to effective use in the hunt for the Yeti.

On the 23rd we abandoned the camp under ledge and made a climbing detour back to the hut at Macherma. Charles again went higher than ourselves and had the good fortune to see an eagle swoop and take a snow-partridge neatly off the cliff just above his head. I had been trying a number of gullies which led up through the cliffs

but none of them appeared to offer a way up to the summit. At one point there were two caves, one above the other, and climbing to the second I slipped and fell about twenty feet, luckily not hurting myself, but considerably startling Gerald. Snow again began to fall heavily that afternoon and we were glad to be back in the yak-hut. We were just entering the village when a pair of wolves passed right across our track and loped off northwards towards the mysterious lake known as the Dudh Pokhari.

By the following morning the snow had stopped. Food was now so low that all we could find for breakfast was rice gruel. We decided to lose no time in getting back to Base. For the first hour, as we made our way down the valley, the snow was thick underfoot and progress slow. Gerald in particular made heavy going and was soon lagging far behind. As the morning drew on conditions improved and Charles and I, after some wild acrobatics down the final steep and ice-covered descent to the Dudh Kosi river and a long stiff ascent up the far side, reached Phorche village at lunch-time. Pemba conducted us into one of the more prosperous-looking Sherpa houses and we sat round the fire while he prepared a meal.

Two hours went by with no sign of Gerald so it was decided to leave Pemba in the house and to continue to Base Camp. Pemba was to wait for Gerald and spend the night with him in the house. We waited only until Gerald was sighted in the far distance before we pounded on down the Tahr Spur, across the Imja Khola and round the Thyangboche Spur to reach Base Camp in good order late that afternoon. Here we found that Tom's party, delayed by Da Tensing's illness—he was now recovered—had been unable to leave Base Camp at all.

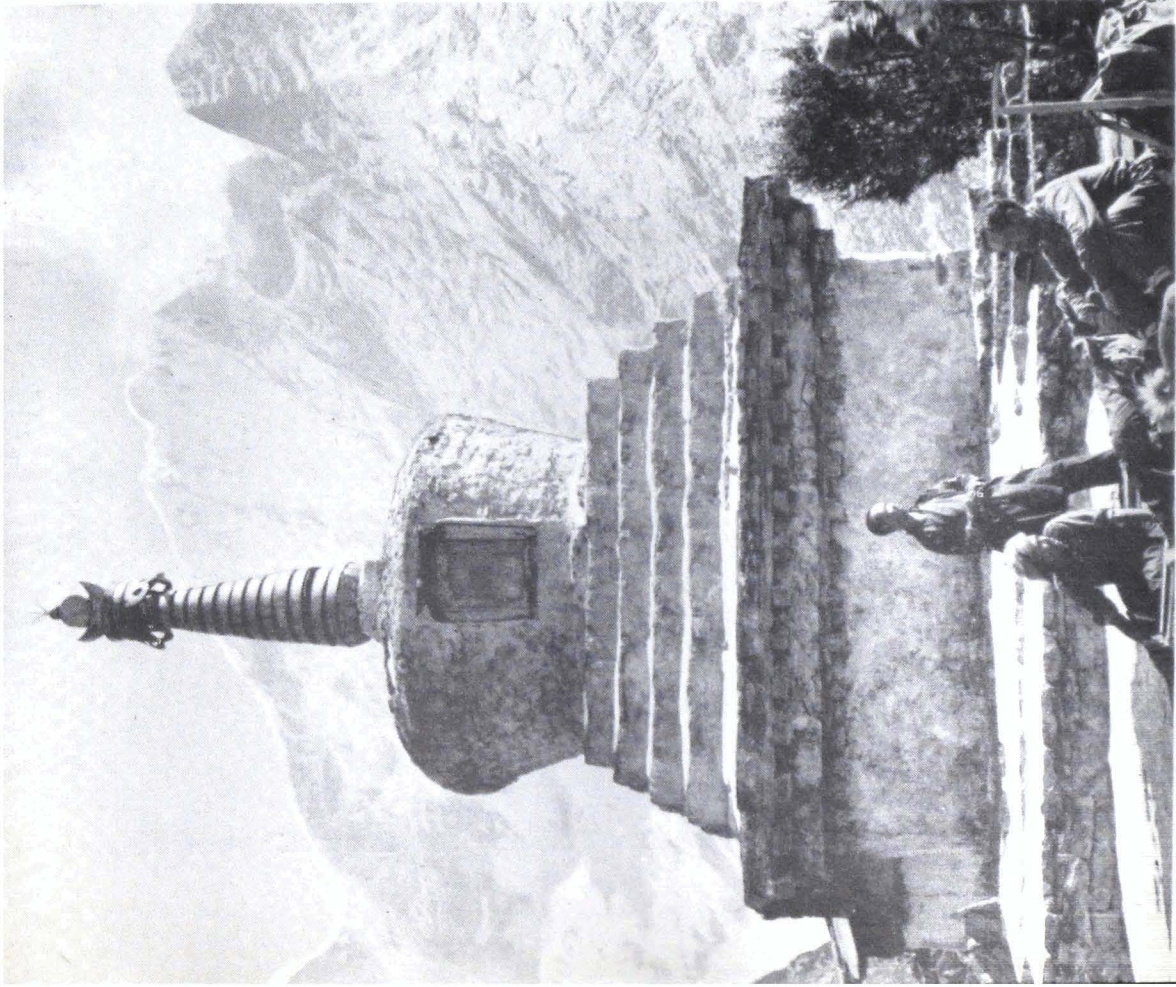
Tom himself had made one sortie with the object of testing the radio equipment. Chunk Lagus had busied himself erecting a radio mast and generally improving the camp. He had also taken out the .22 and shot one tahr and one musk deer to provide meat for the Sherpas. The Sherpas were greatly in need of this meat and we were relieved to find that the shots raised no comment in the district. The big news was that John, Stan, and Bis had sent a note down to say they had come across Yeti tracks three-quarters of the way up the Khumbu Glacier which leads to Everest. They had also written that they had expected to be back in camp on the next day. Gerald arrived during the morning to give us the news that a main reason for his slow progress had been the fact that he was accosted at Dolle, at the top of the fierce ascent up the west bank of the Dudh Kosi, by a

wildly excited yak-herd who claimed to have discovered fresh Yeti tracks near his hut but five days previously. This was the very day on which we had passed nearby on our way up to Macherma and we realised with chagrin that on that occasion we had actually failed to encounter a Yeti by a mere matter of hours.

John's party arrived in the afternoon. They had left Base Camp on the morning of 18th February and spent some hours at Pangboche monastery examining the Yeti "scalp" which is held among the relics there. Here, Bis said, he had been able to confirm Charles Stonor's opinion that the scalp could under no circumstances be a fake or an imitation. Bis, drawing upon his museum experience, was also unable to reconcile the "scalp" with anything he had ever seen before. Then the party had crossed over into the Chola Khola valley and spent they night in the Yak grazing village of Phariche. Next day they proceeded up the Khumbu Glacier as far as Lobuje camp at about 16,000 feet.

Lobuje had been used by last year's Everest team as a rest camp. As it was still mid-afternoon John and Stan decided to make a short excursion up the Glacier. At 16.30 when they were approaching the Lake Camp used as Base by the Swiss in 1952 Jeeves suddenly came on the tracks. According to Jackson, "We followed the tracks to the lateral moraine of the Khumbu Glacier where they disappeared. Two prints were clearer than the rest and the toes were quite visible. There was a deeper depression at the heel and along the outside of the foot. The prints were certainly 10 to 11 inches long and 5 to 6 inches wide. I felt certain that these prints were not of the cat or canine or deer family but from knowledge gained of mountain life in Kashmir and Ladakh I should say the prints were possibly those of a large bear or some similar large animal walking on two legs."

Stan Jeeves, with no experience of Himalayan tracks, immediately remarked on the similarity of the prints with those photographed by Eric Shipton in 1951. Charles Stonor now broke into the conversation and pointed out that the tracks could not possibly have been made by a black bear, while red bear prints would have been considerably larger. In any case bear would seem to write itself off, for both John and Stan remained emphatic that the tracks were made by a biped. There were eighty yards of tracks which proceeded purposefully in a straight line, showing no trace of "stagger," and at one point the creature had stood still with its two feet in the position of "ten to two." Had the animal been four-footed, placing its hind feet exactly in its fore feet tracks thus giving the impression of a biped,



The great gilded stupa outside Thyangboche monastery. Kangteka in background.



Base Camp below Thyangboche Monastery



The head of the Macherma Valley where Yeti have been frequently reported

this feat would have been a sheer impossibility. Although the tracks were judged to be two or three days old, John and Stan proceeded cautiously up the glacier in the hope of getting a sighting. Failing light finally caused the search to be abandoned and by next morning fresh snow had covered all traces of the tracks. This was particularly unfortunate because Bis, who was still having acclimatisation difficulties, had decided not to go beyond the Lobuje camp on the afternoon of the discovery and had thus never had a chance to give his opinion of the tracks which John and Stan had found.

The report made by John's party had given further proof of something which had previously been disputed and must now be accepted, namely that wild life in considerable variety survives the winter months at altitudes as high as 18,500 feet. They reported that in the Khumbu Glacier areas they had come across innumerable tracks of wild goat, wolves, foxes, marmots, mouse hares and even the humble mouse.

CHAPTER IX

DEFEATED BY SNOW

ROUND Danu's preposterously large camp-fire that evening morale was higher than it had ever been. We drank two bottles of rum on the strength of it—rather reckless extravagance, the ration to which we had restricted ourselves being one bottle of spirits per week among the nine of us. Counting Stonor's discovery, we had now found Yeti tracks at two distinct points in the area we were trying to cover. The points were many miles apart and separated by tremendous mountain barriers. It seemed that the Yeti might not be so thin on the ground as we had supposed. We finished the evening with a balalaika concert at which Gerald was the star performer. Whether it was the rum or the natural hazards of the Base Camp—everyone said it was the rum—that night I fell off the cliff which drops almost sheer to the Dudh Kosi from the camp. Luckily I landed in a bush about thirty feet down and, none the worse, was rescued thence by Bis.

The next day was a busy one. I sat down to write a five "take" story for the *Daily Mail* recounting the experiences of John's party, and those of ourselves under Charles. Tom, who is something of an artist, obliged with a drawing of the Yeti which he made by following the instructions of a number of over-critical Sherpas who would not accept it as authentic until they had made a number of alterations and additions. John drew a sketch-map of the area, which already contained many corrections of the maps which we had brought with us. All this material with the several rolls of films made an excellent "bag" for the next runner to take back to Katmandu. In the afternoon we posed for a group picture wearing our windproof suits with their various dazzling colours. These colours were chosen not only because they were aesthetically cinematic, but because they helped us to recognise each other at a distance. But after our first sortie we had already become dubious about the policy of wearing bright garments, for on the vast bare snow slopes it had become apparent we should be quite conspicuous enough to a Yeti without parading about in clothes more suited to a harlequin. From then on most of our

work was done in drab, or khaki, clothes except when it was imperative to protect ourselves from bad weather.

That night we had our second council of war and decided to reform our previous search parties. A glance at the map will show that the three river valleys of the Bhote Kosi, the Dudh Kosi and the Chola Khola run roughly parallel and are separated by mountain ranges which are never less than 18,000 feet and carry peaks like Taweche which is over 21,000 feet high. The three valleys terminate to the north at the foot of an even higher lateral range, which marks the Tibetan Frontier and which is straddled by giants like Cho Oyu and Gyachung Kang, both of them about 26,000 feet high. To the best of our knowledge the ranges had only once been crossed from the upper Bhote Kosi to the upper Dudh Kosi valley and only once from the Chola Khola to the Dudh Kosi. This last crossing was accomplished last year by Hillary, Noyce, Ward and Wiley of the British Everest Expedition, as strong a climbing team as is likely to be found in the world. Charles Stonor was still convinced that it would be possible to cross from the Dudh Kosi to the Bhote Kosi over the col at the head of the lateral Macherma valley which he and I had attempted until we found ourselves submerged almost up to the neck in deep powder snow. He was anxious now to go back to the Bhote Kosi and try the col from the opposite side. My own ambition was to push on beyond Macherma, up the Dudh Kosi to the Dudh Pokhari which I reckoned to be about four days' march from the Base Camp.

I have previously written in my despatches that it was a "hunch" which prompted this decision. It has, however, always been my experience that all sorts of animals find a single isolated lake an irresistible attraction, whether it be frozen or not. Charles and I therefore decided to part company, with reluctance on my part, for as well as on our first sortie, we had been companions for many months together in other parts of the Himalaya. He had however taught me enough to ensure that I could carry on efficiently alone. John Jackson and Stanley Jeeves were both anxious to go back to the Chola Khola valley and the Khumbu Glacier where they had sighted the Yeti tracks. Tom Stobart with Bill Edgar and Chunk Lagus were now also ready to join the search and we decided that they should at first leave with Jackson and Jeeves and should later break away and explore the lower, eastern, side of Taweche mountain where there had been plenty of Sherpa evidence of the recent presence of Yeti. Bis wished to spend a few days sorting out his equipment at

the Base Camp in preparation for the collection of birds and mammals he was hoping to make. It was decided that when he was ready to leave he would join Charles Stonor up the Bhote Kosi. Gerald Russell decided to go with me. Thus the second sortie developed into a three-pronged drive up the three parallel valleys with the possibility that it might become a pincer movement from the centre valley either towards the east or towards the west.

This time we were all to take our Marconi walkie-talkie sets in the hope that we would be able to keep in touch with each other. If prints were found it was left to each party to decide whether a general "Tally-ho" should be sounded to call everyone to one valley. The important point to be remembered was that it might be useless to call the entire team to tracks which were three or four days old. In doing so there was the danger that some of us would be drawn away from an area where a Yeti might be at the present time merely to a place where it had been some time ago in the past. It was agreed that we should all take enough food to stay out three weeks if necessary.

We had now begun our collection of wild animals with a stone marten and a mouse hare. The mouse hare—a perfect miniature of the common hare which would be an ideal children's pet if it could acclimatise itself to low altitudes—proved quite tame immediately on capture, so tame in fact that we felt that we might even shortly be able to give it the freedom of the camp. The stone marten, a most beautiful animal with thick grey-brown fur and blue eyes, remained ferocity itself from the day it was captured until it escaped some weeks later. It was caught in remarkable circumstances by Bahadur, a sixteen-year-old Katmandu coolie who had decided to remain behind as assistant cook to Narayan. Bahadur spotted the marten among some rocks near the kitchen and grabbed it with his bare hands. Impressed by its docility on this single occasion Ahkey Bhutia subsequently tried to handle it and was bitten severely in the finger for his temerity.

The next day, Saturday, was spent in sorting out food and equipment. This was the night of our big meal of the week and as we should not be eating together for some time Tom took over the cooking again; once more he excelled himself by producing *hors d'œuvres* and lobster Newburg, using tinned salmon to supplement our small tinned lobster supply. There followed a magnificent chocolate cake baked by Narayan in Bis's tin collecting trunk and surmounted with an inch of whipped cream.

Next morning began with a screaming argument between Narayan and Ahkey which finished with Narayan in floods of tears. This collapse delighted the arrogant Ahkey but caused us much concern, for I for one knew that Narayan had quite enough spirit in him to stick a kitchen knife in Ahkey if he was goaded too far. It was therefore decided to separate the two, Ahkey being left with Bis and Narayan coming with me. My party was now made up of myself, Gerald, Sirdar Ang Tschering, Narayan, Karma, another probationer cook whom Gerald persisted in calling "Little Henry," Danu, Norbu and nine coolies who included, by special request, Gyalgen, known as the "Jungli Sherpa"—he was a local Sherpa who had been with us since Katmandu—and his equally unkempt companion Ang Tilay. Ang Tilay was quite the most uncouth Sherpa I have ever seen. Raggedly dressed, incredibly dirty, with a rather shambling figure, he balanced his shaggy head on top of an immense goitre. But he was a gentle, kindly, great-hearted man and my affection and respect for him exceeded if anything my respect and affection for the "Jungli Sherpa." Ang Tilay was tireless in the chase and loped around the mountains like a casting hound, covering in each day about three times more ground than any of the rest of us. In spite of his appearance he was a man of some substance and owned at least three houses, including one at Nah about half-way up the Upper Dudh Kosi valley which he kept for the summer yak-grazing and which was often to become our party's advance headquarters. He knew the upper Dudh Kosi area intimately, claimed to have seen a Yeti twice, had often heard the animal calling and had found tracks more often than he could remember. He was thus an invaluable addition to my team.

As a chilly preliminary to our excursion I stripped to the skin in the snow and washed from head to foot in a bucket of hot water. A bath even in those Spartan conditions is a luxury if one is not to enjoy another for three weeks. As Gerald is the slower of the two of us he decided to go on ahead and we arranged that we should spend the night at the woodcutter's cottage owned by the Brueghel family beyond Phorche village.

Snow had been falling intermittently all the week. When I left the Base Camp soon after lunch with Ang Tschering marshalling the coolies into some sort of ragged line and arguing vociferously with Narayan, who as usual was wanting to burden the porters with at least four loads of pots, pans and personal possessions, Gerald's tracks were already obliterated. We slithered down the path from

the Base Camp to the Dudh Kosi river and then started the long climb up the Thyangboche spur towards the monastery. Where the path to Phorche branches off from the monastery track snow was so heavy that I had difficulty in finding the beginning of the steep traverse above the Imja Khola river. As we brushed through the thicket, thick pads of damp snow, dislodged from the branches, fell on to our heads and down our necks. It was here that a very small Sherpa carrying a very large load slipped off the path and slid fifty feet down the cliff until he was brought up by a birch tree. It was fortunate that there was something there to stop him for if he had gone much further he would have fallen over the cliff and down several hundred feet into the Imja Khola. During the slide his load had come unstuck and sultanas, currants and raisins were scattered all over the snow. As many as could be found were carefully wiped and put back into the box. The loss of the "kissmiss" threw Narayan into an ecstasy of grief and it was some days before he could forgive the hapless Sherpa. "Kissmiss," it should be explained, is the word Narayan uses to denote sultanas and raisins and other dried fruit, they being the ingredients of a Christmas pudding.

My party had crossed the ice-covered bridge across the Imja Khola without further mishap and had climbed about half-way up the Tahr Spur towards Phorche, when I was astonished to hear a distant shout behind us. This turned out to be Gerald, who I had thought by this time would be long past Phorche. But by mischance he had missed the turning where the Phorche pass leaves the Thyangboche track and had gone on almost up to the monastery. Here he was fortunately met by Sonam Tensing, known to many previous expeditions as "the Foreign Sportsman," who was on his way back to Phorche, his home village. The unfortunate Gerald was thus not only no longer ahead of us, but was back in his familiar position of about a mile behind and had climbed an extra 1,000 feet into the bargain. We pushed on to Phorche together, the snow still falling heavily, and made the customary halt for *chang* and *rakshi*, a fierce rice spirit. Ang Tschering, who never lost an opportunity to carouse with old friends, asked permission to spend a few hours in the house of "the Foreign Sportsman," who had been his companion on many a Himalayan expedition. Bursts of song, shattering the stillness of the starlit night as Ang Tschering swung along the trail, later told us all we wanted to know about the success of the party.

Gerald and I passed only twenty minutes in Phorche before tackling the high traverse along the left bank of the Dudh Kosi.

Monaul pheasants, as pretty as peacocks, scurried in the snow-laden undergrowth. Before we reached the cottage which was to be our home for the night we also started droves of blood pheasants.

Once more the Brueghel family were only too delighted to evacuate their home and spend the night in Phorche in return for a lodging fee of one shilling for the house and provision fees of three shillings for eggs and three shillings for firewood. The Sherpas took up their quarters in the ground-floor stable normally reserved for Yaks, leaving Gerald and myself to occupy the first-floor living-room. This was not entirely a happy arrangement, for the pungent smoke from the yak-dung and damp juniper-bough fire which the Sherpas lit beneath us poured up through the cracks in the floor and nearly suffocated us before driving us once more into the open. As the snow had now stopped we decided to eat supper round a camp-fire on the small beaten earth platform beside the house. As it was six o'clock I now got out the walkie-talkie set and was delighted to find that we were in good clear contact with the Base Camp. Both Chunk and Tom came over loud and strong and they could also hear me. There was a goggling and giggling audience of small boys and Sherpas as I talked. After we had eaten, Gerald and I sat round the fire drinking mugs of tea laced with rum and mutually congratulating each other on our good fortune to be where we were. This was our own little show and with men like Ang Tschering, Ang Tilay, Danu, Norbu and Narayan in the team it promised to be a good one. Possibly we had some premonition of the startling developments which were to come two days hence. Certainly we both felt very happy and very optimistic.

The clouds had now lifted and the peaks round us sparkled frostily in the moonlight high above the dark shadow of the fir trees. Danu's immense conflagration beneath our sleeping quarters had now been extinguished and, the dense smoke having cleared, we turned in at eight o'clock to be woken later, as I have related, by the trumpeting of Ang Tschering.

Next morning we were off to an early start, and after establishing brief radio contact with the Base Camp, continued up the left bank of the Dudh Kosi. Trailing in our wake was a party of woodcutters from Phorche, some of whom, being no more than eight years old, were scarcely as large as their carrying baskets. For the first mile the trail was almost hidden by snow and the locally recruited Sherpas and Sherpani porters, all of whom were wearing the local Tibetan-style felt boot, had difficulty in keeping to their feet. Two of the

women actually slipped off the path in a flurry of skirts and snow and were gallantly retrieved by Ang Tschering, who from then on expertly took over the task of trail breaker. Once more we started up blood pheasants and also coveys of the giant Himalayan Snowcock. In spite of the worsened conditions both Gerald and I were going far better than on our first unacclimatised journey over the same route and made far better time on the frighteningly steep ascent up the right bank of the Dudh Kosi which leads from the water's edge to the yak-herds' huts at Dolle. Here we had hopes of interrogating the yak-herd who had discovered fresh Yeti tracks in the neighbourhood in the previous week. We found the hut deserted and learnt from a neighbour, who appeared to materialise from nowhere, that the owner would not be back until four o'clock that afternoon. The traverse along the right bank of the Dudh Kosi to Macherma is a long day's march however acclimatised one may be and we therefore decided that we must push on. We argued that in any case the trail would be too old to merit investigation. The weather had been improving since the early morning and we were astonished to notice how quickly the snow vanished as the sun climbed higher.

At Nub Gerald and I sat down to eat lunch beneath an immense rock outcrop which gave us a stupendous view down the valley to majestic Kangtega, superbly buttressed as it is by organ-pipe ice-fluting. A less welcome sight were banks of mist creeping up the valley behind us and already slowly hiding the trees above the Base Camp, which had still been visible to us. We therefore lost no time in pushing on, Gerald in his hurry leaving our only tin-opener behind on the boulder which served us as a dining-table. We reached our yak-herd's hut at Macherma just in advance of the swirling mist. Fuel was quite plentiful and we spent a comfortable evening round a pleasant fire of dwarf juniper boughs. At six o'clock I once more had radio contact with the Base Camp. But this time while I could hear them over their more powerful transmitter they could no longer hear me—a fact which caused me some uneasiness. Bis was speaking, from which I deduced that the other search parties had already set out from the camp. In spite of the fire, which we kept on replenishing, it turned out to be a bitterly cold night.

We were again up early the next morning and were filled with pleasant anticipations for, for the first time on this sortie, we would be breaking fresh ground. I had hoped that we might even go as far as Dudh Pokhari in the day, but it was soon apparent that this

target would be well beyond us. In the early hours the mist had remained very thick and as the sun rose the mist did not lift with it. We were now considerably higher than we had been on the previous day with the Dudh Kosi river-bed at least 1,000 feet below us. Our altitude was about 16,000 feet above the sea. It had begun to snow and the snow of the past few weeks had melted to nothing like the extent of that lower down the valley.

Before we started off I summoned Ang Tschering and told him to announce to everybody that I would pay a reward of 100 Nepali rupees (£5) to the first man or woman who discovered a genuine Yeti track. This was possibly a rash move for as it turned out I lost my money within twenty minutes. We turned the headland from the tiny village and had begun the steep traverse which continued up the right bank of the river, visibility being practically nil, when Ang Tschering, who had once more taken over the now arduous task of breaking the trail, suddenly stopped dead. We were half-way across a slope which lay in shadow so that the snow lay deeply. About six feet below our trail and now running parallel with it was a single line of tracks heading down the valley. They were quite distinct in spite of the snow which had fallen on them since they were made. We judged them to be about three days old. They were like nothing I had ever seen before. They still showed the clear imprint of one big toe and at least three smaller ones. Allowing for enlargement, we judged them to be eight or nine inches long and possibly four or five inches across. The stride could be accurately measured as uniformly two feet three inches long. Our general impression was that, although smaller, they corresponded exactly with those photographed by Eric Shipton in 1951. Both Gerald and I had no doubt whatever that they were those of a biped. Ang Tschering, possibly the most seasoned and experienced of all Sherpa sirdars, at once recognised them as Yeti and his opinion was immediately confirmed by Ang Tilay, who of all people knew what he was looking for, and by Danu and Norbu, who both claimed to have seen Yeti tracks previously. It was possibly unfortunate that the prize money was to go to Ang Tschering, who was the wealthiest Sherpa with us. But the fact that none of the others questioned Ang Tschering's find and persisted in confirming it without any expectation of reward for themselves goes, I think, to prove the authenticity of the track.

The discovery of the footprints caused a good deal of excitement and uncertainty among the Sherpas. For some moments it was a case of those behind shouting "Forward" and those in front shouting

“Back.” The scene was an eerie one as we stood with wraiths of mist swirling about us, occasionally lifting so that we could see a hundred yards or so in any direction and then closing about us so that we could scarcely see each other. Going back on our tracks a little we got to the point where the Yeti, or whatever animal it was, had headed straight down the incline towards the river-bed. As the tracks were so old and must inevitably walk off the snow as they descended lower, we felt it would be more sensible to try and trace them back to their source. We thus continued along the traverse, the footprints keeping exactly parallel to our own path and six feet below it. After about three hundred yards our path led on to a small plateau which the animal had crossed confidently, but a few feet below the far rim of the plateau there was a confusion of marks, some being of the same size and others smaller. We first jumped to the conclusion that we must be dealing with a parent and child but we later came to believe that on approaching the new horizon of the plateau the creature—like any suspicious human being in similar circumstances—had dropped on all fours, the smaller indentations being its hands or knuckles, and had cautiously raised its head above the plateau to ensure that the coast was clear before advancing once more on its hind legs. The animal had approached the plateau by coming straight up from the river, meaning a difficult descent, and as the mist was closing down again we judged it imprudent to follow the trail further at that time. After a short distance our own path brought us to another uninhabited village and, possibly half a mile further on, to our delight we again came upon the tracks and obvious marks where the animal had sat down in a number of positions upon a promontory, apparently observing the village closely before deciding on a deep descending detour. The creature had clearly come down the path we were now about to follow but for some time we were disconcerted to see that the stride had visibly shortened while there were many more footprints than there should have been. We were reluctantly coming to the conclusion that we were after all tracking a quadruped when to our relief and encouragement the tracks suddenly divided round a boulder leaving distinct marks of two bipeds walking possibly four yards apart. The pattern of this track remained for a mile, more often than not a single line, but occasionally dividing to pass round either side of an obstruction. At one point a wolf had crossed over the track at right angles, paused for an obvious “double take” and then returned to the tracks and followed them for about ninety yards to satisfy its curiosity before

turning away again on its own errand. Finally, using a dry water-course, the two tracks disappeared up the cliff to our left, and there being little snow in this gully—while the mist was now thickening dangerously—we abandoned them, crossed the river to the left bank and bivouacked beside Ang Tilay's house in the now empty yak-grazing village of Nah.

In retrospect, it was possibly a deciding factor in the failure of the ensuing pursuit that we remained fogbound for the rest of that day and during the early hours of the following morning. We thus had no chance to examine the surrounding country and make the best dispositions. Unknown to us, as visibility was reduced to a few yards, we had reached the terminal moraine of the Dudh Kosi glacier. We were later to find that the valley divides itself into two at this point and an additional escape route for the Yeti lay open up the eastern branch. We had imagined there must be only one valley at this point, this being the western track down which the Yeti had come. It is the western valley which leads up to the Dudh Pokhari.

Next morning, shortly after we had resumed our march the mist lifted, disclosing that the tracks had apparently come from a vast amphitheatre high up the mountain-side which was filled with shattered boulders and glacier debris. We were ruefully forming the opinion that this almost impenetrable hide-out must be the Yeti home, when a shout from ahead announced that the tracks had again been sighted on the further bank of the river. Danu, with one of the younger Sherpas and myself, crossed the river by the precarious method of boulder-hopping and were immediately not in the least doubt that we were once more on the correct trail. Possibly the animals had made another detour to avoid Nah village, but it was now clear that their general route was down-river, using the yak ledges beneath the cliff and beside the water on the bank opposite to the main path. Dividing round boulders and uniting again where there were no obstructions the prints led upwards till at the foot of a steep waterfall, where the cliff rises sheer, the creatures had crossed to the left bank by means of a rough log bridge. A fiercely steep climb now brought us to the lake of Lang Boma upon which three ruddy sheldrake, their golden plumage glinting in the sun, were floating and beside which there was a positive maze of Yeti tracks as well as those of foxes, wolves and other animals. (All the maps of this area I have seen show only one lake at the head of Dudh Kosi river. In fact there are seven, two below the Dudh Pokhari, which is the largest, and four above it. Each has a local Sherpa name.)

When Gerald and I reached the Lang Boma we were too exhausted for the moment to do anything more than sit on a rock and gaze in bewilderment at the wealth of tracks before us. We were still not properly acclimatised and the last steep pitch had taxed us both severely. We had in fact been climbing steadily since Nah. The snow had been deep under foot and beneath it the ground was covered with loose rocks and shale which made the going particularly heavy. For some time past Gerald had been able to do nothing but stick doggedly to the track. I was the stronger of the two of us but I had made a number of scrambling detours while following the footprints and was now fully as tired. Ang Tschering, who was still comparatively fresh, had, however, been casting round in an attempt to unravel the maze of Yeti tracks beside the lake. It was not long before he discovered a single distinct track approaching from the east. The find so excited him that I felt compelled to join him in the search, leaving Gerald still panting on his rock. Together we climbed the steep snow slope leading up to the lateral rim of the Dudh Kosi glacier and from this point through glasses we managed to pick out the track for over a mile as it led across the glacier in the general direction of Taweche peak and the great wall of rock and ice which separated our valley from the Chola Khola on the far side. The Yeti had not made a beeline across country but had carefully followed the contours of the snow slopes like any experienced tourist on skis. There was a kink on the top of our own slope—the kind of almost invisible hazard which sooner or later upsets all skiers—and, although on foot, I stumbled into it and pitched headlong into a snow-drift. On picking myself up I was amused to see that two yards to my right the Yeti had suffered exactly the same fate, but that after going head first into the drift it had avoided further catastrophe by squatting on its backside and tobogganing to the foot of the slope, using its fists on either side of its body to propel itself forwards and downwards. In doing so it had left a deep groove in the snow. (I have since been told on the best authority that it is a habit of gorillas to sit on their rumps and slide when descending steep banks.) At the end of its slide it had again risen to its feet and set off in its shambling gait, which now seemed to be a lurch forward on its toes.

Gerald had now recovered sufficiently to join in the tracking and it was he who discovered the footprints of a second Yeti leading down-river from the north. If anything, these tracks were fresher than those of the "winter sports" Yeti and as they came from the direction in which we were now heading we decided to follow them. This

was easy, for snow conditions were excellent for tracking although they hampered our own progress. The prints led us to the next lake—Tau Jhum—about a mile up valley, often choosing a better path than ourselves, particularly so as I was anxious that none of us, including the coolies, should tread on them and obliterate the evidence. It was mid-afternoon and our party, in varying degrees of tiredness, was now stretched out over nearly two miles of country. The weather was obviously changing. The mist had cleared, the sky was leaden and a bitterly chill wind was blowing from over the mountain peaks to the north-west. To economise our strength most of us had now left the difficult path along the rocky foreshore and were walking on the frozen waters of the Tau Jhum lake. At the far end of the lake rugged cliffs, capped with snow-fields like sugaring, rise sheer. We would suddenly see wind sweep spume-like clouds of ice particles from the snow-fields. In a few moments the shrieking wind would hurl the spume at us from across the lake and would literally double us up in our tracks, the ice particles lashing our faces as if a sand-blaster had been turned upon us. From Tau Jhum there was still two miles of rocky country to cross before at last we reached Dudh Pokhari. By this time I was sitting down to rest every two hundred yards while Gerald, escorted by Ang Tschering and Danu, was still an hour behind.

There is a small cluster of stone yak-herds' huts beside the Milk Lake and from a distance I could see the Sherpa advance guard making themselves at home. The Yeti tracks were still quite clear and here the creature had gone on to the ice and followed closely along the shore line. I finally came to rest on a rock about a hundred yards from the huts and it was a good half-hour before I could summon the energy to go further. While I was sitting there I noticed that just beside the huts there was a clear sheet of water where more duck were swimming. I then saw, with amusement, that the Yeti had made a tentative assay across the ice towards the water, possibly to poach a roosting duck, but had thought better of it at the point where the ice thinned and short of the target, had ignominiously returned supperless. Through my glasses I saw that the Yeti had originally approached the lake from the north-west. Neither Gerald—who was now in sight moving slowly—nor I, had the strength to go further. Norbu had now forced the door of a small hut which conveniently proved to be three-quarters full of dry yak-dung fuel piled as high as the roof. At the far end there was just enough room for our two mattresses with the hearth between them.

Two further huts provided shelter for Sherpanis and Sherpas, with a small compartment not much bigger than a dog kennel for Narayan.

That night, huddled round our yak-dung fire in our snow-submerged herdsmen's cabin beside the frozen lake, with the wind howling like ten thousand demons outside, we endeavoured to reconstruct the strange behaviour of the two Yeti. Some occurrence common to both must have caused each to leave its respective hunting-ground—many miles apart—almost simultaneously. We thought this occurrence was most likely to have been the heavy snow-fall of the night of 26th–27th February. The meeting at Lang Boma lake must have been a chance encounter at the crossing of two regularly used Yeti trails. Judging by the maze of tracks beside the lake, the Yeti must have sidled round one another for some time before deciding to engage in a joint foraging expedition. Because of the prevailing snow conditions this expedition had necessarily to be down valley, a risk which did not appeal much to one of them, who apparently broke away during the detour round the first village we ourselves came to in our upward journey after first sighting the tracks. We felt that the faint-hearted Yeti was probably that from Taweche who from the lowest limit of its detour would have had an easy journey home to the east. If the Dudh Pokhari Yeti had been the first to return we must inevitably have come across its retreating footprints, and of these there had been no sign. Theoretically it would appear we were now in an excellent strategic position, for this Yeti must pass us to get back to its home, but, with every factor of terrain and weather in its favour, we could not help feeling that the task of eluding us would be simplicity itself. We decided however that we would stay at least two weeks in the area in the hope of picking up clues. If aided by great good luck, we might possibly trace the animal to its hide-out.

That night I wrote in my diary, "Neither of us ever expected success like this. Gerald and I *may* be the first of us to see a Yeti."

By next morning reaction to our efforts of the day before had set in and neither Gerald nor I, in spite of the exciting stage the pursuit had reached, felt capable of walking more than a few hundred yards. I did however tell Ang Tschering to comb the surrounding area and collect all the evidence he could. He, Ang Tilay, Danu and Norbu, then set off in different directions.

Danu followed the trail of Yeti No. 2, which had travelled round the north side of the lake beneath a rounded peak possibly 19,000 ft. high, which looked easily climbable. Between this peak and the

western range which separates the Dudh Kosi from the Bhote Kosi there is an upland depression several hundred feet above the lake. It seemed that the Yeti must have come from this place. On the far side of the western range, which did not look as if it would "go" from a distance, I reckoned that Charles Stonor must have reached a point in the Bhote Kosi valley almost opposite to ourselves.

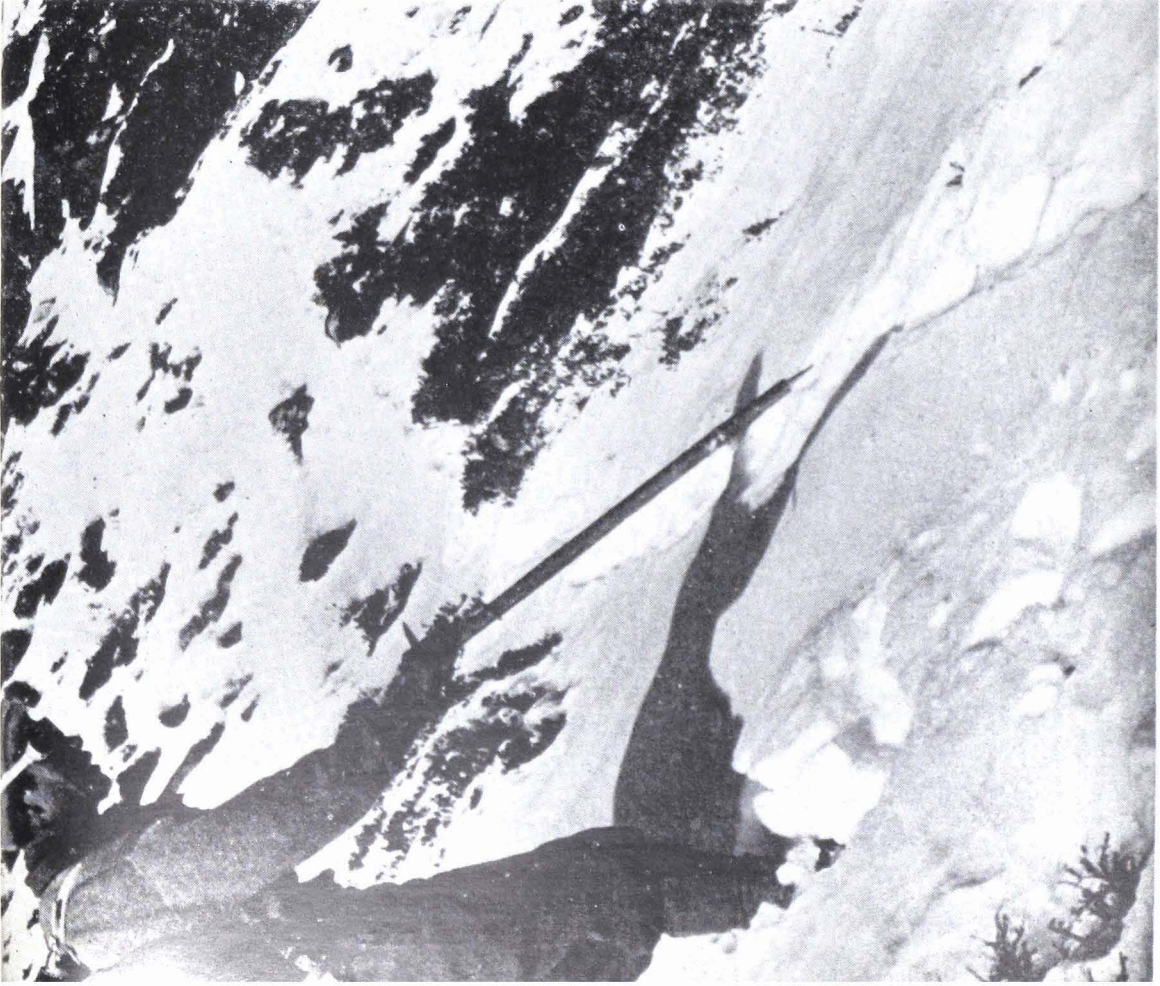
After an early lunch I felt sufficiently recovered to climb to the top of the foothills which screened us from the Dudh Kosi glacier. As soon as I reached the edge of the glacier a stupendous sight opened up; the glacier stretched before me right up to the lateral range which forms the Tibetan frontier, Gyachung Kang being to the right and Cho Oyo to the left. The range is buttressed by towering cliffs, some of them jagged black rock, through gaps in which tremendous ice-falls pour down to the head of the glacier. The glacier itself I can only describe as the world's largest rubbish heap. It is a vast area covered with immense mounds of shattered rock separated by craters whose walls are of sheer ice. The air was constantly filled with the noise of rattling stones and the crash of ice-blocks as they broke away under pressure and fell into the craters. The actual rim of the glacier was a cliff about 80 feet high, large sections of which would suddenly collapse in clouds of dust as they were undermined from below. On the far side the glacier was bounded by the formidable range which separates the Dudh Kosi from the Chola Khola valley, up which John Jackson's party must then be advancing. North of Taweche peak there appeared to be one or two cols which looked as if they could be reached from the Dudh Kosi side. Whether or not they could be crossed depended on conditions in the Chola Khola valley. I wondered if John would attempt them.

The glacier was a fascinating sight and I watched it for over an hour until I became chilled by the cutting wind. Making a detour on the way home I suddenly came across some enormous footprints where some creature had stepped off the rocks and on to the snow. The tracks were fresh, in fact could scarcely have been more than an hour or so old. If the footprints had been made by a Yeti it was truly an enormous one; far bigger than my previous conceptions of it. I confess I was very frightened. I followed the prints for a short distance as they wove in and out of the foothills beside the edge of the glacier until my courage failed me and, pausing only for some photographs, I turned back to camp for reinforcements. It was after taking a short cut that the bitter truth dawned on me. I again came on the tracks but this time the briefest scrutiny revealed the

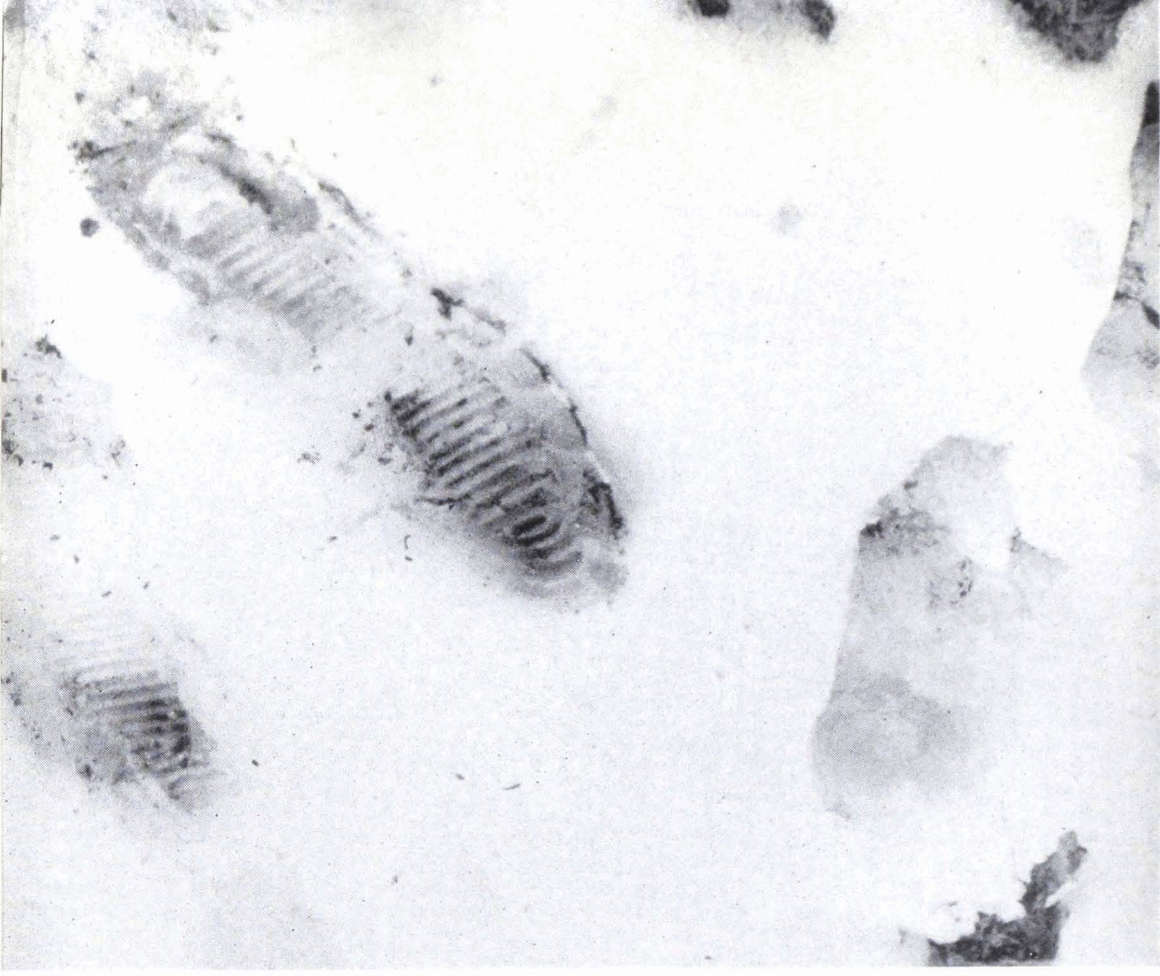
fact that they had come directly from the camp. It was not long before I learned amid uproarious laughter from the Sherpas that their author was none other than Ang Tschering himself!

We turned in early that night and the following morning Gerald set out with Danu to take up an observation post in the foothills which I had visited the day before. Danu had reported nothing from the upland depression to which he had climbed, except that he had lost the tracks of Yeti No. 2 after following it for some miles to a place where it had scrambled off the snow on to bare rock. I therefore set off, this time accompanied by Ang Tschering, to explore the ablation valley which leads from the lake northwards beside the glacier.

The snow lay very thick and, continually stumbling into drifts, we made very slow progress. But to our astonishment we soon came upon the tracks of a third Yeti. This one had quite clearly come down the ablation valley from the north. His home was therefore separated by a 19,000-ft. range from that of Yeti No. 2 who had arrived at the lake from the north-west. It was easy to see from the tracks that Yeti No. 3 had been more timid than No. 2. Instead of taking to the ice No. 3 had approached the lake through the foothills, giving the few stone huts on the shore a wide berth. Yeti No. 3's tracks were approximately the same age as those of No. 2. Ang Tschering and I followed No. 3 northwards to a height which must have been near 18,000 feet which, owing to the difficult snow conditions, was all that I could manage if I was to get back to the camp without collapsing. Along the trail we found ample evidence that a Yeti, being a biped, has exactly the same troubles in crossing crusted or wind-slab snow as do human beings. Whereas an animal such as a wolf, distributing its weight equally on its four feet, could run lightly over the crust, the Yeti found that sometimes the crust would bear its weight—in which case it left little or no trace—and sometimes it would not, whereupon it left whole lengths of great plunging foot-steps. Yeti No. 3 had placed itself in one situation which I found particularly interesting. It had been scrambling over rocks or boulder-hopping when it suddenly became confronted with a deep, steeply rising snow-drift. There was no easy detour and the Yeti had finally jumped into the middle of the drift threshing, floundering and "swimming" its way upwards using its arms and legs. The result was a great depression in the snow roughly the shape of a broad arrow-head. This suggests that the Yeti is capable of simultaneous lateral movements of its arms as in the breast stroke and I



Dudh Pokhari sortie: Ang Tschering points to Yeti tracks parallel to our own.



Yeti print between 8 in. and 9 in. long and between 4 in. and 5 in. wide. Note print of my size 11 boot is a double one, therefore no reliable guide as to size. The Yeti stride has shortened here to climb a steep grass bank.



Yeti tracks in Upper Dudh Kosi Valley beyond Macherma. The Yeti trail is to the left. The confusion of marks to the right of the picture was made by ourselves as we walked up and down examining the tracks. Over this level piece of ground the Yeti stride was measured as uniformly two feet three inches. At this critical period conditions were never kind for photography. Thick mist was almost invariably the general rule.



Sirdar Ang Tschering points to the head of the Upper Dudh Kosi Valley. Beyond this formidable barrier lies Tibet. Cho Oyu appears on the extreme left of the picture and Gyachung Kang on the extreme right.

Looking down Macherma Valley to East. An advance base camp is tucked hard under the black cliff in the bottom left-hand corner of the picture. The central mountain is Taweche.





Lake Tanak above the Dudh Pokhari. This appears to be another favourite Yeti haunt.

Taweche: with Sherpas Norbu, Ang Tschering and Ang Tilay in the foreground. Beyond Taweche lies the Chola Khola Valley where Jackson's party were trailing a Yeti at the moment this picture was taken.



can think of no other animal likely to be found at such altitudes which would be capable of such movements.

The light was failing when Ang Tschering and I abandoned the trail at a point where the creature had climbed up the cliff from the glacier. Here, among a pile of boulders, there was a colony of mouse hares. Ang Tschering immediately described the mouse hares as "Yeti food"; this being the first comment he had ever made on the subject.

When we got back to camp I was more exhausted than I had ever been before during the whole trip. Gerald was in scarcely better shape, for he had remained far too long in his hide-out exposed to the chill winds. We had reached such a limit of fatigue that neither of us had the energy to sympathise with the other. We turned in clasping in our fingers mugs of tea laced with rum but too tired to eat. We did, however, decide that after making a brief search together along the track of Yeti No. 2 to satisfy ourselves that it had gone beyond our reach, we would push after Yeti No. 3 and establish another advance camp further up the valley to the north.

These plans were interrupted the next morning by the arrival of a runner from Katmandu. The advent of the mail-bag was the most pleasurable event of the month but on this occasion it meant discontinuing further operations for at least two days. I now had a mass of material from which to write a story and both of us had received a large number of important letters which had to be dealt with before we could release the runner for his homeward journey. The weather in the afternoon, however, proved far too good to waste and we therefore decided to dispose of Yeti No. 2. This time Gerald and I went off together accompanied by Ang Tschering, Danu and Narayan. We climbed along the side of the mountain to the north of the lake, making a long slanting traverse which finally brought us to the upland depression. From here, looking east, we had a glorious view of the summit of Everest, its snow plume boiling away like a tea kettle. But regarding Yeti No. 2 we could only confirm Danu's previous assertion that it was untraceable once it had reached a series of rock ledges on the northern side of the depression. One thing was quite certain, that it could not have come down from the north where the cliffs were unclimbable. It was possible that its hide-out could be nearby, but more probable that it had found its way over from the Bhote Kosi. If this was so it was well beyond the scope of a single afternoon's excursion.

Back at the hut we spent a pleasant evening re-reading our letters

and a bundle of newspapers and enjoying an unexpected windfall in the shape of an extra bottle of rum which had come up with the mail from Katmandu.

The whole of Sunday, 7th March, was spent in writing despatches, making out film logs and dealing with the remainder of our mail. Early the next morning our runner was handed the mail-bag and set off for Katmandu. The weather, which had improved in the past two days, now showed rather unpleasant signs of changing again. There was a turbulence of cloud at the head of the valley where two winds from different quarters appeared to be meeting. Although we were compelled to keep a wary eye on our food stock we decided to push on to the north and establish a light camp beside Lake Tanak, the next lake above us. For this excursion we took with us Ang Tschering, Ang Tilay, Danu and Norbu and seven coolies who were to carry up the loads and then return to the Dudh Pokhari camp. The snow had melted to a great extent and the going was far easier than when Ang Tschering and I had followed the same route three days before. The tracks of Yeti No. 3 were still quite visible although considerably enlarged by melting. The high altitude—the highest Gerald had ever experienced—affected us both and we did not arrive at Lake Tanak until 2.30 in the afternoon. Here, as at the Dudh Pokhari, a line of foothills separates the glacier from the waters of the lake. The setting of Lake Tanak is exactly similar to that of the Dudh Pokhari—a big bay flanked by steep cliffs to the north and south and terminated by the mountain barrier of the western range. There are no yak-herds' huts at Tanak but the herdsmen have built a number of circular windbreaks constructed of small rocks and boulders. When we topped the last rise and looked down at the scene we were astonished to see that the snow which covered the ground literally abounded with Yeti tracks. It seemed impossible that one animal could make so many and we were forced to the conclusion that there must be a Yeti No. 4. There was, however, very little time left that afternoon for further investigation. The weather was now definitely worsening and once more thick cloud-banks were creeping up the valley from the south. I therefore ordered the coolies to dump their loads, which included a large quantity of firewood, for there was no longer any local fuel to be had, and return to the Dudh Pokhari without delay. We had two tents with us, Gerald's "Hillary," which we gave to the four Sherpas, and my Pyramid which Gerald and I shared. It had now turned bitterly cold and snow was falling gently. As we did not wish to waste our

firewood we climbed into our sleeping-bags at four in the afternoon and ate our dinner in bed. The next morning Ang Tschering and I set off northwards continuing up the ablation valley, where the snow was now very thick. We were still tracking Yeti No. 3 although the trail was quite obliterated in places over distances of 100 yards or so. We had just come in sight of the next lake—Lake Masumba—when we started to sink up to our thighs in the snow. At Ang Tschering's suggestion we therefore climbed eastwards on to the lateral moraine of the glacier. We found the going easiest along the exact edge of the cliff rising from the glacier proper, although it was more than disconcerting suddenly to hear whole sections of the cliff disappear in a roar of rocks and clouds of dust sometimes behind and sometimes in front of us.

The further north we advanced the more the country to the east began to unfold for we had passed the range of mountains which form the head of the Chola Khola valley. Opposite Lake Masumba, which we reached at about eleven o'clock, we were rewarded by a most magnificent view of Everest. The old north route to the summit used by pre-war expeditions, the Lho La; the western Cwm, the Lhotse and Nuptse peaks, the Lhotse face, the South Col and the new route to the South and true summits were all visible, indeed from no other vantage-point have I ever seen so much of the mountain revealed. Skirting Lake Masumba to the north there was a branch of our path heading westwards which Ang Tschering assured me—although I knew he had never been to this particular area before—led over to the Bhote Kosi valley and joined up with the main Bhote Kosi route over the Nang Pa La into Tibet. Beyond Masumba the rocks were very loose beneath the snow and we had not advanced very far in the direction of Lake Kyja Sumba before snow began to fall again. This decided us to turn for home. I had been going far better than usual and on return I found that Gerald had also been going well. He had found a good hide on the mountain-side above Tanak and had once even thought that he had seen a Yeti. Glasses had revealed, however, that this particular Yeti was Sherpa Norbu.

Norbu now introduced an innovation into our routine by producing a large bag of Yeti droppings which he had gathered from around the lake. Near the tent Gerald had been excited to find a place where a Yeti had leaped thrice to extricate itself from a snow-drift. Together we went back to the tracks and took photographs of the marks in the snow. That was the last night we were to spend in Tanak.

Next day we woke to find snow lying heavily on the tent and further

snow still falling steadily. As the fuel at Tanak was too scanty to risk being snowed in there was nothing to do but to retreat to the Dudh Pokhari. It was as well we did so for snow fell incessantly for the next two days. We were now properly snowbound in our Dudh Pokhari yak-hut. Further search was not only impossible in the conditions, it was useless, for all previous traces of tracks were now buried by a thick blanket of fresh snow. It was as if the Yeti had been presented with a clean sheet of paper upon which to sketch out his new movements. Unless he did so there was no longer any hope of keeping in touch with him. Gerald occupied some of the tedious hours spent in the hut waiting for the weather to clear in analysing the Yeti droppings. He submitted the following report:

“Found on 10th March approximately 11 a.m. on the regular path between Lake Tanak and Dudh Pokhari. One set of faeces approximately twelve days old lying alongside another set of faeces approximately six days old. The former containing a quantity of mouse-hare fur; a quantity of mouse-hare bones (approx. 20); one feather, probably from a partridge chick. Some sections of grass, or other vegetable matter, one thorn, one large insect claw, three mouse-hare whiskers.”

On the 11th March snow was still falling, but no longer as heavily as before. Ang Tschering, Norbu, Danu and Narayan were out soon after breakfast looking for tracks but without success. Gerald and I were held back in the camp by the most welcome arrival of a messenger from Tom Stobart. It appeared that the runner we had sent off to Katmandu had told some story of our finding Yeti tracks at the Base Camp as he passed through. This news had been relayed to Tom in the Chola Khola valley. Tom wrote:

“Dear Ralph, We have heard that you have seen tracks so your news may by now be more exciting than ours—however, I think you ought to have a report from us. We are camped at Thula, between Phalong Karpa and Lobuje. On the way up we had no special experience except to examine again the scalp at Pangboche. Personally I would not rule out its being a ‘mode article.’ When one considers the shrunken heads made in South America it is by no means impossible. I should think a boar would provide the basic materials.

“At our base. John made a recce with Doc. Edgar up the Chola Khola and visited a col with views of Everest. He saw *bear prints*

and other usual animals but nothing of special note. What is this bear—the red bear?

“Stan, Chunk and I have been concentrating on the local fauna. Mouse hares live mostly on lichen which they eat off the rocks. They are active mostly in the morning and late afternoon, which fits the Yeti feeding-times.

“We have not caught any yet though we have been almost successful and will no doubt do so with our technique now worked out.

“We have put up the clover-leaf bird trap, but only succeeded in catching some large animal which broke the trap up.

“Our small traps have been successful and we have caught three very attractive voles—short tails, rabbit-colour with white bellies and a wonderful fluffy pet. This animal is so tame that it can be handled as a pet mouse *immediately on capture*. *In fact all the small animals seem completely tame up here.*

“We have constructed a wolf-snow leopard trap, and it is set tonight with a small goat as bait (in a separate compartment). Wolves have killed three yaks in the last few days just below so we may get one. The yak-herds say they will treat us to *chang* if we get one of these pests!! There are tracks of wolf or leopard in the stone gully just above the trap.

“This morning (8th) John and Doc. set out to cross the col to visit you as arranged. However tonight on the radio they report numerous Yeti prints on the glacier and so there is a change of plan.

“These tracks are fresh, a day old, and there is a chance we have the Yeti trapped in the Chola Khola. I have told John to move his camp to an O.P. above the col. Tomorrow we all move up—leaving a block party in the narrow exit to the valley (just below our camp). I hope to meet John and post O.P.’s all over the valley, with radio contact—and then keep watch. The Yeti must come out to feed and drink.

“I think that our policy of splitting up is a dangerous one myself. At least now we ought to join forces. Suggest you try to join us over the pass. If you could move up towards it we will send someone over as soon as this first Yeti scare is over. If it has come out of the Chola Khola it must have gone up the Khumbu glacier—or around Taweche—or crossed over near us to the hills behind Chukung under Lhotse. If only we had more people to post at points of vantage to cover all the exits—as it is we are forced to abandon my block at the foot of the Khumbu glacier.

“I must confess I have been a bit despondent but hoping we would

get a line given by the more mobile members, whilst trying to get in some spadework on the other animals. Now we have a line and a definite area to block and work I am feeling more hopeful.

“I also feel that Gerald would be absolutely invaluable with these traps, because they involve quite a bit of work and someone tied to the base. I have taken a lot of pictures of the ‘cute woolly mice’ which would amuse the children, also a picture of Chunk trying to get a ‘mouse’ out of Stan’s clothes after it had run up his sleeve; and I should imagine that a fierce Tibetan wolf on a stick-lead would make a worthwhile picture to keep the ball rolling—if we can get one. Hope you and Gerald are enjoying yourselves. Yours, Tom.”

In view of Tom’s news and also in view of the fact that there was no particular point in remaining where we were now that we were out of touch with the Yeti, we decided to retreat down the valley to Ang Tilay’s house in Nah village. This journey we completed in very orderly fashion in spite of the fresh snow. No Yeti tracks were sighted but leopard-cat, fox and wolf were plentiful. To keep in practice Narayan and I followed a pair of wolves for some distance down valley and it was interesting to me in that they used the same route as that taken by the two Yeti we had tracked when we were heading north. This time when we arrived at Nah visibility was perfect and for the first time we saw the second valley which leads north-eastwards up the side of the glacier from its terminal moraine. With sinking hearts we realised its significance. This was the perfect second escape route by which at least two Yeti could have avoided us had they wished to get back to the north. It was also possible that somewhere up this ablation valley there was a pass over to the Chola Khola as Tom seemed to suggest. It might even be one of our own Yeti which was now engaging Tom and John’s attention in the Chola Khola. That evening I drew a sketch-map of our movements and sent the following reply to Tom:

“Dear Tom, Very many thanks for your letter of the 8th, with its heartening news, which arrived yesterday. To save time I am enclosing copies of two stories sent to London and a rough sketch-map which together should tell you our story. We have been concerned with three, almost certainly, four Yeti. We first picked up the tracks, coming down valley, just above Macherma, on about the temporary snow-line. They were about four days old otherwise I should have sounded the ‘Tally-ho’ for you all, but did not do so in

case we diverted you from more recent discoveries. It was also no good trying to track them on grass so we went on up valley, to try and track them to source. (I may say that as all were facing down valley—i.e. south—and into the sun when it was shining, it was a difficult job getting adequate pictures, particularly of such details as the distinctive toe features.) As we went upwards the snow remained good and a fascinating picture unfolded itself from the tracks. Three Yeti started simultaneously from different points of the compass and we think it must have been the heavy snowfall of the night of 26th Feb. which sent them down in search of food. In addition, a fourth Yeti has apparently been fooling about with Yeti 3, round Lake Tanak. There were no Yeti marks as high as Lake Masumba and altho' I cannot find complete proof I should bet that Nos. 3 and 4 climbed into the ablation valley from the right, about half-way between the two lakes. You will notice my sketch-map bears little relation to our photostated one, which is wrong in many details. Instead of a single lake—Dudh Pokhari—there are in fact seven!—four of which I have visited. Three have a certain amount of open water and on two, Lang Boma and Dudh Pokhari, there are a few ducks—golden plumage, bright yellow heads and black and white underwings (ruddy sheldrake).

“By getting *above* the Yeti, that is between them and their homes, we were in a good tactical position for they could only (a) try to sneak past us, (b) take to the valleys on either side where we presumed yourselves and Charles to be waiting. This seems to have happened in your case. Unfortunately we overlooked the significance of the right fork of the Dudh Kosi (the fork at Nah, where we now are). When we came to Nah on our way up there was a thick fog so there is some excuse, but in my opinion the Yeti used this fork which runs under Taweche to return home.

“I would come across to visit you but there is no pass apparent to me on this side, that is nothing that would not require some moderately expert climbing, and being a novice I think it would be foolish to lead the Sherpas into obvious trouble.

“I know we all have personal likes, etc., but to my mind there is no question but that this valley is the best bet yet—you will excuse us if the report of a *single* Yeti's tracks now leaves us rather cold. If your own scare dies down I would suggest a concerted effort here, a pincer movement up the two forks of the Dudh Kosi meeting at the foot of Gyachung Kang. This could cut off lateral retreat. The glacier and moraine here is of simply colossal size—I have never seen

the like. The ice-fall leading up to the two-horned mountain I have indicated with a question mark (Gyachung Kang) is certainly wider and I should judge tougher than that leading up to the Western Cwm. From Lake Masumba the view of Everest is superb and must certainly be expertly photographed. One looks *down upon* and along the Lho La and one has almost the entire new and old routes exposed at the same time. I have never seen so much of the mountain revealed. A big effort up this valley would be no picnic. There is no fuel to be had above Nah; one carries it with one. For this reason I sent the radio back to Base to conserve porter capacity. It never worked beyond Phorche anyway.

“Our plan is to probe up the right-hand fork of the Dudh Kosi and we should be back at the Base Camp about Wednesday or Thursday (17/18th March); our rations are two meals light of estimate as two tins of kippers have vanished. Please try and meet us there to discuss plans. I am very loath that Gerald should be pinned down at Base Camp feeding animals. He joined this expedition to hunt Yeti and has no desire to do anything else. In my opinion the lesser animals must be kept in their place and must not be allowed to impede the main effort. Our ‘hunting strength,’ that is those who want to do nothing else but hunt Yeti, is small enough as it is. Also to immobilise Gerald would mean putting Danu, one of our best hunting Sherpas, out of action. What we really want here is another (at least one) mountaineer Sahib.

“Wolves abound here—generally hunting in pairs—sometimes they follow the Yeti tracks for short distances, probably out of curiosity. Also the small fry are numerous. As I see it there is no way over the immense lateral barrier at the head of the valley and if we could push the Yeti up against it we might get somewhere. They do not appear very agile over rocks and do not seem to like crossing deep snow.

“If you can’t make Wednesday or Thursday can you let us know? Also please let me know which particular Col or Pass needs watching, bearing in mind we do not have a good map here. I may be able to discover a pass in the meantime and will do my best. Both of us are very well and still fairly optimistic. Good luck and good hunting to all of you. Yours, Ralph.”

The runner carrying this message made astonishingly good time for three days later he was back again bringing a second letter from Tom. It ran:

"Dear Ralph, Indeed you seem to have had better luck than we have, because we only found the tracks of one Yeti—just possibly two—up here. At the moment we do not believe that the Range between you and us is crossable by Yeti. This seems to show that the Yeti is not as rare as all that since ours is a different one. Your pace 2 ft. 3 in. exactly corresponds with my measurements, but regarding the tracks we measured both Bill Edgar and myself and John all had the impression that the animal was walking on all fours.

"I am sending John and Stan and Doc. up to the other col today to see if they can see you. If so I shall be over. If not will see you at Base on Wednesday or Thursday.

"You misunderstood me about Gerald. I did not mean to suggest that he should remain at Base. But we have a perfectly good leopard trap and live bait up here and could do with someone less mobile to keep an eye on it—otherwise we have no chance of catching anything else.

"I am getting very definite ideas about looking for the Yeti. I cannot think that we are likely to see it by walking about. We can either

"(a) hope to see the tracks leading to its lair—in which case we can capture one. But this will only be whilst the snow is down, or

"(b) We must enter its territory with our Sherpas and withdraw leaving two people under a rock who must remain absolutely concealed and quiet, so that the Yeti will think all is clear—rather as one puts a bird photographer into a hide.

"In addition I think one might put observers into the head of the Dudh Pokhari over a col from here rather than by the more obvious route up the valley. What do you think?

"I should like to go down to Ghat to see the flowers for a few days when we get back if this is possible. It is a bit difficult for me so far because I am somehow bound to make a film of this expedition. Unfortunately to make a film I have to get pictures. I cannot bring in wolves or reconstructions of Yeti sliding down on their behinds without getting pictures of the damned things.

"However let us hope we get to grips with Yeti soon, then we shall have more time for the other things.

"See you soon. All well and keen. Tom."

The intervening days before this reply came were spent in exhausting reconnaissances. On Saturday, 13th March, I set off with Ang Tschering, Ang Tilay and Norbu up the eastern fork of the Dudh

Kosi. We began by climbing up the terminal moraine of the Dudh Kosi glacier. Like all Himalayan glaciers that of the Dudh Kosi has receded and the "snout" in this case already affords sparse grazing for the local herds of yak. The glacier proper now begins some distance further north. We first climbed to the summit of the moraine which was still snow covered and spent two or three hours in fruitless search for tracks. It then occurred to me that it might be a better plan to reconnoitre the eastern range, which shut us off from the Chola Khola, in the hope of locating the pass which John Jackson might attempt and which I still felt might have been used by a Yeti crossing over to the east.

Glaciers are tiring in the extreme to negotiate, for the surface towards the snout is generally composed of loose pebbles and shale, and by the time we had climbed down to the foot of the eastern ablation valley I already felt we had done a normal day's work. We came down at a point where there are three or four herdsmen's huts sheltered beneath an immense cliff of black rock. The huts are known as taknak which means "Black Rock." From the huts a frozen waterfall—as distinct from an ice-fall, for this one obviously melts in summer and becomes a torrent—winds very steeply upwards in the general direction of Taweche. We decided to make our way up it; to me it seemed an interminable ascent as we climbed with the black cliff to our left over "boiler plates" of bubbly, blue ice. It must have taken us two hours to reach the top, this time with myself lagging a good quarter of a mile behind the others. At the summit the route branches; we took the right-hand fork which brought us hard up against the fluted ice-cliffs which form Taweche's main defences. Had we taken the left-hand fork which leads more to the north we should have arrived at the foot of the col which John was preparing to cross. This particular col was unknown to Ang Tilay although his home is within a few miles of it. It is possible that had we not inadvertently bypassed it we should have seen John's party bivouacked on the summit.

The route we chose led to the top of a steep ridge which disclosed a large area of rolling upland between Taweche and the Dudh Kosi river-bed. This "pastoral shelf," which was invisible from below, looked like ideal Yeti country to me but we never found any tracks upon it. We now turned south along the ridge, which itself was high enough to merit the Sherpas building a cairn upon it. Most of the flank of the Taweche range was exposed, but seen from close range none of the gaps in it looked climbable even by a fully equipped party of experts. A secondary feature to the north hid John's col from view.

A long downhill scramble to the south brought us by a roundabout route to a point opposite Nah, which lay possibly 2,000 ft. below. The descent was not difficult but now even the Sherpas were tiring. I was so exhausted that I could scarcely manage the stepping-stones across the river and nearly foundered on the steep short climb up to Ang Tilay's house. Throughout the day the sun had shone brilliantly and I was suffering badly from glacier burn.

Next day we returned to the western fork of the Dudh Kosi to examine the vast amphitheatre of boulders and shattered rock which we had noted had been visited by the first two Yeti which we had contacted on our journey upwards. We felt that we owed this to Major de la Bastide for a close study of our map showed us that this was the exact spot which the Major had indicated to us by Radies-thesia as a Yeti haunt. Gerald, having produced this particular "secret weapon," was perfectly confident that the Major would be correct in his diagnosis, although I remained sceptical. We climbed up the amphitheatre, which we named affectionately the "Frenchman's Gully," until, at about 18,000 ft. under an overhang which had been sheltered from the recent snowfall, we once more came on Yeti tracks which were possibly ten days old. Beside the tracks were more droppings identical with those we had previously analysed. At this height Gerald and I decided we could go no farther, but the three Sherpas with us climbed on for another 800 ft. without discovering any further evidence. By the middle of the afternoon we had between us covered every inch of the gully and were satisfied that there were no longer any Yeti within it, but, as Gerald was again at pains to point out, Major de la Bastide could not predict the future with his pendulum; he could only tell where the creature was at the moment he was making his experiments. In this case he had been working on his map nearly a month ago and I was prepared to concede the fact that from the evidence we had seen there was good reason to believe that Yeti had been in the gully at that time.

Throughout the day the sun had again been fierce and by the evening when we returned to Ang Tilay's house my face was very badly burnt indeed. In spite of anti-glacier-burn creams—I learnt later that I was probably allergic to the first one I used—the irritation was so maddening that I spent an entirely sleepless night. It was this that decided us to move the camp back to Macherma for it was obvious that I should not be able to continue working among the high altitude snows for some time and our food was now running short. On the valley floor the snows had vanished quickly under the sun of

the two previous days and what had seemed quite a lengthy march as we had come up-river, hampered additionally as we had been by fog, proved a short easy march going down. We reached Macherma in mid-morning. In the small lateral valley at Macherma there was far less snow than when Charles and I had tried to climb the cliff at its head. As my face was still very painful I decided to spend the rest of the day in the hut, but Ang Tschering, Ang Tilay, Norbu and Danu, spurred on by the fact that I had offered a fresh reward now that most previous tracks had been obliterated, were anxious to try the cliff. According to Ang Tilay, there was another shelf above the cliffs which led to a small plateau used for summer grazing and upon which stood a few deserted huts known as Lang Soma. The four Sherpas then set off to climb the gully to the north of the cliff which had previously defeated Gerald and myself and after making a remarkable high altitude detour round to the south returned to the camp at about 5 p.m. They claimed to have found six-day-old tracks of a "small Yeti" but were the first to admit that this did not merit a reward.

Going over the food stocks the next morning we were forced to the conclusion that we no longer had enough supplies to make another useful sortie. We therefore decided to return back to Base Camp. When we reached Dolle this time the yak-herd who had reported tracks to Gerald as he was returning from our first sortie was present in his hut. He confirmed what he had previously reported; that he had found tracks high up a small lateral valley at Dolle and he escorted me for a short distance up the valley to point out the place. Again it was what we had come to recognise as "good Yeti country." We had just returned to Dolle when a Sherpa runner approached us coming down valley. He brought the news that Tom Stobart, John and Bill Edgar had crossed into the Dudh Kosi valley and spent the night at Char Chung high up above Nah under Taweche peak. A brief note from Tom said that John and Bill Edgar were returning over the col they had crossed while Tom himself would follow us down to the Base Camp. Tom actually caught us up just below Phorche, where Gerald and I had stopped for tea before pushing on for home. We spent many hours that night talking round the camp-fire recounting our adventures of the past few days and discussing future plans. Tom's story was the following:

"On the evening of 8th March we heard on the radio the faint voice of John Jackson reporting from the head of the Chola Khola,

'tracks, exactly like Eric Shipton's and not more than twenty-four hours old.'

"Since the Chola Khola valley is a narrow one it seemed possible that we at last had the Yeti bottled up if only we could set our trap with sufficient cunning. I therefore asked John Jackson and Bill Edgar to move their camp to a position above the col leading out at the top, from where they could keep watch without being seen.

"The following day we hastily packed several days' rations and moved up the Chola Khola into our ambush positions. Chunk Lagus was left at the foot in the narrow part of the valley below the lake and opposite the moraine of the glacier that comes down from Taweche. Whilst on the move I had spotted possible Yeti tracks leading down this moraine and part of Chunk's job was to investigate these. He reported later that he considered they were made by a stone.

"Stan Jeeves and I, with Sherpas, Tsowang, Na Tsering and others went on up the valley. Behind the second yak-hut I left Stan behind to find a place for the night under a boulder. At this point we wished Na Tsering to go into the yak-hut for the night, but he was frightened to sleep there alone and we had to replan our dispositions.

"Shortly after leaving Stan, I saw some enormous tracks on the opposite side of the river. It took me some minutes of excited tracking to realise that these were old tracks made by Jackson and Edgar. As a result of this detour my Sherpas went on ahead and went to ground in the Dzong Ha yak-hut. Evening was now drawing on and I had no time to find an overhanging rock and construct a shelter which would be needed as a cold wind had sprung up across the snow.

"That evening I went for a quiet walk just as night was coming on in the hope of seeing the Yeti. Coming round a pile of rocks I was suddenly frozen with fright as I saw what I took to be a Yeti watching me from a pile of rocks across a gully. However, my field-glasses soon showed this shaggy and motionless creature to be a brown-stained cleft in the rocks. But if I had been a Sherpa without glasses . . .? I got back to the hut in the dark just as the Sherpas were coming to look for me.

"Next day Chunk's party reported they had been disturbed by noises in the night—which the Sherpas said were Yeti—but which Chunk thought were made by wolf or fox. John Jackson came on the air and said that he had been unable to find a camping-place on the col and was camped by the moraine above us. I called up Stan

and asked him to join me in a visit to John where we could hold a council of war.

“We met on top of the moraine and all re-examined the Yeti tracks. They certainly were Yeti tracks and in places where the snow had been hard we could see the footprints clearly. However the number of rocks and patchings of the snow made it impossible for us to follow them far.

“Soon after lunch the weather went back on us and it began to snow. We all moved down to a very large cave where John proposed to take up his quarters. After having tea Stan and I returned down to the Dzong Ha yak-hut.

“The following morning—after a night of snow—the weather was still bad. Chunk came through on the radio saying he was snowed up and since our food was running low—we had had to supplement John’s party from our rations—I asked him to organise a food lift from base and to join us in the yak-hut.

“This he did. The snow fell again. John came on the next morning saying that there was nothing to report except that on the two nights in the cave they had been visited by a wolf which had left tracks around the entrance. He added that the cave was very unsafe, being as far as he could see only supported by the ice frozen in the cracks, and that they were also very cold. He proposed to come down to our yak-hut.

“That evening whilst we were at supper around one of Stan Jeeves’ special yak-dung fires—which nearly set the hut ablaze—Mingma Gyalgen, who was cooking for us, suddenly froze and showed great signs of fear. We asked him what the matter was and he said ‘Yeti—I heard the Yeti call.’ We all went out of the hut into the moonlight, but though we listened till we were chilled we heard no sound.

“Next day John, Bill and Stan left to prospect the third possible col over to the Dudh Kosi valley. Chunk and I were to go out to look for tracks. Before leaving I strolled up to a knoll near the hut and examined the surrounding slopes with my field-glasses. I could not believe my eyes. Clear straight tracks contoured the far side of the valley (from where Mingma had heard the Yeti) and then zig-zagged up a gully exactly as a man would. I rushed breathless back to the hut and shouted the news to Chunk. We excitedly prepared to make a close inspection, but our preparations were interrupted by some Sherpas arriving with a baby bear in a basket. It had not enjoyed its journey and was not as friendly as bears should be—in

fact it growled and tried to bite everyone. Its great interest to us was that it showed that bears were to be found above Namche (where it was caught) at this time of year, although the Sherpas had said this was not so.¹

“On reaching the tracks the Sherpas said they were Yeti, but though some looked like the Shipton tracks, the ‘stride’ was much less—a foot shorter—and on hard snow they looked like wolf. I think they were wolf tracks several days old.

“In the evening John’s party returned, and said the pass would go easily, so we began to make plans to visit you in the Dudh Kosi.”

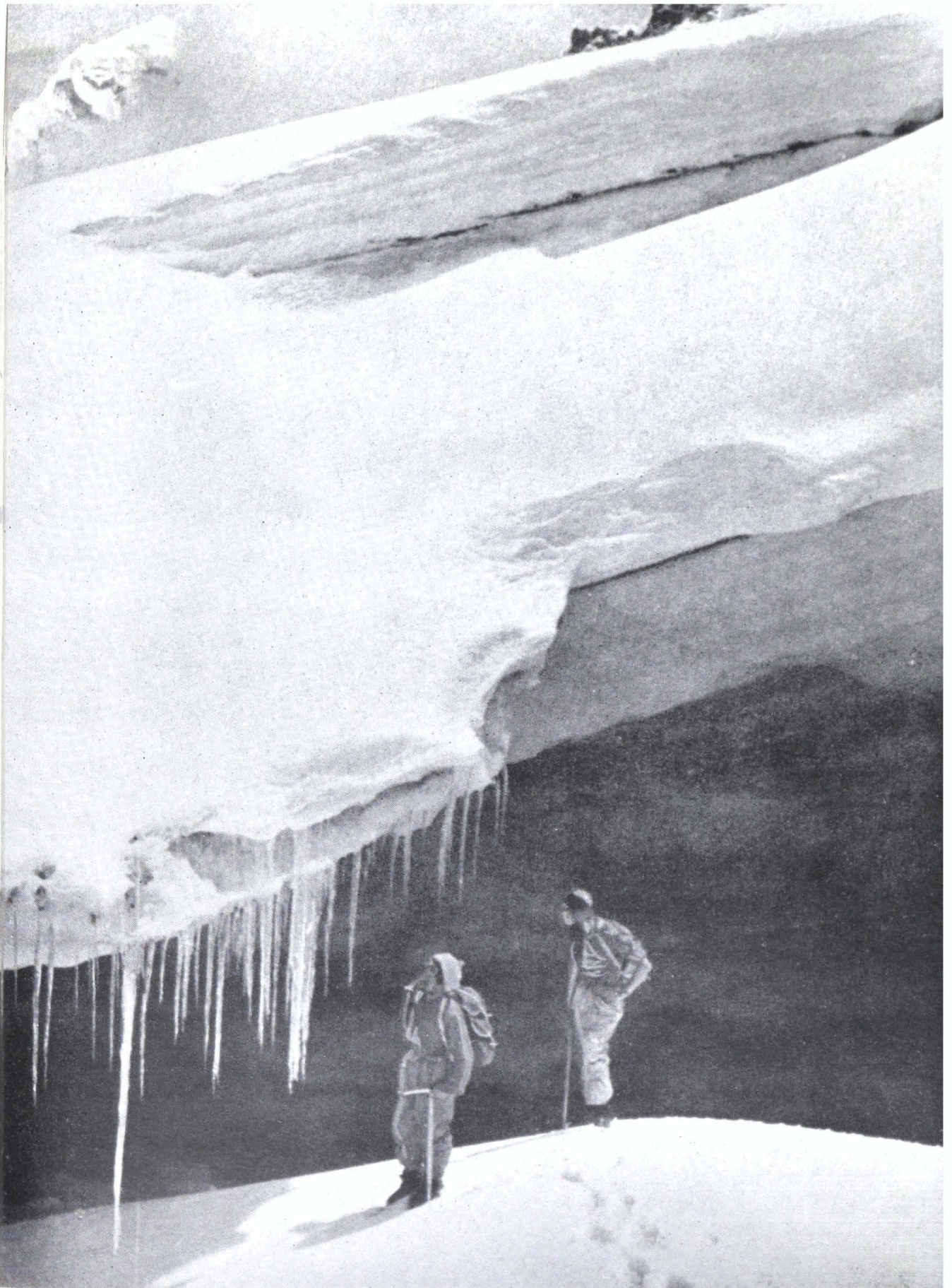
Next morning I had just completed a bath and dressed in clean clothes when an agitated Sherpa yak-herd named Arjeab arrived from Macherma to say that the previous night he had heard the Yeti call repeatedly close to the huts there. On being asked what the call was like he strode up and down the camp imitating a strange mewling sound which again resembled the amplified crying of a sea-gull. It may seem strange that we did not set off at once back to Macherma. The truth is that none of us had the energy to do so. Herein lies the crux of sorties at high altitude. It is impossible to sustain effort indefinitely and certainly in my case nearly three weeks of strenuous work was all I could ever manage without some days’ rest. That Arjeab seriously believed he had heard a Yeti I have no doubt. On leaving the camp he went straight to Thyangboche monastery to undergo a “cleansing ceremony” to ward off any evil that might befall him after hearing the call. He would scarcely have taken this trouble if he had been merely yarn-spinning.

Two further days were passed quietly at the camp. This brought us to Saturday, 20th March, which saw the return of John Jackson’s party complete with a bear cub, some yellow-bellied weasels and some short-tailed voles. With two minks which we had purchased locally for a few pence we now had quite a respectable menagerie. Saturday also saw the arrival of another runner with mail-bags from Katmandu. Since he had parted company with Tom at Char Chung in the Dudh Kosi valley John had had quite an adventurous time. Together with Bill Edgar he had gone up the Dudh Kosi valley to Taknak, the black rock village, where he had come across tracks I had left in the snow. He had then gone on up the eastern ablation valley

¹Re-interrogation of the Sherpas concerned later proved that the bear—a Himalayan black bear cub—was actually caught in the forests *below* Namche Bazar—R.I.

of the Dudh Kosi glacier for some miles where he had found faint Yeti prints in the snow. He returned to Taknak that night. The next day he had followed my tracks up the frozen waterfall but instead of taking the right-hand fork at the top he had branched to the left, thus bringing himself to the col he had crossed with Tom. On the top of this col, which he named Kang Cho to coincide with Kang Cho peak (20,500 feet) which rises from the col to the north, he and Bill Edgar were joined by Stanley Jeeves and Chunk Lagus. A reference to the *Alpine Journal* showed John that this col was first crossed last year by members of the British Everest Expedition. Referring to the accomplishment in the journal Sir John Hunt terms the crossing a "remarkable circuit of the Taweche peaks" but it is to be remembered that last year's climb was made by Sir Edmund Hillary, Wilfrid Noyce, Michael Ward and Major Wylie. Although we were not primarily a mountaineering party, this year's crossing clearly shows that we could develop considerable climbing strength if we wanted to do so. John again proved this on the following day when, together with Stanley Jeeves and Bill Edgar, he climbed Kang Cho peak from the col. This peak was also climbed for the first time by members of the Everest team and John was astonished to find that tracks the Everesters had left in the snow were still clearly visible. John reported "much dangerous loose rock near the summit but a lovely snow ridge at the top." The purpose of this climb was by no means merely "one-upmanship." John, like myself, had become confused by the bewildering inaccuracies of our maps which made it almost impossible to co-ordinate movements between different parties. He felt that if he could get high enough he might be able to straighten out a number of obvious mistakes. John's party spent one more night on the col and then set out for Base Camp leaving a quantity of stores and two Sherpas at the Thula yak-hut which overlooks the entrances of both the upper Chola Khola valley and the Khumbu glacier.

The arrival of the bear cub caused a good deal of commotion in the camp. About three months old, it was a sickly animal and we suspected it had been ill-treated immediately after capture. Feeding it was no problem for it would eat anything. It was constantly causing uproar in the kitchen where it would overturn the pots and pans and attempt to broach the provision cases. The only Sherpa who could be persuaded to deal with it was Ang Nima who suffered two pairs of torn windproof trousers for his pains. When we sat round the camp-fire the cub had a diabolical habit of creeping up



An ice cave in the glacier below the Changu La (the Wolf Pass) visited by Jackson, Edgar and Izzard and later crossed by Jackson

Final ascent to the pass leading from the head of the Upper Dudh Kosi Valley into the Bhoté Kosi Valley. (Height *circa* 19,000 feet.)



A view of Everest from the top of a 19,000 foot pass at head of the Upper Dudh Kosi Valley. Everest is to the left of the summit and Sir John Hunt's southern route are seen in profile. The southern route dips down to the South Col which rises again to Lhotse Peak. Nuptse Peak appears slightly in advance of Lhotse.



behind us and snapping at our calves. He was particularly fond of tormenting the goat which we had kept as live bait for the wolf and snow-leopard trap. There was never a dull moment in the camp when the bear was about for either he was having to be prevented from ripping one of the tents from top to bottom or having to be rescued after falling over the cliff towards the Dudh Kosi. In the end we had to keep him on a dog collar and lead tethered to a tree near the kitchen. He was known as Benji as it had been our intention to present him to the children's organisation known as the Benji League, which is run by the *Statesman* of Calcutta, with the intention that the children should present him in turn to the Calcutta Zoo. Unfortunately this never came about. As Gerald might have said "curiosity was the ruin of this bruin." One night when all of us were out on our next reconnaissance, Benji set off on another of his foraging expeditions, having pulled his chain loose from its fastening. He had only gone a few yards and was climbing along the top of a wall when his chain caught in a rock. The sudden tug must have caused Benji to lose his balance for he fell off the wall and hanged himself ignominiously in his dog collar. This placed us in rather a dilemma as we did not wish to disappoint the Benji League. Bis's resourcefulness solved the problem. He ordered Ahkey Bhutia to skin the bear, which was later stuffed by the Zoological Survey of India. Benji now occupies a place of pride in the special children's section of the Indian Museum.

CHAPTER X

TO THE NANGPA LA (I)

THE mail from Katmandu brought encouraging news that the expedition story was running well, not only in England but in twenty other countries to which it was being syndicated. Our fan mail now included letters from many parts of the world, including at least two from Iron Curtain countries. Two most interesting contributions concerning the Yeti had been printed by other newspapers. They were by Earl Nelson writing for the *Evening News*, and by Mr. Vladimir Tschernezky writing for the *Manchester Guardian*. I have received permission to reprint both these articles and include them here.

“What is the Yeti?” by Earl Nelson, F.R.A.S., F.R.S.A., F.R.G.S., F.Z.S. (author of *Life and the Universe*).

“Before so very long we may know definitely what the Yeti, or Abominable Snowman as he came to be called, really is. In the meantime it is interesting to surmise what he may or may not turn out to be.

“It is fairly certain that he will not prove to be a man, or even a sub-man, or ape-man such as the remote Pithecanthropus or Teleanthropus.

“It is now clear from the fossil record that at various periods in the remote past a great many different species of men were evolved, just as happened in the case of other mammals, notably the horse and the elephant. More than three hundred different species of elephant are now known to have existed in the past of which, broadly speaking, only two now survive, the Indian and the African. The modern horse is descended from a little five-toed creature about the size of a fox, while the ancestral elephant stood only two feet high at the shoulder.

“That man has evolved from a primate ancestor is now beyond dispute, and the fact is accepted by scientists everywhere. Anatomically man can be classed among the apes, since he does not differ materially in any notable feature from other apes and exhibits a close

resemblance to the chimpanzee and the gorilla. This is not to say that he is descended from either the one or the other, since they are all contemporary and all three have a common ancestry.

“There is plenty of anatomical and other evidence to prove that man, like the surviving forms of the higher anthropoids, the gorilla, chimpanzee, orang-outang and gibbon, is descended from tree-dwelling ancestors.

“For one thing, the young of anthropoid apes in infancy bear a close resemblance to human infants. This resemblance becomes progressively less as the animal develops. The skull of the infant gorilla is very much like that of the human infant, and it is only as the animal ages that the difference becomes more and more marked; projecting jaw, low receding forehead and so on. From this we may infer that there is no question of man’s direct descent from any of them, but that the anthropoids and man are descended from a common ancestral stock.

“There must therefore have been a time when the large anthropoids, the gorilla, orang-outang, chimpanzee, and man were represented by a common ancestry arboreal in habit, and Sir Arthur Keith is of the opinion that it was during this stage that the anthropoidal group which was destined to evolve into the human race became separated from the other groups that remained anthropoid. Once the lower limbs of the pre-human groups had more or less adapted themselves to a bipedal stance they were able to leave the jungle and the world lay open before them. Sir Arthur also makes it clear that the points of structure common to man and the living anthropoids are too numerous and too intimate for us to attribute them to anything except inheritance from a common ancestry.

“In this regard it is worth noting that the coccyx, the terminal triangular bone of the vertebral column, which in human beings consists of three to five vestigial tail vertebrae, shows that man’s remote ancestors possessed tails.

“Even today children are sometimes born with tails, which in civilised communities are invariably removed by the doctors at birth.

“Again, dissection of the human foot proves that it was at one time prehensile as those of the living anthropoids still are. Man has not even yet completely adapted himself to an upright stance. Balancing the body on the hind legs is a difficult feat that has taken millions of years to make near perfect, and every human child has to learn it afresh at the cost of considerable time and effort.

“A number of intermediate types, ape-men, and sub-men, which

form links in the chain connecting man with remote ancestral forms of typical apes, are now fairly well known. These include a creature having the somewhat dignified name of Proconsul, a ground-dwelling ape of the mid-Tertiary Period, known to have been a biped, also Dryopithecus and Propithecus, two other primitive man-like apes. Then there are the South African ape-men, Australopithecus, and other allied forms, of which whole families once existed in South and East Africa: Pithecanthropus, the Java man; Sinanthropus or Peking man, both of which lived from half a million to a million years ago; Rhodesian man, Neanderthal man, and others. The last named was sufficiently human to be classed in the genus *Homo* though not *Homo sapiens*.

“It is possible that the Yeti may prove to be an ape of a type closer to ourselves than any other existing species. A number of people, Sherpas and others, including the abbot of a monastery, claim to have seen the Yeti, and describe him as standing about five feet or more in height, powerfully built, walking with a lumbering, somewhat stooping gait, and covered with reddish hair. Such a description could well apply to the probable appearance of extinct Neanderthal man or to the ape-man of Africa. The Yeti could be a survival that has lingered on long after other creatures of this type have become extinct. One wonders what he can find to live on among the snows of the Himalayas. He is said to have killed and eaten men, but this is not surprising. Our remote ancestors were cannibals just as some of our human contemporaries are.”

Mr. Vladimir Tschernezky's contribution to the *Manchester Guardian* ran:

“Nature of the ‘Abominable Snowman.’ A New Form of Higher Anthropoid?”

“An expedition organised by the *Daily Mail* has gone to Himalaya to unravel the mystery of the ‘Abominable Snowman.’ Already available information allows us to make a fairly accurate prediction as to the probable nature of this enigmatic creature.

“Let us compare the photograph of the ‘Snowman’s’ supposed footprint with a drawing of the foot of the mountain gorilla and a photograph of the footprint of the caveman (probably the Neanderthal man) made by Professor Albert Carlo Blanc. A cursory glance is enough to convince us that the footprint of the Snowman has been made by a primate in whom are combined the features of a human and of an anthropoid ape.

“The big toe, which is shortened and separated from the other toes, is similar to that of the ape, but it is opposed to the other toes less than in any known anthropoid including the mountain gorilla whose foot comes nearest in structure to the foot of a man.

“By the short toes, thick heel, and the overall contour of the very broad foot the spoor of the snowman resembles the footprint of the caveman.

“If we were to reconstruct the footprint of some being intermediate between ape and man, such as the Pithecanthropus our reconstruction would thus be similar to the photograph taken by Eric Shipton in the Himalaya. The footprint of the Snowman shows, however, some peculiar characteristics, allowing us to draw the conclusion that we have here to do with a representative of a specialised branch of the higher anthropoids. The footprint of the Snowman is 12.5 in. long, which is not less than that of the largest gorilla even in spite of the short toes. In addition it is at least one and a half times as broad. Consequently this enigmatic anthropoid of the Himalaya should be larger and heavier than the greatest of known anthropoid apes.

“As is well known, the plantar surface of the monkeys is much narrower than that of man, especially in the region of the heel. But the breadth and massive structure of the heel of the Snowman is most impressive. This ‘human’ character is even more pronounced than in modern man and in the fossil Neanderthal man. Accordingly it can be concluded that this creature has extraordinarily thick and massive legs, legs that are much stronger than anything known both in monkeys recent and extinct, and in any living or fossil human races.

“The relative size and position of the toes is also peculiar. The first toe is exceptionally thick, the third, fourth, and fifth are narrow and appressed to one another. The second toe is intermediate in size between the first and the third, and is separated from the latter. There seem to be three independently moving groups of toes, capable of grasping objects between them. A grasping foot and strong legs are ideally adapted for climbing on rocks and steep inclines.

“The length of the stride of the Snowman, as the writer of this article was kindly informed by Eric Shipton, is about 2 ft. 6 in. It is thus equal to the stride of a six-foot man. The ancestors of man, such as the Neanderthal man, or the Pithecanthropus, had relatively shorter legs and a more massive body than contemporary man. This suggests that the Snowman must be of huge size, not less than

seven feet high. E. Shipton, who saw these mysterious footprints several times, never noticed anything that could be described as the marks of the hands. This indicates that the Snowman, as probably *Pithecanthropus erectus*, is a completely bipedal creature.

“The palæontological discoveries made by von Koenigswald before the Second World War have proved the existence of gigantic forms among the fossil anthropoids. These forms are considered by some authors, as for instance by Weidenreich, to be pro-hominids. In a Chinese druggist’s shop in Hong Kong, von Koenigswald found three molar teeth of a gigantic anthropoid; these were three times as big as the corresponding teeth of a gorilla and six times as large as the teeth of contemporary man. Von Koenigswald called this form a *Gigantopithecus*. The structure of these teeth is intermediate between ape and man, with a number of human features. Weidenreich proposes to name the creature *Giganthropus*.

“Embryological data may be used to determine the systematic position of the Snowman more exactly. In its embryonic development the human hand passes through stages resembling the ancestors of man—the hand of a new-born child in its proportions resembles the hand of Neanderthal man. In the case of the foot this similarity is not so obvious. At no stage of its development, however, does the human foot resemble the foot of the monkey or the footprint photographed by E. Shipton in the Himalaya. The Snowman is thus not very nearly related to the genus ‘*Homo*’ and is not human, even though it is a more highly developed form than any of the living anthropoids.

“Lastly, let us consider the somewhat contradicting descriptions of eyewitnesses. The Sherpa Sonam-Tensing says that the ‘Yeti’ was ‘. . . five feet six inches tall, standing on hind legs, it has no tail, and was covered by reddish-brown hair, except on the face which is bare and red.’ The abbot of Thyangboche monastery gives a similar description but mentions that the creature sometimes stood on all fours. Slavomir Rawicz, a Polish officer, who in 1942 fled from a Soviet concentration camp through Mongolia, China, and Tibet, observed in the Himalaya for two hours strange creatures which he said resembled a cross between a big bear and an orang-outang. He described these creatures in the following way: They were massive creatures, seven to eight feet high, with shoulders sloping to a powerful chest, and with long arms reaching to the knees, with a square head, the occiput of the head making a straight line with the back. They were covered with reddish-brown hair, and in places

one could see longer greyish hairs. The creatures never went on all fours, but walked on two legs with a comical swinging motion.

“Although eleven years have passed since the Polish officer made these observations, his narrative is exceptionally lucid. The creatures which left the traces described and photographed by E. Shipton must have been just like that. The Sherpas must have seen a young, not fully grown specimen.

“It is to be expected, according to all that has been said, that a new form of higher anthropoid will soon be discovered. This form will be either very nearly related to the fossil Gigantopithecus, or it may even be a living representative of this most extraordinary member of the primate family, for such the ‘Abominable Snowman’ appears to be.”

Sunday, 21st March, was largely spent in discussing our next operations. Up till this time we had had no news of Charles Stonor and Biswas who were, as far as we knew, still up in the Bhote Kosi valley. At the lower altitude of the Base Camp it had become quite obvious that winter conditions were passing. Rhododendrons were already budding round the camp and Sherpas trekking up from the south had told us that further down the Dudh Kosi valley rhododendrons, magnolias and other flowering trees and shrubs were approaching full blossom. Tom Stobart was most anxious to obtain cine-colour films of these and also to obtain a red panda and other animals. It was decided that Tom and Chunk and Stan should go down the valley as far as Ghat and spend a few days in film-making. As there had been no information sent down by the Sherpas left in the Chola Khola valley it was decided that John Jackson and Bill Edgar should join Gerald and myself in another sortie up the Dudh Kosi, which all of us now were agreed was the most promising area, but this time it was our intention to push right to the head of the valley so as to be at least two camps beyond Tanak, the furthest point reached by Gerald and myself. Further interrogation had confirmed that there was a pass leading westward along the terminal mountain barrier which forms the Tibetan frontier and which, after skirting Cho Oyu, descends to the Bhote Kosi and joins up with the main route leading over the Nangpa La to Tibet. Our party was to block the entrance to this pass from the Dudh Kosi side. Tom's party was to return from Ghat and push up the Bhote Kosi when, turning east, they would cross over and join up on the pass. No particular area could be assigned to Charles and Bis until we knew

their movements but it was thought that after some days' rest they might move up to support Tom. This certainly left the pass over to the Chola Khola open but if it should be necessary to block it we decided to use Gerald for the purpose.

On the next morning a party of monks from Thyangboche headed by Sanghi Lama, who was to become one of our best friends, arrived in the camp. After a prolonged tea-drinking ceremony, Ang Temba, who had learnt a good deal of English in Darjeeling, was asked to sound the monks on the possibility of obtaining the Pangboche scalp on loan. Somewhat to our surprise Sanghi Lama seemed confident that this could be done, he even announced his own readiness to fly with the scalp to England. As a first move it was decided to try and call a committee meeting of monks from Pangboche and elders from Phorche, who are the joint owners of the scalp. As Charles Stonor had begun negotiations for the scalp some time before we decided to send a message to him, asking him to return immediately and act as our representative at the committee meeting.

On the next day there were two further diversions. Sherpa Danu, inexpertly handling a .22 rifle, fired a shot through Gerald's tent which missed my head by a few feet and pierced Gerald's lilo which had been laid out on a rock to dry. In the afternoon a wire-netting enclosure having been made we turned some of the animals loose in it in turn for the purposes of photography. The stone marten became quite frantic when released from its cage and flung itself repeatedly at the wire in such a manner that we became frightened that it would either break its neck or otherwise injure itself severely. We were forced to sacrifice one of the voles as bait to lure it back into its cage. Another of the voles vanished in the enclosure and was later found squashed to death under a rock. Only the mouse hare and the weasels showed any talent as film stars. A good deal of the day was spent collecting kit and stores together for our next sortie, which we planned to begin on the morrow. That night, as it was the eve of John's birthday and as we should be separated again on the next day, we held another celebration.

We woke to find rain falling heavily. It was the first we had experienced since Katmandu and was another sign of the changing seasons. As we sat having breakfast in the mess tent Nemi brought the news of another calamity—our single mouse hare had died in the night. In the course of the morning the rain turned to a thick damp snow quite unlike any we had had in the previous weeks. As we were obviously in for a soaking John, Bill and I decided to wait until

after lunch before setting out, in the hope that the weather would clear. Anxious that he might not be able to keep up with us, Gerald set off alone, followed by the twenty-seven coolies. We arranged a rendezvous at the Brueghel hut beyond Phorche. Pandemonium reigned throughout lunch for Benji, who was then still alive, had become miserably bedraggled in the snow and had to be brought into the mess tent for shelter.

We were just finishing the meal when Charles suddenly arrived, having walked right through from Thame in the morning. He had left Bis behind but brought with him Gyalgen to help him in the negotiations for the Pangboche scalp. We had been puzzled what to do if we succeeded in obtaining the scalp on loan, but we now agreed that Nemi, the most trustworthy and responsible of the Sherpas, should escort it down to Katmandu. He would hand it to Saksena who would then fly it down to Calcutta, see that it was passed through the Customs and then place it in charge of the pilot of a London bound air-liner. None of us had any illusions as to what might happen if the scalp was lost on the way or was delayed in its return to us. It was probable that no one of us would be allowed to leave the district until it was recovered.

This time Charles had no news whatsoever to report of the presence of Yeti in the Bhote Khosi valley, which had yielded such promising results on his first sortie. He had, however, been present near Thame when a pair of Tibetan snow wolves had attacked a herd of sheep and killed seven of them within twenty minutes. Outside the snow still fell in heavy damp wads. We were just deciding that we would have to move, snow or no snow, when a hunter from down the valley arrived with skins of panda, pangolin, leopard cat, Himalayan marten, and one small mammal unknown to any of us, but which we later identified as a species of giant mongoose. These skins we bought for Bis for a few shillings.

We left at three in a violent snowstorm, sheltering under an umbrella apiece. This was not the sort of snow that lies long but it had utterly obscured the path. As all the coolies had gone on with Gerald, John, Bill and I were alone, and it was as well that we were; for having rounded the Thyangboche spur we missed the path altogether and had to make an alternative one of our own on the very edge of the precipice which drops sheer into the Imja Khola. Having crossed the bridge at the foot of the gorge John took over the task of breaking the trail for us up the Tahr spur. The snow continued very thick. It clouded our goggles, got down our necks in spite of our

umbrellas and was wet enough to soak through our windproofs and dampen our sweaters and shirts. It was a miserable climb and when we arrived at Phorche we were relieved to find that Gerald and the Sherpas had wisely decided to call a halt there for the night. There was no question of taking over a whole house here as Phorche is very over-populated and no one was going to turn out into the storm to accommodate us, but we were warmly received in the first-floor common-room of a house belonging to one of the coolies, which our own party of thirty-one souls now shared with quite as many more relations and friends, who ranged in age from babies of a few weeks to great-grandparents of nearly ninety. It was a homely scene as we all crowded round the hearth among the pots and pans trying to dry our steaming clothes. Vast brass-bound wooden bottles of *chang* were going the rounds, to be followed by little bowls of *rakshi* which had been delicately tinted violet with permanganate of potash. I never saw this disinfectant used for any other purpose. The air was filled with acrid juniper smoke which made our eyes run until we lay on the floor to avoid it. A round dance was going on in one corner, two or three parties were singing and a number of women were kneeling on the floor pounding out potato pasties with rolling-pins. Ang Tialy and the "Jungli" Sherpa were jiggling bawling babies in wooden cradles slung on their backs—the babies found some amusement in pulling the ends of their pigtails—and over all was an atmosphere of the greatest kindness and good humour. Even the fleas were affectionate. In the middle of the night when, after waking to a chorus of snoring in sixty different keys, I looked out of the window I saw that the silver stars were shining frostily in a perfectly clear sky.

The next stage from Phorche to Macherma was one we were coming to know well, but this time the heavy snow had made it unrecognisable in the early stages. We kept losing the path and the coolies were continually falling with their loads and sliding down the slope. As the sun warmed the snow melted with astonishing rapidity and by the time we had climbed the first ascent which follows the crossing of the now swollen Dudh Kosi, it had nearly vanished. This day neither Gerald nor I went well and we were far outdistanced by John and Bill. It was 25th March and often we would pass yak-herds driving their animals up valley towards the early spring pastures. The village of Nub just below Macherma, which had been deserted on our two previous excursions, was now fully occupied. Ang Tschering and Narayan found previous acquaintances in this village and stopped for a prolonged *chang* session. Even the huts at

Macherma were now half occupied, including our old billet—"the Ritz." All we could find was a small hut nearby with no door and very little roof. This the four of us shared with Narayan and his young assistant cook Little Henry and Little Henry's pride and joy, his own even younger assistant cook known as the Chokra.

The next day we decided to go no further than Nah, although in the changing conditions it was barely two hours away. The march was uneventful except for the fact that two more coolies slipped off the track and slid about fifty feet. The reason for the short day was because an early morning yell of anguish from Narayan announced that the bacon had been left behind. We had also discovered that we had no spare flash bulbs, so a runner was sent back to Base to fetch both bulbs and bacon. This runner had to be given time to catch up with us. While I wrote a number of letters Bill and John made a sortie as far as Lang Boma, upon which the ruddy sheldrake were still floating. They found no sign of Yeti prints, but any amount of yak tracks which were clearly going to make our task more difficult by obliterating any Yeti evidence there might be.

By the next morning the snow round Nah had entirely gone and we all enjoyed a most pleasant march to the Dudh Pokhari camp, taking a rather higher route which proved easier going in the long run. The sky was clearer than for some days past. Ice still held firm over the Tau Jhum Lake and along the side of the Dudh Pokhari, but Bill, who ventured too far out on the Tau Jhum, was forced hurriedly to return when the ice cracked with a report like a pistol shot. We arrived at Dudh Pokhari at two in the afternoon. John, Bill and I still felt fresh enough to climb the foothills by the side of the Dudh Kosi glacier. There was some cloud in the upper valley which obscured the tops of Cho Oyu and Gyachung Kang, but we spent a pleasant half-hour while John with his expert knowledge pointed out a number of lesser peaks which he thought would "go." John was enthusiastic about the Dudh Pokhari site, which he considered the most beautiful he had seen so far. That night I wrote in my diary "all in good health and contented."

Next day John, Bill and I set off on a reconnaissance of Lake Tanak and, finding the snow conditions particularly good, we pushed on beyond to Lake Masumba. I had hoped to show the others the stupendous view of Everest which is to be seen from the upper lake but long before we reached it thick cloud had enveloped the mountain. The day was not lost, however, for John was able to scan the approaches of the pass leading north-west to the Bhote Kosi. He was

convinced that it could be crossed. There were no new signs of Yeti footprints but the new snow had now melted sufficiently to enable the depressions that the Yeti had made in the old snow round Lake Tanak to become visible again. We arrived back at the Dudh Pokhari camp at the same time as Gerald, who had spent the day in another visit to the basin north-west of the lake to which we had tracked Yeti No. 2 on our last sortie. We were still puzzled as to the route by which the Yeti had entered the basin before descending to the Dudh Pokhari. Gerald had no new solution to offer.

That evening a runner arrived from Base Camp with a message from Charles who told us that he was fairly optimistic as regards obtaining the scalp on loan. Next morning began with one of those unavoidable rows over Sherpa food. Ang Tschering, who had been given £100 six days previously to provide food for all the Sherpas, now announced that he had run out of potatoes. A simple calculation showed that if this was true the Sherpas had been eating 5 lb. of potatoes per head per day on top of their other food—which was enough to provide a more than robust meal by itself. One never wins these arguments. All one's protestations are met with a simple shrug of the shoulders and the imperturbable, unanswerable and continually repeated assertion: "Sahib, there is no food."

Gerald having decided to go down valley to lake Tau Jhum, John, Bill and I set out to visit the upper basin where Gerald had been the day before. As usual we skirted round the mountain immediately north of the lake, making an ascending traverse, but could find nothing in the basin. With a clear sky the view of Everest was once more superb, so I suggested that we complete the climb up the mountain. This we managed after a hard slog of about one and a half hours, there being no great technical climbing difficulties to overcome. The three of us built a cairn on the summit and this being the first peak I had ever climbed in my life it was named "Ralph's Peak." I did not feel unduly conceited about this, for, although it was roughly the height of Kilimanjaro, it was a pygmy as far as Himalayan peaks go—so small that no Himalayan veteran would have bothered to name it at all. The col connecting my peak with one to the north I named "Col's Col" after my friend Colin McFadyean. In the same spirit George Lowe of the Everest team named a hitherto unnamed mountain to the west of Lho La, Lowe Peak.

We had descended half-way down the mountain when to our astonishment we saw two lines of brand-new tracks coming down from the mountain range which separated us from the Bhote Kosi.

These tracks, after crossing the basin, carried on down to the lake in the general direction of the camp. The descent now became a scrambling run until we could examine the tracks closely. One was so big that at first I mistook it for a bear; the other was rather smaller. It was not long, however, before I was satisfied that they must have been made by a male and female wolf. The male obviously was a huge animal. Returning to the camp we found the Sherpas greatly excited, the animals were indeed a pair of wolves which had crossed the lake at two in the afternoon, that is in broad daylight, and come very close to the camp. Both had nearly white coats. The male was the biggest wolf the Sherpas had ever seen. The female was slighter and had a black patch on her right haunch. After seeing the huts occupied the couple had gone on down valley towards Tau Jhum where Gerald also saw the tracks but did not see the animals. These two wolves were, however, to become only too familiar to us, their appearance generally coinciding with the slaughter of further sheep and yaks. Finally we captured the she-wolf's two cubs and brought them back to England where they were presented to the London Zoo.

That night we occupied ourselves trying to puzzle out where the wolves had come from in the western range. Throughout the whole of the length visible from Dudh Pokhari the ridge seemed to be utterly unclimbable. But somehow the wolves must have crossed from the Bhote Kosi or they must have a lair right against the final cliff. We now had clear tracks to work on and we determined to try and solve the riddle the next day for it was not impossible that the wolves would show us the way to the Yeti.

John, Bill and I set off early in the morning to reach the upper basin by the now familiar route. The wolf tracks had descended directly from the west to the basin down a steep slope of scree possibly 500 feet high. We had not tackled the scree before for it had not seemed to lead anywhere. Beneath the snow it also appeared to be composed of rotten rock and it had seemed quite likely that the whole of it might avalanche once we were on it. After some consideration John decided it was an acceptable risk and we started the long climb upwards, occasionally slipping and floundering on the snow and shale but in no great danger. At the top of the scree there is a broad gently rising snow-field formed by a glacier flowing down from a peak to the south. To avoid crevasse dangers we kept to the edge of the glacier climbing along a rock ridge on the northern side, which was roughly the route that the wolves had followed. After an

hour's slow climb we rounded an outcrop on the ridge to find ourselves beside an immense ice-cave from the upper lip of which depended icicles, giving it the appearance of the gaping mouth of a giant shark. From this point the wolves had cut directly across the glacier to the west, which showed that they had come from the final line of cliffs which separated us from the Bhote Kosi. From where we were, possibly half a mile from the cliffs, there still appeared to be no pass leading over to the west. John did not like the idea of following the wolves across the glacier and we therefore worked round to the north keeping to the rocks and stones at its edge. Following the curve of the glacier our direction gradually changed from north to west and then to the south until we once more picked up the wolves' tracks at the point where the animals had stepped on to the glacier from the final ridge. This ridge began with a steep scree slope which brought us to rock. It was not until we were among the rocks, which we now found were not nearly as difficult as we had imagined from a distance, that we found the key to the ridge. At its foot there is a narrow path which zigzags first south then north then south again, finally bringing one out on top of the divide between the Dudh Kosi and the Bhote Kosi. Because of the zigzags the pass is quite impossible to detect when one stands directly opposite it. The three of us now stood on the summit of the western ridge about 19,000 feet above sea-level looking down into the Bhote Kosi valley. There was no doubt that the pass to which the wolves had led us—and which struck us as the typical cunningly-hidden physical feature beloved by the writers of cowboy and rustler stories—could be equally easily crossed from the Bhote Kosi. We named it Changu La—the Wolf Pass. It would have been easily negotiable by a Yeti. There seems no doubt whatever that it was used by Gerald's and my Yeti No. 2. This then was another point which had to be watched if we hoped to bottle up the Yeti in the Dudh Kosi valley.

We spent some time on the rocks at the top of the pass eating lunch and once more admiring the superb views. It was brilliantly sunny, which again was to give me acute glacier burn, and for once Everest was the only mountain visible throughout the entire day. On the descent, which became almost unbearably warm on the glacier, we stopped to make lemonade from the stream which had caused the giant ice-cave. By the time I reached the lake I was so tired by our exertions that I decided to walk along the ice rather than along the switchback path which runs beside it. This is not a wise thing to do. In such places boulders are continually rolling down the mountain-

side on to the ice. Their weight in time causes them to melt through the ice, leaving thinly coated patches where they have been resting. These cannot be detected when the whole is covered with snow. I fell in three times. Owing to the glacier burn I spent another wretched night listening for hours to the rustling of voles as they scurried round the stores. Nothing would scare them away and when I would suddenly flash my torch on them they would scamper right up to the bulb to see what all the fuss was about. Because of the painful condition of my face I decided to spend the next day in the hut. Another runner from Katmandu was due and he arrived in the afternoon. There was more encouraging news concerning the interest shown at home in our adventures, but depressing news concerning the hairs from the Pangboche scalp which we had sent home to Professor Wood Jones for analysis. The following report had been printed in the *Daily Mail* on 19th March:

“The *Daily Mail* has submitted to scientific examination photographs and specimens of hairs from the so-called Yeti scalp in Pangboche monastery, visited by the *Daily Mail* Himalayan Expedition during February.

“A detailed description of the ‘scalp’ with some hairs taken from it were flown back to this country and with photographs from the material submitted for examination.

“The inquiry was conducted by Professor F. Wood Jones, D.Sc., an expert in human and comparative anatomy.

“The results of his researches, which included the taking of microphotographs of the hairs and comparing them with hairs from animals such as the bear and orang-outang, are inconclusive.

“He is of the opinion that the evidence of the hairs and the photographs indicate that it is not, in fact, a scalp of any type. The reason for this is that although certain animals have a ridge of hair beginning at the top of the head and extending between the shoulders to the back, he does not believe that any animal has a ridge such as shown in photographs of the Pangboche relic running from the base of the forehead across the top of the head and ending at the back of the neck.

“The hairs which were examined were black or dark brown in colour when seen by dull light, and a foxy-red in sunlight. None of these had been dyed and they were probably exceedingly old; (Mr. Charles Stonor, of the *Daily Mail* Expedition, in his report

appearing in the *Daily Mail* of 3rd March estimated the age of the so-called scalp at around 350 years).

“These hairs were bleached, cut into sections and compared microscopically with those of an orang-outang and black bear. Professor Wood Jones is unable to suggest from what animal the Pangboche hairs were taken. He is, however, convinced they are not the hairs of an anthropoid ape nor of a bear. He suggests they may have come from the hair of a coarse-haired hooved animal, but not from its head. They may have come from its shoulder.”

An additional enquiry by the *Daily Mail* had been answered with the suggestion that the “coarse-haired, hooved animal” referred to in the last paragraph of the report might possibly be a yak.

Charles Stonor, who had been down at the Base Camp when the runner came through, had received a duplicate copy of the report and had sent his comments on it to me. He wrote:

“There are one or two points on the identification of the Pangboche scalp as formed out of the dorsal skin of an unknown animal.

“I do not think it can possibly be made from a yak skin. The foxy-red and black colour is quite different from that of a yak: also the stiff bristles do not tally. The Sherpas are quite emphatic that no such yak has ever been heard of.

“It is more like a pig (including the thickness of the hide): pigs are not kept in this area, but are kept in parts of Tibet, and there would be no difficulty in getting a skin. But where are pigs to be found with foxy-red bristles?

“Local opinion is adamant that it is from a Yeti. Assuming the beast to exist might not the scalp be fashioned from the shoulder and dorsal skin of a Yeti? In this connection all who claim first-hand knowledge of the Yeti and to have seen it near to, affirm that it has stiff, bristly hair of a reddish and black colour. In every instance this has been volunteered and in no case has a Sherpa been asked ‘did the Yeti you saw have bristles?’ or any such leading question. There is also the striking account, already recorded, of the party of people who found, alongside man-like tracks in the snow, a tuft of these bristles where the creature had caught its foot in a cleft rock. There is no question of collusion among Sherpas to tell any identical story. I have several times had accounts from men who, up to the time I met them, did not know what we were in the country for.

The same account has also been given by Tibetans just arrived from across the border.

“It is important to realise that the scalp is not an object of wonder in the Sherpa country. Except for the inhabitants of the nearby villages, it is doubtful if many people have seen it and the expedition has met quite a proportion of the population who did not know of its existence. As already recorded, it is associated with a reincarnated Lama of the Pangboche area. It is worn once a year at a summer festival linked with the founder. The villagers refuse absolutely to part with it under any conditions, even on loan. They maintain that it has been in its present home for so many generations and is linked with a particularly sacred place so that to remove it would be most unlucky and would invite reprisals from the founder and the spirits. They have made it quite clear that it has no monetary value at all.

“There can, in view of its small importance, hardly be any question of the Yeti growing up around the ‘scalp’ and being based on it. As noted, Tibetans give precisely the same account, although they have never even heard of Pangboche.

“I cannot agree that the Sherpas will always tell a white man what he wants to know. They are people of high intelligence, semi-civilised, and do not look on us as superior or different beings. Indeed, when the expedition arrived, we had not the slightest idea ourselves of what we wanted to know. The entire story has been built up from information volunteered by individual Sherpas over three months: leading questions have been most carefully excluded in our enquiries. And yet the accounts given of the Yeti tally remarkably in all essentials, although our informants have seen or heard it in widely different parts of the mountains, under very varying circumstances, and at intervals of time varying from two to twelve years.

“Nobody has anything to gain by ‘leading us up the garden path’: they are perfectly accurate about the other beasts of their country. I have more than once told Sherpas that most people outside themselves do not believe in the Yeti. The reply has simply been ‘why should we invent such an animal?’ Let us remember apropos of this that the Yeti plays virtually no part in the lives of the Sherpas: and for a people to invent an animal in the existing circumstances seems almost incredible. When questioning men who claim to have seen one I have always pressed for details on this or that point and have frequently been told ‘I could not see: the Yeti was too far away’ or some such remark. Thus a drawing of what it might look like was

sent up here. It was shown to local Sherpas as being a picture of their Yeti. Far from trying to please us, they at once began pointing out mistakes.

“To return to the scalp. My own view is that it may well be from the skin of a Yeti, made up into the imitation of the head. I do not think it can ever have been a water vessel, as has been suggested. Katmandu is one of the oldest centres of metal work in Asia and there has been trade in metal vessels up through the Sherpa country from time immemorial. Their own water vessels are of wood, of a simple form such as is presumably very ancient. Also, pottery in neighbouring Tibet goes back to prehistoric times.

“Why has the expedition not encountered a Yeti at first-hand? From all accounts it seems to be a vagrant, thin on the ground and ranging over at least ten thousand square miles of very broken, almost inaccessible mountain ranges. If it exists, it would have been almost miraculous to have come to grips with it in a matter of weeks.

“The more we see and get to know the Sherpas, the more difficult does it become to look on their logical account of the Yeti as a fabrication.”

The arrival of the runner now meant that I had to produce another tory before he could be sent back again to Katmandu. This was a problem, because so far this sortie had produced nothing as sensational as the last one Gerald and I had been on together. I woke with a chill next day and spent the greater part of it lying in my sleeping-bag beside the yak-dung fire. It was 1st April, a date which passed unnoticed by our own Sherpas. Nobody enjoys a joke better than a Sherpa. Exactly which European joker it was from past expeditions who explained the significance of “April Fool’s Day” to Tom’s Sherpas I do not know. I learnt later that down at Ghat his party had been served with boiled eggs for breakfast. When they came to crack the eggs they found that the insides had been neatly extricated.

By the next day I had recovered. It was again brilliantly clear and when in desperation I asked John, Bill and Gerald what on earth I could write they suggested unanimously that I should describe the approach of spring. I sent off the following:

“*Dudh Pokhari. 31st March.*

“Our expedition has now been two months in the field—half the time officially allotted to us by the Nepalese Government—and it may be as well to take stock of the situation.

“We have still to sight a Yeti, but all our search parties have sighted tracks which we now know can belong to no other animal. On at least two occasions we and the Yeti have used the same trail within a few hours of each other and, although the difficulties confronting us remain fully as great as we anticipated, we remain fairly optimistic regarding the eventual outcome of our search.

“At least we have confounded the theory that the Yeti cannot exist because no life is supportable at high altitude in winter. In fact, we have found that wild life abounds as high as we have been able to climb—that is, certainly to 20,000 ft.

“Only four days ago John Jackson, Bill Edgar and I reached the summit of a peak over 19,000 ft. high which rises beside the jade-green waters of this lake and we were astonished to find on the very top tracks of both the leopard cat and mouse hare, perfect miniatures respectively of the leopard and the common hare.

“Here at 17,000 ft. foraging wolves have appeared in broad daylight outside the yak-herders’ hut which serves as our advance base and their tracks have led us over a hitherto unsuspected 19,000-ft. pass which connects this valley of the Dudh Kosi with the valley of the Bhote Kosi, the next river to the west.

“At night, within the hut we have been kept awake by voles scurrying over our sleeping-bags on their way to investigate our provisions.

“The mountain slopes just below us have yielded ample evidence of snow leopard, Tibetan fox, wild goat and musk deer and our own little menagerie at Base Camp now contains a black bear cub (not a pet to be recommended if one values peace and quiet in the home), two Siberian mink, one stone marten, a mouse hare and voles; it once included a leopard cat and flying squirrel, now alas, deceased. (I have not mentioned these before as they died on the last stage of their journey to us.)

“All the above animals were taken at 13,000 ft. and over. We admit that the presence of a black bear in winter at such a height has surprised us, but at least the footprints of our cub Benji have enabled us to avoid confusing them with those of the Yeti.

“We are now in the transition period between winter and spring and, although each afternoon regularly brings snow, it is speedily dispelled by the glittering morning sun. The first primulas and gentians are appearing and thousands of feet down the valley the flowering rhododendrons are reported to be superb.

“Wild life of all kinds is stirring and round our lake we have

counted no fewer than seventeen different kinds of birds, varying from the golden eagle to the ruddy sheldrake, from the bar-headed goose to raven, wagtail and wren.

“We have weathered bleak icy winter conditions and will soon no longer lack company, for both American and New Zealand mountaineering parties are reported to be on their way to this area—the New Zealanders headed by Sir Edmund Hillary and George Lowe.

“Herds of yak are now moving up the valley to their spring and early summer grazing grounds and to keep in touch with our quarry we are forced to keep ahead of them. . . .”

A week or so later at a lower altitude Charles Stonor developed the same theme.

“TREKKING THROUGH THE SHERPAS FLORAL WONDERLAND.

“Possibly the bleakest feature of the long-drawn-out winter of the higher Himalayas is its lifelessness: it is by and large not so very much colder than in our own country; but the vast grey and brown snow-capped ranges, the snow blizzards and the freezing fogs which drift down the valleys and often obscure everything for days on end all blend to give a feeling of unending barrenness as if men, beasts, the whole countryside in fact, were gone into hibernation.

“Yaks and sheep live huddled below the stone houses, while their owners spend much time round the fireside employing themselves with odd jobs, spinning and weaving, or go off on trading parties down to lower Nepal.

“But when April comes round everything changes almost in a twinkling; the whole country starts to pulsate with new life in a way more striking and more intense than any other part of the world I can call to mind. The snows melt and recede steadily upwards to their summer limits on the higher peaks, the water comes cascading down to swell the half-frozen, boulder-strewn rivers of the gorges into roaring torrents.

“Much or even most of the Sherpa life is centred round their yaks; and for the graziers life now begins in earnest. Families pack up their few necessities—and for Sherpas the necessities of life are few indeed—cooking-pots, food and blankets, and start the trek up to high villages which are centred on the grazing grounds, usually steep slopes and little plateaux sometimes as high as 17,000 ft., and where the herds can scratch a shifting living.

“In winter these spring and summer villages are utterly deserted and nobody lives above 12,000 ft. or 13,000 ft. But every yak owner has a solidly built stone house in at least one or even two or three summer villages, up to three days on foot from his permanent home, where his family goes as soon as the first sign of spring appears; to live for as long as need be.

“This side of Sherpa life has a great effect in mixing the population—for people from three or four (permanent) villages may own summer homes in the same grazing settlement and thus have completely different sets of neighbours from season to season.

“Early April also sees the start of the potato crop, one of the main Sherpa foods. Their potatoes are grown in little fields hard by the dwelling-houses and are stored away from the frost in deep-dug pits. After a hoeing by the women, the seed potatoes are planted in the fast thawing earth. As is very common among Himalayan peoples, the crop rotation devolves almost entirely on the women.

“The spring brings with it long days of brilliant sunshine, attracting people out from the smoke-ridden gloom of indoors, to sit around in parties, weaving, spinning, drying stored potatoes (first slicing them up) and gossiping.

“On the tracks one meets a steady stream of Tibetans heading for their own country; many of them come to do casual work for the Sherpas in winter, so as to help out the food problem in their own less hospitable climate, and go back over the higher passes for the summer months.

“During the early part of the expedition perhaps the most wearisome aspect of the endless climbing and scrambling over boulder-strewn mountain ranges was the utter monotony of colour; nothing to rest the eye or cheer the heart but grim greys and browns, relieved only by dull-hued evergreen bushes and rock-encrusting lichens, and always with the glaring white of the snows.

“All that is changing fast and soon we shall be living in a fairyland of Alpine flowers. Already many rhododendrons are in full blossom and here, the very centre of the natural home of these wonderful shrubs, they are staggering in their beauty; seen in their natural setting they quite eclipse even the finest botanical or private garden.

“The lower mountain slopes up to about 13,000 ft. are in places studded and splashed with scarlet, pink, purple, cherry-red and crimson and with every day that passes new kinds start to open their flowers.

“Some grow snugly on the hillside as tall bushes or even of tree

size, others in dense 'stands' covering hundreds of square yards and all happily mixed up, species intertwined with species to add to the galaxy of colour effects.

"The first to flower is as lovely as any, with compact flowers of ruby-scarlet, set off to perfection by stiff leaves of dark emerald green, and we have seen it in sun-speckled glades among silver birch forest or contrasting with the sombre colour of spruce firs.

"Already the expedition has found some twelve species in flower and as others come out in the weeks ahead we may even be lucky enough to find something unknown to botanists. (Nearly thirty species were finally collected.)

"Equally spectacular are the sheets of mauve primulas which are now at their best, covering nearly every square yard of the damper yak pastures. The same mauve *Primula denticulata* that every rock gardener in Britain grows in little clumps, but quite transformed when seen by the thousand.

"On one very memorable day I camped in a yak-grazing pasture, the open space sheeted with mauve and surrounded on all sides by a blaze of no fewer than eight different species of rhododendrons, with flowers of as many colours.

"But the two most charming flowers I have seen have been, first a wonderful shell-pink viburnum (guelder rose), growing as a small tree with rounded balls of flowers literally smothering it; and, secondly, a bush of fragrant mauve daphne, half-hidden in the shade of a birch forest. If only we can get some of these back for our own gardens.

"All manner of unexpected birds are starting to find their way up from the lower hills and even the plains of India now that warmer weather is hatching out insects. Every day the expedition watches house martins and swifts circling over the camp and often woodcock come fluttering over just at dusk. We have been surprised to find numbers of birds migrating right over the highest Himalayas from India into their breeding-grounds in Tibet; kites, geese, sheldrake, cranes, all pass over in their spring flight.

"A most unexpected sight, and one to remember for many years to come, was of a little flock of exotic sunbirds, yellow and shining blue—the most tropical and fragile-looking creatures one could imagine, but sipping happily at rhododendron blooms far up near the snow-line."

CHAPTER XI

TO THE NANGPA LA (II)

FOR us the approach of spring and the recession of the snows as the weather grew warmer could mean only one thing, we would have to work at higher altitudes, and this meant in its turn that we would have to lengthen all our approach marches. This had little effect on our present sortie for we were in any case heading north. On the afternoon of 2nd April we had moved up from Dudh Pokhari to occupy our old site at Lake Tanak. It was decided that Gerald should remain here while Bill, John and I would leave the next day for the head of the valley to establish an advance camp at the head of the pass which leads north-west towards the Nangpa La route into Tibet. This was all barren country which provided very little fuel at all and it was essential that each of us carry as much as possible to save the porter capacity. Next morning Ang Tschering refused to carry a load and Ang Dawa was appointed Sirdar in his place. Ang Dawa was John's special favourite, and rightly so, for if he survives long enough—he is in his early twenties—he will undoubtedly rank with Tenzing and Ang Tharke as one of the greatest Sherpas of all time. He has had little experience so far with British expeditions, but last year distinguished himself with the Japanese on Manaslu. He is cheerful, efficient, immensely strong and quite fearless in dangerous situations. With him came his brother Ang Temba, a pleasant youth but inclined to be careless, my own Norbu and, among the coolies, the inseparable Ang Tilay and the "Jungli" Sherpa. To my surprise Narayan insisted on coming too and on carrying his own bedding. It was regrettable that Danu had to be left behind with Gerald. Although we did not realise it when we left Tanak, we were to push on to the Nangpa La. Readers of H. W. Tilman's book *Nepal Himalaya* will remember that it was Danu who related the story that five years ago a close friend of his Lakhpa Tensing had been attacked by a Yeti while crossing the Nangpa La and had been so severely mauled that he subsequently died. Referring to this incident Tilman, quoting Danu, writes, "By running

downhill, which is of course the only way a man can run at these heights, one can usually get away from these creatures as the long hair hanging over their eyes hampers them; but the unfortunate Lakhpa Tensing had apparently tripped and lying half stunned by the fall had become easy prey." Danu had often repeated this story to us and seemed to have an idea of the exact spot where the incident had taken place.

Including the three of us our total party numbered fourteen. Our route again led us up the ablation valley to the left of the Dudh Kosi glacier until we came to Lake Masumba. Here our party divided into three, the more venturesome proceeding straight across the ice, which cracked alarmingly, and the more timorous including myself dividing to detour either to the right or the left. From a point on the far side where we assembled safely we could now see one thousand feet above us our first objective, the rocky col separating the Dudh Kosi valley from the Bhote Kosi, this col being some miles north of the Changu La. Beneath the col was a rather forbidding-looking glacier. The climb now began with a steep section up great brown boulders attractively splashed with scarlet, saffron and lime-green coloured lichens. Boulder-hopping is no man's pleasure particularly when every other one rolls under one's feet, but we made good time until finally the boulders gave place to loose scree. Here we slipped back a foot for every two gained, more often than not scattering stones and rocks on to our companions below.

It was now noticed that Narayan was making heavy going of it and when we reached the glacier and wedged ourselves upwards between it and the sheer right-hand cliff he fared no better. We therefore abandoned all thought of reaching the top of the col that day and hacked ourselves some platforms in the glacier side for our tiny tents. We were still possibly three hundred feet below the col itself, but from my own reactions I should say we were already over 19,000 ft. high. A hurried conference decided us that it would probably be necessary to send Narayan, who had obviously developed into an acute case of altitude sickness, back on the following day and because of this, in spite of grossly overcrowding the tents, we decided to retain as escort two coolies who were originally intended to return that afternoon. That night John, Bill and I crammed ourselves and our sleeping-bags and a rather exuberant kerosene stove into a two-man tent. John volunteered to do the cooking while Bill and I, tied into our sleeping-bags as if into straight jackets, watched in consternation while unruly flames licked hungrily at the flimsy fabric of the

roof of our tent. It was a bitterly cold night and in the morning we found that sheets of ice caused by condensation had formed between our down sleeping-bags and their waterproof covers.

Morning also revealed that Narayan was if anything worse. He was incapable of doing anything but sit on a rock and vomit incessantly. The two Sherpa coolies who had been detailed to escort Narayan back to Tanak stood nearby looking down at him contemptuously. Feeling he might be abandoned and left to find his own way back, Bill Edgar now insisted on accompanying the party, although this meant that it would be at least two days before he could catch up with John and myself. John, who suffers acutely from mountain fever whenever there is a worthwhile prize within his grasp, now argued—rightly so as it proved—that as there was no sign of Tom Stobart's party they must be delayed by a change of plan. He suggested that he and I and the rest of the Sherpas should continue over the col above us, cross down to the Bhote Kosi glacier and push on to the Nangpa La. Gerald was in a position to contact Tom when he crossed over the col. I was not entirely in agreement with this plan, but I found the prospect of a visit to the Nangpa La an exciting one. The Nangpa La pass is 19,050 feet high and allows a trickle of all-the-year-round trade between Tibet and Nepal—our maps claimed inaccurately that it was only open between May and August. It also provides a slender temporal link between the monasteries of Thyangboche from the south and Rongbuk in the north, which are both dedicated to the contemplation of the serene majesty of the Everest massif which lies between them and which is known to the monks as the home of the Mother Goddess of the Winds. Besides traders, the Nangpa La has been visited by possibly half a dozen mountaineers, all of them of the calibre of such men as Edmund Hillary and Eric Shipton.

It was decided that John and I should push on very slowly over the col to give Bill time to overtake us. Narayan was led off sobbing tears of mortification. A heavy burden was now thrown on John, for while Bill Edgar has had considerable climbing experience, I have never claimed to be anything but a novice—and not a very promising one—on snow and ice. Of the 300-foot climb up rotten rock to the knife-edge of the ridge all I remember is thinking to myself, "This must be like climbing a cathedral roof with all the tiles loose." Sitting astride the ridge the novice who has overreached himself tends to ask himself "What on earth am I doing here?" Looking back there was some consolation for the views of Everest were better

than ever, but looking forward and down, the prospect was to say the least depressing. A terrace of loose scree, covered with just enough snow to be a nuisance, sloped down far more steeply than we had imagined it would until after some hundred yards it ended in a precipice which dropped sheer, finally levelling out to meet the Bhote Kosi glacier. We were faced with a traverse of some 300 yards across to a rock spur beyond which the terrain remained a question mark.

Ang Dawa, as sure-footed as a mountain goat, was first sent across and achieved the spur safely. After him went John who, after arriving at the spur, dumped his load and slowly returned, improving the track as he came with his axe. Norbu then started off and, not wishing to be the last across, I followed. I had passed John in mid-traverse and had gingerly progressed about another fifty yards when a sudden shout behind me made me clutch at a rather loose rock. When I had summoned sufficient courage to turn round—a heavy rucksack on one's back does not aid balance—I saw that one of the coolies had slipped off the track and, with his 60-lb. load on his back, was hanging literally by his fingernails about twenty feet below it. Luckily John, with his customary knack of being in the right place at the right time, was near him and I watched him inch himself down, grip the man by his pigtail and haul him back on to the track. This incident vastly amused the Sherpas as had all similar occurrences and they hooted with laughter, but I confess that when I reached the safety of the first spur I was perspiring freely. Beyond this spur the sight was again unencouraging. True, the snow on the next slope was deeper than it had been on the other but the whole curved like a bent funnel left-handed, down and out of sight behind a formidable rock "gendarme." There was thus no knowing what lay below. The first section of 120 feet, the exact length of the rope we had with us, was extremely steep. The slope then eased allowing another traverse to a second spur. Ang Dawa, again the pioneer, was first lowered to the rope's end and then unconcernedly flogged out the traverse. After him down the rope went his brother Ang Temba cutting steps with his ice-axe as he went. Because one is constantly off balance, cutting steps downwards is one of the most difficult and tiring exercises in mountaineering. This may explain what happened next. Ang Temba had reached the end of his icy staircase, was half-way across the traverse and was about to pass Ang Dawa who was attempting to improve his own trail when he suddenly overbalanced and slid off the track. Ang Dawa made a grab at him, lost his own balance and together the two

of them took off down the slope with ever-increasing momentum and disappeared round the bend and out of sight. The emotions which John and I felt, helpless at the top of the rope as we saw the two brothers locked in each other's arms heading downwards as if on a bobsleigh to what we thought must be certain death, were indescribable. Words cannot also describe our relief when we again heard Norbu, who had followed Ang Temba down the rope and was also on the traverse, laughing heartily. The speed which the brothers had achieved on the descent had become such that they had swung wide at the bend, and shot along the very edge of the cliff and had come safely to rest on a patch of scree at the side of the second rock spur. True Ang Temba had lost his load, but as this was composed of folded tents it was enabled to bounce on undamaged until it finally came to rest beside the glacier. Neither Ang Dawa nor Ang Temba appeared the least the worse for this adventure, in fact they laughed loudest of all. But the party which finally assembled at the second spur contained some unnerved members—the locally recruited coolies who, unlike our booted Sherpas, were climbing in Tibetan footgear with smooth yak-hide soles. Happily the descent now before us, although steep enough, had no cliff at its foot and, although the rope was again produced for those who wished it, most of the party preferred to make their own way down. Some of these descents were certainly unorthodox—like that of our friend “Jungli” Gyalgen. Gyalgen's progress can only be described as a series of dashes and dots; the dashes where he slid wildly downwards, sometimes on one foot, and the dots where he sat down abruptly. Recovery from these sitting positions was invariably a lengthy business preceded by mopping of the brow with the pigtail and bouts of increasingly exasperated prayer. The total descent, which an unencumbered mountaineer could probably make in half an hour, took us with our laden coolies nearly five hours. Because of the exertions and excitements we decided to go no further that day and camped for the night beside the eastern fork of the Bhote Kosi glacier. We were still two full days' march from what had now become our main target, the summit of the Nangpa La, where we hoped to find more traces of our next Yeti.

To reach the Nangpa La John and I had now to cross the glacier beside which we were camped, climb the mountain beyond—a modest turf-covered alp possibly 17,000 feet high—and descend to the main branch of the same glacier which lay on the far side. When we started off next morning I had previously had no experience of

such glaciers. Technically they are called "stony road glaciers" and I can now vouch for it that they provide the world's worst foot-going. The ice beneath them may be 200 or more feet deep, but the surface is covered with shattered boulders and loose shale so that there is seldom one firm foothold in a hundred steps. The whole is pitted with contiguous craters some 100 feet deep and on this glacier, as on the Dudh Kosi glacier, the air is filled with the roar and clatter of falling debris as ice walls collapse and the sides of the craters cave in and fall on to the ice below. For clumsy people like myself every new twenty yards as one scrambles along the ridges between the craters presents vivid possibilities of disaster.

To cross this branch of the glacier, which cannot be more than three-quarters of a mile wide, took us well over an hour and we were resting in the warm sun on the turf slope on the far side and looking back along our route when we were astonished at the sight of two tiny figures making their way down from the col which we had negotiated the day before. The figures proved to be Bill and his Sherpa Nim Tenzing who, having made a pre-dawn start from Tanak, were now trying to catch up with us. Having had no warning of the severity of the descent they had no rope with them but to our relief they reached the foot of the dangerous section safely. We now fired off Verey lights to show our position and soon after midday our party was once more reunited.

The mountain above us now proved easy going and by late afternoon we were gazing down into a deep gorge where runs the lower section of the Nepal-Tibet trade route, which must surely be one of the most romantic in the world. That night as we camped beside the track at a spot dignified on our map by the name "Lunak," but in reality no more than two roofless stone cottages, we were able to replenish our dwindling supplies of matches and kerosene from itinerant traders. The next day's march was airily dismissed by the tireless Ang Dawa as a mere matter of four hours and would, he said, bring us to a spot named Jasumba just below the Nangpa La icefall. In fact it took me nearly nine hours and by the end of it I could at least claim to be an expert on stony road glaciers. The track began by skirting beneath a great cliff of black rock, where we spent some minutes vainly trying to catch some mouse hares, then, for prudence sake, as the two sides of the valley converged in upon us and threatened to bombard us with blocks of ice as big as houses which were depending from hanging glaciers on either side, it took to the dead centre of the glacier itself. It was not long before I was

floundering along well in the rear of the party. All vegetation had now ceased and we were in an icy world whose features became ever more intimidating the nearer we approached our goal. The pinnacles of the glacier, which lower down had been probably two feet high, now towered fifty or more feet above us varying in colour from deep blue to pale green. A good deal of the way I was in mortal fear of slipping and impaling myself on foot-high spikes of ice which rose sharp as stilettos from the ground. Once I fell and slashed my hand open with my ice-axe. It was with relief that I finally came upon our camp perched on a small roughly-hewn platform immediately beneath the main ice-fall. Here in mid-glacier we were safe enough but it was a disturbed night, for avalanches roared down round us like express trains, while occasionally there would be a report like a cannon shot as two immense ice-blocks in the fall itself broke apart.

Next morning, as we tried to warm our fingers round our steaming mugs of tea, Ang Dawa allowed us two hours to make the pass, adding on second thoughts "three for the tall Sahib" as he nodded in my direction. As if to prove the dubious reliability of Sherpas in these matters we achieved the ascent in little more than 100 minutes. Leaving the Sherpas to pack up the camp we followed the trail, now only faintly discernible, up a scree slope, hard under the right-hand cliff, a section safe enough at this time of year, but probably earning the name of "avalanche corner" in late summer, when it must be a death-trap for travellers. The path then threaded its way upwards among seracs and crevasses of the ice-fall itself. Ice-caves teathed with icicles were common here, again reminding us unpleasantly of gaping sharks. Finally, after passing over "boiler plates" of pale blue ice, we emerged on an immense undulating snow-field. That yak-herds drive their beasts over this route, as they frequently do, continued to astonish us. Animals are certainly lost, but not many.

Once on the snow-field we realised that the pass was ours. All that now separated us was a long, slow rhythmic plod in line ahead over the snow. It is true we were nearing 19,000 feet, but the three of us were still fresh and going well within ourselves; 20,000-foot peaks on either side of the snow-field which had looked so utterly unattainable from a distance now appeared reduced to manageable proportions even for myself. Gradually the horizons fell away before us, until suddenly and unexpectedly we were treated to a scene of quite extraordinary beauty. We had imagined that the top of the pass would bring us merely another mountain view, of which, superb

though they are, we were beginning to feel we had had our fair share. Instead it dawned upon us that we had walked right through the Himalayas. Far beneath us stretched an immense vista of Tibet—cone-shaped blue hills, green valleys and fair rolling tableland, a sight so alluring to our snow-tired eyes that I believe all three of us felt an upsurge of temptation to enter it. But rumours of Chinese Communist troops deterred us. The Yellow Peril may seem remote in Berkeley Square but it is not on the Nangpa La.

The summit of the pass was marked by two curved sticks bearing prayer flags tied there by pious travellers. Beside these tattered emblems a Tibetan trading family of four generations had paused for breakfast. From the toddlers to a wrinkled crone this family proved amiability itself, if one excused the incessant demand for sweets and cigarettes. Their lives are spent in to-and-fro passage of the pass, their stock-in-trade this time as they journeyed homeward being matches and army felt hats originally meant for the Gurkha regiments. The ease with which even the most feeble of this party encountered the difficulties and even seemed to thrive on the thin air rather shamed our own efforts. But apart from the Tibetan family the only sign of life we saw on the Nangpa La was two ravens fussily strutting over the snow. An interesting sidelight on the distortion of perspective at high altitudes is the fact that when I first saw these two birds from a distance I quite thought that they were two animals each about six feet high. Possibly a Yeti watched us from the surrounding rocks as we made our own one-mile-an-hour progress over the snow-field. If so, he must have felt contemptuous of our speed and supremely confident of his ability to evade us. Certainly we never saw him.

We were back in Jasumba by midday, after one breath-catching incident when I slipped and nearly fell into a crevasse. We stopped by the stream near Jasumba to brew lemonade. A painful slog over the glacier now brought us back to the black rock cliff, where Nim Tenzing, who had come down with the other Sherpas and pitched camp at the site which we had used before, welcomed us with mugs of hot tea.

In the camp we found a runner from Base with letters from Charles, Gerald and Tom. Charles informed us that he had given up all hopes of acquiring the Pangboche scalp on loan. He also told us of the death of Benji the bear cub. Gerald's news was rather disconcerting. He had fallen asleep over a book in his tiny tent with all the openings closed. His hurricane lamp had been left burning and in consequence he was suffering from carbon-monoxide

poisoning. The most interesting news came from Tom. To our immense surprise he had come across evidence of the Yeti in a totally unexpected place. This was near Ghat in the lower Dudh Kosi valley. He sent me this letter:

“Chalanga, 2nd April.

“Dear Ralph, We have been delayed down here due to bad weather—cloudy skies—and the amount of work filming the flowers. We also have a man out after pandas and if he gets one or two we shall want to complete a sequence here. We are already behind schedule. But we were due to leave tomorrow.

“However tonight a report has come in that a Yeti was heard calling all night (two days ago) at the yak-hut above. Both our informant and his brother heard it very close and were very frightened. The man (whom I did not meet) came to our Sherpas and said ‘Have the Sahibs found a Yeti yet?’ The Sherpas said ‘No.’ ‘Well,’ said the man, ‘they should look up above here as the Yeti have moved down.’

“At least I think I should go up to get the story from this man’s brother as it would seem worth looking into after such a recent hearing. So we are changing plans and going up from here which means we probably won’t meet you as arranged. Will send a note up if any exciting sequel or story.

“One interesting point is that the Yeti was heard chattering all night which seems to bear out my belief that the Yeti is mainly nocturnal.

“All fit. The flowers are just past their best, but still very beautiful.

“Bad news from Charles—and bad news that the bear died. Although Charles has failed over the scalp I think we ought to make one more try, and I suggest sending Da Temba when we get back. He knows the landowner of Phorche and Pangboche who lives in Khumjung, and thinks that with his help he could do the trick. It would be worth a try and I have told Da Temba that if he succeeds he will get a handsome present. So tomorrow we go after the Yeti again.—Tom.

“P.S. We are a day’s journey below Ghat—at the camp between there and Caraciola. The Yeti is on the same slope as the reputed Mongo sighting.”

Tom later sent me a full report of his party’s adventures:

“For the last few days the photographic team consisting of myself, Jeeves and Lagus, have pulled out of the main Yeti-hunt in the Dudh Kosi to descend into the lower Dudh Kosi valley in order to film the rhododendron and magnolia trees in full flower. This is a stupendous sight and must be one of the most wonderful floral displays to be seen anywhere in the world.

“The day before yesterday we received news of a Yeti in the hills above here and, having questioned a Sherpa called Ang Nuri, decided to go up and investigate. The slopes above are very steep indeed, and it may be that this is better ground than the flatter areas of the Dudh Kosi, since the Yeti will be forced to pass us if he traverses these slopes.

“Ang Nuri is a forest Sherpa whose main village is in very wooded country. He is used to catching Red Pandas to supplement his income and is much more of a hunter than the Sherpas of Namche and above. He thinks he knows the habits of the local Yeti and is reputed on one occasion to have tried to trap one.

“A year ago in April he was at the camp from which I write. At about 6 p.m. it was just getting dark, cold and snowing—he was just bedding down his 33 yaks for the night, when he heard a Yeti calling from some rocks about 200 yards from the hut.

“He was frightened and barricaded himself into the hut, and lit a large fire. The Yeti went on calling for some time and then its cries got fainter as it went over the ridge above. Next morning there were the usual tracks in the vicinity.

“Last October Ang Nuri says he found some Yeti hairs under a rock. It was, he says, a place where the Yeti had spent the night. The hair was four inches long and very stiff. The hair was eagerly seized by all and sundry for good luck and he has none left, but hopes to recover some for us.

“Three months ago Ang Nuri states he was coming over the ridge from Caraciola (the first camp on the Dudh Kosi on the way in) to a yak-hut at Sham-Teh when he heard a Yeti calling and looking up saw one moving on the snow. He says it looked like a small man. When asked how he knew it was not a man, he said that only he and his brother go up there at that time of year, i.e. January.

“Ang Nuri says he has often seen Yeti tracks and points out what he considers its ‘beat.’ This is between two peaks which lie to either side of the Dudh Kosi tributary gorge which is now below us.

“Three days ago ten women and a boy were in the yak-hut of



A view north looking up the glacier leading to the Nangpa La (19,000 feet)

Nearing the summit of the Nangpa La. This route from Nepal into Tibet is frequently used by laden yaks.





Two short-tailed voles. This very tame little animal commonly inhabits yak-herds' huts up to heights of *circa* 16,000 feet.



Rhododendrons

Sukpa-Karka—the other end of the Yeti's 'beat'—and were singing around their yak-dung fire after their evening meal. In a pause between songs they heard a Yeti calling outside, were terrified and shut the door, making up the fire to a big blaze. The Yeti went on calling until the early hours and they sat huddled together without daring to sleep.

"My party set off in considerable excitement under the guidance of Ang Nuri, a very quiet young man who inspired confidence. He was obviously very familiar with the animals in his area.

"Ang Nuri is the fastest man on a hillside I have ever seen. Whilst we were grinding up the slope out of the trees under a very hot sun he was moving upwards as easily as if it were a lunch-time stroll in the park. Covered with sweat we arrived at a yak-hut just above the tree-line where we met some girls who had heard the Yeti. They all told us the same story and imitated the Yeti call in the way we have now come to regard as commonplace. We camped here and were treated to the sight of a yak overbalancing and falling over and over down the hillside, none the worse—like a small boy on the downs.

"Next morning we started off traversing diagonally upwards across very steep ground. It was obvious, as Ang Nuri said, that in crossing the rock ridge the Yeti would be forced frequently on to the yak path which often followed the only line of weakness in country which would otherwise involve severe rock traverses.

"At one point we were shown a mark on the rock where a few weeks before our guide had found what he said was a Yeti hair. Unfortunately this was lost but the mark on the rock seems to indicate that this was not a story he had made up for our benefit. At length we reached a less broken grassy entrant in the valley side where there were several yak-huts. I asked Ang Nuri if this was the hut where the Yeti had been heard. He said 'No' and pointed right to the other side of the horseshoe of peaks. My reaction was to swear loudly at having been led to the wrong place, but Ang Nuri pointed out that the Yeti had certainly left its previous locality and was probably heading in our direction. He had seen the tracks frequently and believed that the Yeti had a beat on which our yak-huts were located. I promptly sent three Sherpas down into the gorge to make a three-day sweep in the hope that they would drive the Yeti towards us. Next day a reconnaissance of the slopes above us failed to disclose any Yeti tracks and so we had hopes it would enter our area. I took my sleeping-bag and a tin of fish about one hour's journey above the camp and, having organised a level place in a

concealed spot, sent the others down and prepared for a night in the open. Of course it snowed but, as it was also freezing I was able to spend a reasonably comfortable night, waking up in the morning under an icy mound of powder snow.

“I say I spent a comfortable night but actually I woke at every sound and wondered what in fact the Yeti would do if it stumbled over a sleeping man, or how many heart attacks I should have if I woke up to find a Yeti standing looking down at me.

“Very early I got up and walked to the col above. Just beyond my sleeping hollow I came on some fresh snow-leopard tracks. The animal had obviously been driven down by the night snow and had passed quite close to where I had lain without detecting me as the tracks went straight down. These were the first new snow-leopard tracks I had seen and I studied them with interest. I think that very old snow-leopard tracks could easily be confused with Yeti tracks, but we are all getting wise in the lore of tracks in snow which are such an important factor in Yeti hunting. From the col I was rewarded by a magnificent view of Cho Oyu and Gyachung Kang where even at that moment Izzard and Jackson were making their reconnaissance. The following day the Sherpas arrived having completed the horseshoe and reported no sign of Yeti tracks. So the Yeti had gone the other way. Stanley Jeeves and I went up to another col looking over to the east where the Yeti must have gone, but saw no signs—only another world of peaks and gorges spreading away towards Sikkim.

“Since we had run out of food we called up the Sherpas and passed over a col to the north. Very steep snow-slopes led down and we slid down these on our behinds far outpacing the coolies and nearly losing our too adventurous camera Sherpa Phoo Dorje where one gully suddenly steepened to ice. When dark fell our coolies were still not in sight and we spent an anxious time till we contacted them all safe and well but complaining bitterly of the bad path down which the Sahibs had led them.”

Another piece of news the runner brought us was that Pasang Phutar, one of the best of the locally recruited Sherpas, was ill at Namche Bazar, and was asking for Bill Edgar. Bill therefore decided that next morning he would walk straight down the Bhote Kosi valley, in which case he would be likely to reach the Sherpa capital in two days' march. John was anxious to tackle the Changu La—the wolf pass—which he and Bill and I had discovered above Dudh Pokhari, from the Bhote Kosi side. I had had enough of climbing

for the present. I had despatches to write and films to be sent off and I therefore decided to accompany Bill.

We made very fast time down the valley from Lunak and were soon clear of the glacier and walking downward over springy turf bearing brown patches of heath which gave the valley much the appearance of a Scottish moor. We stopped beside a small lake at Chule, where John, Ang Dawa, Ang Temba and Ang Tilay branched off towards the Changu La. Two days later when I arrived back at the Base Camp I received a note from John. After a long climb he had spent the night at a group of yak-huts known as Langden. He left Langden at 7.20 next morning—a late start brought about by what he described as ‘an unusual diversion.’ In his note he continued, ‘We were ready to leave at about 6.30 a.m. when a wolf attacked a yak in the field next to us. The yak was bitten badly in the hind leg but of course our arrival scared the wolf away. The wolf was a creamy colour and very big. We chased the wolf off in the direction of Hanjo (on the way to Changu La) and we then waited for a yak-herd who came with us quite a long way towards the Changu La. He had a basket with him and was going to search for cubs, as the locals think that one of the she-wolves is about to have cubs or has already had them. Everyone here seems to think there is only one pair of wolves. Just below the Changu La on the Bhote Kosi side there are some boiler plates of ice which go well when one has boots and an ice-axe, but are hopeless for coolies with yak-hide soles. It is a good thing that all of them did not come over as a slip would have been disastrous.’ John reached the top of the Changu La at about 1 p.m. and arrived at the Dudh Pokhari camp little more than an hour later. He pushed on up to Tanak where he found Gerald much recovered from his poisoning. It is however an unfortunate fact that Gerald was subsequently never able to throw off the effects of the poisoning completely. He found that any height above 16,000 feet exhausted him to the point of collapse.

After we had parted from John at Chule, Bill and I continued on down valley. We crossed the bridge to the right bank and camped for the night at Tarangan. We were off at 9 o’clock the next morning making good progress, but finding the lower altitudes almost oppressively hot. We passed Lang Moche and then Thame, a charming village surrounded by firs and set in a depression on the mountain-side. Thame is the birthplace of Tenzing Norkey’s parents. Preparations were being made in the village for a wedding and lamas in yellow robes were busy on the roof-tops putting up flags. Having

left Thame we overtook footprints made by European type boots going in our direction and deduced rightly that they had been made by Charles Stonor and Gyalgen I. In this delightful valley rimmed by cliffs of ice, spring was well advanced and we walked across a carpet of mauve primulas studded with purple and pale blue dwarf irises. The rhododendron bushes and trees were a blaze of blossom and here for the first time I saw the full flowering pink viburnum which had so delighted Charles. I was sitting resting beside a roaring river greatly swollen by melted snow when a very small boy guiding a very large yak stopped in front of me. I offered him a piece of chocolate but he refused to take it until I had also accepted half a very dirty boiled potato which he produced solemnly from his homespun trousers. The sun was fierce and we were very tired by the time we reached Namche Bazar. Here we found that Pasang Phutar had recovered and returned to Base Camp, but his pleasant wife insisted that we rest in the house and refresh ourselves with *chang*. Mukherjee, the Indian Government Agent, now arrived and took us back to his headquarters where more *chang* and *rakshi* was provided. The time was passing very pleasantly when suddenly a very scared-looking Sherpa entered the room. He talked in low tones to Mukherjee whose face turned very grave. The news was that smallpox was suspected in a family who lived in a house about 100 yards up the hill. We had been dreading that this might happen ever since we left Katmandu. All our own Sherpas used Namche Bazar very frequently. Very few of them had been vaccinated and these some years before and it might well become impossible to keep the disease out of the Base Camp.

Bill and I accompanied by Mukherjee as interpreter now set off for the house. We found it belonged to a man we had often employed as porter. He was one of the unsophisticated Sherpas who still wore the pigtail, a gentle unassuming man who had always served us well. In the dimly-lit first-floor common-room his wife was sitting crying by the window nursing an infant, with another child, possibly four years old, standing beside her. It was the two children who were affected. Bill took a long time over his diagnosis but could only confirm that both were smallpox cases. In communities like Namche Bazar there is a hard-and-fast rule which meets this emergency—banishment from the village until the sufferers either die or are cured. This family had already been told by the headman that they must leave the village within two hours. The rule may seem harsh but it must be remembered that each family has at least two, possibly

three houses in the district at different altitudes in the surrounding countryside which have been built beside the patches of grazing which have been allocated to them for their yaks. Thus some primitive form of isolation can be achieved. Provided one member of the family can remain free from disease and thus able to tend the sick there is a chance that some may survive. If all members go sick then the whole family is inevitably doomed to die in miserable loneliness. In this particular case one of the children died and the other probably owes its life to the drugs which Bill was able to provide.

Both Bill and I were greatly depressed by the present development. We were not heartened by the reflection that the cause of the outbreak was the money which we had paid to the head of the family in return for his carrying services. With this money the family had been able to take a holiday and they had gone far down the valley to visit relations. There they had contracted the disease.

Bill and I were also very weary and we still had a march of over two hours back to the Base Camp. I therefore suggested we should hire another coolie to carry our packs. No one in Namche Bazar thought it in the least incongruous when a very small boy who cannot have been more than 7 years of age was produced as the 'coolie.' This youngster manfully shouldered both our rucksacks and trotted off up the track with Bill and I, both of us six-footers, and therefore feeling rather foolish following behind. We were, however, able to give the small boy a treat which he is not likely to forget. To his delight when we reached a point high up on the cliffs from which the Base Camp far below was visible we let off a number of Verey lights to announce our impending arrival. This was the first time the youngster had ever seen anything resembling fireworks.

Both Charles and Bis had arrived back at the Base Camp. Charles had been busy collecting rhododendron specimens and Bis's collection of birds now numbered over fifty. News from the menagerie was not so good. As well as the unfortunate Benji, two mink were dead, although another one had been captured. There were also two more voles.

CHAPTER XII

FURTHER EVIDENCE; A NEW SCALP; A BAD FRIGHT

NEXT morning another runner arrived from Katmandu. Among the mail was the following interesting contribution to the *Statesman* by H.R.H. Prince Peter of Greece who now lives in Kalimpong:

“To my mind there can be no doubt that the so-called Abominable Snowman really exists. Sufficient proof in the form of footmarks, eyewitness accounts, etc., have now come our way to make it certain that some kind of unknown anthropoid animal really inhabits the upper slopes of the giant Himalayas.

“So sure do I feel that there is such a creature in existence that I have myself planned and attempted to seek it out. Unfortunately prevailing conditions in the frontier areas have so far made the authorities concerned with the issuing of passes for the desolate habitat of the unknown beast always withhold permission from me—for reasons best known to themselves.

“Last autumn I planned with Tenzing, the Sherpa hero of Everest, to visit the Zemu glacier, one of the best-known places in Sikkim to find the Snowman. Alas I was informed that north Sikkim is now a ‘closed area’ but presumably not in order to protect the Snowman.

“Tenzing has a young nephew who claims to have seen the elusive animal. It was some ten years ago, he says, near Namche Bazar, his birthplace. He was out in the pasturage early one morning, when he saw a large ape-like creature, standing upright like a man, on its hind legs at the end of a meadow. It was about 5 ft. 10 in. high and had long hair of a brownish colour all over its body, with a large mop of it hanging from its forehead over its eyes. It tossed this back on seeing the young fellow, and made off quickly with an ambling awkward gait. Tenzing said that the female had large pendant breasts ‘like a woman.’

“When I told Tenzing that I should like to make an attempt at finding the Snowman in order to get a picture of it, he protested

violently. 'It is very unlucky to look upon a Snowman,' he said, 'I should not advise you to try.' 'But your nephew here has seen one,' I answered, 'and he seems none the worse for it.'

"'Ah! Yes, but he was unlucky for seven years after,' was the reply to which I could naturally give no answer.

"In spite of this, Tenzing agreed to let me have one of his Sherpas Ngawan Wangpo 'who is not afraid of the *mi-go*,' he told me, to go with me. But the plan never came to anything, because of the obstruction of the authorities.

"*Mi-go* (Wild Man) is the usual Tibetan term by which the Snowman is known round here. Yeti, I understand, is the Sherpa (Nepali) name for it. Charles Stonor in an article in the *Statesman* of January 30th, 1954, says that this word is made up of *yeh* (rocky area) and *teh* (general Tibetan term for animal). *Yeh* may be Sherpa-ka for rocky area (it is not Tibetan), but I have never heard of *teh* with the meaning given to it above. Animals are called *Semcha* (*Sems-ch'has*) in Tibet as far as I know, and *teh* would appear to have quite another significance. It is, I believe, a rather vague colloquial term for 'brown bear' (spelt *dred* and pronounced *T(re)*). This would tally with Stonor's three types of *teh*: The *mih-teh* or 'manbear,' the *dzu-teh*, or 'cattle bear' (which is dangerous to livestock) and the *yeh-teh* or *yeti*, the 'rocky-area bear.'

"Of course when the Tibetans speak of a *mi-go* they do not always mean the real live Abominable Snowman, but also a wild imaginary spirit. Hence a certain amount of confusion as to the actual existence of the fabulous Himalayan beast. High-ranking Lamas and even the ruler of a Himalayan State, have spoken to me about the *mi-go* who come and pester them when in meditation. His Highness has told me how one of them got into his bedroom one night and broke his watch, and how he had to exorcise him with appropriate prayers to keep it away. That obviously is quite another kind of mythical *mi-go*.

"The real species, the flesh-and-blood Snowman is, I think, all the same, both a bear (perhaps a brown Himalayan bear) and a monkey. Tracks of both have been seen and the Swiss Everest Expedition's leader, Professor Wyss-Dunant, found what he considered to be the footmarks of a whole family of plantigrades on the slopes of the world's highest mountain. The monkey, however, seems to be the more prevalent of the two, and it is usually an anthropoid, ape-like creature that witnesses have reported having seen.

"The question how they live at such high altitudes has often been

put. The generally assumed lack of vegetation and animal life in their habitat seems to encourage the idea that they must be supernatural beings living on air.

“From what I myself know of the Himalayas, there is, however, vegetation and animal life up to a very great height. Pine trees and rhododendrons are to be found up to nearly 15,000 feet (at least in Sikkim) and the forests I have been in at that altitude are inhabited by rats and other small rodents. It is quite possible it seems to me for large ape-like creatures to live in these off a vegetable and animal diet and occasionally to wander up higher in search of food, on their way to other such hunting-grounds. If they live, as has been supposed, in caves situated even higher, it seems equally reasonable to think that the tracks they have left in the snow were made when they were on their way either in or out of their lairs. As it is, the excreta of the Snowman, or what is presumed to be his, has been found by Sherpas, and they will tell you that it contains little bits of undigested bone, which tends to point to a meat diet. Chemical analysis of such excreta and the bone it contains—if they could be obtained—would no doubt go quite a way to solving the mystery.

“When I was in Kapup at the foot of the Jelap-la which leads into Tibet in April 1952, I tried to find out what the local inhabitants knew about Snowmen. The place is famous for them and it was here that one was allegedly captured by giving it *chang* (Tibetan beer) to drink, as I have recounted in a letter to the *Statesman* in 1951. There are quite thick forests around Kapup, although they are at an average height of about 14,000 feet, and it would have been exciting I thought to track one of the *mi-go* down, but I could get no information from the people I asked. The bungalow’s *chowkidar*, a Tibetan who had lived there many years, kept answering—‘It is quite safe, don’t be afraid’—each time I enquired from him about the unknown animals. He apparently imagined I was frightened to go into the woods because of the Snowmen and added, ‘They are all much higher up at this season,’ pointing to the crags above him with a knowing gesture.

“Just below Kapup, there is a small lake called the Menmoi tso, and it is associated with a local story about the *mi-go*. A Tibetan woodsman is said to have been out working all day and when he came home at night he found a Snowman in his tent. His wife had disappeared and so he presumed she had been eaten by the wild man. Horrified he sat down near the fire, keeping the latter between himself and his unwelcome visitor. He stretched out his hands to

warm them, while wondering what on earth to do, when he noticed that the *mi-go* did the same. He then stretched out and took up a bowl filled with butter. The Snowman did likewise with the vanished wife's bowl which still stood near the fire. Whereupon the woodsman smeared butter all over himself and the great beast silently followed suit. The story then goes on to tell how, when this operation was completed, the Tibetan pushed the animal into the hearth, where catching fire he rushed shrieking from the tent. He tore about aimlessly outside, seeking relief from the devouring flames, and finally dived headlong into the Menmoi tso where he was drowned. His body is reputedly still at the bottom of the lake.

"On arriving at Gangtok at the end of the 1952 trek, I mentioned this tale in a conversation with some of my acquaintances in the Sikkim capital. They said that they had heard about it, and also of another one which just happened. Two State Policemen were patrolling the frontier area near Kapup, they stated, and as the weather had turned bad they took refuge in a cave. As the sun appeared again, they came out of it and saw a huge Snowman coming up in their direction. They immediately retreated into their cave but to their horror the apparition followed them in. Crouching in a corner, in a twentieth-century version of Ulysses and the Cyclops, they kept as quiet as possible in the hope that they would not be noticed, but the *mi-go* sniffed the air and soon made their presence out. He did not however attack them, merely amusing himself by throwing sticks at them from a distance, which the two policemen did not at all enjoy. Finally, the beast walked out again and the men escaped thanking their lucky star that their unpleasant experience had ended so well.

"There are many other tales circulating in these parts about the Abominable Snowman, some of them fantastic and unbelievable and others quite plausible. The great Lama of the Chumbi Valley, the late Tromo Rimpoche, predecessor of the present teen-aged Incarnation, is said to have often heard the *mi-go's* strange whistling cry when away in the mountains in a meditation shack. And the owner of the Himalayan Hotel in Kalimpong, Mrs. Anne Perry, has herself as a child run away in terror from the woods where she was picking berries in the neighbourhood of Yatung when she heard the same eerie cry coming out of the mist on a foggy day.

"I have no doubt that we are rapidly approaching the day when the Abominable Snowman will be no mystery any longer. The Tibetan Giant Panda was one for a very long time. This is something

similar, and if the attempts at tracking it down are conducted seriously and resolutely I am sure it too will be discovered. I like to consider myself in the race to solve the mystery, and feel that I have a good chance to do so—provided the authorities will relent and let me search! Even if the actual animal is not seen at once, everything pertaining to it should be carefully collected already now. Its hair has been found we are told in a monastery in Nepal, and its excreta should be gathered and submitted to scientific analysis.

“The British *Daily Mail* expedition to Nepal has my best wishes in its quest. May it return triumphant with, if not the beast, at least more concrete evidence of its actual existence. And should it fail, we shall try to take up the challenge.”

In England there had also been the following contribution in lighter vein to *Punch*:

“NOTHING DEFINITE YETI

“There are fascinating footprints in the snows of Katmandu
 On a slightly less than super-human scale:
 There are numerous conjectures on the owner of the shoe
 And the money it has cost the *Daily Mail*.”

To this masterpiece Leonard Curtis, the *Daily Mail* Foreign Editor, had added the comment, “The last line really touched my heartstrings!”

On the evening of the next day, Sunday, 11th April, Tom with Stan and Chunk arrived back from Ghat. They brought with them a red panda in a wicker basket. This proved an unusually ferocious specimen. As a rule red pandas are easily tamed and indeed, Pandit Nehru, the Indian Prime Minister, keeps one as a pet, but none of us were ever able to get on friendly terms with our own panda. He survived the journey back to England, but instead of becoming a house pet in Tom's home he finished up behind bars in the London Zoo.

At the Base Camp one entire day was spent in constructing a roomy cage for the panda, it being hoped that we should be able to collect more of them. Since we had been away there had been considerable improvements to the camp. Nemi had supervised the construction of a complete stone house to accommodate Bis's

specimens and collecting boxes. We now also had a bath house, the bath being a grave-like depression dug in the ground and lined with a tarpaulin. Into this we poured buckets of boiling water. This day also saw the return of John and Gerald with news that the temporary bridge connecting Phorche with Dolle on the other side of the Dudh Kosi had been washed away. They had been forced to make a long high and difficult detour and Gerald, who was still far from recovered, had had to be carried part of the way.

On 12th April returning porters brought us news that the Californian Himalayan Expedition had reached Makalu. It was rumoured that among the American party was a scientist who was also interested in investigating the Yeti. We decided that Charles should go over to the Californian Base Camp, a journey of rather more than a week, to compare notes. Early next morning we received a distinguished visitor, Ang Tharke, who after Tenzing is probably the most famous Sherpa Sirdar of all time. He was now employed by the Americans but had been released by them for a short visit to Namche Bazar. He readily agreed to escort Charles back to Makalu.

It is now necessary to say something about the long-drawn-out and baffling series of negotiations which resulted in our failure to obtain a Yeti scalp on loan for there were to be developments in this respect in the next few days. It will be remembered that Charles Stonor had begun the parleys in January at Pangboche, where it was thought at the time that the only Yeti scalp in existence was held. We had hoped for nothing further than that we might be loaned the scalp for a period of three months which would enable it to be expertly examined in London, after which we guaranteed its safe return. As honorarium we had suggested paying a substantial contribution towards the repair of the Pangboche gumpa. To expect its guardians to part with the scalp permanently was unreasonable—as unreasonable as if a party of Sherpas were suddenly to appear in a remote English village and ask for a gift of the church plate. The presence of the Yeti scalp in the village is held to be a safeguard for the inhabitants from the unwelcome attentions of other Yeti. In a land where the very nature of the countryside ordains that local disasters are frequent, the removal of a scalp is not a responsibility which can be undertaken lightly. However, the monks at Pangboche had seemed to welcome the idea of the short-term loan of the scalp as the monastery was sadly in need of funds. Unfortunately, as I have related, any decision affecting the scalp had first to receive the

approval of the combined Council of Elders of both the villages of Pangboche and Phorche. This meeting had taken place while we had been away on our last sortie. It had been found that no one was prepared to speak the decisive word. We had been told with apologies that the former Chief Lama might possibly have permitted it, now it was out of the question. When we had asked whether we might not at least debate the matter with the present Chief Lama we had been greeted with the entirely baffling reply, "He is not yet among us" (meaning that the monks have yet to locate him in his present reincarnated form). As it is impossible to negotiate with a vacant throne, complete deadlock ensued, although the utmost good will remained on both sides. This was still the position in mid-April although in the meantime our relations with the nearer and larger monastery of Thyangboche had been improving.

The monks, who had regarded our arrival at our site below the monastery with some suspicion, now appeared willing to concede that while we might be slightly mad, we were quite harmless, and a mark of the increasing favour in which we were held was the arrival of an entirely unexpected invitation to a performance of temple dancing.

The invitation to the dance did not come on an engraved gilt-edged piece of pasteboard. On the afternoon of 14th April a young shaven Lama in maroon homespun rode into the camp on a shaggy cow-hocked Siberian pony saddled with a carpet, to inform us that our presence was requested at the monastery at 10 a.m. the next day. It may be added that the Lama's pony is the only riding animal in the district. It serves the whole of the Namche Bazar area as the local "taxi" and is owned by an elderly Sherpa woman who has no other means of support. Of course we accepted the invitation.

Thyangboche monastery has figured in all accounts of post-war Everest expeditions. Much has already been written of its idyllic setting on the crest of a spur which almost cuts the Imja Khola valley in half; of the firs, silver birches and rose and raspberry-red rhododendron bushes which clothe the crest, and of the majestic snow- and ice-peaks which surround the whole. The monastery is, of course, dedicated to contemplation of Everest whose smoking pyramid appears to the north just above the rock curtain which joins the peaks of Lhotse and Nuptse and which is nowhere less than 25,000 ft. high in the whole of its five-mile length. More dominant on the immediate horizon is the massive wedge of Ama Dablam which we had heard was about to be attempted by a New Zealand party headed by

Sir Edmund Hillary and accompanied by Dr. Charles Evans. The monastery itself is a collection of box-like stone cells surrounding the central temple. The buildings are washed white or pink. They are roofed with shingles held in place by boulders and crowned with gilded finials. It is with a pang that one realises that these aesthetically correct roofing materials will soon be replaced with corrugated iron sheeting. The present Chief Lama, only comparatively recently reincarnated, is still scarcely more than a boy and is at present absent undergoing a course of indoctrination at Shigatse in Tibet. One cannot help fearing for the influence that the Communist ideology at present sweeping that country may have on the mind of an impressionable youth. At Thyangboche the temporary incumbent in the absence of the young chief abbot is a roly-poly Lama of many chins and much dignity who we came to know affectionately as Friar Tuck.

An early start was made from the Base Camp on the day of the dance for the journey to the monastery entails a stiff climb of nearly two hours. We had nearly reached the summit of the spur when a breathless messenger arrived from below with the news that Friar Tuck, who had been on a dawn patrol of his parish, was delayed at its foot having trouble with his pony. (One would like to have heard the Friar's diminutive steed on this point for it was debatable which of the two weighed the heavier.) The interval needed for the completion of the Friar's pilgrimage we passed very pleasantly as guests in the cell of our old friend Sanghi Lama. We squatted comfortably on rugs while hot buttered tea—best taken with salt rather than sugar—was dispensed from a pewter pot standing on a central brazier. Tea eventually gave place to *chang*, poured from an immense brass-bound wooden bottle. The lengthy ceremony of toast-drinking gave ample leisure for inspection of Sanghi Lama's cell without appearing unduly impolite. The walls were attractively decorated with paintings in red, green, blue and yellow colours, the various panels depicting the wheel of life, the mystical incarnation of successive Buddhas and benign and malevolent divinities with their attendant animals. The whole was coated with varnish but this rather harsh effect was softened by the light from the windows which were "glazed" by cellophane wrappings salvaged from some previous expedition.

It is pleasant to record that Sanghi Lama has been able to benefit in other small ways from the trail of litter such expeditions invariably leave in their path, for among his butter lamps and other carved

silver receptacles serving some semi-religious use are now ranged an empty beer can (Barclays Export), a tin which once contained Mackintosh's toffee and a Hennessy Brandy bottle. His seat of honour is a provision chest (Case 101) from last year's British Mount Everest team.

The dance took place in the cloistered courtyard in front of the temple with the great snow- and ice-tower of Ama Dablam visible in the background. A narrow gallery running round three sides of the court provided accommodation for Friar Tuck's throne, for the monastery band, for ourselves and for a refreshment bar upon which stood gigantic flagons of *chang*. The dancers used the temple itself as a dressing-room and emerged from the dark interior into the sunlight which bathed the temple stairs clad in silks of brilliant colours and grotesque masks, some benign and some horrific. The performance was largely composed of square dances in which never more than four monks took part, each stationed at a corner of the court which has a tall mast bearing fluttering prayer flags in the centre. The capering and posturing of the monks, who occasionally beat drums and clashed cymbals, continued for some hours. Very little of the performance was intelligible to us, but I might here dispel a popular belief by adding that these dances are not "devil dances." They are best described as analogous to extracts from medieval mystery plays. An ever-recurring theme is the joyous arrival of Buddhism in a previously benighted part of the world—the triumph of good over evil. I believe the dances would have continued the whole day but the sun became obscured by cloud, further filming became impossible and by mutual consent we all adjourned into the temple where we joined the exhausted performers in the consumption of prodigious quantities of *chang* and *rakshi*.

Courtesy demanded that the Thyangboche dance be followed by an equivalent entertainment on our part and happily we had brought with us a box of fireworks for such an emergency. The problem was where to set off the fireworks without starting a major conflagration in the forests which surrounded us. Thyangboche itself was dismissed as being too closely wooded, while Pangboche and Phorche were regarded as too remote. Finally our choice fell on Khumjung, a handsome village which stands on a bare plateau high above Namche Bazar, which had, of course, ruled itself out as a possible site by the two recently developed cases of smallpox.

On the night of the fireworks—Easter Saturday—spectators arrived from as far as ten miles away and were added to by a strong

contingent of enthralled monks from Thyangboche. Ang Tharke, as spruce as ever, was a guest of honour. That afternoon we sent up an advance party to Khumjung to arrange the scene for the display and to buy up copious quantities of *chang*, indispensable for such celebrations. Ang Tschering and Ahkey were given this latter task which they accomplished more than ably, for by the time the rest of us had climbed to the Khumjung plateau the party was already in full swing and our two wine-waiters well under the weather. Fortunately it was a cloudless night with the moon shining brightly. The steps of a large stupa were used as a grandstand and seldom can so much enjoyment have been given to so many people for so little expenditure. The fireworks, which were good ones, were a tremendous success and all of us were relieved that the evening passed off without accident. There were some moments of acute anxiety, especially when a party of young Sherpas, who had stayed too long at the refreshment bar stumbled in the dark against a case of Verey lights and pistols which had been brought up in error and began letting off signal flares in all directions. This impromptu interpolation, which might have ended in a fatality or in the setting of some houses on fire, passed off harmlessly and proved the smash hit of the evening. It was nearly midnight and the firework display had long since given place to a *chang* and dancing session, when we made our rather disorderly retreat through the gullies, down the cliff, across the river and back to the Base Camp.

The fact that we had so lavishly entertained the Khumjung villagers without expecting anything in return—we did not then know that a second Yeti scalp existed in their temple—apparently impressed them, for the very next morning Sanghi Lama appeared in the camp. After a kipper breakfast he led Tom into the mess tent and presented him with a locket containing hair from the revered head of the Chief Lama of Rongbuk, the parent monastery to the north of Everest. After a period of arch evasion he then disclosed to Tom the presence of a second scalp at Khumjung. He added that if Tom would accompany him to Khumjung on the following day he would intercede to obtain it for us on loan.

Next morning Tom and Sanghi Lama, a tall gaunt figure with parchment skin and straggling mandarin beard and moustachios, set off together for Khumjung. Tom stated afterwards that the scalp was produced with alacrity. After he had examined it a number of dignitaries donned it and capered about the cloistered forecourt of the temple. Finally it was light-heartedly clapped on Tom's own

head. It was then hinted broadly that if he and myself and Sanghi Lama would attend a village council meeting on the following day, we might hear something to our advantage. We had high hopes of this meeting for Phudorji, one of the friendliest of our Sherpa porters, is himself a member of the Khumjung council, as is his delightful father, one of the district's richest landowners, but the next day was to see its set-backs.

In the early hours Sanghi Lama sent a message that he was too fatigued to repeat the arduous mountain climb to Khumjung so soon. As an escort he provided a young Lama who subsequently proved too awed by the occasion to utter a sentence. We also ran into interpreter difficulties. Our only Sherpa who spoke a smattering of English was Da Temba who had recently claimed to be possessed by the spirits of two dead men. As Dr. Bill Edgar had nothing in his repertoire to cure such a complaint, the local medicine man had had to be summoned to the camp. This gentleman, after keeping us sleepless for two nights by ceaselessly beating on a tomtom, had pronounced Da Temba cured. News of the possession but not of the cure had reached Khumjung and although the hapless Da Temba professed manfully that he was himself again, throughout the proceedings a number of the more superstitious council members remained obviously in doubt as to which of three possible men were attempting to interpret on our behalf. When we arrived at the temple the entire council were already seated on a ten-yard-long bench to the right of the temple door which was locked. In the place of honour at the extreme right sat an exceedingly old Lama wearing, with much dignity, a peaked red wizard's cap. Next to him sat the village headman who remained strangely silent—it was later explained that he was speechless with a heavy hangover acquired during a wedding celebration of the previous evening—and to his right was Phudorji's father, a jovial man whose pear-shaped figure was surmounted by a small round felt hat. Further to the left the importance of the members dwindled rapidly until the extreme end of the bench was summarily dismissed by Da Temba without further introduction as "the people." The proceedings began with the genial consumption of mint bulls'-eyes and cigarettes provided by ourselves and draughts of *chang* provided by the council and poured from one of the district's typical brass-bound wooden flagons. At length, as the elderly Lama could not be deterred from a non-stop intonation of prayers and the headman could still not be revived sufficiently to say anything, the opening speech in our favour was



Sanghi Lama the expedition's great friend at Thyangboche Monastery. Sanghi Lama disclosed the presence of a second Yeti "scalp" at the village of Khumjung and later presented the expedition with a cherished piece of Yeti skin.



Sherpa Ang Tharke visits the expedition base camp from his own base camp on Makalu where he was acting as Sirdar to the Californian Himalayan Expedition of 1954. He is seen with Gerald Russell. By virtue of his past performances Ang Tharke, now a veteran, is regarded by many climbers as a great a Sirdar as Tenzing Norkey.



Gyalgen—known affectionately as the “Jungli Sherpa”



Monks dancing in the court of Thyangboche Monastery

delivered by Phudorji's father. He had hardly begun when to everyone's astonishment he was volubly interrupted by "the people," many of whom had admittedly throughout the proceedings been wearing expressions of acute alarm. In short "the people" forecast dire calamities for the village should the Yeti scalp be yielded up, and finally, finding themselves responsible for the good behaviour of the elements during the scalp's temporary absence, the other two-thirds of the bench visibly wilted.

The closure was applied by the lowest bencher of all who announced that "the people" would cut the noses off the councillors should they agree to the scalp's loan. Although it was emphasised that this sally was meant jokingly it can hardly be said to have caused hearty laughter among the senior members. The meeting then broke up in some confusion which was added to by the headman who, after the departure of most of the councillors, suddenly roused from his reveries and demanded to know why he had not been granted a hearing. As this was difficult to explain diplomatically it was agreed we should all meet again another day. An attempt was made to restore good humour all round with another loving cup of *chang*. I noticed this passed unusually quickly from hand to hand and felt this departure from the general custom must be an ill omen. When the cup reached me I found that the anxiety to be rid of it was due to a large dead cockroach which was floating in the bottom. The conduct of "the people" had however upset the elderly Lama who now even refused to produce the Yeti scalp for my inspection. He was, however, eventually persuaded to do so after we had made a small contribution to the Gompa funds. This time, instead of bandying the scalp about in the manner of the day before, the Lama treated it very gingerly indeed and only reluctantly posed for a photograph holding it in his hands.

The Khumjung scalp is exactly of the same size as that of Pangboche. It is possibly more battered but carries a much more luxuriant head of hair. The two scalps appeared to us to be of the same age and there is a legend that they are a pair, the Pangboche scalp being male and that of Khumjung female. It can be added that most of our porters were recruited from Khumjung and the fact that it had only been after many weeks of cordial relations that the villagers had decided to trust us with information regarding their scalp indicates the veneration in which these relics are held. When Tom and I retreated to the Base Camp much depressed by the events of the day, we returned to find that our sole remaining mink had died; but that

evening we were somewhat consoled by the arrival of two men who each brought us a live tragopan (the Crimson Horned Pheasant).

We were now anxiously watching the weather for we had reached the third week of April. Spring was advancing ever more rapidly. The rhododendrons were bursting into blossom all about us and the entire aspect of the countryside round the Base Camp was changing. For some days there still seemed a slender hope that we might obtain the Khumjung scalp. The village headman who had been "absent" during the first negotiations had paid us a subsequent visit and informed us that if we would send himself and a companion to London with the scalp, he would continue to intercede on our behalf. We had succeeded in convincing him that it would be sufficient to send the two of them to Calcutta where they could see the scalp despatched on an aircraft and could wait there at our expense for its return. This would save us considerable money although it would deny Piccadilly a rather colourful spectacle. Until the final decision was reached neither Tom nor I felt able to leave on another sortie. I have omitted to mention that Charles had left for Makalu after the monastery dance, Thyangboche being the first stage on his route. Charles was travelling slowly in order to allow time for Ang Tharke to catch up with him. On the day after the fireworks Bis and Ahkey had set off for the Dingboche area for further bird collecting.

By this time two schools of thought had developed among us as to the best method of tracking down a Yeti. John, with myself supporting him, believed that it was essential to keep moving and cover as much ground as possible in the hope that sooner or later we would come across further fresh tracks. Tom and Gerald favoured choosing a good strategic position and lying up there for as long as a week if need be. Charles's ideas were somewhere between the two schools. Up to this time he had covered as much ground as any of us and he had spent more nights lying up in the open among the rocks. Before we left England we had also discussed the possibility of choosing a valley with only one entrance and quietly infiltrating two of us up to its head. The rest of us would then drive all game in the valley towards them. We should then see what we had to deal with. There is one such valley just near the Base Camp which has the curving flank of the Thyangboche spur on one side and the forbidding cliffs of Kangtega on the other. This valley is best described as a deep wooded gorge which cuts its way almost to the heart of Kangtega. The walls of the gorge rise over 1,000 ft. almost sheer from the valley floor and the head of the valley is blocked by the

22,000-ft. high ice-cliffs of the mountain itself. As it is a wilderness which has only one exit—its mouth—leads nowhere and is therefore never used by Sherpas the gorge seemed an excellent place within which to organise a mass sweep. We were strengthened in this view after studying the lie of the land outside Thyangboche monastery. If a Yeti had appeared before the buildings in 1949, as the monks maintain adamantly that it did, it seems most probable that it was harbouring at the time in our valley. That of course was not to say that there was still one there, but as we had a day or two to spare we thought we might as well undertake the sweep as an exercise to train the Sherpas for a possible future sweep in more promising country.

Over thirty locally recruited Sherpas were employed as well as the seven expedition members then at the Base Camp. As an operation the sweep was an outstanding success, being carried out with as good as military precision—a remarkable fact in itself for no Sherpa takes kindly to discipline—but as a ruse to flush a Yeti it was a failure. On the day of the sweep we were up before dawn and not long after had our Sherpa beaters mobilised at the mouth of the gorge. On this occasion the Sherpas were permitted to wear their gayest clothes—on normal patrols for purposes of camouflage we had kept them dressed as soberly as possible—and for once they were allowed to make as much noise as they pleased, in doing which they never need encouragement. Gerald Russell on the local pony was sent up to the neck of the Thyangboche spur to cover the exact point where the monks had sighted the Yeti five years before. Bill Edgar climbed the southern side of the gorge to a point hard up against the flank of Kangtega where he could block any attempt at escape in that direction. Together they held the whole gorge under observation, being posted at its right- and left-hand shoulders. Throughout the day they managed to keep in touch with us by means of Marconi walkie-talkie sets. By this means too, those of us who were struggling through the tangled undergrowth and rhododendron thickets up the gorge's bed managed to keep the Sherpas in some sort of line. It was appallingly difficult going for, apart from the almost impenetrable vegetation, we had to force our way round or over gigantic boulders and immense piles of rocks which had fallen from the cliffs above. It was not long before the spirits of some of the fainter-hearted Sherpas began to wilt, especially as the climbing sun rendered the gorge stiflingly hot; but although there were "casualties" the line was maintained until we emerged above the trees. We had had

breath-taking glimpses of gorgeous rhododendron blossoms outlined against the snow or the foaming water of the central torrent, but the valley yielded nothing we had not seen already in the way of wild life. All that we had flushed from cover by the time we had left the trees behind us were several pheasants of the gaudiest possible plumage, one marmot and a small herd of musk deer which had been occasional visitors in the vicinity of our camp.

By the time we had reached the ice-cliffs at the head of the gorge all of us were exhausted. John, as usual, had been the hardest worked, for he had been covering the extreme right flank hard against the lateral cliff and was thus constantly having to force a way over the outcrops. The undergrowth had been so thick that while we were all constantly talking to each other over the walkie-talkie sets, we often never saw each other for hours at a time. It was when we were returning that we received a most heartening piece of news from Tom who, in the middle of the search, had been suddenly summoned up to the monastery by Sanghi Lama. Tom told us that Sanghi Lama, distressed at our failure to obtain the Khumjung scalp, had disclosed to him that he was prepared to present us with a piece of Yeti skin which was his personal property. It had unfortunately been lost somewhere in his cell but he hoped to unearth it and bring it down to us at breakfast-time on the following day. Once more Sanghi Lama proved as good as his word. Next morning he trotted down to the camp and presented us with the skin which was carefully wrapped in a piece of silk. The skin was about 3 in. long by $1\frac{1}{2}$ in. wide and although thinner than that of the scalps, it was covered with identical reddish-black hair. Sanghi Lama's story as to the origin of the skin was an interesting one. He said that until quite recently Khumjung Village possessed an entire Yeti hide. One night, against the advice of the monks, this complete skin was brought out for use in a moonlight "Ghost Dance." After the dance had reached its delirious climax—no doubt assisted by the customary immense consumption of *chang*—the skin was inadvertently left lying in the open. By morning it had vanished. One of the monks had, however, prudently snipped off a small piece of the skin. It is this piece which Sanghi Lama presented to us. We lost no time in despatching it to Professor Wood Jones in London.

In this doldrums period there was one other day which must be mentioned, for an incident occurred which badly shook us all. This was when John came within an ace of being drowned. None of us are likely to forget the sight of him being swept helplessly over a

20-ft. high cataract in the swollen Dudh Kosi river. I have mentioned that the bridge connecting Phorche with Dolle had been swept away by flood water. No attempt had been made to replace it. We had still not finished with the Upper Dudh Kosi valley and part of our next plan of operations was to bring Bis and Ahkey back from Dingboche and send them up the Dudh Kosi valley to the Dudh Pokhari. We therefore decided that to avoid the difficult high-altitude detour, we would make an attempt to put a bridge over the river. As a preliminary John volunteered to swim a line across at a point where the river levelled off for a short distance between two cataracts. None of the pools which lie between the roaring rapids looked promising but this one was chosen because a large boulder in midstream appeared to halve the distance to be covered. At this season the water is still best described as liquid ice, but this did not deter John who is an outstanding all-round athlete. John reckoned that if he were lowered from a 20-ft. high rock on our bank, a racing start would carry him through the strongest section of the current and enable him to reach the boulder. From the boulder to the far shore looked easy. The first half of the programme went according to plan. Stanley Jeeves climbed to the top of the rock, lowered John on the line he was to swim across for us to the water and then "played" him like a fish as he struck out for the boulder, but the slippery boulder provided no hold whatsoever and to everyone's consternation John was gradually dragged away from it by the current. Enough line had had to be payed out to enable John to make the full crossing and it could not be recovered quickly enough to prevent his being washed with startling rapidity downstream and over the falls. Finally the line grew taut with John suspended in a frightful cauldron of water beneath. The sudden jerk of the line pulled Stan off his rock and he hung, held by a belay, about 4 ft. below the summit. Sherpas who will laughingly take appalling risks on snow and ice all loathe water and by this time many of ours were in tears. In a misguided rescue attempt they now yanked desperately on the line which only had the effect of pulling the luckless John back under the cataract. Here he could have only survived a few seconds, but fortunately Tom and I had scrambled down the rocks beside the fall and throwing an extra line to John managed to pull him across the face of it to the bank. We then were able to fish him out with only superficial bruises to show for his adventure.

It was two days before we returned to the crossing and this time, after one or two abortive attempts, we succeeded in hurling a grapnel

across and lodging it securely among the rocks on the far side. After the rope had been stretched taut we went across hand over hand—a gymnasium exercise which none of us much appreciated, and when it came to a trial attempt to transport baggage, resulted in the loss of a case of provisions which were luckily replaceable. The provision chest was smashed to pieces almost as soon as it hit the water.

CHAPTER XIII

BACK TO EVEREST

ON 22nd April we received final notice from Khumjung that the Yeti scalp there would not be made available to us. We therefore lost no time in making plans for our next operation. We had become acutely aware that we were reaching the culminating point of our efforts. Possibly only six weeks now remained to us before the arrival of monsoon conditions. It is possible to continue working during the monsoon but porters become most difficult to obtain, for it is the tilling season and all available manpower is required for the fields. If we delayed too long we might find it impossible to extricate ourselves in good order from the Sherpa country. We might be faced with the choice of allowing ourselves to be marooned in the mountains until the autumn or having to abandon most of our equipment. We also noted with concern that there had been two further cases of smallpox in Namche Bazar and one more death there. If the outbreak should reach epidemic form it was possible that the local authorities along the road to Katmandu would forbid porters from Namche Bazar to pass through their districts.

The plans we now made were a drastic revision of anything we had carried out hitherto. We decided to switch almost our entire strength further to the east, leaving only Bis and Ahkey in the Upper Dudh Kosi valley. John and Stan were deputed to make an entire circuit of Ama Dablam. I decided to set up advance headquarters at Lobuje, half-way up the Khumbu glacier, which had only been briefly visited by John on his first sortie. Tom and Chunk Lagus were first to accompany John's party but would break away after the first stages and on reaching Chukhung would cross over to join me at Lobuje. At this time we received another letter from Sir John Hunt supporting Tom and Gerald's contention that we might be attempting to cover too much ground. It was therefore arranged that Gerald should first accompany me but should then choose a hide-out near the Khumbu Glacier and lie up there for some days at a time. I intended to work up the glacier towards Everest. As a

long-term plan we agreed that John, after completing his circuit of Ama Dablam, should rejoin us at Lobuje. He would then set out with a number of the Darjeeling Sherpas for Kangchenjunga, a long and difficult journey of about 200 miles—all of it through what we hoped would turn out to be good Yeti country. At Kangchenjunga he would join up with the British Expedition which was reconnoitring the western approaches to the mountain in preparation for a possible attempt upon it in 1956. The British Party included John's brother Ronald. From Kangchenjunga John would march on to Darjeeling and pay off the Sherpas who had been recruited there.

As the Darjeeling Sherpas were to be split into two forces, for some we retained for our main party, they held a farewell celebration of their own on the night of 23rd April. Whole tubs of *chang* were provided for this occasion and a weird sight it was as Sherpas and Sherpanis, sophisticated and unsophisticated, linked arms and formed a line in the firelight and executed their stamping *pas de bas* to their own singing accompaniment. The shuffling steps of the dance looked simple indeed and Tom, John, Stan, Chunk and I all joined in, but although partnered by such experts as "Jungli" Gyalgen and Phudorji we could make little of the constantly changing movements.

The next day, prior to John's departure, we drew lots as to which of the personal Sherpas should go with him on the march to Darjeeling. Two had to be sacrificed to make up a full team and the choice fell on Gerald's Danu and Bill's Nim Tenzing. Almost at the exact moment that John's party were leaving, Charles returned having failed to reach Makalu. He had come to a halt on the far side of the Barun Pass, which he reckoned must be nearly 21,000 ft. He had been much helped by Ang Tharke and wisely accepted his advice that if he continued down to the Barun Glacier where the Californian Expedition was camping, he would be unlikely to be able to get his Sherpas back over the pass unassisted. This day was Saturday, 24th April, and we again held our extra special Saturday night dinner. After we had finished eating Ang Tschering and Nemi presented us with a large flask of *rakshi* and stayed on to drink it with us. It was then we learned of Nemi's exploits as a Ghurka parachute jumper.

On the next morning Gerald and I set off for Lobuje with twenty-one coolies. As Gerald was still not going well we hired the local pony for him. When we began the ascent of the Thyangboche spur, however, Gerald decided to test his legs, so I rode the pony and thoroughly enjoyed it. When one does not have to be watching each

footstep over rough rock one can survey the surrounding countryside properly and I cannot help feeling that this is an important factor in Yeti hunting. When one is on foot it becomes a habit to keep one's eyes constantly on the ground in front of one and much that is going on around one may pass unnoticed. With the pony beneath me I arrived at the monastery far in advance of the others. I had barely reached the lawn in front of the buildings when Sanghi Lama came fussing out to greet me. He led me into his cell and placed me in the seat of honour. He pressed tea upon me and finally with a charming gesture tied a ribbon bearing an embroidered Buddhist amulet about my neck. Present in the monastery at the time—he had only recently arrived—was Professor David Snellgrove of London University, who was deciphering the temple's religious books. Dr. Snellgrove is a Tibetan scholar who speaks the language very fluently. He was a great help to us in collecting a number of folk-stories concerning the Yeti. Two are worth repeating, although it must be emphasised that they do not necessarily indicate that the Yeti is solely a fairy-tale animal. Do not real animals appear in our own fairy stories? The wolf of *Little Red Riding Hood*, the Three Bears of *Goldilocks* and the cat of *Puss in Boots* are obvious examples.

The first of Dr. Snellgrove's stories concerns an attempt by the Sherpas to lessen the number of Yeti in their district. The fairy-tale Sherpas had noticed that whenever they undertook any task the Yeti would imitate them, but would employ far more energy than was necessary. Thus when a Sherpa would cut down a tree the Yeti, in imitation, would cut down fifty. If a Yeti saw a Sherpa strike a yak with a stick he would seize a log and more likely than not break the unfortunate animal's back. Because of this imitation a great deal of damage was done. The Sherpas therefore decided on a ruse to reduce the number of the local Yeti. They set up a table in a clearing of the forest and put on it a large number of flasks of *chang* and a number of light wooden swords. The Sherpas then sat around the table and got thoroughly drunk. They then pretended to pick a quarrel. Each seized a wooden sword and they slashed at each other until all fell to the ground shamming death. The next day they again set up the table with the same quantities of *chang* upon it, but this time they substituted real swords for the wooden ones. As soon as they had prepared the table they withdrew. The imitative Yeti who had been watching from a distance now gathered round the table and were soon very drunk indeed. They then picked up the swords and slashed each other until not one of them was left alive.

The second story concerns a traveller renowned for medical skill who was making a journey along an out-of-the-way path in the mountains. He suddenly found an exceedingly large Yeti blocking his path. The Yeti gestured imperatively to him to follow him. The frightened traveller complied. The Yeti led him to a cave where his wife was rolling on the ground in acute pain. It appeared that the female Yeti had a bone stuck in her throat. With the male Yeti watching, the traveller expertly extricated the bone which of course turned out to be a human one. The patient being restored to good humour, the traveller was allowed to depart and as a final gesture the male Yeti stuffed two objects, the size of footballs and wrapped in leaves, into the saddle-bags of his riding-yak. The traveller was still too frightened to stop to examine the objects on the spot. It was some distance further on before he did so. The gift proved to be two human heads complete with massive gold earrings.

So much for fairy stories. . . .

Professor Snellgrove later unearthed a most valuable piece of information although we did not receive his news of it until after we had left the Sherpa country. He was given to understand that beside the scalp in Pangboche monastery the monks there hold a mummified Yeti hand which is considerably larger than that of a man. It is bound with layers of bandages and twine and there is thus no possibility of examining it, for to cut open the bandages would involve the desecration of a sacred relic which is apparently held in even greater reverence than the scalp, for its presence was never divulged to us.

On the afternoon that I arrived at the monastery Professor Snellgrove was giving a tea-party for all the monks and he invited Gerald and myself to join. This we were unable to do as we had set our sights on Pangboche as our target for the night. With the monastery bell summoning the monks to tea ringing in our ears, we set off northwards across the meadows, Gerald now mounted on the pony. We were now on part of the classic route to Everest which has been fully described by Eric Shipton, the Swiss Everest Expedition, Sir John Hunt and myself in previous books. Dropping down the rhododendron-fringed path which leads across the bridge to the Imja Khola Gorge we constantly startled musk deer who have come to realise that they are secure from attack while they remain within the precincts of the monastery. The same applies to the dozens of Monaul, Blood—and other pheasants which abound round the monastery and are so tame that they will take grain from the hand. We

reached Pangboche as dusk was falling and pitched our tents in the back garden of one of the cottages in the lower village. A few empty soup packages on the ground told us that either John or Charles must have used the same site shortly before us. As we sat round our camp-fire both Gerald and I felt exhilarated that we were once more out on a sortie. I had spent two weeks at the Base Camp and although the time had been fully taken up by the negotiations for the scalp, the sweep and the river crossing, I greatly begrudged the time lost from the Yeti hunt proper.

Neither Gerald nor I had yet inspected the Pangboche scalp and we began the next day by visiting the Gompa. This is an old-established institution and has seen fourteen generations of Chief Lamas. The building is painted a deep rose colour and has a pleasant air of antiquity about it, but no scalp was produced. We were told a story that it had been sent down to the related village of Phorche as it was needed for some religious celebration there. Ang Tschering, who was again my Sirdar, urged me not to believe this story, but having seen the Khumjung scalp I decided not to pursue the matter. We now set off for Phalong Karpa, a yak-grazing village high up the Chola Khola valley at the foot of the Khumbu Glacier. I again took first spell on the pony which I was bound to agree with Gerald was an excellent innovation. One no longer had to remind oneself to pass left about round the Mane walls which lined the route. The animal performed the manœuvre automatically. At the point where the Chola Khola valley forks left from the Imja Khola I dismounted and Gerald took his turn. After crossing a rough stretch where a landslide had come down the mountain, we arrived at Phariche, the lowest grazing village of the Chola Khola. Phariche was already again occupied by yak-herds. Beyond, the valley broadened and rose gently to Phalong Karpa about two miles distant. Taweche Peak was now on our left hand as we marched upwards. The turf here was covered with blue and mauve primulas, some of them dwarf specimens which lay flush with the ground. As we approached Phalong Karpa we sighted a yellow pyramid tent in one of the enclosures which we knew must belong to Bis. It was not long before Bis also sighted us and came out to greet us. He had seen no trace of a Yeti during his present sortie but was delighted at the number of birds he had been able to collect. Ahkey had shot a few snow partridge for the pot and these made an excellent evening meal.

After breakfast the next morning we set out on the climb up to the

two stone huts at Chule where Tom had established his advance base on his second sortie. The huts are situated on the very snout of the Khumbu Glacier and they had vivid memories for me, for it was here that I had had to drag Sherpa Gyalsen when he had collapsed on my journey to Everest in the previous year. As we approached the huts, Gerald again on the pony, we noticed that the wolf-snow-leopard trap set by Tom weeks before had been entered by an animal which had succeeded in smashing its way out. At the huts a custodian Sherpa whom Tom had left behind was in residence and from the stores left there we took some tins and jars of marmalade. After a brief rest we climbed over the snout of the Khumbu Glacier and continued up the ablation valley. In this infinitely lonely country far above the tree-line both of us felt much more at home as regards Yeti hunting. Once more we had hopes that we might still be successful; but even here, as we were approaching the limits of our opponent's altitude, there were signs that the year was advancing. The crossing of a branch of the Chola Khola stream as it debouches from the Khumbu Glacier had become difficult as the waters were much swollen and caused the porters some trouble. The pony proved its usefulness, however, and made the crossing a number of times with a coolie hanging to its tail. On the narrow path on the far side we repeatedly found droppings which appeared to us identical with those we had previously identified as those of Yeti and again our spirits rose. We reached the stone huts at Lobuje soon after mid-day. This is an ideal site, for there is plenty of fresh water and a great store of yak-dung to use as fuel. Although Everest itself is not visible from this location it affords superb views of Nuptse, a most beautiful mountain in its own right, for it is composed of great seams of black and pale gold rock. When we arrived at Lobuje, Nuptse was continuously spilling avalanches down its sides. After the Base Camp, which was already becoming unpleasantly hot, the air at Lobuje was deliciously fresh and cool. An immense area of utterly deserted country was now on our doorstep and the old thrill of the chase returned to us.

Next morning Gerald turned back down the valley to prospect for a hide high up under the cliffs of the right-hand side. I had a little writing to do but had hardly written the words "Chapter One" when Bis arrived on the pony. He had intercepted it on the way back to Thyangboche. He enthused over a number of giant rose finches which he had observed along the route. Just beside the Lobuje huts there is a large mouse-hare colony which last year had

teemed with these attractive little animals. They had still been in residence last March when Bis had first visited the camp site. Now there were none to be seen. This puzzled us both, but while we were sitting at lunch we saw the explanation. Three or four yellow-bellied weasels had taken over the colony and we watched them play prettily among the rocks. Narayan, Norbu and Bis's Sherpa Tasi spent some time scrambling over the rocks in an attempt to capture a specimen but the creatures were far too nimble for them. Bis left me in the afternoon, intending to go straight back to Base Camp and then up to the Dudh Pokhari. Towards evening the weather again turned bitterly cold and, not wishing to waste fuel, we clambered into our sleeping-bags at 7 o'clock. By morning the tents were once more stiff with ice.

On the next day Gerald set off with the four Sherpa coolies who had remained with us to build a hide at a point which overlooked the lower section of the Khumbu Glacier and also the upper Chola Khola valley. By midday I had completed my writing and decided to make a brief excursion up the ablation valley beside the Khumbu Glacier. I had only gone a few hundred yards when I realised that this was ideal Yeti country. There were long stretches of turf dotted with massive boulders and an occasional small lake, while up to the left there seemed to be an endless area of high rolling upland offering countless hiding-places among the rocks. Wolf or fox droppings were frequent, proving that the area is well populated. I climbed upwards for about a mile when I came on some puzzling broad footprints of some age in patches of frozen mud. After studying them carefully I came to the conclusion that they must be bear, but which bear was another puzzle. It seemed to me most unlikely that it could be the Himalayan black bear, which is never seen at such altitudes, and equally unlikely that it was the red bear which the Sherpas vow is never seen in this particular area. I must have had bears on my mind for at a point where the valley peters out and forces one to traverse the glacier scree, I could have sworn that I heard a bear snarl from close at hand. This startled me in no uncertain fashion, for I had no other weapon than my ice-axe, but although I inspected the land most carefully round about, always prepared for a bolt downhill with a bear bounding after me, I could find no patch of cover which could possibly have hidden so large an animal. It may be I was suffering from a high-altitude delusion but I still remain convinced that I heard what I thought I heard. I climbed on along the side of the glacier to a point within about three-

quarters of an hour of the Swiss Lake Camp. The sun was beginning to set as I turned for home. Near Lobuje I noticed for the first time a narrow gully leading into the cliffs to the right. The floor was sand-covered and carried two sets of footprints of unequal size, which I now identified with some confidence as those of bear—probably a mother with a cub. I followed the trail—not very happily, although it was an old one—for about 300 yds. up the defile which then broadened into a vast rocky amphitheatre. The trail was utterly lost here. It was quite dark when I reached camp, Ang Tschering and Norbu having come out to meet me blowing police whistles.

Early next day Gerald set off for his hide, which the coolies had constructed to his satisfaction. At midday I again set off up the glacier determined to reach the Lake Camp, but this proved an “off day.” Compared with the previous afternoon I was both listless and breathless. I found it hard going indeed and was constantly tempted to return by ugly-looking clouds which were building up behind me. For some time I pressed on across an appalling stretch of stony-road glacier and then suddenly sat down on a rock overcome by the futility of it all. I was obviously going too slowly to reach the Lake Camp safely and return comfortably. All desire to go on had left me but, what was worse, I had no desire to turn back. I sat in a daze for some time until I could summon the energy to return, rather ashamed and genuinely astonished at my last year’s feat of walking right from Lobuje to the Everest ice-fall and back to Lobuje in one day. This year about a quarter of the distance had exhausted me. It was, however, as well that I turned back prematurely, for suddenly the ugly clouds dissolved into a heavy blinding storm of damp snow. I arrived back in camp miserably wet through and white from head to foot. My laziness on this occasion probably saved my life, for had I gone on to the Lake Camp I should have had to spend another two hours or so in the storm and it is more than doubtful that I could have found my way back. I remained convinced that the Khumbu Glacier is an excellent place to look for Yeti.

Across the glacier from Lobuje, Pokalde Peak (over 20,000 feet high and climbed last year by Bourdillon, Noyce and Ward) looms almost opposite. Just below the peak there is a col which leads over to the Imja Khola valley. Next day I was sitting having lunch when we heard distant shouts far away in the direction of Pokalde. Sounds carry astonishingly in the high mountains and it was some time before, even with glasses, we were able to make out Tom’s

scarlet breeches twinkling on top of the Pokalde Col. Soon other black dots appeared beside him until it became evident that it was his entire party attempting to cross the col towards us from Chukhung. The descent from the col to the Khumbu Glacier is not particularly dangerous but for my Sherpas at Lobuje there were pleasant possibilities of minor disasters and they watched hopefully as Tom led his porter train down. No one slid off the track—they would not have come to much harm had they done so—and at tea-time Tom, Bill and Chunk with all their Sherpas joined us. Soon afterwards snow began to fall again and Gerald, no longer able to see anything from his hide, also rejoined us.

That evening we decided that all of us should go up to the old British Base Camp at the foot of Everest and in a mild spirit of "one-upmanship" should make a climb up the ice-fall. Tom's party would leave the following day. I would wait for the next Katmandu runner, who was now again due, and leave the day after. Tom's party set off at 10.30 a.m. and I decided to accompany them for a spell in order to make sure of the way across a long stretch of boulder scree immediately below the Lake Camp. Returning and feeling fairly strong, I made a detour and climbed slowly up to the col between the mountains to the west of the glacier. This col was known to the Swiss Expedition of 1952 as the "Yeti Col" for the footprints which they discovered near the Lake Camp appeared to lead over it. There were a number of cairns on top of the col, proving that it must have been crossed frequently by human beings at least and I made out what must be a way over to the Dudh Kosi valley, skirting a glacier which appears to come down from the north before forking both east and west.¹ Up on the col there were no traces of Yeti tracks, in fact no sign of any game whatsoever. I made a long descending traverse from the col back to the Base Camp and bending down to get something from my tent on my return I experienced what almost amounted to a black-out, this being the first time that such a thing had ever happened to me. It was a warning, if I needed one, that after nearly four months of over strenuous work in the field, I was beginning to near my limits.

Back in the camp I found John and Stan very pleased with their eight-day excursion during which they climbed Pokalde Peak. It

¹This pass, which eventually leads to the Dudh Kosi valley, has been named Chakri La by the Swiss, the height is given as 20,000 feet which I should judge to be excessive. It was first crossed in 1951 by Bourdillon, Murray, Riddiford and Ward of Eric Shipton's Everest Reconnaissance team.

snowed heavily during the late afternoon and we were driven each to his separate tent. Thus it was not until evening, when the weather had again cleared, that I heard John's story. I give it as he later wrote it for me (I should add that our main reason for sending John round behind Ama Dablam was our belief that the peak would be attempted this year by Sir Edmund Hillary. We wanted John to contact the New Zealanders and also give us an expert climber's appreciation of the mountain, thus enabling people at home to estimate Sir Edmund's chances. In fact, the New Zealanders stopped short at Makalu).

This is John's diary of the week:

"24 April. Left Base Camp for the last time at 11.0 a.m. Arrived Thyangboche at 12.30 a.m. and had tea with Sanghi Lama and was presented with a white silk scarf from the monks due to my leaving the Sola Khumbu district. Camped for the night at Pangboche. An electrical storm and peals of thunder rolling from peak to peak.

"25 April. To Chukhung via Dingboche. No yak or herders yet at this village.

"26 April. Beautiful early morning clouds. Long ascent through good Yeti country to 19,000 ft. high col leading over to the Khumbu Glacier. Placed camp at 18,500 ft. Out long after dusk but nothing seen or heard.

"27 April. A sleepless night but nothing unusual heard. Out at 3.45 a.m. Brewed tea over primus stove. A poor dawn at 4.30 a.m. Ascended Pokalde Peak for photographs of Ama Dablam. Reached summit (over 20,000 ft.) at 7.30 a.m. Back at camp at 10 a.m. Searched glacier and frozen lake for prints but no sign. On arriving back at Chukhung in the evening we learnt that all Sherpas and Sherpani left behind had visited Nanga Dzong, where a high lama from Tibet named Tseri lives entirely alone on the hill between Dingboche and Chukhung. The Sherpas seem to have great faith in him. He says he has seen Yeti on two occasions from his dwelling.

"28 April. To the foot of the Ambu Lapcha Pass (19,000 ft. high) which leads over to Hongu. We met Phu Keepa, a coolie from the American camp at Makalu, who with 140 others was making his way back from Makalu to Namche Bazar. None had seen any signs of Yeti. Took some photographs of Ama Dablam North Ridge—it looks hopeless.



Ama Dablam seen from Pokalde



An incident during Jackson's attempt to circumvent Ama Dablam

“29 April. Crossed over the pass. There is a tricky gully near the top and we used a life-line for the porters. It was snowing on the far side as we arrived at Hongu Lake. No sign of Yeti or of the New Zealand expedition.

“30 April. Stan and I crossed the frozen Hongu Lake. No tracks. Ascended glacier to summit of a peak (20,000 ft.) south of Hongu. No life or tracks seen on the glacier plateau east of the pass leading to Mingbo Valley. More photographs of Ama Dablam, Chamlung, etc. Snow-storm in the afternoon.

“Occasionally Nepalis visit Hongu from southern Nepal. Yeti have been reported but we saw no sign.”

John had turned back towards Chukhung after reaching Hongu. He had three extra coolie loads of firewood with him and these he left beside the barren shore of the lake, after pinning to the pile a notice which read “Jacko’s firewood New Zealanders please use.” To his diary John appended the following appreciation of Ama Dablam which may be of interest to climbers.

“Until the attempts on Everest were made from the south nothing was known of this peak, since when it has gained notice for inaccessibility. Its four great ridges and its faces are very steep and defended by sheer rock, ice arêtes and bulging ice, depending from hanging glaciers. Viewed from Thyangboche and Pangboche its westerly ridge is seen to be very long and steep; from Pangboche giving the effect of a secondary peak. The west face is a mixture of ice and rock perpendicular in places and defended by ominous-looking hanging glaciers. The north ridge starts with steep slabs of rock which lead to a narrow rock arête, much iced, to be followed by a quite beautiful but impassable-looking ice arête that merges into the summit dome of snow and ice. This summit dome is quite a feature of the peak and would always be a last great defence of the mountain, as it presents such a steep and dangerous slope before easing off. The steepness of the north ridge ice arête is best evident when seen from Pokalde. The east ridge is really a part of a line of mountains that swing round north-easterly towards the Ambu Lapcha and Hongu. It is composed of ice-fluted peaks and very steep. The summit dome above the east ridge here looks its most difficult and is seen to the best advantage from the Hongu Lake.

“The south ridge and face perhaps presents the kindest appearance.

and if it were possible to place a camp at the point where the ridge steepens one can see a possible camp site higher up which it might be possible to reach after climbing of a high standard of technical difficulty—rock and ice. Here again the final thousand feet to the summit is very steep indeed and when seen from Pumori seems quite impassable. However, a closer inspection, a rubbing of one's nose against it, might, as often happens, reveal some flaw in defence to make an ascent feasible. It might be that the technical difficulties are so great that some light oxygen equipment would be required to allow climbers a quicker reaction and greater capacity for speed and work."

John was now ready to set out on his solitary journey to Kangchenjunga, but when he heard that we intended to make a climb into the Everest ice-fall he decided to come too. Gerald thought it unlikely that he would be able to keep up with us and decided in our absence to concentrate on watching the country from his hide. By an oversight a good deal of John and Stan's equipment, including a very necessary extra tent, had been left behind at Chukhung and a Sherpa had to be sent back for it. This meant that it would be at least two days before John and Stan could join us at the ice-fall and I therefore decided to push on up the glacier alone, leaving the pair of them comfortably housed in the Lobuje huts. I set out on Monday 3rd May accompanied by Norbu and two coolies. None of us much enjoyed the long stretch of boulder scree beneath the Lake Camp and it was disheartening to find no sign of Yeti prints on the stretches of snow and patches of sand by the lake itself. We stopped for the midday meal at the lake and the four of us wasted at least half an hour trying to catch a very bold mouse hare which was bobbing about among the rocks. I had begun to have misgivings that we might never catch another of these animals and raised the reward to 20 Nepali rupees (£1) per head; but although efforts were redoubled after the reward was raised, they were fruitless. A runner from Tom now came to meet us to say that his filming had been badly held up by mist and cloud and that therefore, instead of going to the old British Everest Expedition Base Camp, he was staying at the Base Camp used by Eric Shipton's Everest Reconnaissance Expedition in 1951. This is not on the Khumbu Glacier itself but tucked in the ablation valley right under Mount Pumori. This meant a long high climb over boulder scree up the western containing bank of the glacier and I did not arrive in camp until after 4 o'clock in the afternoon. I

found it bitterly cold and after tea in Tom's tent went straight to bed.

Tom had a remarkable story to tell. He had been out before five that morning with a shot-gun in the hope of bagging a snow-cock for the pot. After a steady climb up the western valley side he took up a position beneath a high, boulder-studded ridge. By this time it was full light. His eye travelled along the ridge, rested for a moment on a spot where one red-brown boulder seemed to be balanced upon another, travelled on and then returned to the same spot. To his astonishment the topmost boulder had disappeared. He had no doubt of this, for he had not changed position. He is certain that the topmost boulder must have been in reality the back of a large red-brown animal. In some hopes Tom set off up the hillside. He was only about 200 yards from the boulder above him, but because of the altitude—nearly 19,000 ft.—it took him half an hour to reach it. His hopes were then immediately dashed. On the far side of the ridge there appeared an endless area of rugged rock-strewn country which might have hidden a mountain regiment, let alone a single animal which had warning of his approach. With no snow to carry tracks the search was obviously futile and Tom returned ruefully to camp. On such flimsy evidence he refused to claim that he had seen a Yeti, nor did he wish to identify the animal as a red bear. He is only quite certain that it was a reddish-brown animal, but as there are no yaks at this altitude and as, in any case yaks do not squat on rocks, it can only have been a red bear or a Yeti. We never again had a sight of this particular animal.

Tom was most anxious to climb a subsidiary feature of Pumori, for from an elevation of about 20,000 ft. where there is a small platform which is the highest point ever climbed by the Swiss, by Eric Shipton and Tom Bourdillon and by Russi Gandhi's party, magnificent views can be obtained of Everest, which immediately faces Pumori across the ice-fall. Pumori, 23,000 ft. is still unclimbed and no one has succeeded in advancing beyond the small plateau because of the very grave risk from avalanches which would have to be expected on either side of it. We reckoned it would take us about four hours to reach the platform and as we expected the skies to cloud over as usual at about eleven, this meant an early start. We agreed to take only the pick of the Darjeeling Sherpas with us and told the others to pack up camp in our absence and move it across the glacier to the site of the British Base Camp of last year. It was a long slow climb up to the platform with Tom and Bill going well and

myself labouring behind with Chunk who had again been out shooting for the pot before breakfast and had thus made a late start. The spur ascended very steeply and presented us with some rather alarming "boiler plates" to cross. We must have passed the 20,000-ft. mark rounding the bluff immediately below the platform and when we reached the top of it the views were truly superb. Seen from this elevation the ice-fall came spilling down between Everest and Nuptse like a burst bag of lump sugar. It was possible to look straight into the Western Cwm and also over the Lho La to the North Col. For half an hour all of us were busily engaged in taking photographs. Then the skies clouded over.

The descent went wonderfully well. We climbed down on to the glacier and threaded our way through the ice pinnacles to the former site of the British Base Camp. We found that John and Stan had already reached the camp from Lobuje. The six of us were now assembled and ready to attempt the ice-fall on the following day. Ours, of course, was not an attempt on Everest itself, nor was it a full-scale assault on the ice-fall—John Jackson reckoned it would take us at least a week to reach the top of the fall, even if we had the necessary "siege equipment," scaling ladders and so on. It was to be a token anniversary climb for on 29th May it would be just a year since Hillary and Tenzing reached the summit. Prior to this success a number of nations, anticipating failure, had "booked the mountain" until well into the 1960's. Hillary and Tenzing changed all that. All planned attempts were cancelled, but it occurred to us that whatever nations might think about it, we might show that the British were still in the field.

With us on this occasion were the two Sherpa "tigers" Phudorji and Pasang Phutar II, both of whom in the previous year had achieved the remarkable endurance feat of twice carrying loads to the 26,000-ft. high South Col. It was a matter of great regret to us that "Tiger" Ang Nima had been left at Chukhung. He may be somewhat of a problem youth below 20,000 ft. but his boundless energy makes him a hero above that altitude. Last year, with Alfred Gregory, he carried a load to the topmost assault camp of all—somewhere near 28,000 ft.—and thus has climbed higher than any other Sherpa except Tenzing. Phudorji continues to give all the appearance of indestructibility, but Pasang Phutar is still suffering from the strain of last year's exertion. Phudorji and Pasang Phutar say that while they would willingly climb the Lhotse face to the South Col again, nothing will ever induce them to repeat the full climb of the ice-fall.



Edgar and Jackson in the Everest Ice Fall. Mount Pumori in background.

20,000 feet up on Mount Pumori, Stobart, Edgar and Izzard gaze across the Khumbu Glacier towards Everest





A view of Everest from 20,000 feet up on Mount Pumori. The great crescent shaped Ice Falls lead up into the Western Cwm. The Lhotse Face appears above the Cwm. The South Col and the final ridge to the summit are obscured by cloud. Unfortunately at such altitudes one cannot wait indefinitely for the clouds to pass.

They say this knowing that enough supplies have been abandoned in the Western Cwm above the fall to stock a general stores in Namche Bazar indefinitely. As is the custom those supplies may be had for the taking.

The British Camp among the glacier pinnacles looked as if it had only been just abandoned, littered as it was with the usual debris left behind by all high-altitude expeditions. It was built on solid ice covered with shattered rock and shale. Tom noticed at once that the whole glacier has sunk to an astonishing degree since last year when he hacked himself an ice cave at "ground floor" level. His cave was now at least 20 ft. up an ice pinnacle. Here, because it faced north, it remained in good condition. A second cave carved out by Tom Bourdillon facing roughly south-west had become merely a shapeless hole. After we had cut steps in the ice pinnacle we all gathered in Tom Stobart's cave. It was surprisingly warm and it was suggested that we should have afternoon tea there. Some misguided person—I was not guilty—thought it might be an improvement to light a fire in the cave. The fire caught well, after being doused with kerosene, but the dense volume of smoke it produced came near to suffocating all of us. We were 20 ft. above the ground and one man's body was sufficient entirely to block the entrance to the cave. As we could only leave one at a time, the late starters had a rough time of it and for some minutes could only lie on the glacier convulsed by spasms of coughing. The Sherpas thought this was the best joke of the trip.

We spent that evening hobbling around the ice pinnacles wearing crampons. Three of us were using them for the first time and I, because I had left my size 11's at our own Base Camp had to be content with size 8's.

It was an uneasy night. Sometimes the glacier ice would crack beneath us with a cannon-shot report and sometimes with an eerier sound like the slamming of a door in an empty room.

We were off next day to our usual early start and for some time followed a glacier stream which threaded its way through ice blocks as big as houses and between pinnacles as shapely as church steeples. In this ice world it was infernally hot; we were all soon stripped to our shirts. We were too close under Everest to have any idea of its stupendous magnitude. Immediately to the north, but happily well out of range, avalanches constantly roared down from the rock-face which connects the Lho La to Lingtren Peak to the west. We had just begun serious climbing when we suddenly came upon the remains

of the Swiss Expedition's Camp II, or rather the position where the Swiss Camp now is; for it has obviously moved some considerable distance down the ice-fall. Here we found empty tins and cans and a cylindrical canister containing part of an oxygen apparatus and a bag of sugar which the Sherpas with commendable quickness of mind promptly recognised as "Sherpa sugar."

We stopped at this spot for some time, for it gave a magnificent view of the ice-fall above us, enabling us to make a critical survey. It may be said at once that no party would ever attempt the ice-fall if there were any other way to Everest's summit. In some years it may present an insoluble problem even for an expert party. To be perfectly just, it is unfair to speak even of a "first ascent" for the whole aspect of the ice-fall is constantly changing and each new expedition must work out its own route through the 2,000-ft. obstacle. Immense blocks grind together, new crevasses open, seracs and pinnacles topple and the entire mass slowly and remorselessly churns downwards. Of dozens of flags placed in position by both British and Swiss all have now vanished completely, except for a single one which we recovered—a yellow Swiss flag advertising a shoe firm. Viewing the ice-fall from close quarters, one becomes full of admiration for some of the unsung heroes of the British Expedition, such as Mike Westmacott who had the unenviable task of overturning pinnacles and seracs which had moved into positions to threaten the supply route to the Western Cwm—sections which Tom, who of course knew the route, described as "those parts where you just hoped for the best." According to Tom the ice-fall when we were on it, was no easier—possibly a little more difficult—than the previous year. A new and fearsome sickle-shaped crevasse has opened right across the width of the fall. It begins about two-thirds of the way up on Everest's flank, curves down and round what was known as the "Atom Bomb area" and finishes against Nuptse just below the British Camp II. It would present a major bridging job for any expedition. At the Swiss Camp II we put on crampons and roped up: Jackson, myself, Phudorji and Chunk on rope one and Tom, Bill Edgar, Pasang Phutar and Stan on rope two. For the next two hours we climbed steadily upwards.

For a novice, the first half-hour of such work—jumping seemingly bottomless crevasses, clumping on crampons across seemingly vertical ice-falls, where there is nowhere to fall but "off," scrambling up ice-steps and treading gingerly over snow-bridges—finds one as frightened as one ever wishes to be. But with time, fear leaves one

and one becomes entirely absorbed in solving what is possibly rather poorly described as a three-dimensional jigsaw puzzle where all the places are blocks of white, green or blue ice.

One's first emotion on returning safely from such an experience is humility at the thought of what better men have to endure in reaching the top of a major peak. One also permits oneself some mild exhilaration in that one has completed a task which one anticipated with dread, which one will always remember with pleasure, and which one knows for certain one will never have to face again.

At the point we reached in the ice-fall there is no doubt that we could have gone much further. It is just possible that if we had made a really serious attempt, allowing ourselves the necessary time, and dissipating our remaining energy, we might have forced our way into the Western Cwm. We had John as leader and Tom, Phudorji and Pasang Phutar who had the necessary local knowledge. Stan and Bill had by this time developed into strong climbers, while Chunk and I, although still "passengers" in comparison, had learnt to do what was required of us quickly and efficiently without being told; but it was no part of our plan to exhaust ourselves in what could only be described as a diversion from our main task of hunting the Yeti. That a Yeti would go up the ice-fall on its own initiative seems to me completely out of the question, for there is nothing whatsoever to attract it in the Western Cwm.

We spent one more cold and eerie night at the old British Base Camp, and then made our way down the centre of the Khumbu Glacier back to Lobuje. Although we did not realise it at the time, this was the beginning of our retreat from the Sherpa country. It was now 6th May and two weeks at the most remained to us. I was still hoping to make another short trip to the Upper Dudh Kosi valley, but other events intervened and the excursion was never made. At night there was another heavy snowfall.

The next day Gerald rejoined us looking very haggard and quite obviously ill. He had spent the time while the rest of us were up near Everest lying up in his hide and he was now suffering from exposure as well as anoxia. We were sharing a tent together and throughout that night he appeared to me to be in a state of semi-delirium. The next morning he could hardly walk and Bill at once made arrangements to have him carried down to a lower altitude. The Katmandu runner, who had been delayed, arrived on this day and with the greatest reluctance I wrote a letter to my Head Office announcing that we would have to go ahead with plans to wind up the expedition.

We had already remained out abnormally long for a high-altitude expedition and Gerald's condition was merely a warning of the fate which awaited us all if we continued our efforts too long. We had all lost much weight and some of us were pitifully thin. As we were growing weaker our task was becoming more and more formidable. As the year advanced the snows were receding, adding possibly hundreds of square miles to the territory we would have to cover, much of it at a higher altitude than we had been working hitherto. It had obviously become a losing battle and a kindness—to use boxing parlance—“to throw in the towel to prevent further punishment and possible permanent injury.”

That day I said good-bye to John who set off in good spirits for Kangchenjunga. We were to meet again five weeks later in Calcutta. Tom and the rest of the party left for the stone hut at Chule, where Gerald was to spend the night. I remained alone at Lobuje where I had a good deal of writing to do before the runner could set off again for Katmandu. Next day I marched right back to the Base Camp. We had needed three days for the journey up and, although the return march is largely downhill, a strong head wind was blowing up the Chola Khola Valley and I was exhausted long before I got to Thyangboche. Tom's party were also marching down to the Base Camp that day and I began to overtake some of his straggling coolies. Two of these had got uproariously drunk in Pangboche and could hardly stand. They crawled across the narrow footbridge over the Imja Khola Gorge on all fours while I carried their loads.

The eastern slopes below Thyangboche monastery were now bright with especially lovely sulphur-yellow and pale mauve rhododendrons. Once more Sanghi Lama spotted me as I marched, very slowly by this time, across the lawn in front of the monastery. He put his skinny arm round my waist and supported me into his cell where a number of cups of buttered tea revived me sufficiently to make the last steep descent down to the Base Camp. I arrived back very tired and with my arm throbbing from a cut finger which had turned septic. There had been the usual mishaps at the Base Camp. A second panda had arrived, which we were hoping to present to Pandit Nehru, but it had escaped during its first night in captivity. Somehow the stone marten, which was the most beautiful animal in our collection, had also got away.

Charles had left a note to say he was paying a visit to Thame where the villagers' great annual festival was due to be held in a few days' time. Instead of setting out on a new excursion I spent the next

week quietly at the camp completing preparations for departure. Tom, Stan and Chunk set off for Thame where they wished to film the festival. Gerald and Bill remained behind with me.

On the morning after our return I had woken with the realisation that my Yeti-hunting days were over, at any rate for that season. Although improving, my arm was still painful and the glands of my armpit swollen. This I could have endured; what really defeated me was an overpowering feeling of leaden-like lethargy. I knew I should never be able to shake this off and do any more high-altitude work before it was time to return to Katmandu. Once I had accepted this fact I was overwhelmed with a sensation of utter relief. I lay back in bed and thought of what we had achieved. The first battle had been against blind ignorance. It is true that we had not captured a Yeti, or even seen one, but we had surely collected enough evidence to convince a large body of opinion that the animal is no myth but a flesh-and-blood creature whose ultimate identification may well prove the zoological discovery of the century. The second struggle had been against brute strength—the fury which the high mountains can unleash if they choose to be unkind to the traveller who makes his way among them. Here at least we fought a good fight pitting our resources in conditions where there is no referee to intervene when one is down, where, in fact, the real punishment begins when one is beaten to one's knees. Showing varying degrees of endurance we had each of us driven ourselves to his own limit. I myself believe that it is fallacious to suggest that man can exist indefinitely at 23,000 ft. and retain anything like his full efficiency. Each man has, I am convinced, his own "ceiling," which may have little to do with his actual physique. That point has yet to be proved. Gerald had reached his limit at about 16,000 ft. John's limit was obviously much higher—although I am bound to add that when I later met him in Calcutta after his remarkable trek of over 200 miles from our Base Camp to Darjeeling, I was shocked by his drawn and emaciated appearance. Most of us had, for four months, been able to work in comfort up to 20,000 ft., although our performances had noticeably deteriorated after the end of the third month.

Re-reading a number of mountaineering books on my return to England I was amused to find that many of our routine patrols and circuits had been described with respect almost amounting to awe by the men who had first made them. On our side it may be said that we had never thought of ourselves as peak or pass "baggers." We had often not even taken the shortest distance between two points

but, where the terrain permitted it and the country looked promising, had made lengthy detours to both sides of the main track, sometimes thus making two days' work out of a single day's march. In comparison with our own efforts a purely climbing party working the same year well away to the west of us had been unable to reach more than 15,000 ft. and that with aid of energy pills (possibly a dangerous stimulant when inertia is caused by lack of oxygen). As I considered these matters as I lay in my tent I felt we had nothing of which to be ashamed.

There followed a succession of warm, sunny, idle days. Gerald had been ordered complete rest before he attempted the arduous march back to Katmandu. I spent the mornings wandering in the surrounding woods collecting lichens—by this time I had a fairly representative collection—and occasionally rooting up new plants which I thought might interest Charles.

On the 14th a note arrived from Bis, still at the Dudh Pokhari, to say that he intended to return to Base on the 16th. I had informed him of our intention to cease further operations and he outlined his own plan, which was to march out to Darjeeling by the low-level route. That evening Tom's party returned from Thame bringing Charles with them. The festival had been a most impressive affair and I now regretted having missed it. Tom also brought news of a third Yeti scalp held in the temple at Namche Bazar. This "scalp" was clearly an imitation of those at Khumjung and Pangboche. It was composed of separate pieces of skin—these looked genuine enough—sewn together into roughly the same shape as the other two. We decided that the monks of Namche Bazar, lacking a "genuine" scalp for their temple, and being envious of those of their neighbours, had fashioned a prestige imitation with which to console their villagers. An impious thought is that possibly the Namche Bazar scalp is the explanation of Khumjung's missing Yeti hide.

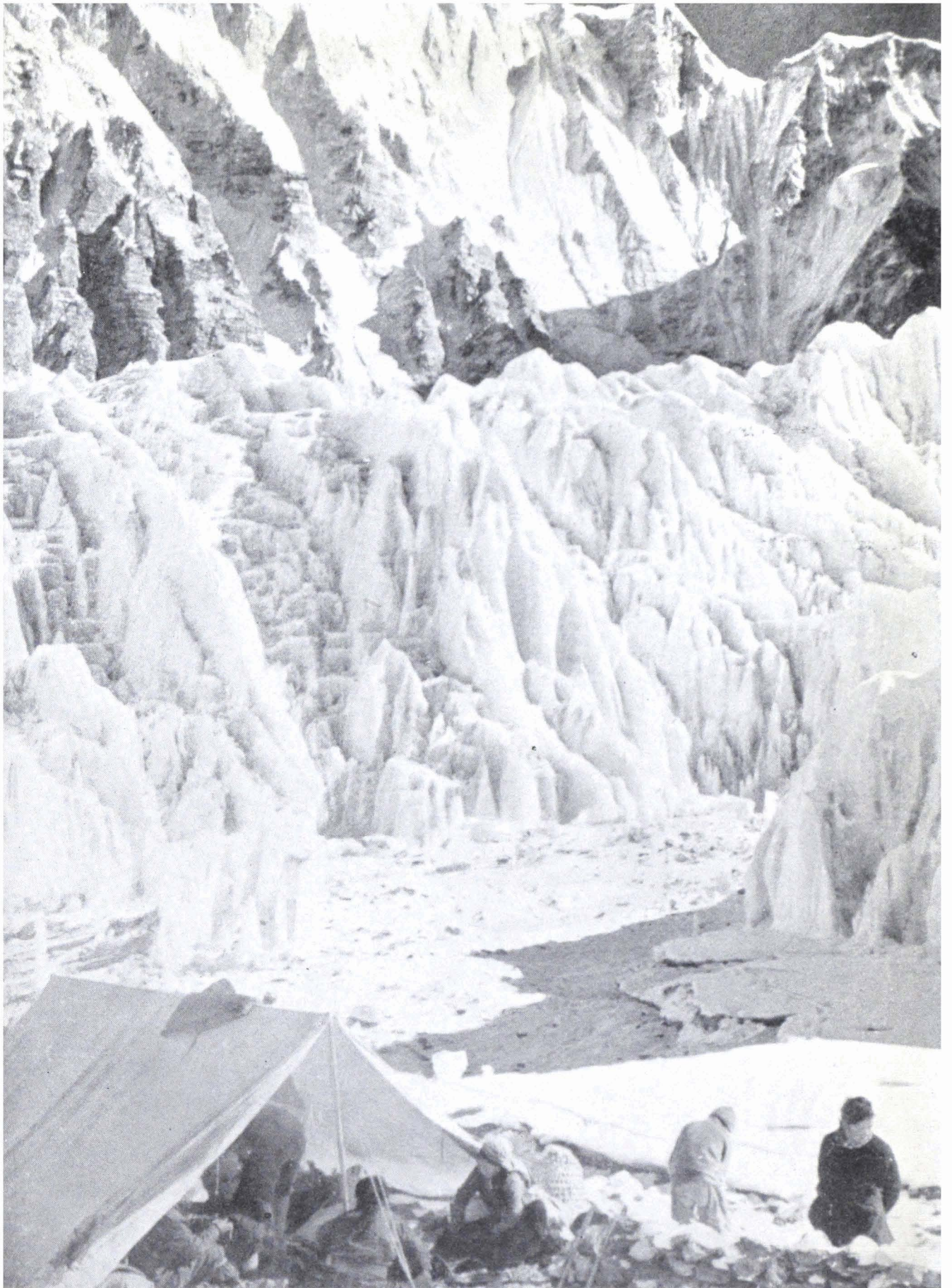
Throughout these days we had been anxiously listening to news of the monsoon over our small wireless receiver—our main radio equipment was useless for this purpose. We had previously not used this receiver much as it tended to be unsettling for morale, particularly when we picked up the spoken reports of air-liner pilots heading for Karachi and home. Now interspersed with "Temple Time" from Ceylon and other exotic features it brought us news of the advance of the monsoon first "in feeble strength" south of the Andamans and later with gathering force in the Bay of Bengal. These were warnings which it would be foolhardy to ignore.

It was now decided that it would be advisable to send someone on ahead of the main party to Katmandu in order to ensure that enough money was available there to pay off the coolies who would carry for us on our march out. It was also as well that other matters such as accommodation for ourselves and our Sherpas and animals should be attended to in advance of the arrival of our main party. I was chosen for this task, having already done the journey alone in the previous year, and I was completely agreeable for I knew that if I fell sick by the wayside it would only be a matter of three days or so before I was overtaken by Bill.

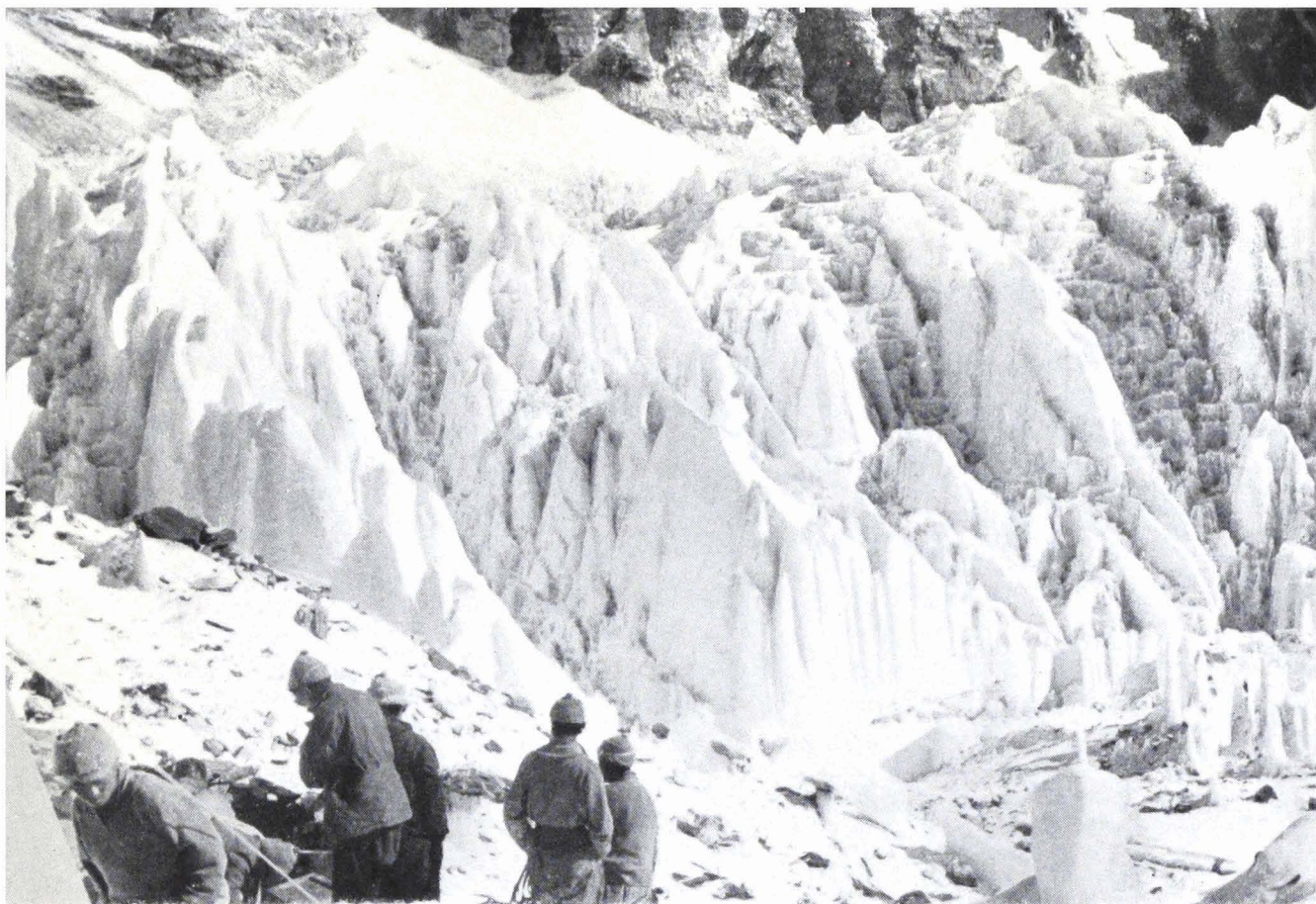
CHAPTER XIV

BACK TO KATMANDU—AND TO DARJEELING

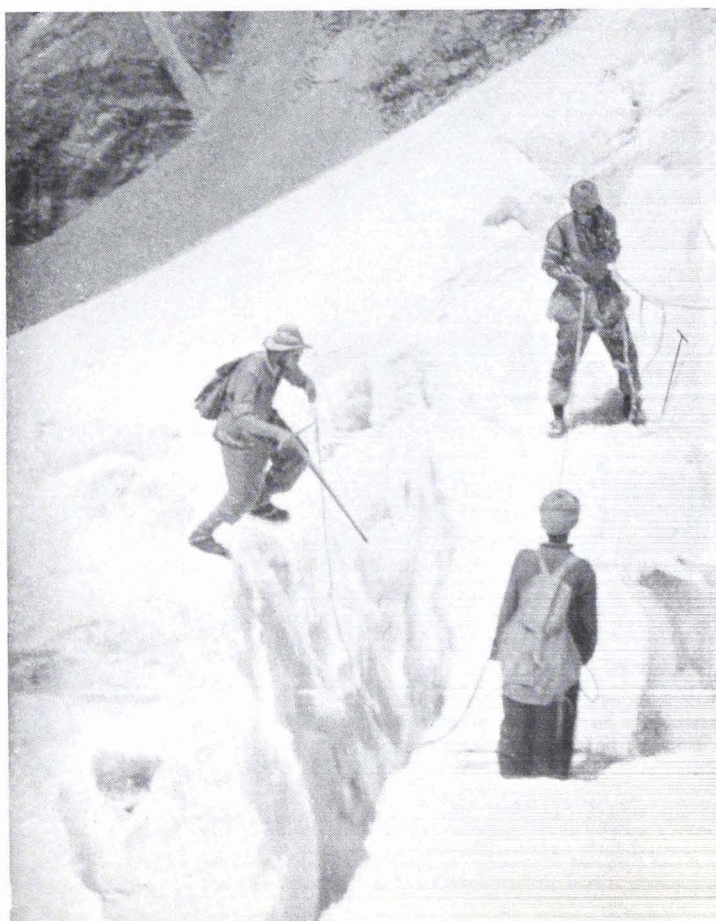
ON 16th May, two days before I was due to leave, Bis and Ahkey returned from the Dudh Pokhari. They had seen no sign of a Yeti but they brought with them a most valuable addition to the menagerie—three wolf cubs, so young that they were still blind. These were cubs from the pair who had been in touch with us ever since we entered the Sherpa country. These animals are only too well known to the Sherpas themselves, for in the course of a few years their deprivations among the yak-herds and the flocks of sheep and goats have caused damage running into some hundreds of pounds. On the credit side it must be said that their tracks in the snow had twice led us over high passes whose existence we had not suspected. Also, being hunters like ourselves, they had taught us many lessons in stalking mountain animals. For instance, by following the trail they leave in the snow we had learnt such matters as what particular group of rocks may be worth investigating and which horizons an animal of intelligence will avoid if it wishes to remain unseen. The Sherpas believe that this pair of wolves is the only one in their area. The she-wolf with the black patch on her right haunch is the second partner of the huge, creamy-coloured male. His first mate was trapped and killed three years ago but next season he was back once more with his present partner. Since that time the new pair have developed almost diabolical cunning and have been killing for pleasure rather than for food. Having no weapons themselves the Sherpas had often implored us to try and shoot them, but they had never come within range when we had guns with us. The two wolves have two special enemies—the yak graziers Partharky of Phorche Village and Afu of Khumjung. Last year, by patient tracking, they discovered the cave where the she-wolf was nursing two cubs. They took the cubs and killed them and within a week they collected nearly £70 “blood money” from fellow yak-herders by exhibiting them round neighbouring villages. This year the two Sherpas again discovered the lair—a cave at Gokyo, just to the north



The Everest Expedition's Base Camp re-occupied by our own expedition



Camp at the head of the Khumbu Glacier used last year as Base Camp by the Everest Expedition



Jeeves jumps a crevasse in the Everest Ice Fall

of the grazing village of Chugima up the eastern ablation valley of the Dudh Kosi Glacier. This time there were three cubs—one male and two female. It was a happy stroke of good luck that when the cubs were brought down to a yak-hut, followed at a safe distance by the parents, Bis happened to be in the vicinity. The Sherpas thought that by using the cubs as a decoy they could lure the parents within shooting range. They knew Bis had a gun, so he was sent for. Unfortunately the only weapon Bis had with him was a light shotgun he was using for his bird-collecting. Against a wolf it could only be effective at point-blank range. A battle of wits now developed. For two days Bis, the two Sherpas and the three cubs remained in the hut while the two wolves circled outside. Bis said that occasionally the she-wolf would approach to within 100 yards lay her muzzle on a rock and make liquid eyes at him as if coaxing him to give up the cubs, while he on his part tried every trick he could think of to bring her within range. He realised later that the only chance he might have had of bagging the pair would have come if he had dressed up in yak-herd's clothes. On the second day the two wolves grew tired of the situation and disappeared.

Bis turned up at the Base Camp carrying the three cubs in a provision box. We were anxious to buy the cubs but could not possibly match the amount of blood money that Partharky and Afu could collect by exhibiting them. In the end it was decided that we should buy two outright and that the two hunters should take one cub on a tour of the villages, after which it should be returned alive to us. For some days we reversed Kipling's Mowgli story by rearing the cubs on patent baby food in a baby's bottle. They proved to be mannerless little ruffians who fought each other viciously for first turn at feeding-time.

To disprove the Sherpas' theory that there is only one pair of wolves in the district, two more cubs from a second litter discovered high up in the Bhote Kosi valley were later brought to us. Of the five, three survived the journey back to England and were presented by us to the London Zoo. They are, I believe, the only specimens of the Tibetan snow wolf ever seen in captivity. It was such a rare capture that for some time there was some reluctance at the London Zoo to recognise them as the Tibetan Snow Wolf and they were described as the Indian Plains Wolf. One can only say that both litters were born at rather more than 18,000 ft. on the permanent snow-line, the parents having quite clearly come into the Sherpa country from Tibet. Wolves do not occur below Namche Bazar

until one reaches the plains. We are confident that when they are fully grown the wolves will speak for themselves, for they are huge creatures which dwarf the common plains wolf. The adults are almost white in colour and it has been interesting to note that within six months the coats of our cubs have already changed from black to sandy-brown.

The day the wolf cubs arrived in camp also saw the arrival of a small boy who brought another handsome tragopan and two chicks. Bis and Ahkey also brought with them a brace of duck which they had shot at Lang Boma Lake. These we had curried for dinner. As there was not sufficient to go around, Bis modestly refused his helping. They proved quite dreadful food but we did the best we could with it. After we had finished eating Bis impishly informed us that they were Brahminy Duck and continued with an academic dissertation on their diet, which apparently is chiefly composed of dead bodies floating down the rivers of India.

The next day was my last at the Base Camp. It had been decided that I should take thirty porters with me, who would carry all our radio gear. It was important that this gear should be re-exported within six months of its import, otherwise we might forfeit a very large deposit which had been paid to the Customs authorities. That night we invited all our permanent Sherpas to a final celebration dinner, which was also attended by many of our friends from the surrounding villages. Guests of honour included Nemi's wife Pem Pem, who is Tenzing's favourite sister and who had been staying at Thame. She brought her child with her. Mukherjee and his Indian assistant came up from Namche Bazar and, being Hindus, were served with kippers instead of the corned beef and spaghetti which was devoured in immense quantities by everyone else. Dancing and singing of Sherpa songs, some of which we ourselves had by this time learnt, continued until after midnight and, of course, *chang* and *rakshi* flowed freely. . . .

The next day, 18th May, which was to see my departure for Katmandu, began with the arrival of a runner from John Jackson. John's report was dated the 13th May and informed us that he had crossed both the Ambu Lapcha and the Barun Passes and had made contact on the Barun Glacier with both the New Zealand and the Californian expeditions then attempting to climb the twin summits of Makalu. This is probably the first time in mountaineering history that major expeditions from two countries have attempted the same mountain at the same time and one would imagine that

some rivalry would be unavoidable, but John Jackson told us that the greatest friendliness existed between the two parties who were camped within ten minutes of each other.

The Americans were apparently concentrating on the peak known as Makalu I and the New Zealanders on Makalu II. At the New Zealanders' Camp I, on the stony section of the Makalu Glacier, Jackson found Edmund Hillary and Brian Wilkins. Charles Evans who, in the previous year had reached the south summit of Everest and was now a guest climber with the New Zealanders, George Lowe, also of the Everest team, and Bill Bevan had gone on ahead to attempt to establish their next camp at a height of 22,000 ft. At the New Zealand Base Camp John found Jim MacFarlane and Dr. Ball. Five days before, MacFarlane had spent a night down a crevasse into which he had fallen and suffered some frostbite before being rescued the next day, but Hillary was anxious that we should pass on the message to MacFarlane's relatives and friends that he was recovering very well and was most cheerful. During the successful rescue, Hillary had cracked a rib but he appeared to be fully recovered when John met him. John parted company as Hillary and Wilkins set off for their Camp II, both carrying 40-lb. packs. John's last sight of Hillary was of him waving cheerfully as he and Wilkins moved off into the distance. About four days later Hillary himself fell desperately sick, it was thought with some form of malaria contracted on the march up to Makalu, and his friends throughout the world waited anxiously until it was known for certain that he had survived.

At the Californian Base Camp John found that the Americans, having been longer in the field than the New Zealanders, had their climb further advanced. They had established their Camp III on the Barun Glacier at 22,000 ft. and their Camp IV at about 23,000 ft. A long steep rock-ridge (the south-east ridge) remained to the summit, which is well over 25,000 ft. high. On 14th April most of the climbers, including their leader William Siri, Dick Houston and Fritz Lipman had returned to their Base Camp. The Americans were all unanimous that their success would depend on a spell of really good weather—a "lull"—such as favoured the Everest Team in the previous year. John said that when they were talking the wind was blowing at 40-50 knots and it was bitterly cold. The Americans never reached their target. Their efforts were brought to an end by the premature arrival of the monsoon, which defeated all the Himalayan climbing expeditions of the year, except that of the

Italians on K.2 who were brilliantly successful. It can be said, however, that entirely different monsoon conditions prevailed on K.2 from those round Makalu.

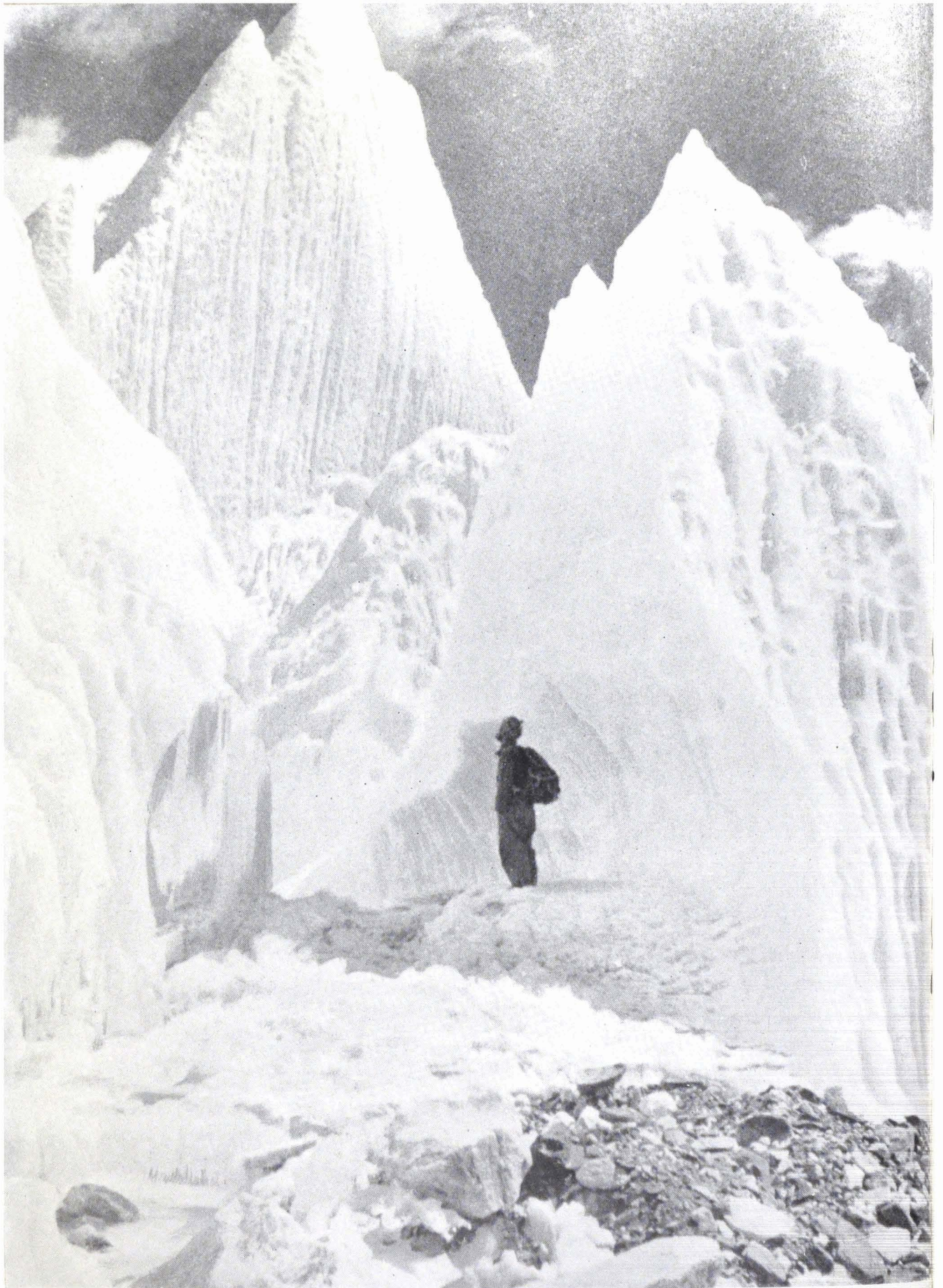
John Jackson continued from Makalu towards Kangchenjunga where he had a remarkable family reunion with his brother Ronald. On 18th June he cabled to London:

“My brother Ronald was on the British Reconnaissance Expedition to find a route to the summit of Kangchenjunga, the 28,150-ft. mountain which is still unclimbed. I set off from our Base Camp with four Sherpas and two Sherpani to see if I could find any trace of Yeti footprints over in the Kangchenjunga region. This is about 80 miles as the crow flies from the Everest area where our own expedition was working and about 250 miles of actual trekking over hard country. My journey took about eighteen days. Then, at 8 o'clock one morning, well down below me in the Kalung Valley I saw one of the British Expedition tents at about 15,000 ft. When I reached the slopes above the tent—it was several hours' march from where I first sighted it—I gave a cuckoo call. It was a call Ron and I first used as a private signal when he taught me to climb in the Lake District twenty years ago. We have used it ever since because it is a sound which carries a long way. He knew, as soon as he heard it, that it was I and then came running out to meet me. I was a welcome visitor because the Reconnaissance Team was running short of food. Supplies were low because they had had coolie trouble and had been living on a diet of soup and *chaprit*, a kind of roast ground barley. I was able to give them a gift of food from our own supplies and we had a slap-up feed of ox tongue and biscuits to celebrate our reunion.”

We spent some time sitting in the mess tent discussing John's message and waiting for the porters who had been ordered for me to turn up. It was a very long wait. By 11 o'clock only three men out of the expected thirty had arrived. They informed us that the others had cried off with the usual excuses that they had work in the fields to do; that it was now too hot down below; that they would be bound to get malaria and die. For an hour or two it seemed that we had reached a complete impasse; then, by a remarkable coincidence, a coolie contractor from lower down the valley walked into the camp and offered us all the labour we should require if we would give him four days to recruit from the lower villages. This suited our main



Jeeves in the Everest Ice Fall gazes at Nuptse Peak



Jackson among ice pinnacles immediately below the Everest Ice Fall

party, but it meant that I should have to modify my own plans. Instead of thirty coolies it was decided that I should take only eight, two or three of whom stated that they would go no further than Namche Bazar, where they guaranteed, however, to find substitutes. It was obvious that I should not get beyond Namche Bazar that night, but the great thing was to get on the move. Shortly before I left, Da Temba came to the mess tent bearing a white silk scarf for each of us and a bottle of very special *rakshi* which, as a mark of particular favour, was smeared round the rim with butter. This was a present from the Sherpas in return for the previous night's entertainment.

I left Base Camp for the last time at three in the afternoon and arrived in Namche Bazar two hours later. An important wedding was in progress and all the inhabitants were wearing their gayest clothes. Three-quarters of them were more than three-parts drunk and everyone was in the highest possible spirits. Mukherjee, who had been expecting me since the morning, came out to greet me and, hearing of the coolie trouble, insisted that I should spend the night with him. He was kind enough to present me with a Sherpa mat beautifully embroidered with different coloured wools. In the evening we walked across the village for a last stoop of *chang* at Gyalgen I's house, but had hardly settled down when news was sent us that another runner had arrived from Katmandu. Besides our mail and a bundle of newspapers, this runner brought with him four very welcome bottles of rum and I was able to repay Mukherjee to some extent for his hospitality.

It had been decided that Pemba, the Sherpa cook, should act as my Sirdar on the journey down, as Narayan was more adept at cooking in difficult circumstances for a large number of men. At six next morning Pemba roused me with the news that a full team of eight coolies was available. Two turned out to be very old men indeed and four were women. The other two said they would carry only as far as Those, the half-way mark, but guaranteed to find replacements there. On the whole I counted myself rather lucky. It was still not yet 7 o'clock when Pasang Phutar and his wife arrived with another white silk scarf, which they ceremoniously draped around me, and another bottle of their very best *rakshi*. Good-fellowship demanded that this had to be drunk at once—an appalling imposition for an empty stomach—particularly as a very great deal of Mukherjee's excellent *Chang* had to be poured on top of it. It can, however, be said that this pre-breakfast party eased the sorrow of parting.

I do not intend to describe my journey in detail, for it passed off almost entirely without incident. As the bridge lower down the Dudh Kosi had already been washed away and would not be repaired during the monsoon season we took the high-altitude route which leads westwards from Tate to Junbesi. This section took us four days and for part of the way brought us once more as high as 17,000 ft. Quite apart from being wonderful Yeti country, this route must be particularly beautiful, for there were glimpses of glorious pink, white and yellow rhododendron trees as well as delightful dwarf rhododendrons with blossoms as neat as rambler rose-buds. Primulas of many varieties abounded, as did a number of other alpine flowers which I was unable to identify, but throughout this part of the journey we were marching through very thick mist or pouring rain, sometimes through a combination of the two, and seldom was visibility more than a few hundred yards. Whatever the situation in the Bay of Bengal, Pemba and the Sherpas were quite convinced that the monsoon was already well upon us. Pemba, a rather mournful man, who was anything but a "go-er," kept a very gentle hand on the coolies, with the result that our daily marches tended to get shorter and shorter, each leading us from one damp, chilly and depressing camp-site to another. When at last we began to get lower, we walked out of the dank upland mists and through a succession of violent rain-storms interspersed with bright, sunny periods. Those we reached on the seventh day and had hardly got the tent up in the police station compound when another tremendous thunder-storm broke over us. This storm continued throughout the night. The two Namche Bazar coolies who had announced that they would turn back at Those now agreed to make the full march, but I was to lose the oldest two days later. In the intervals between the storms it had become stiflingly hot and this man in particular had begun to flag badly. It was a kindness to pay him off and good fortune for me that we were able to get an excellent substitute, a neatly-dressed Nepali who proved a fine carrier.

Two days later I was able to send a runner off to Saksena with the news that I expected to arrive at Banepa on the morning of 1st June. Possibly the most memorable day of the march was 31st May. In the early morning we had climbed down to the junction of the two rivers at Dolalghat where, from the stretch of sand which serves the village as burning ghat, I had a most exquisite bathe, wallowing in the water for at least half an hour. A fisherman was casting his nets on the far shore, while above me the sun shone through the pale green

varnished leaves and large orange-coloured blossoms of a magnificent flowering tree, whose name I do not know. Three squirrels were chasing each other round the branches and two gaudy kingfishers peered intently into the water from one of the lowest twigs.

All that morning another thunder-storm had been building up and we had climbed less than two miles up from the river when it broke over us. We had reached the foot of a gully where a thin trickle of water fell sheer for many hundreds of feet to the pathway we were using. Remains of many camp-fires showed that this gully was a favourite halting-place. The storm rapidly reached cloud-burst proportions and we were forced to take shelter beneath a pipal tree just to one side of the gully. Some kind Providence must have guided us in this choice for a more obvious shelter was afforded by the gully itself, but, had we stayed there, there is not the least shadow of doubt that our whole party would have been killed. Suddenly, with no warning whatsoever, an immense wall of dirty brown water, many thousands of tons in volume and carrying whole trees with it, burst over the top of the cliff and thundered down into the gully. The cliff above us began to crumble. Huge rocks became dislodged and smashed down on to the track. Above the deafening roar of this cataract could be heard the screams of the Sherpas as they bolted for safety, leaving Pemba and me to extricate the abandoned loads. On this occasion death literally missed us by a few feet. One hour later the skies again cleared and, making our way through a patch of jungle, we watched delightedly while a troupe of langur monkeys played happily in the trees, swinging from branch to branch with all the agility of gibbons.

This day's march placed me within easy reach of home and next morning at noon I walked into Banepa. Civilisation came to meet me in the form of Saksena driving the Land Rover which had been thoughtfully loaded with some bottles of cold beer, a thermos flask containing ready-mixed gin and lime, and a box of cream pastries which had been made that morning by Saksena's charming wife. Guest House No. 2, which we had used when we first arrived in Katmandu, was now occupied and the Nepal Hotel had been closed, but another establishment, the Snow View Hotel, had been opened under the capable management of Tom Mendies. This hotel is a modern building with very comfortable rooms and adjacent bathrooms, and both food and service are excellent. It is a great improvement on any hotel so far opened in Katmandu and is a result

of the efforts of the present Nepal Government to promote tourist traffic in their country.

I now had four days to kill before the arrival of the main party. One fact caused me uneasiness. The tremendous monsoon storms had rendered the airfield unusable. There had been no mail for a week and the banker's draft which would enable us to pay off our coolies and Sherpas was thus stuck in the post somewhere between Calcutta and Katmandu. It was not known when the airfield would be opened again or whether the mail-bags would be transferred to the land route and carried over the mountains by runner. Enough remained in our account at the bank to pay off my party, but that was all. Tom Stobart had reckoned that he would be needing anything up to 150 coolies and, counting our Darjeeling Sherpas, a very considerable amount of money would be required. It looked as if an interesting situation might develop, as indeed it did, but before coming to this part of the story it is necessary to say something of the tribulations of Dr. Biswas. As I have related, it was Bis's plan to march out alone along the low level route to Darjeeling. In normal seasons this is not difficult, for the track forms part of the main east-to-west trade route. Bis was convinced that he would be able to make some important additions to his bird-collection. There was also a chance that he would pick up further news of the Yeti. On Thursday, 3rd June, when I was sitting in the hotel chatting with Tom Mendies, Saksena arrived with part of a very garbled and incomplete radio message from Mukherjee. It began "Biswas requests one thousand rupees" and there it stopped. A note from the radio operator in Katmandu added that at this point Namche transmitter had broken down and it was not known when it would be in operation again. We never got the rest of the message. There was no means of telling where Bis wanted his money to be sent. Thus no action could be taken upon his request. We had together worked out the sum he would require for his journey and this had been allotted to him at the Base Camp. I had taken the further precaution of sending another sum of money to await him at Darjeeling. Neither he nor I realised what additional expenses would be incurred by the difficult monsoon conditions he would have to face. It was some time later that I heard his full story, when, his march having begun after our main party had left the Base Camp for Katmandu, he sent me the following account:

"On 25th May the Base Camp which we had set up and occupied

since mid-February was abandoned by me as the last member of the expedition, and Tasi, Nemi and I, accompanied by 26 porters, left for Namche Bazar. When I reached the platform below Tesinga opposite the Base Camp across the Dudh Kosi I looked back at the abandoned camp through my field-glasses and saw that the Khumjung villagers, who used to pass through the camp to collect firewood, were busy dismantling the planks, tree trunks and whatever was left there. I stayed a day in Namche Bazar getting some of my collecting boxes repaired and some empty biscuit tins, now full of specimens, soldered. On the 27th I left for Phakding. I halted there for three days, of which the first two were raining, and made some collections. I left for Bung on the 31st, spending that night at Surkya. Next day I left the main path that leads to Katmandu at Kharte and took the narrow track that goes east. I spent the night at Pankhoma, having had torrential rain during the middle of the day when I was at Puiyan. Heavy rain also fell throughout the night. On 2nd June—my birthday, although I did not remember it as such until the following day—I crossed the Inukhu Khola near a point where it joins with another stream. There were two bridges there, one over each river. The bigger one over the Inukhu Khola was in working order but the other bridge was merely a plank affair—originally there had been two planks but when we crossed there was only one, the other having been washed away. This plank was loose and it shook disconcertingly as we walked over it. Due to the heavy rain of the night before the current in the stream was very strong. However, the porters declined to cross the bridge and waded waist-deep through the torrential water, several at a time and all clutching one another for support. On the other side of the river a stiff climb brought us to Chaiya Kharka, where we camped for the night. When I took off my boots in the camp I discovered two or three dead and crumpled leeches between my feet and my socks and my feet covered with patches of blood. Leeches had evidently crawled over the top of my socks to reach some vulnerable point and gorged with my blood they had detached themselves in their usual manner, and had then been crushed by the friction of my boots.

“Next day we arrived at Bung. We halted here for a day and I was able to do a little collecting but was badly hampered by rain and mist, so dense that it was comparable to a London fog. Here I recruited a new team of porters and left for Dingla on 5th June. From Bung, where my camp had been at the top of the village (altitude 9,000 ft.) we descended about 3,500 ft. before crossing the

Hangu Khola by a plank and chain bridge. We climbed to the village of Gudel, where I found that some of my porters who had gone on ahead had settled down in a *chang* shop. From them I learnt that others had remained in another *chang* shop below Bung, but I was assured they would be following us. Some of the porters I was with at the moment, after finishing their quota of *chang*, then told me that there were cases of smallpox at Sare, where I had intended to camp for the night. They wanted to spend the night at Gudel, which would have meant another day lost. I assured them that we should camp at one end of Sare far away from smallpox cases. I then went ahead to Sare and selected a hut which might be used as a store-house for loads as well as a shelter for the porters. Here I found that there was one single case of smallpox, which had occurred a year before, and that the affected household lived over half a mile from the village down near the river. It was very late in the evening when the porters started coming in one by one and even at ten that night there was no trace of several, including the ones carrying my tent, sleeping-bag, etc. At eleven I went back with Tasi to search for the missing ones. It was pitch dark. About half a mile from our hut towards Gudel we discovered five sleeping under a large tree above the path. They said that it had become very dark and they were frightened to go any further. Concerning the other porters, they said that four of them had drunk so much *chang* they had been unable to leave Gudel and were spending the night there, and three others, who had not been convinced by my assurances regarding the smallpox outbreak, had gone on past Sare to find some shelter. The position was now like this: 4 porters at Gudel, 5 at a spot about half a mile away from Sare, 14 at Sare with me and 3 somewhere east of Sare. There was nothing to be done at that hour of the night so we returned back to our hut, having retrieved my lilo and sleeping-bag, and turned in well after midnight. Next morning, to my utter surprise, all the "missing" Sherpas turned up at Sare at 7 o'clock, their loads all ready to be carried.

"That day (6th June) I left Sherpa country at Salpa Bhanjyang (12,000 ft.) and entered the Arun Valley. I camped for the night at Phedi. Leeches were bad here and I found that many had entered through my open shirt collar and were feeding on my body. Torrential rain fell all that evening and throughout the night. My next day's march lay along the Irkhua Khola, a tributary of the Arun. The day was extremely clear and bright, there being not a speck of cloud in the sky, and the sun was blazing furiously. The march

over boulders and through bushes along the river-bank (*circa* 4,000 ft.) was most unpleasantly hot, even for me, and even when I was stripped to the border-line of the local conception of decency. In the last hour before we camped at Papunga for the night we had two stiff short climbs. Next day we reached Dingla at three in the afternoon. I now no longer had enough money to pay all my porters. I had been expecting money from Katmandu at the local post office in reply to the wireless message I had sent from Namche Bazar. Of course I had no means of knowing that it had been impossible to transmit my message in its entirety. Some of the porters now offered to stay with me at least up to Chainpur, if not Darjeeling, and those who refused to stay were paid off. Later, however, I found it was not possible to raise the requisite number of porters locally, it being the season when almost all able-bodied men and women are at work in their paddy fields. I was therefore compelled to leave several of my loads behind here in the charge of some of the Dingla notables. I set out for Chainpur on 11th June.

“It had been my intention to cross the Arun at Sabhaya Ghat, but my porters now insisted on our crossing at Sati Ghat. When we reached Sati Ghat from Dingla (about 12 noon) it was quite infernally hot (altitude about 2,000 ft.). The river was almost prohibitively high, the current being very strong. There was, however, a single dug-out canoe at the ghat, carrying passengers from one bank to another. The boat was manned by five men, one being in front with a bamboo pole, three in the middle with narrow paddles and one aft, the coxswain, with a short wide paddle. These ferrymen were of jet black complexion and wore nothing other than their tiny loin-cloths. They could carry only three or four men with their loads at a time and it took us two and a half hours to complete the crossing with all our loads and the porters. The current in the river proved to be extremely strong. From our starting-point the boat would be towed diagonally upstream, but the current would carry us down about 200 yards below our starting-point on the opposite side. On the far side, after the passengers had disembarked, the boat would then be dragged upstream along the edge of the bank and then launched from a suitable starting-point. A large number of people were crossing the river and the ferrymen were doing brisk business. Even a horse took the help of the boat in crossing the river, it being made to swim beside the boat in which the owner sat holding its headband.

“That night we spent at Tumlingtar. Next morning we set off

for Chainpur but when we reached Sabhaya Khole near its confluence with the Arun, we found, to our surprise, that overnight both the rivers had become in spate. The boat which normally plies at Sabhaya at this point was not there. The local people said that the rivers were in such a condition that the boatmen would not dare to bring their boat. It would certainly capsize. There was no other means of crossing the Sabhaya. For hours I marched along the river upstream and downstream in vain, trying to find a point where the river was comparatively narrow, with a view to cutting down one or more big trees and thus constructing a temporary bridge. At about three in the afternoon some local men offered to take our loads across the river and also help the porters and me to cross it. The local men formed some sort of living chain by holding one another's hands, and although it seemed certain they would be washed away, we crossed the river in this fashion. Water was up to my chest, the boulders of the river-bed slippery, and the current *very* strong, but I was held by two men on both sides and the crossing was made without accident. I cannot say I enjoyed this bath in the muddy turbulent waters. One of the porters was so afraid of water that he had to be carried over on the shoulders of one of the local men, our female porters also being carried in this fashion. It was already getting dark when our crossing was completed, so we camped at a tiny hamlet some 500 ft. above the river. Next day we reached Chainpur, having lost twenty-four hours and being almost penniless. Once more the local Post Office yielded no mail from Katmandu nor any money. I discussed my financial position with the S.D.O. and was both astonished and highly pleased when he at once procured me some money which was even free of interest. At last my situation was saved and I was able to pay my porters. Five men I sent back to bring up the loads we had left at Dingla, but they came back the next morning because the boat at Sabhaya had been washed away. Both the Arun and Sabhaya rivers were in spate. I sent them back the same day with instructions to try the three or four ghats on the Arun River below Chainpur. After eight days they returned with the loads from Dingla, having only been able to cross the Arun at Kundale Ghat, for no boats were operable in any other ghat in the vicinity. Throughout this time I was trying to contact Katmandu by means of the Radio Station at Dhankuta but, as ill luck would have it, the transmitter there was continuously out of order. Thick cloud and rain most of the time during these days put an end to my work—out of the eight days I went out collecting, only two proved pro-

fitable, and I gathered only a very few specimens. I would go out with my gun and within a few minutes would be enveloped in dense cloud and blinding rain, reducing visibility to a few yards at the most. I would try my luck for hours and hours each day, only to return in the evening almost empty-handed. This went on for a full week. Finally I decided to give up collecting and go straight to Darjeeling. Collecting had been brought to an end by the early arrival of an unusually heavy monsoon.

"I left Chainpur for Darjeeling on 27th June. Four or five miles of the track beyond Chainpur provided very good going, the path being wide and well maintained, but it soon dwindled into a thread-like footpath which was both narrow and awkward. After crossing the Pilus Khola we had a very severe, almost never-ending climb up to Nundhaki where we spent the night. Next morning we crossed the Milke Bhanjyang (10,000 ft.) and entered the Tamur Valley, leaving the Arun Valley behind us. We spent the night at Sango, the next day crossing the Tamur near Dumuhan and reaching Taplejung. Throughout these three days extremely heavy rain fell unceasingly and we were much troubled by leeches. The next day brought us down to a small stream at Taplejung, the path lying along its bank and over its boulders, but since the stream was in spate we were compelled to cross and recross it three times. Next followed a crossing of the Kabeli River, this being a tributary of the Tamur. There was a bridge here, the usual chain and plank affair, but it was in deplorable condition, being very much like the one we had crossed long before below Charikot, on our march up to Namche. The bridge here was, however, much more dangerous because it was far longer and the river below was very high. If one looked down at the flowing water from the middle of the bridge one was at once overcome with giddiness and the illusion that the entire bridge was moving upstream against the current. That night we camped at Ang Bung and next day reached Khonga, this being a very long march through incessant rain and in many places over slippery red clay, where some of the porters were continually falling with their loads, happily without serious accident. Next day we reached Phedi on the western slope of the Singlali range. It had rained heavily since the early morning but at about 2 p.m. it suddenly cleared and after an interval of many days we once more saw the sun. Next day, 2nd July, we had a really bad march. We took a short cut, the path becoming indescribably bad and non-existent at a number of points. Leeches were very numerous and persistent. Drizzle was incessant, the rain

having already transformed the so-called path into a hill stream. However at about 1.30 p.m. we crossed the frontier into India and trekked southward along the Phalot-Darjeeling Road. Walking along this road was a pleasure in spite of the rain, after scrambling and floundering along the paths of Eastern Nepal. On 4th July we reached Jorepokhri. On the 5th I ceremoniously shaved off my beard, and on the 6th I arrived at Darjeeling.

“The collection I had been able to make between Phakding and Darjeeling included 20 birds, a few mammals, some frogs and toads, innumerable insects, and some leeches.

“Between 12,000 and 19,000 feet in the Sola Khumbu district I had collected: 58 species of birds, 15 of mammals, some frogs, innumerable insects, snails, flatworms, etc. A few of these may ultimately turn out to be new to science, although I cannot be sure yet.

“These collections are important not only because of the presence of possible new species or because the bird-collection is probably the best single bird-collection ever made at such altitudes of the Himalayas, but also for many new records—geographical and altitudinal.”¹

¹ Bis later wrote to me: “Two of the frogs collected by me have proved to be new to science and more novelties are expected in other groups.”

A list of birds collected and identified appears in Appendix C. R.I.

CHAPTER XV

CONCLUSION

LONG before Bis crossed the frontier into India our main party had arrived back in Katmandu and indeed most of us were back in England. None of us will forget that stay of ours in the Nepalese capital, nor, I am sure, will Tom Mendies. On Thursday, 3rd June, while I was still alone, a runner arrived with a note from Tom Stobart, which he had written the previous Monday. It ran:

“Dear Ralph, We are camping tonight in a fly-blown village whose name I don’t know, above the Charikot Bridge. It is very wet! We expect to be in Banepa at midday on the 6th, Sunday. Can we have—

- (1) Land Rover to take us all in.
- (2) Two trucks—might manage with one big one, but think two would be best.
- (3) Place to sort out stores and keep the animals in Katmandu.
- (4) Accommodation (needless to say).
- (5) BEER!

“All in good order, though coolies drunk most of the time. One baby wolf and two snow-cocks are dead. They don’t seem to stand the heat well. The rest in fine form.

“Hope you had a good trip. Tom.”

The next day a second runner arrived with another note:

“We are having a lot of rain and intend to press on and save a day, so we shall be in Banepa at 12 on Saturday, not Sunday as I wrote. Can you alter arrangements to meet us a day earlier please? All well. Tom.”

At Katmandu the position was that the airfield was still out of order. No money had arrived and until it did, accommodation had to be found for anything between 150 and 200 Sherpa coolies, as

well as the animals and birds. Boris Lesanowitch very kindly offered to accommodate the menagerie. Tom Mendies—with what he may well have thought later was misguided hospitality—suggested that the Sherpas should camp in the compound of the Snow View Hotel.

At 12 noon on Saturday I drove out to meet Tom's party at Banepa and bring them back to the hotel. Behind us followed the two ramshackle lorries piled high with our equipment which was surmounted by a full load of Sherpas. The Snow View Hotel is not a large building. It is a two-story affair built round three sides of the compound. The Sherpa coolies, most of whom came from the poorest families, and who with hangers-on now numbered at least 200, were delighted with their new quarters and settled down happily in the mud of the compound, quite prepared for an indefinite stay. Hardly an inch of ground was left clear. Camp-fires were lit all over the place. The uproar was continuous and the aroma from this army of the cheerfully unwashed overpowering. These conditions, growing more intolerable day by day, lasted for a week, by which time Tom Mendies must have been near a nervous breakdown. The remainder of the distraught hotel guests had long since given up complaining, for they had nowhere else to go. Each night saw a fresh outburst of revelry and pandemonium, for the Sherpas, although still waiting to be paid off, seemed to have plenty of money left with which to buy *rakshi*. One night there was a free-for-all fight between our coolies and those of another expedition which had reached Katmandu on its return journey. The coolies remained on terms of the friendliest affection with us and in parties of five or six would invade our bedrooms at any hour of the day or night. Here they would sit down smiling broadly and making themselves thoroughly at home, while Tom and his bearers paraded up and down through the building, spraying with flit-guns and dispensing dense clouds of DDT powder. It was nothing to be awoken at five in the morning by a radiant Sherpa solicitously pressing a good pint of raw *rakshi* to one's lips. It was, however, with unbounded relief that at last we heard that the airfield was once more in operation and that our money had arrived. Having received their pay, the Sherpas set off for home feeling that they had had the time of their lives. It was three or four days before we could arrange air transport to fly the rest of the expedition down to Calcutta.

Throughout our stay in Katmandu the members of the expedition had been most hospitably entertained by the Foreign Minister, Mr.

and Mrs. Summerhayes, the members of the American Point Four Mission and by Boris Lesanowitch. Both Mr. M. P. Koirala, the Prime Minister, and General Kaiser, who in our absence had been appointed Defence Minister, were anxious to hear personal accounts of our adventures. On 13th June Mr. Koirala received all of us at his home. The Premier, who started his career in the Forestry Administration Service, has always taken the keenest interest in outdoor activities in Nepal and followed our story with the greatest attention. He called for a large-scale map and traced out our route upon it. At the close of our interview he gave me the following message:

“The *Daily Mail* Himalayan Expedition, consisting of scientists and assisted by climbers came to Nepal in January 1954 with a view to establishing definite proofs of the existence or otherwise of the mysterious Yeti which is believed to exist in Himalayan and sub-Himalayan regions. Though the expedition, who worked diligently for four months was unable, either to sight or to catch the elusive Yeti, it can be said beyond any doubt that they accomplished a lot of spadework and established many facts relating to the habits of the animal. That in itself is an achievement to be proud of. Apart from the search for the Yeti, the collection of many specimens of the flora and fauna of the little-known Himalayas of Eastern Nepal would in themselves make a most absorbing study at the hands of the experts. The report that the Expedition’s Medical Officer was instrumental in stamping out an outbreak of smallpox in the Sherpa village of Namche Bazar is especially worthy of praise. I have derived immense pleasure in associating myself with this particular expedition which came to our country to unearth another Himalayan mystery. Their effort was for the common knowledge of the human race.”

I was also able to have two long talks with General Kaiser, who was also kind enough to send us another farewell message:

“Please accept my sincere congratulations on the inaugural success of the Yeti expedition, proving beyond doubt that the Yeti is there, and that with a little more luck in the future it will actually be seen.”

It was necessary to charter two aircraft to fly all our equipment and ourselves to Calcutta. It was arranged that Gerald Russell

should go in the first plane, with the Land Rover and our fire-arms, and that we should follow in the second with the equipment and the animals and birds.

The second plane left Katmandu on Wednesday, 16th June. Previously we had said good-bye to Akhey, to Ang Tschering and the rest of our faithful Darjeeling Sherpas who were walking out over the mountains to the railhead at Amlekhganj. The disbanding of an expedition is always a heart-breaking task, particularly when a fine team has been got together in which masters and men have worked together in complete harmony as had we—sharing discomforts and dangers, joys and sorrows, excitements and disappointments. Parting becomes additionally complicated when there is a language difficulty and all one's emotions have to be compressed into a handshake and a glance. I wrote an especially good recommendation into Norbu's record book, the more so as some woman, who had employed him for what must have been a "Sunday afternoon stroll" compared with the hardships he had undergone with me, had previously written "Is slow on the march." I took pleasure in writing "He was never slow on the march *with me*" and hope his next employer will not miss the point. Certainly Norbu would be my first choice if ever I have the good fortune to be a member of another Himalayan expedition.

A large crowd had collected at the airport, prominent among them being Boris, who was kind enough to present us with a flying squirrel as a parting gift. This squirrel was considered to be perfectly tame but the general commotion must have upset it for it escaped in the plane and bit three of us before it could be recaptured.

The seats had had to be taken out of the aircraft in order to accommodate all our stores and it was not a particularly comfortable journey as we bumped high over the Nepalese foothills down into Calcutta. Here, even compared with Katmandu, the heat was almost unendurable for us who only three or four weeks before had been shivering in our stiffly frozen tents. The condition of the animals was far worse and it was obvious that if some cool place could not be found for them we would lose the lot. We had arrived in the evening and a good hour was passed at the Dum Dum airport placing our equipment in bond. It was too late to contact animal dealers or the Calcutta Zoo authorities and we thus threw ourselves on the mercy of the manager of the air-conditioned Spence's Hotel. The manager received our request unblinkingly and one cannot help feeling that he was more than accommodating. Possibly it is as well

that the remainder of the guests did not know that at one time Tom Stobart's air-cooled suite harboured the following:

3 wolves in the bathroom.

A mongoose and a flying squirrel in the bedroom.

A snake (a harmless one) in a biscuit box.

A snow-cock and a number of handsome pheasants in the laundry basket.

A red panda in a cage.

Bill Edgar, who had also shared the room with Tom, left next morning for New Delhi pale of face and muttering: "Never again."

It proved a pretty lively morning, for both the mongoose and the flying squirrel escaped into the corridors and were at liberty about the hotel for some hours before they were finally retrieved from the lift shaft. It was a shockingly busy day for me. Passages had to be booked and other expedition work attended to, while someone had to receive a constant succession of callers—friends, well-wishers, the merely curious, newspaper reporters and cameramen. To the great relief of the management it was arranged that the animals should travel on the midnight plane to London. By this time Tom's room had become almost uninhabitable. John Jackson, who had now rejoined us, Stan and Chunk were to travel on the same plane as "keepers." They left late that evening for the airport but were back again at two in the morning with the menagerie, to say that the London plane was delayed for at least twenty-four hours. Possibly this was as well, for in the hurry to get them out of the hotel the snake in its biscuit box had been inadvertently left on a bench in the bar where it was, however, retrieved by one of us before the box had been opened by any curious outsider. It was two days later before the animal aircraft was able to leave, by which time both Tom and myself had left in another plane for Cyprus. Of the expedition, only Charles Stonor remained for a short while in Calcutta. Bis, battling his way out of Nepal, was still weeks away from home. John in the animal plane told me later that the pilot, who had willingly agreed to take all the animals in his cabin, soon bitterly repented his decision. The stench became so overpowering that at each stop they came to after Karachi the pilot pleaded that either the animals would have to get off the plane, or he would. It is, however, thanks to his endurance that we were able to deliver all our charges safely and alive to the London Zoo, with the single exception of the snake which was found dead when its box was opened.

Nothing now remains but to complete the story with our conclusions—to take stock of what we have achieved and to try and sum up our results. In the *Daily Mail* series this task was left to myself, to Tom Stobart and to Charles Stonor. In my own article I emphasised that our objective was best described as “the definitive identification of a hitherto unknown animal.” I again pointed out that we had no intention of trying to capture a specimen and bringing it back to Europe. The alternative to bringing the animal to experts was to take a party of the experts to the animal. On the Yeti’s own ground they could study the evidence at first hand and we hoped that their final conclusions would prove acceptable to the scientific world. I stressed the all-round fitness of our team for the task and I stated my conviction that, if ever another expedition sets out with the same objective, I feel they will be lucky to match the all-round competence of our team. We had had fears that we might be deficient in climbing strength, but they had soon been dissipated. Judging by the tracks he leaves in the snow, the Yeti may well be much faster across the country than were we, but he does not appear to possess any outstanding climbing agility. Had it come to the perpendicular it might well have proved that we were more than a match for him.

The decision to launch our expedition in the winter months was based on what I still think was a sound deduction—that cold and snowfall would force the Yeti down to lower altitudes. As yak-herding shepherds also retreat from the higher slopes in the face of winter, leaving the entire area deserted, we had also hoped to achieve the element of surprise. Before our expedition, extremely little had been known of winter conditions around Everest but we had received encouragement and valuable advice from Sir John Hunt and the other members of the Everest team, particularly with regard to clothing, equipment, food and acclimatisation. Looking back we found the Everest winter far more tolerable than we had anticipated. True, we had had to weather one or two ferocious blizzards and were sometimes held down for days at a time by thick blankets of fog, but there were also calm warm periods.

As regards the actual chase—when we left England we had held the belief that it would be merely a matter of picking up the Yeti tracks in the snow and following them until we caught up with the animal. In fact the Sherpas’ contention that the Yeti roams haphazardly throughout the vast boulder-strewn areas above the tree-line and below the permanent snows had proved only too correct.

It is impossible to describe how disheartening a chase can be in such conditions. Dawn would often find us on the trail threading our way slowly through an immense expanse of snow, ice and shattered rock and, as day drew on, pausing ever more frequently to gulp the thin air into our lungs. Hope would revive as we approached the last cliff-face or top the last horizon, invariably to be dashed again as the new prospect opened before us often larger and more desolate than the country we had just traversed. In such circumstances there is a temptation to camp too early, thus giving the Yeti two or three more hours of daylight to lengthen the distance between himself and his hunters. There is also an even greater temptation to press on regardless of a point of no return, risking the fact that a sudden blizzard, a bank of fog or the onset of fatigue—which comes with startling swiftness at high altitude—would find oneself and one's porters in an untenable position. Pursuit in such circumstances requires a very high degree of leadership, judgment and mountain craft and I think it is to the credit of all of us that, while we remained out abnormally long for a high-altitude expedition, we had no single case of injury, accident or illness to record among ourselves or our Sherpas.

I am personally convinced that sooner or later the Yeti will be found and that it will be sooner rather than later because of our efforts. One must however add a word of warning to future expeditions. I think it is the opinion of all of us when we review our own experiences that the Yeti is more likely to be met in a chance encounter round say, a rock, than by an organised search. A reconnaissance party of two or three Sahibs needs about 30 Sherpa porters to support it over a period of about three weeks. We found it impossible to introduce such a large body of men into an "empty quarter" of the Himalayas without disturbing all wild life within it. In such country there is no question of stalking an animal in the accepted sense of the term. For miles at a time there may be only one safe path used by men and animals alike, for to deviate from it would mean taking unacceptable risks from crevasses, avalanches and other hazards. Often such a path, as at the Nangpa La, may cross the dead centre of a snow-field where a party is as conspicuous as a line of black beetles on a white tablecloth and where, from the surrounding cliffs, a lurking animal can hold one under observation for hours at a time with freedom of choice to lie low or steal away across the next horizon.

I concluded my contribution by stressing that our expedition was.

not conceived with the object of amassing jealously guarded secrets. We wish any expedition which may follow us the very best of luck and, should they be successful, we shall be more than pleased if the great amount of evidence which we collected contributes in any way to that success.

Tom Stobart's article which appeared in the *Daily Mail* of 9th July was entirely concerned with the achievements of the expedition apart from Yeti-hunting. I print it here:

“The high Himalaya along the southern border of Tibet is still one of the least-known parts of the world, full of spectacular flowers, unusual birds and animals. Nepal, in particular, has been open to the outside world for only the past five years and is a treasure house in which one may still find an animal unknown in the museums or a new rhododendron to blaze in the garden.

“For the whole of the five months in which we hunted the Snowman, Dr. Biswas of the Indian Zoological Survey, helped by his Bhutanese skinner, Akhey Bhutia, collected and prepared skins of birds and mammals, mostly from the little-known region above the tree-line. This is of special interest since it is the highest fauna in the world. Dr. Biswas will have to spend some months working on this mass of material in the museum before we know the full extent of our success, but we think there is at least one species new to science. The collection of birds ranges from huge eagles and vultures, snow partridges, ducks and pheasants down to little coloured finches and birds which I myself classify as ‘little brown birds,’ beloved mostly by the experts.

“The mammals are wild goats, deer, foxes, weasels, martens mouse hares, rats and voles, kinds of creatures well adapted to live in the unpromising tundra country just below Everest.

“I must confess that my own interests lie more with the living animals. We have collected a great deal of information about the habits of these and managed to bring a few home alive, although carrying them 170 miles out along the Himalayan paths was not an easy matter.

“Most interesting of these now to be seen in the London Zoo are snow-cock, a bird very rarely seen in captivity, and three puppies of a very large strain of wolf—the Tibetan snow-wolf. The youngest of these, a little fellow we christened Tenzing, was born in that most popular Snowman resort, the upper Dudh Kosi valley, and was brought up on a bottle. His greed was phenomenal, quite out-

stripping anything I have ever seen—a sort of fur vacuum cleaner that breathed in the milk.

“Among the most interesting animals we studied were the Tibetan mouse hares. These were important because, besides being one of the highest living animals in the world, they are reputed to be the main food of the Snowman. Unfortunately our efforts to bring some of these back alive failed, as they could not stand the change in altitude. They live among the rocks between 15,000 ft. and 20,000 ft. and look exactly like a guinea-pig clothed in wild rabbit’s fur. With no tail, and feet concealed in their long coat, they bounce around on the rocks like balls of grey fluff and have no fear of man. They eat grass, roots and lichen.

“The migration of birds is always fascinating, and here we have an almost unstudied spring movement up from the plains of India and right across the main ranges of the Himalayas. We saw kites, cranes, ducks, geese, swifts, pipits, all going north across the ridges bordering Everest, and they must go to at least 20,000 ft. before they get over into the plateau of Tibet. We even saw a hoopoe alongside the ice-fall, at over 19,000 ft.

“No less important was the collection of plants and seeds made by Charles Stonor, although it was unfortunate that we were mostly working in the winter, having to start back just as the flowers were coming into their full beauty. Over 100 species from giant rhododendrons to small grasses were preserved and are being given to the national collections at Kew Gardens. This is not a large collection, but we hope there will be one or two new plants among them.

“We took an enormous number of coloured photographs of flowers in full bloom and of the sort of places in which they grow. This must be a highly valued modern adjunct to a herbarium of pressed specimens.

“Ralph Izzard used to scrape lichens off the rocks with great persistence—usually on a cold day when we wanted to keep moving. He finished with a large collection, although to be quite honest he doesn’t himself know the first thing about them. However, for his perseverance he will probably be rewarded with more new species than the experts. Lichens are little studied and are the province of the specialist, but they are the toughest plants in the world, going higher than any other plant on the mountains and even managing to gain a foothold on the Antarctic continent.

“Finally, in the field of anthropology we have acquired a great deal of data on the way of life, the agriculture and the economics of

the Sherpas. In particular we studied the movements of the yak-herds and their migration to summer villages in the hope that this would throw light on the Yeti, which seems to keep just ahead of the moves made by man.

“Our main effort, of course, was concentrated on finding an answer to the fascinating mystery of the Snowman, or Yeti, but our information on this is so detailed as to need an article to itself.”

It was left to Charles Stonor to say the final word in summing up our conclusions concerning the Yeti. He was placed at a great disadvantage in that he was compelled to compress his findings into a thousand words or so, which is all that a daily newspaper can afford in the present days of newsprint restrictions. He has, however, been kind enough to write out his conclusions in rather lengthier form for the purposes of this book:

THE YETI IN RETROSPECT

Before we left England at the beginning of the year, all possible evidence on the “Snow Man” was naturally examined and sifted: the net result was that it was slender, mildly conflicting, and based very largely on a general impression gained by most travellers in the Himalayas that some unknown beast existed in the remoter fastnesses. A few photographs of tracks in the snow whose identification had been the subject of much controversy were the only shred of hard-and-fast reality. From these vague rumours and second-hand tales had grown up a fantastic tissue of theories. For reasons some of us found hard to understand responsible men of science were able to state categorically that the story was based on the Common Langur Monkey of the Himalayas; while others of the same profession were equally definite that the so-called “Snow Man” was without doubt the large Red Bear. If sifting of the same chain of evidence could lead professional zoologists to such startlingly opposed conclusions—even if a few of us were tempted to think these dogmatic attitudes a trifle unscientific—surely there was an odd, bemused situation well worth looking into.

So that the expedition set out in a spirit of honest enquiry, completely open-minded as to the possible outcome. Was there some unknown beast in the unexplored fastnesses of Nepal and Tibet? Was it a myth? Or was it, as the experts laid down, a garbled account of some common and familiar animal? One guess seemed as good as another.

So we arrived in the Sherpa country armed only with very vague tales and inconclusive rumours with which to begin our search. Our immediate plan of campaign was twofold: to start in and search as soon as possible, and to find out what we could from the local population. An initial difficulty had already been created; most authorities at home in England had gone to some trouble to explain that it would be quite useless to question the Sherpas "Because a Native will-always-tell-you-what-you-want-to-know." I for one was not prepared to have my guns spiked by any such cliché. Suppose, for instance, the Sherpas did not know what we wanted to know: nor did we ourselves. Who or what was a "Native"? ultimately perhaps anybody who is not a professional scientist. Speaking for my own part, with a reasonably wide experience of Asiatic peoples—and I am sure every Himalayan traveller will agree wholeheartedly—the Sherpas are as intelligent, as logically-minded, and possibly even more hard-headed than we are. Indeed they must be; for they live in one of the most awkward terrains in the world from which to wrest a living. By way of life they are mainly graziers, shepherds with a very strong instinct for trade. Many are literate; all are products of Buddhist civilisation: they are not primitive or savage at all.

Now many of these people spend most of their lives from childhood looking after their herds, spread over the remoter valleys and slopes, and this, taken with their very unemotional temperament made it clear that to brush aside anything they had to tell us would be quite as stupid and prejudiced as to snub off a Highland keeper on the subject of red deer or a Sussex shepherd on the habits of hares.

We took every precaution while questioning the Sherpas: simply asking direct questions such as "We have heard there is a beast living in your country called a Yeti. What sort of creature is it?" It became clear, very early on, that the stories of a weird half-human monster, living in the snow-fields and glaciers were utterly strange to the Sherpas. Everybody knew for a fact that the Yeti existed, many people have seen one, and it is looked on as an animal pure and simple, living alongside wolves, snow-leopards, wild goats and other beasts of these mountains. To doubt its existence as we did was to evoke pitying looks. And let us remember that for all the local people know there are Yetis in abundance in every country in the world.

In trying to build up a picture of what it was said to look like we rejected all second- or third-hand descriptions and accounts: and took seriously only those from people who claimed to have seen

one themselves. Before many weeks were past it became almost startlingly evident that no matter when, or where, or under what circumstances a Sherpa claimed to have seen a Yeti, every account added up to precisely the same thing.

A smallish, squat animal, about the size of a fourteen-year-old boy: covered with stiff, bristly hair, reddish brown and black in colour, with a flat face like a monkey, a rather pointed head and no tail. It was described as normally walking on two legs, man-like, but if frightened, or on rocky ground, bounding along on all fours. It had a distinctive call, a loud mewling note, apparently like the mewling of a sea-gull, and most frequently heard in early evening or late afternoon. People from upwards of ten villages, spread over the Sherpa country were questioned intensively; as also were Tibetans down for winter trading. Their stories were as reasonable as they were unshakeable.

So far so good. But just where did this creature live and, even more important, was there anything for it to live *on*? It could not be a forest-dweller; there are only a very few areas of forest in this region: quite obviously no mammal could survive permanently in the higher ranges and peaks with their utterly barren glaciers, snow-fields, and cliffs. There remained the region, zone, call it what you will, between the forest and the peaks: an area of immense magnitude, between about 13,000 and 18,000 ft., including indeed the greater part of the higher Himalayas: not a barren zone, but alpine country with dwarf shrubs, plants and grasses; and populated by quite a sizeable number of birds and mammals. If the Yeti was to be found anywhere it must be here: and it was here that the Sherpas all agreed that it had its hide-out.

To digress for a moment; the wonderful achievements of purely climbing expeditions have for some years focused our attention on the higher ranges and peaks above the 20,000-ft. level—so much so that most of us automatically think of the Himalayas in terms of the topmost zone, and forget that there is this other region—far greater in its vast extent of rough pastures, semi-barren valleys, square miles of boulders, just below it.

To sum up on the initial position: we had established there was a very plausible story of an unknown beast, there was a great unexplored region for it to live in, and there was food, both plant and animal. Circumstantially the whole situation was becoming realistic: and the next step was to get down to the job and search the likely areas. At the outset it was very obvious this would be no easy

task: a huge area of broken, tough country with innumerable hide-outs where a shy, intelligent animal could avoid detection and sit pretty to its heart's content. Added to this the uncertainty of the weather; we could be and were immobilised for up to a week on end by frozen fog, snow blizzards and deep snow on the ground; we had only a very limited time at our disposal as we must be back before the monsoon.

It had become quite clear that another total misconception about the beast was on the way to being clarified. One of the main points in favour of its existence had been the sighting of the mysterious tracks in the snow in several parts of the Himalayas, and from which had arisen the totally erroneous idea that the Yeti was a creature of the perpetual snows: the simple fact was that there are regular falls of snow throughout the winter and, as in any other cold region, man, beasts and birds leave tracks when they chance to walk through it. The Sherpas were all most emphatic that the Yeti was a beast of the rocks—as the derivation of its name (*Yeh*, a rocky place) made clear. We found tracks of wolves, leopards, deer, tahr (wild goat) and foxes in many places where the snow was deep enough: and several times man-like tracks hard to identify with any known beast, and which some of us were reasonably sure were made by Yeti. Our Sherpa companions were always very fair-minded over these tracks: like us they held strong opinions in favour of them, but were quite aware that one can seldom be dogmatic over identifying tracks in the snow.

For fifteen weeks or so these sorties, or reconnaissance parties were kept up, climbing, slithering and scrambling over perhaps 400 square miles of alpine country between 13,000 and 18,000 ft.: not combing it; that would have been impossible, and a hundred Yeti may have been lying low in the area for all we know. By all accounts they were thin on the ground and, greatest obstacle of all, local opinion is emphatic that the Yeti is a roamer, and a vagrant, here today gone tomorrow; with no fixed den or lair to which it could be tracked; virtually anywhere was as likely as anywhere else for a chance encounter.

We did at least prove to our complete satisfaction that there is absolutely no theoretical case against the existence of a beast new to science in these mountains. The climate supports other sizeable mammals: there is plenty of food; much of the area teems with mouse hares, little beasts rather like guinea-pig, and both Sherpas and Tibetans maintain that mouse hares are the staple food, helped out

by insects (in the summer) and probably roots, shoots and leaves of alpine plants.

Another line of investigation was the so-called scalps kept in the temples of a few villages, and traditionally looked on as from Yeti: they were (as was proved by examination of hairs in England), of great age—perhaps three hundred years or even more. Their identification still remains unsolved. Opinion in this country is that they are not really scalps, but skin from the back and shoulders, skilfully moulded to look like the scalp of a pointed head: the origin is a mystery; the hairs are stiff and bristly like a pig, but are fox-red and black, and cannot so far be matched with any known animal. When or where they got them the Sherpas do not know.

Thus may our reconnaissance in search of the Yeti be summarised. How do our findings—the results of the first serious attempt to solve the mystery *on the spot*—tally with the accepted theories of the world of orthodox science?

(i) *The Yeti and the Langur Monkey.* The Langur is purely a beast of the forest: in summer it comes up as far as 12,000 ft., the wooded fringe of the Sherpa country proper, and is well known to all Sherpas who constantly see them (as we did) when they journey down to trade. Now the Himalayan Langur is a big grey-brown beast, with a very distinctive blackish face fringed with silver fur, and an extremely long and prominent tail. It is always in small troops, and never goes far from the shelter of trees. On the ground it walks daintily on all fours, its great tail held aloft; and even at several hundred yards range is quite unmistakable. I can think of no animal less likely to cause confusion or to be mixed up so as to be described in terms quite unlike its real appearance. The Sherpas to a man are quite incredulous that the Yeti and the Langur could be confused.

(ii) *The Yeti and the Red Bear.* There is here a case which needs sorting out. As has been recorded previously the Sherpas and Tibetans regard the Red Bear as a type of Yeti, but held it absolutely distinct from the small Man-Yeti of their country. Again, it is a familiar beast to them; for most people go regularly into Tibet to trade, and quite often see bears across the north of the Great Himalayan range. They are adamant that Red Bears very seldom if ever come into their country: and in support of this point out very logically that while bears are a real menace to livestock in Tibet, killing both yaks and sheep, the small Man-Yeti is not regarded as in any way a menace to their own herds: if the small Man-Yeti and the Red Bear are one

and the same, one is forced to believe that while the Sherpas can recognise the Red Bear in Tibet they cannot do so in their country; and that while it is a beast dangerous to men and herds across the border, it changes its habits in the Sherpa country. There is, furthermore, a very sharp distinction made by the Tibetans themselves between the two types of Yeti.

By and large, it is hard indeed to escape from the view that there is in these remote, vast and unexplored mountain ranges some beast as yet unknown to science. Perhaps it will be a type of Ape or Monkey: or perhaps some new creature of the Bear family. We ourselves looked on our trip as a reconnaissance to try and clarify the position. That we failed to see a Yeti signifies nothing, either for or against its existence. In amplification of this: snow-leopards are common in this area; no member of the expedition saw one in the fields; only some of us saw wolves, and yet there were wolves preying on the herds the whole time we were there; a fox was seen only two or three times, although it is one of the commonest alpine animals. Given a year or two's continuous searching, I for one feel we should have established its existence beyond all reasonable doubt.

Thus I complete both *The Case* and *The Chase*. I leave it to the reader to judge whether this particular expedition has been worth while, always hoping that he will bear in mind the almost non-existent nature of the clues we had to go upon when we began our investigation. There are, I know, many who rejoice that we failed in our main objective—that a last great mystery remains in this much picked-over world to challenge adventurous spirits. With these sentiments I am bound, in part, to agree, for the world will not be a more attractive place to live in after we have touched everything. But I rejoice, too, that even as I have been writing this book I have had news that other men as skilful and experienced as ourselves are planning to take up the pursuit where we abandoned it. Providing that their investigation is carried out on a proper scientific basis and in a humane manner I wish them: "Good Hunting!"

APPENDIX A

CLIMBING ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE "DAILY MAIL" HIMALAYAN EXPEDITION, 1954

By John A. Jackson

Although this was not a mountaineering expedition a good deal of high ground was traversed and a number of high passes crossed, in order to link up parties, or to bring a search to its satisfactory conclusion. There may be some interest that many of the passes were crossed quite early in the year and a peak of over 20,000 ft. climbed by 18th March.

Our equipment was most satisfactory, and at no time was excessive cold felt even in the winter months. At heights over 18,000 ft. we used Pyramids and Meade Tents. Windproof clothing was provided by Grenfell, and two pairs of very strong boots were made for members of the expedition by Robert Lawrie. These were nailed with Tricournis and had an inner Vibram sole. This proved ideal for our type of expedition which involved much foot-slogging over very varied terrain.

In mid-February, Jackson and Jeeves reached the Everest Base Camp of 1953 and ascended a rock pinnacle over 18,000 ft. in height. Stonor, Izzard and Russell also went up to about 18,000 ft. on the east side of the Dudh Kosi valley above Macherma.

During the first two weeks of March activity in the Chola Khola took members of the expedition to greater heights. A col of some 19,000 ft. at the head of this valley was reached after a glacier crossing, by Jackson, Edgar and Ang Dawa. Much to their surprise they found the bootprints of Charles Evans, and Da Tenzing who had been there in October the year before.

One could only assume there had been a light winter snowfall, and that the strong winds blowing almost continuously over the col had kept the tracks free of snow. From the col it was possible to look down on the pass between the Upper Dudh Kosi and the Khumbu valley—the pass named Chakri La by the Swiss.

Two other cols of over 18,000 ft. were also visited in the Chola

Khola. One of these immediately south of "Pointed Peak" was also ascended by Jackson and Edgar, on 6th March, thinking it might be a quick direct route to the Dudh Kosi. Though possible of descent it was extremely steep and dangerous for laden coolies. The other col was the one used by Hillary, Noyce, Wylie and Ward in 1953 during their circuit of the Taweche Peaks. The same circuit was made, but in the reverse direction on 15th March by Jackson, Stobart, and Edgar in an endeavour to contact the Izzard-Russell party in the Dudh Kosi. Two days later Jackson and Edgar returned to this col where they were joined by Jeeves and Lagus.

Jeeves and Lagus had meanwhile ascended an easy rock pinnacle about 18,500 ft. in height behind the Chola Yak hut. All camped on the glacier and the following day Jackson, Jeeves and Edgar ascended the peak to the north of the col—a peak which the local people of Churkhung and Nang named Kang Cho Shah—"East Snow-sided Peak." Over 20,000 ft. it provided a good test for acclimatisation in mid-March and from its summit a useful view of the Upper Dudh Kosi was obtained. Climbing varied, sometimes providing the three with a sensational rock traverse over "gendarmes," other times being quite easy but always dangerous because of the large amount of very loose and shattered rock. A final snow cone of over a hundred feet was a fitting finish to a fine climb.

Later in the same month Izzard, Jackson and Edgar ascended a pleasant peak of 19,000 ft. above the Dudh Pokhari from which they were able to see the Everest massif and look down upon the glacier of the Upper Dudh Kosi. The day following this ascent, the same three people back-tracked wolf prints to a pass of some 19,000 ft. which led to the Bhote Kosi valley. This entailed an ascent up the true left side of the glacier above the Dudh Pokhari, a partial crossing of it, and a final few hundred feet of scrabble to the pass, which we named "Changu La"—Wolf Pass. Later in April a complete crossing of this pass was made from the Bhote Kosi to the Dudh Kosi by Jackson and three Sherpas. They stayed a night at Langden below Jenjo, then had a long uphill tramp to the small glacier below the pass on the Bhote Kosi side. The glacier was very short but steep, and once again footprints of a wolf were found.

During the first seven days of April, Izzard, Jackson and Edgar crossed to the Bhote Kosi via a col in the top north-west corner of the Upper Dudh Kosi, a col perhaps 19,500 ft. in height which proved to be quite difficult for local porters. This crossing was part of a journey across the Himalayan watershed to the Nangpa La 19,050 ft.

—a trade route between Sola Khumbu and Tibet. All three crossed the stony glaciers at the head of the Bhote Kosi and reached the top of the Nangpa La on 7th April.

A glacier and a possible third col between the Bhote Kosi and Dudh Kosi valleys was seen as the caravan returned and the day after the crossing of the Changu La, Jackson and Ang Dawa visited this glacier. The col was not crossed but it is probably the easiest of the three passes between the two valleys. Before returning to camp the two climbed a rock peak over 19,000 ft. on its north-west side, the climbing being very enjoyable with several short sections of Difficult and Very Difficult standard. The north side was a perpendicular rock wall as often is the case with the Dudh Kosi peaks, but the walk off to the south was disappointingly easy.

In the third week of April Charles Stonor with Gyalgen I and Ang Tharke (Sirdar to the Makalu Expedition) crossed the difficult Ambu Lapcha 19,500 ft. to the Hongu Lake, then ascending the West Col of the Barun Saddle, a height of perhaps 20,000 ft. There was some doubt as to the possibility of returning from the Makalu Glacier, so they did not cross the East Col with Ang Tharke. They returned via the Ambu Lapcha. This was a fine achievement by Stonor who has done very little mountaineering.

In the last week of April Jackson was asked to write a climber's appreciation of Ama Dablam, which of course required a good look at the mountain from the tops as well as from below. He and Jeeves trekked to Chukhung and from there placed a camp on the Pokalde col or Yak Pass, which leads from the Imja Khola to the Khumbu valley. This col, about 19,000 ft., was crossed by Lambert in 1952, and by Hunt, Ward, Bourdillon and Noyce in 1953. It was also crossed on 1st May, 1954, by Stobart, Lagus and Edgar.

Pokalde, a peak of 20,000 ft., was climbed by Jackson and Jeeves from the col camp and many fine pictures of Ama Dablam and the surrounding country obtained. The rock is very poor, and at the time snow conditions were avalanching on the north side.

These same two people crossed the Ambu Lapcha to the Hongu Lake and in that area ascended a very enjoyable but easy glacier mountain of some 20,000 ft. which they named "South Hongu Peak." Ama Dablam looks well from here and good views are obtained of Chamlung, and the Mera and Ama Dablam cols which lead to Mingbo and the Imja Khola.

On 4th May Izzard, Stobart, Edgar and Lagus ascended to the site of the Russi Gandhi Camp I on Pumori, a height of 20,000 ft., in

order to obtain a good view of the area and to obtain photographs of the Khumbu ice-fall, Western Cwm, Lhotse Face, South Col and the route to the summit of Everest. Jackson and Jeeves also made the same ascent two days later. Six members of the expedition enjoyed a day on the Khumbu ice-fall more or less as a token climb. They went perhaps half the distance between Camp I and Camp II of the previous year.

When the expedition was nearing its end in May, Jackson made the journey from Everest to Kangchenjunga via Makalu. He and his porters crossed the Ambu Lapcha and reached the Makalu Glacier after crossing the West and East Cols of the Barun Saddle. A height of 21,000 ft. was attained on this crossing in order to take photographs of Makalu and the Barun Plateau. The party met Sir Edmund Hillary and other members of the New Zealand Expedition. Part of a day was also spent with the American Himalayan Expedition which was attempting Makalu I, 27,790 ft. The rest of the journey to Kangchenjunga entailed the crossing of several high passes, two of which were the Rakha La at the head of the Arun River and the Tipta La leading over into the Tamur Valley. The rest of the expedition trekked to Katmandu on the monsoon route. There were no injuries or casualties among the expedition members or the porters throughout the five months in the field.

APPENDIX B

SOME MEDICAL ASPECTS OF THE "DAILY MAIL" HIMALAYAN EXPEDITION, 1954

By W. M. Edgar, M.B., B.Chir.

The conditions under which we were working were to some extent different from those affecting Himalayan mountaineering expeditions, as we did not go to such high altitudes, and every three weeks or so returned to Base Camp (about 11,500 ft.) for a few days. On the other hand we were in the field longer than most mountaineering expeditions—almost five months—and arrived there in winter.

Illness can be greatly reduced, on an expedition of this nature, by taking precautions to prevent it, though what is in fact accomplished, at least in some aspects, will inevitably fall short of what is theoretically possible.

Before leaving England all members of the expedition were immunised against smallpox, cholera, typhoid and paratyphoid, and tetanus. The last is perhaps an unusual addition for a non-military expedition, but is a useful one since the administration of anti-tetanus serum in the field for small injuries is, to say the least, an inconvenient procedure. Perhaps immunisation against typhus should also be carried out but it is a debatable point and in this case it was decided that it should not be done. None of our Sherpas or coolies had been immunised against any of these diseases except for a few who had been vaccinated, usually many years previously.

Malaria was not a problem on the march out from Katmandu since the weather was too cold. As we returned to lower levels on the march back paludrine (or chloroquine) was given out to all sahibs, Sherpas and coolies. The majority of the coolies lived at altitudes at which malaria does not occur and refused to accompany us unless given paludrine.

On previous expeditions the most common illnesses have been respiratory and intestinal infections and we, like the British Everest Expedition of last year, adopted various precautions to reduce their

incidence. The cooks were supervised as closely as possible and we considered it essential that all water should be boiled or chlorinated. Cooking and eating utensils should also be adequately washed and they and food should be protected from flies. For the latter purpose we had two large mosquito nets for the return march and used one in the kitchen, putting all food and cooking utensils underneath it, and used the other as a "dining-room."

Camping sites should be chosen which are not near villages but often this is not possible since frequently houses are needed for the coolies as protection from the weather, and the only available water supply may be in a village. However, the incidence of intestinal infections was low, much less than had been anticipated, and only a few mild infections occurred during the whole time. These were treated with phthalylsulphathiazole and in most cases rapid recovery ensued. One case of dysentery occurred in a Sherpa and this also reacted favourably to phthalylsulphathiazole.

None of us suffered from severe sore throats, perhaps because we did not go to very high altitudes. Coughs and colds were fairly common especially in January, February and March when the weather was colder, though in the case of some individuals coughs remained during the whole of the expedition and were troublesome at night, but they generally tended to improve during the brief periods we spent in Base Camp. The more severe of these infections were treated with aureomycin. Here again one can adopt some precautions by avoiding staying in Sherpa villages and houses and by using bellows to inflate air mattresses.

We were longer at high altitudes than most mountaineering expeditions and with one exception all of us became well acclimatised. The use of oxygen apparatus was not of course necessary at the altitudes at which we were working.

High-altitude headaches were uncommon and were relieved by codeine. Occasionally, especially at the high camps, barbiturates were used to ensure sleep.

There were no cases of serious injury; minor injuries were uncommon and frost-bite did not occur.

D.D.T. powder is virtually essential to prevent infestation with lice and is very effective in accomplishing this. Dimethylphthalate (D.M.P.) is a good leech repellent and should be applied round the eyelet holes of boots and in an inch-wide band around the top of the boot.

There was not a great deal of illness among the Sherpas who

worked for us, respiratory and intestinal infections again being the most common conditions met with.

With regard to the coolies whom we had for the outward and return marches, those on the outward march were generally less healthy than those on the return journey, as is to be expected since the majority of the latter lived at the higher altitudes of the Sherpa country, whereas the former came from the Central Valley of Nepal where the climate is much warmer. Among the coolies on the outward march respiratory infections were common, and intestinal infections, malaria, trachoma, and worm infestations were encountered.

At all times numbers of the inhabitants of the areas through which we passed came for treatment since there are normally no medical facilities whatsoever except in the Central Valley and at just a few other places. Many different conditions were seen, including those mentioned above, and treatment was given so far as circumstances permitted, but obviously on an expedition of this kind one cannot adequately treat many members of the local population, especially as in any case one's treatment of serious illness in members of the expedition is to be regarded as of an emergency, or temporary, nature only.

It is not proposed to deal fully with the subject of food. The question of nutritional requirements was worked out by Dr. Griffith Pugh who accompanied the British Everest Expedition of 1953 as physiologist, and by Tom Stobart. Apart from potatoes, rice and eggs and occasional chickens our food was brought from England in tinned and dried form and so vitamin capsules were taken daily throughout the whole of our stay in Nepal. Possibly greater use could have been made of local supplies but that is largely a matter of personal taste. Excellent bread was made under the supervision of Tom Stobart and this was most welcome.

APPENDIX C

BIRDS COLLECTED AND IDENTIFIED BY THE
"DAILY MAIL" HIMALAYAN EXPEDITION, 1954

By Dr. Biswamoy Biswas, B.Sc.

A. Birds actually collected between the Base Camp and above—
12,000 and 19,000 ft. (February-May, 1954).

Black-eared kite	Golden bush-robin
Indian sparrow-hawk	White-browed bush-robin
Besra sparrow-hawk	Red-flanked bush-robin
Bearded vulture (Lammergeier)	Himalayan rubythroat
Ruddy sheldrake	Blue-fronted redstart
Common teal	White-throated redstart
Goldeneye	White-capped redstart
Snow-cock	Black-throated thrush
Blood pheasant	Plain-backed mountain-thrush
Monal pheasant	Whistling thrush
Snow-pigeon	Nepal wren
Rufous turtle-dove	Indian brown dipper
Tibetan hoopoe	Alpine hedge-sparrow
Short-toed lark	Rufous-breasted hedge-sparrow
Short-billed minivet	Robin hedge-sparrow
Orange-gorgetted fly catcher	Hodgson's pipit
Variiegated laughing-thrush	Hodgson's pied wagtail
Streaked laughing-thrush	Grey-backed shrike
Nepal yuhina	Nepal tree-creeper
Hodgson's fulvetta	Himalayan cole-tit
Orange-barred willow-warbler	Crested black tit
Pallas' Himalayan willow-warbler	Brown crested tit
Blyth's crowned willow-warbler	Tibetan twite
Tickell's willow-warbler	Hodgson's mountain-finch

Tibetan mountain-finch	White-winged grossbeak
Pink-browed rose-finch	Red-billed chough
Beautiful rose-finch	Yellow-billed chough
White-browed rose-finch	Jungle crow
Red-headed bullfinch	Tibetan raven

B. Birds collected between 5,000 and 10,000 ft. on way back via Darjeeling (May-June).

Crimson horned pheasant (Tragopan pheasant)	Yellow-bellied flycatcher-warbler
Nightjar	Plumbeous redstart
White-cheeked bulbul	Indian magpie-robin
Variegated laughing-thrush	Himalayan blackbird
Red-headed laughing-thrush	Whistling thrush
Streaked laughing-thrush	Grey-backed shrike
Black-headed sibia	Grey drongo

C. Birds observed but not collected.

(i) *Between Katmandu and the Base Camp (January-February)*

Pariah kite	White-cheeked bulbul
Black-eared kite	Red-vented bulbul
Black eagle	Black bulbul
Himalayan grey-headed fishing eagle	Scarlet minivet
King vulture	Short-billed minivet
Bearded vulture	Niltava
Harrier	Yellow-bellied fantail fly-catcher
Little stint	White-throated laughing-thrush
Ibis-bill	Red-headed laughing-thrush
Snow pigeon	Streaked laughing-thrush
Slaty-headed parakeet	Red-tailed minla
Himalayan pied kingfisher	Yuhina
Common kingfisher	Ixulus
White-breasted kingfisher	Black-headed sibia
Golden-throated barbet	Willow-warblers
Green woodpecker	Indian redstart
Gold-headed pied woodpecker	Blue-fronted redstart
House-swallow	White-capped redstart

Plumbeous redstart	Grey tit
Crested serpent-eagle	Green-backed tit
Golden eagle	Yellow-cheeked tit
Kestrel	Red-headed tit
Black partridge	Rufous-fronted tit
Kalij pheasant	Crested bunting
Greenshank	Hodgson's mountain-finch
Common sandpiper	House-sparrow
Indian magpie-robin	Tree-sparrow
Tickell's thrush	Common myna
Pied bushchat	Jungle myna
Indian bushchat	Black drongo
Whistling thrush	Grey drongo
Spotted forktail	Crow-billed drongo
Little forktail	Himalayan nutcracker
Nepal wren	Red-billed chough
Indian brown dipper	House crow
Indian tree-pipit	Jungle crow
Grey wagtail	Raven
Hodgson's pied wagtail	

(ii) *Between the Base Camp and above (14,000 and 20,000 ft.)
(February-May)*

Himalayan fishing eagle	Woodcock
Griffon vulture	Wood owl
Bar-headed goose	"Darjeeling" pied woodpecker
Snow-partridge	Yellow-bellied fantail flycatcher
Hawk-cuckoo	Fire-tailed sunbird
Common cuckoo	

(iii) *Between the Base Camp and Darjeeling (May-July)*

Pariah kite	Large adjutant stork
Brahminy kite	Kalij pheasant
Black eagle	Indian koel
Himalayan fishing eagle	Hawk-cuckoo
King vulture	Indian cuckoo
White-backed vulture	Himalayan cuckoo
Kestrel	Spur-winged plover

Indian river-tern
Black-bellied tern
Green pigeon
Red turtle-dove
Nightjar
Indian roller
Great Himalayan barbet
Blue-throated barbet
Golden-throated barbet
Coppersmith
House martin
House swallow
Yellow-bellied fantail flycatcher
White-headed laughing-thrush
Shrike-babbler

Willow-warblers
Tailor bird
Black-headed shrike
Himalayan cole-tit
Green-backed tit
Crested black tit
Mrs. Gould's sunbird
House-sparrow
Tree-sparrow
Common myna
Black drongo
Red-billed blue magpie
Himalayan tree-pie
House crow
Jungle crow

APPENDIX D

LICHENS OF EVEREST

By G. Salisbury

“Ralph Izzard used to scrape lichens off the rocks with great persistence—usually on a cold day when we wanted to keep moving. He finished with a large collection, although to be quite honest he doesn't know the first thing about them.” It is a fact hinted at by Tom Stobart (*Daily Mail* article) that many people and some botanists *don't know the first thing about lichens*. A full and scientific report, therefore, of Ralph Izzard's collection, even if it were possible to write one in the short time available, would not need to be widely read and will be published elsewhere. In a brief, preliminary report such as is written here, the lichens do not appear so resounding as they should: the first pickings were bound to be commonplace though, perhaps, it is of interest to say that a number of the species that occur on Everest above 15,000 feet occur on mountains in Britain. This is, however, no surprise to lichenologists: lichens are the most cosmopolitan of all plants; many species are world-wide, common as grass, and deserve to be better known.

Usually spoken of as moss—Beard Moss and Iceland Moss are both lichens—or by sticklers for accuracy as lichenous moss (only in a literary sense would the use of either term be permissible: Walter de la Mare used the word *lichen*¹) there is little similarity between the patches they form on rocks, roofs, walls and trees, and typical moss cushions. A moss has stem and leaves; lichens never have, and it is probably their unregulated shapes—the fronds are filamentous or leaflike, wizened in the sun and floppy in the rain; or often there is only a crust—which enable them to be distinguished at once. Less easily distinguished from fungi, they are in part fungi. Botanically lichens are not single plants, a fact which was still being contested fifty years ago: each lichen consists of a fungus and an alga knitted so closely together as to resemble one plant. In a strictly scientific

¹ It would be interesting to learn how Walter de la Mare pronounced his word: *litchen* or *liken*. Lichenologists prefer *liken*: *litchenologist* would be awkward-sounding.

sense therefore, a lichen name is not the name of a plant, but of a consortia or plant community. The same name is used by lichenologists for the fungus by itself; the alga goes by another name, the one used by algologists. The fungus absorbs moisture from the atmosphere, cloud and rain, and supplies most of the raw materials which the alga, utilising its store of chlorophyll, manufactures into food. The fungus has no chlorophyll and cannot live by itself; the alga in dry places would soon die; but both plants together occupy great tracts of mountain and arctic regions where no other plants live. By no means limited, however, to cold inhospitable places such as the Himalayas provide, they grow (other species) equally well, or better, in the forests of the Equator, and achieve their greatest size and luxury on trees, in numbers so as to obscure the bark completely. They should be, if they were noticed, amongst the commonest plants of our own countryside: in fact they are often exceedingly rare, for they are the first plants to be affected by smoke. Huddle of town and industry has killed Nature's toughest plants, and long before the suburbs are reached the cottage roofs are not so lichen-encrusted as they were, the trees for all their fine leaves almost bare.

Rigours of altitude and climate that kill most other plants have left lichens in almost sole possession of Everest. And though Somervell, one of the climbers of the 1922 attempt on Everest, collected a few (afterwards written up by Paulson 1925) around the Base Camp below Rongbuk Glacier at 17,000 feet, he was not likely to be copied. A bibliography of Everest lichens would amount to no more—or little more, begging a thorough search—than Paulson's paper. One taking into account the Himalayas as a whole, and given later, is not thought to be complete but cannot be immediately added to. Ralph Izzard's lichens, not a tremendous lot, are admittedly not the equal of those that might have been collected by a lichenologist, but he is not so ignorant about them as Tom Stobart says.

Many of the mountainous genera such as *Cetraria*, *Rhizocarpon*, *Umbilicaria*, *Cladonia* and *Stereocaulon*, are represented. The yellow *Rhizocarpon geographicum*¹ that spreads from pole to pole is here from 16,000 feet in the Dudh Kosi valley. Sir Joseph Hooker, the noted botanist who did not entirely ignore the lichens, remarked a hundred years ago in his *Himalayan Journals* that its name *geographicum* is

¹ *Rhizocarpon geographicum* (L.)DC., associated with *Umbilicaria cylindrica* (L.) Del., *Lecanora cinerea* (L.) Sommerf., and *Candleariella vitellina* (Ehrh.) Mull.Arg. on granitic stones.

not intended to indicate its wide range but the curious maplike patterns which its yellow crust forms on the rocks. It is a notable omission from Paulson's list; but it is impossible to say how many of the species recorded by the old botanists such as Hooker, and not noticed since, actually occur. Species formerly were hardly delimited in the same precise way that they are today, and it is not certain how many of the three usually accepted species, *geographicum*, *chionophilum*, and *oreites*, occur on Everest. A certainty is the so-called Reindeer Moss¹—again not moss but lichen—eaten elsewhere by reindeer which usually have to dig for it through the snow; but the majority have no common names, and one resembling white worms, *Cerania vermicularis*, has to have its Latin name quoted in full: similarly an orange-red *Caloplaca* from 20,000 feet on Mount Pumori, remarkably like the arctic *C. elegans*² which also grows on some Scottish mountains, and it probably is that plant.

Below the tree-line in the vicinity of Thyangboche monastery at 13,000 feet grow some straw-coloured *Usneas*,³ commonly known as Beard Moss or Old Man's Beard, which they closely resemble—some many feet in length. In contrast is a *Lobaria*, or Lungwort, growing on sticks, like a brownish-green cabbage leaf with a reticulated "vein" pattern: hidden by these larger foliaceous lichens are the gelatinous *Collemas*, hardly seen when dry but swelling up to two or three times their size when moistened. Notably absent are the smaller crustaceous species: it seemed at first that they must have been ignored. On the wetter, southern slopes of the Himalayas, the increased humidity of the air accounts for a preponderance of foliaceous species: similarly in the woods above L. Bala, east of the Welsh Mountains, where a climax condition of the lichen flora is reached the smaller crustaceous species are pushed out. Very few species from mixed forest can be named immediately. Apart, however, from noting the decrease (practical disappearance) of British species with the decrease in altitude, not accounted for by the different substratum (trees), and contrary to what might have been expected with the approach to a more temperate climate and, indeed,

¹ *Cladonia rangiferina* (L.) Web., a terricolous species, associated with *Cl. deformis* (L.) Hoffm., *Cetraria nivalis* (L.) Ach., *C. culcalata* (Bell.) Ach., *Stereocaulon paschale* (L.) Hoffm., and *St. alpinum* Laur.

² *Caloplaca elegans* (Link) Th. Fr., with crowded apothecia and well-formed spores. At the same altitude the *Stereocaula* are stunted and sterile.

³ *Usnea longissima* Ach. (belonging to one of the genera monographically studied in recent times) on trees, associated with *Nephroma*, *Parmelia*, *Ramalia*, *Sticta* spp. (all these genera badly in need of monographic study), so far unnamed.

to what has been noted elsewhere,¹ the subject must be left as one too involved to be dealt with at once.

Among the various reasons put forward to account for the wide distributional range of lichens is the very great capacity for dispersal of the lichen diaspores—spores, or more often powdery fragments of lichen which give rise to new plants. In consequence, the distribution limits probably amount in some cases to distinct existence limits: pantropical species are confined to rather narrow limits on either side of the Equator; on the other hand, arctic species spread to all parts of the world where increases in altitude introduce local climates near arctic—in Britain over a few thousand feet, equivalent in the Himalayas to over 15,000 feet, and a similar lichen flora occurs in both places.² Even for a brief, preliminary report it is a poor conclusion which says, in effect, that as regards phytogeographical questions and conclusions drawn from studies in plant distribution, the lichens can be ignored. Instances, no doubt, could be quoted to prove otherwise: localities similar in geography, geology (substratum) and climate, markedly dissimilar as regards their lichen flora; but the problems—the lichens themselves—are hardly touched. Little enough is known about British lichens: certainly the lichens are ignored. A fairer conclusion for a brief, preliminary report which, hardly making use of the material brought back by Ralph Izzard—who is not a botanist but rather shows up botanists—might be (in similar words to those used by Tom Stobart) that as yet we *don't know the first thing about Everest lichens*—if I could blame Tom Stobart I think I should.

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¹ In lists by Babington (1852) and Chopra (1934), the majority of species are British: due, no doubt, to the use of British floras for the determination of specimens.

* At least 20 of the 31 lichens in Paulson's list are British.

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APPENDIX E

ON THE NATURE OF THE "ABOMINABLE SNOWMAN"

By Wladimir Tschernezky

The first approach on a scientific plane to the nature of the "Abominable Snowman" could only be made after Mr. E. Shipton, in 1951, brought back with him from the Himalaya a photograph of the footprint of this mysterious creature. Mr. Shipton's discovery, in spite of its tremendous importance, met with some incredulity. If the traces were discovered not on the snowfields of the Himalaya, but on the hardened clay in some prehistoric cave, as the traces of the Neanderthal man found by Professor A. C. Blanc, they would, no doubt, have attracted more attention. There would be no attempt on the part of the scientists to ascribe them to a bear or a langur monkey.

The *Daily Mail* Expedition of 1954 not only repeatedly found footprints similar to the ones photographed by Mr. Shipton, but also observed a spot where the Snowman made his way through a snow-drift, sliding on the hind parts of his body and raking away the snow with his hands. Besides this, members of the expedition discovered in a Buddhist temple the scalp of the Snowman which was described in detail by Mr. C. Stonor in the *Daily Mail* (3rd March, 1954). A few hairs were removed from the scalp. The expedition also procured a bit of skin belonging, as the natives said, to the Snowman.

At first sight the results of the expedition appear to be rather meagre. In actual fact they are, however, extremely important: the existence of a bipedal anthropoid creature which is still unknown to science, can be considered to be established beyond a doubt.

We thus have at our disposal at present a detailed and repeatedly verified description of the footprints of this unknown creature, of its strides, of its method of overcoming snowdrifts, and finally of its scalp. In addition we have several brief descriptions of the creature given by eyewitnesses, descriptions which tally very well with the anatomical data derived from the other observations. Taking all

this into consideration and using the evidence of comparative anatomy, anthropology, embryology, and palaeontology, I will attempt to interpret the shape of the footprint and of the scalp, and thus to reconstruct the features of the "Abominable Snowman."

In my newspaper article (*Manchester Guardian*, 20th February, 1954) I compared the footprint of the Snowman (Fig. 2) with the foot of a mountain gorilla (Fig. 1) and with the footprint of the caveman described by Professor A. C. Blanc (Fig. 3). This comparison

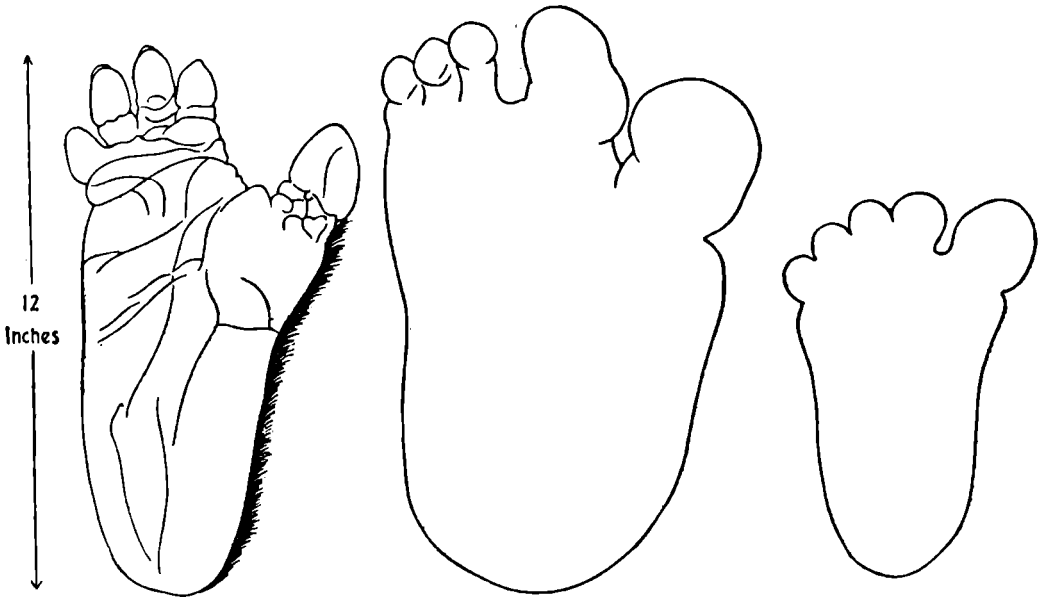


Fig. 1. (left) *The Gorilla beringei*.
(From William King Gregory: *Evolution Emerging*, 1951, Vol. II.)

Fig. 2. (centre) *The Abominable Snowman*.
(From *The Mount Everest Reconnaissance Expedition*, 1951, by Eric Shipton.)

Fig. 3. (right) *The oldest human footprints?* By Alberto Carlo Blanc.
The Illustrated London News, March 1, 1952.

(Now reconstructed and exhibited in South Kensington Natural History Museum.)

suffices to show that the spoor of the Snowman is that of a primate. Actually the footprint of the Snowman shows both simian and human features, with some peculiar characters of a very large and heavy bipedal anthropoid.

A simian feature: the great toe is very short and diverted inwards.

Human features are evident in the short toes and in the general outline of the broad foot. In this respect the footprint shows the greatest similarity to that of the caveman (presumably of a Neanderthal man).

The peculiar features of the Snowman are the extraordinarily great breadth and massive structure of the heel and the relation between length and breadth of the toes. In the *Manchester Guardian* I wrote:

“If we were to reconstruct the footprint of some being intermediate between ape and man, such as the *Pithecanthropus*, our reconstruction would thus be similar to the photograph taken by Eric Shipton in the Himalaya. The footprint of the Snowman shows, however, some peculiar characters, allowing us to draw the conclusion that we have here to do with a specialised branch of higher anthropoids. The footprint of the Snowman is 12.5 in. long, which is not less than that of the largest gorilla, even in spite of the short toes. In addition, it is at least $1\frac{1}{2}$ times as broad. Consequently this enigmatic anthropoid of the Himalaya should be larger and heavier than the greatest of known anthropoid apes.

“As is well known, the plantar surface of the monkeys is much narrower than that of man, especially in the region of the heel. But the breadth and massive structure of the heel of the Snowman is most impressive. This ‘human’ character is even more pronounced in the Snowman than in modern man and the fossil Neanderthal man. Accordingly it can be concluded that this creature has extraordinarily thick and massive legs, legs that are much stronger than anything known both in monkeys recent and extinct, and in any living or fossil human races.

“The relative size and position of the toes is also peculiar. The first toe is exceptionally thick, the third, fourth, and fifth are narrow and appressed to one another. The second toe is intermediate in size between the first and the third, and is separated from the latter. There seem to be three independently moving groups of toes, capable of grasping objects between them. A grasping foot and strong legs are ideally adapted for climbing on rocks and steep inclines.”

These arguments published in my newspaper article may be further developed and supplemented in accordance with the theoretical generalisations of such a prominent authority in palæontology as the late Professor R. Broom. Even before the remains of the

Meganthropus and the *Gigantopithecus* had been discovered, Broom came to the following conclusions:

"In 1935, before these giant forms had been discovered I came to the conclusion from my consideration of the human foot, that man in his evolution must have passed through a very heavily-built, or giant stage.

"The primitive type of primate foot is one with four developed toes, and a hallux, or great toe, which is prehensile. Now, in marsupials we have examples of arboreal types, with hind feet like those of monkeys which become terrestrial forms; and in each the great toe becomes reduced and then lost, and the foot is left with only four toes. If the first terrestrial ancestors of man had been small, lightly-built animals, the great toe would have disappeared. But as the great toe becomes the largest in the foot the terrestrial ancestor must have been heavily built, requiring the development of a great toe for support. *Thus, the ape-man will probably be found to have a large great toe.*" (Italicised by W. T.) (Broom 1950, p. 19.)

The great toe of an ape-man should thus be, according to Professor Broom, powerfully developed in connection with its function of support. The predictions of the illustrious zoologist have been justified by the foot of the Snowman even to a greater extent than he had expected, as *not only is the great toe thick and strong, but also the second toe.* Apparently both the inner toes serve to support the weight of the body. Thus not only the size of the Snowman's foot, but also its structure, equally adapted for gripping and support, corroborate my suggestion that the Snowman is a very large and specialised type of higher anthropoid.

Embryological evidence is also in favour of regarding the Snowman as a specialised form. In no stage of its embryonic and post-embryonic development does the foot of the human resemble that of a monkey or of the Snowman. The shape of the hand of a new-born child repeats in its proportions the shape of the hand of the Neanderthal man, and the same is largely true in respect of the foot of a new-born child and the foot of the Neanderthal man. I believe that the "biogenetic law" according to which the embryo or juvenile form of the later descendant shows resemblance with the structure of its adult ancestors, may be applied in our case. The conclusion would be that although a direct relation of the contemporary man to the Neanderthal man is obvious, no very near relationship can be established between the genus *Homo* and the mysterious anthropoid of the Himalaya.

The great size and heavy build of the Snowman may be deduced from the length of the stride (2 ft. 6 in. according to Mr. Shipton, 2 ft. 3 in. according to the *Daily Mail Expedition*) and from the distance between the traces of the two feet. When the spoor of the Yeti, as photographed by Mr. Shipton, is compared with the spoor of a human it can be seen that the Snowman sets his feet further apart. One gains the impression of a pair of strong legs set far apart to give sufficient support to a massive body.

I reckon that the Snowman must be at least 7 feet high. I reach this conclusion in the following way: in a human the length of stride of $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet would correspond to a height of at least 6 feet. In fossil hominids, as for instance in the Neanderthal man, the trunk was relatively greater and the legs relatively shorter than in contemporary man. It follows that the same length of stride in a more primitive creature, as in a Snowman, would correspond to a greater stature.

Mr. Slavomir Rawich who had an opportunity to observe a pair of large bipedal creatures in the Himalaya mountains in 1942 from a distance of 100 yards described them as resembling a cross between a bear and an orang-outang, and gave their height as 7 to 8 feet.

The mysterious creature living in the Himalaya has the great body size in common with the likewise mysterious fossil giant, the Gigantopithecus. The stature of the Gigantopithecus, the only known remains of which are three teeth which are double the size of corresponding teeth of a large gorilla, has been estimated by Professor Broom as follows: "If he was an ape-man, he may have had shorter legs than man and perhaps stood at about 8 feet."

It will be seen that my calculations, based on the size of the footprint and the length of stride of the Snowman, the evidence given by Mr. Rawich, and Professor Broom's conclusions about the height of the Gigantopithecus coincide in a most remarkable manner.

The scalp of the Snowman found by the expedition allows us to make some more well-founded conclusions which are in complete harmony with the previous ones.

Mr. C. Stonor described the scalp in the following way:

"It is helmet-shaped, sloping sharply to a point. Its dimensions are: Total height 7.5 in. Total length 9.75 in. Breadth (at base) 6.75 in. Overall measurement from back to front over crown 17.25 in. Girth at base 26.25 in. Length (from back to front at a point 3 in. below the crown) 6.25 in.

"A fair proportion of hair still remains. The hair is foxy-red in

general colour, intermingled with blackish-brown. Individual hairs are a very few inches in length and are extremely stiff and bristle-like. It is impossible to say if there were formerly hairs of greater length.

“An extraordinary feature is a crest or ‘keel’ which runs from the base of the forehead straight upwards over the crown and down the back. It has a uniform width of almost exactly one inch.

“It is covered with bristle-like hairs of the same colour as the rest, which are no more than 1.25 in. in length, and which slope inwards from each side so as to meet in the centre and form a crest which is thus triangular in cross-section.

“In common with the rest of the hairs, much of the crest is gone, but it is distinctly marked on a *slightly raised ridge on the skin.*” (Italicised by W. T.)

The scalp of the Snowman shows no traces of the ears, it must have been removed from the part of the head above the ears. It is impossible to determine exactly how high the skin had been cut, and consequently we do not know in how far the scalp indicates the size of the head. Mr. Stonor was informed that the scalp had been kept in the Buddhist temple for over 300 years; the skin might have been shrunk somewhat in consequence. In spite of all these circumstances the size of the scalp exceeds by far the size of a human head! Most impressive is the unusual height of the scalp—7.5 in.!

The height of the head above the ears of a very large gorilla does not exceed 4-4.5 in.; the scalp of the Snowman is thus roughly $1\frac{1}{2}$ times as high, at the very least. The height of the head in a gorilla depends not so much on the size of the brain-case, as on the presence of extremely developed cranial crests serving for the attachment of the powerful masticatory muscles which are necessary to move the enormous lower jaw. In the gorilla we also find a very powerfully developed subcutaneous tissue. This lies just underneath the skin of the head, covering the skull as with a sort of hood, and attached to the cranial crests (Fig. 4).

From these anatomical data it is easy to conclude that the cranial crests, the masticatory muscles, the jaws, and probably also the subcutaneous tissue of the mysterious bipedal anthropoid of the Himalaya are greater and more developed than in the gorilla. As in the case of the footprint, not only the size of the scalp but also its shape are suggestive of the Yeti's great strength and powerful build.

In comparing the scalp of the Snowman with the head of a gorilla we must make certain reservations. First of all, the gorilla is not

bipedal, and does not keep its head upright, as a human being does. This is reflected in the shape of the head, and in particular in the position of the cranial crests. The powerful cervical muscles (muscles of the neck) cover the occipital region of the skull and their attachments reach to the summit of the head. If this thick layer of muscle be included in the "head" of the gorilla the latter would appear to be exceedingly long. The circumference of the head of a

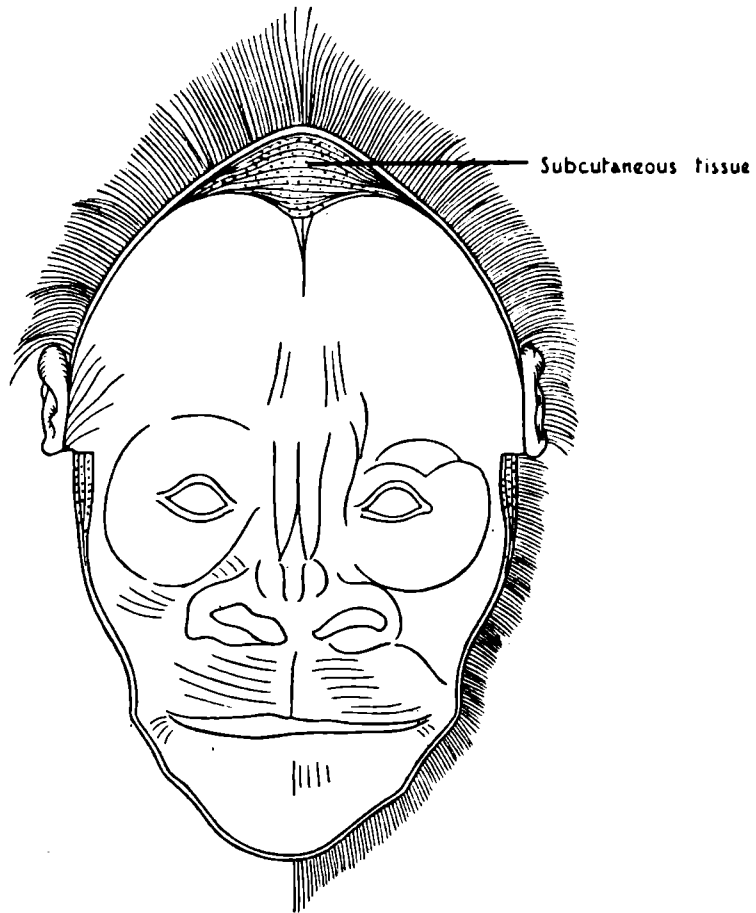


Fig. 4. Raven: *Regional Anatomy of the Gorilla.*
Plate 8. Muscles. Male. West Africa.

gorilla measured along the line at which the scalp of the Yeti had been cut, would include not only the skull but also the cervical muscles attached to the occipital surface of the skull. Judging from its circumference the size of the head of the gorilla would appear to be greater than that of the Yeti (30-35 in. in the former, 26.5 in. in the latter).

The construction of the skull would also show a distinction depending on whether the head is held vertically or horizontally. In the gorilla the occipital crest is situated very high, and on the summit of the skull it joins the longitudinal sagittal crest. The two crests are arranged in the form of a T in which the vertical bar corresponds to the sagittal crest and the horizontal bar represents the occipital crest. The masticatory muscles (the temporal muscles) in the gorilla cover most of the cranium and are attached both to the sagittal crest and, in their posterior portions, to the occipital crest (Fig. 5).

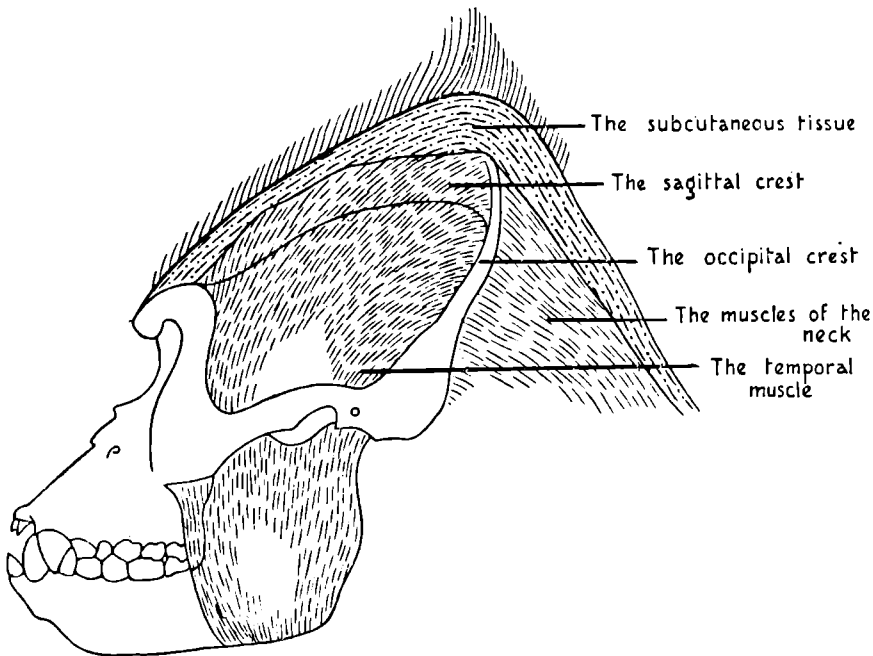


Fig 5. The skull and the muscles of Gorilla head (Schematic).
(One-sixth of natural size.)

Let us suppose, however, that there exists a bipedal creature which keeps its head upright, but possesses masticatory muscles which are as powerful as in the gorilla. The position of the cranial crests on the skull of such a creature would be different. The occipital crest serving for the attachment of the cervical muscles would be situated lower down on the occipital surface of the skull and would not reach to its summit. This condition is found in the fossil *S. African Australopithecines*. With this position of the occipital crest the temporal muscles would not be attached to it, but all their

fibres would be directed to the top of the head, to the sagittal crest. As a consequence the occipital crest would become smaller, but the sagittal crest would become increased, and with it would increase the height of the head. *The skull would acquire the shape indicated by the scalp of the Snowman.*

By accepting, as a working hypothesis, that the Snowman is related to the fossil Gigantopithecus, we can explain the peculiar shape of the Snowman's scalp as well as its other features. Professor Broom wrote about the teeth of the Gigantopithecus:

"In the Chinese drug-stores of Hong Kong, von Koenigswald found between 1934 and 1939 three teeth of a gigantic ape or man. Nothing further is known of the being, nor do we know where the teeth came from. Von Koenigswald regarded them as having belonged to a huge ape, which he called Gigantopithecus. *I have pointed out, in 1939, that they appeared to agree more closely with the teeth of our South African ape-men.*" Italicised by W. T.) (Broom, 1950, p. 17.)

It is hardly possible, however, to claim direct relationship between the Australopithecines and the Gigantopithecus. The former lived probably about 2-2½ million years ago, the Gigantopithecus is a much more recent form. According to von Koenigswald's opinion, which he kindly communicated to the author, the Gigantopithecus lived 300,000-400,000 years ago.

Amongst the Australopithecines some recently discovered forms are conspicuous for their large size, in particular the *Paranthropus crassidens* which had very large and massive jaws and a correspondingly well-developed sagittal cranial crest (Fig. 6). *Paranthro-*

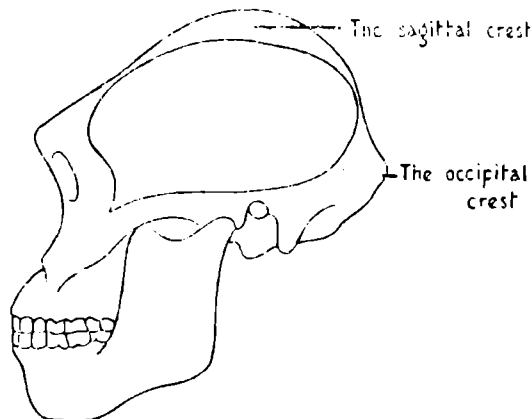


Fig. 6. The reconstructed skull of *Paranthropus crassidens* (Schematic). (One-sixth of natural size.)

pus crassidens shows the same characters as the hypothetical creature outlined above: a sagittal crest situated low down on the occipital surface of the skull. A reconstruction of the skull of *Paranthropus* shows that the sagittal and occipital crests are separated from one another and that the masticatory muscles were attached to the sagittal crest only.

The teeth of the *Gigantopithecus*, although of similar shape, are double the volume of the corresponding teeth of the *Paranthropus* and the gorilla. In the giant primate the jaws, the masticatory muscles, and the sagittal cranial crest must have been, therefore, considerably larger than in the fossil ape-man of South Africa or in the largest of the contemporary African apes. If, using the similarity with the *Australopithecines* as a basis, we attempt to reconstruct the skull of the *Gigantopithecus*, and then to visualise the shape of its head, we would find that the scalp of the Snowman might fit this head quite well.

There is another detail in the scalp of the Yeti that allows to draw comparisons with the anatomy of a gorilla's head. Mr. C. Stonor has noted the presence of a peculiar crest or keel running from the anterior part of the head to the apex and further down the posterior surface to the edge of the scalp. This keel is formed by a slight elevation of the skin with stiff hairs sloping towards the midline of the ridge.

In the gorilla, the subcutaneous tissue forms a distinct thickening over the sagittal crest, and over this thickening the skin is slightly raised, similarly to what is seen in the Snowman's scalp. There is, however, the difference that in the Snowman the ridge is present not only on the anterior surface of the head, but is extended all the way on the posterior surface of the helmet-like scalp. We are again forced to the conclusion about the presence in the Abominable Snowman of a tall sagittal crest, powerful masticatory muscles, and enormous jaws.

It is very important that the colour and shape of the scalp correspond to the brief descriptions of persons who had seen the living Yeti. All are in accord that the Snowman is of a reddish-brown colour. According to Mr. Stonor "the hair is foxy-red in general colour, intermingled with blackish brown." "The head . . . was tall and pointed," said one of the Sherpas. Mr. S. Rawich said that in the two bipedal gigantic creatures which he saw the head was squarish, but he added at once that "seen in profile the back of the head was a straight line from the crown into the shoulders." This

observation is again in accord with the shape of the scalp. The shape of the scalp, as it is now, thus probably corresponds to the shape of the head from which it was removed.

Fig. 7 is a reconstruction of the skull and the head of the Abominable Snowman based on anatomical data and on the evidence of eyewitnesses. In drawing this figure I have most especially taken into consideration (a) the development of the cranial crests and the

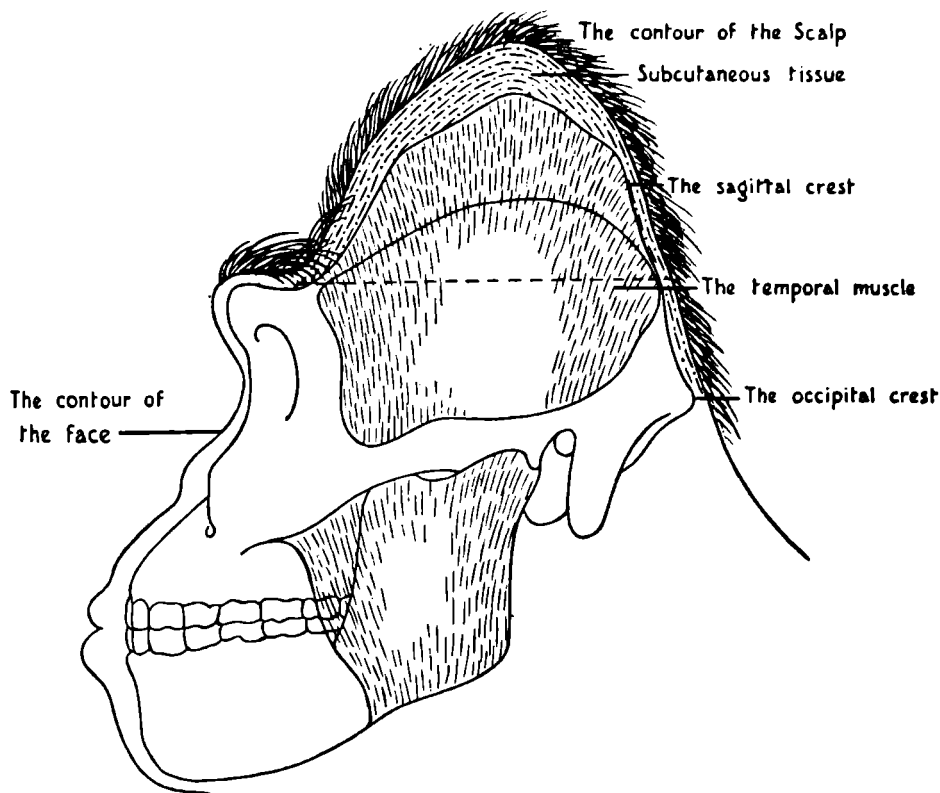


Fig. 7. The reconstructed head of Abominable Snowman (Schematic). (One-sixth of natural size.)

subcutaneous tissue in a large male gorilla; (b) the position of the cranial crests in the fossil ape-man, *Paranthropus crassidens*; (c) the size of the reconstructed lower jaw of the *Gigantopithecus*, and (d) the scalp found in the Buddhist temple. A reconstruction of this kind, naturally, cannot be very exact, but still it helps to visualise what the Abominable Snowman may look like. I have also made a sketch of the general appearance of the creature (Fig. 9). This sketch, I hope, may be improved and corrected as new observations become available.

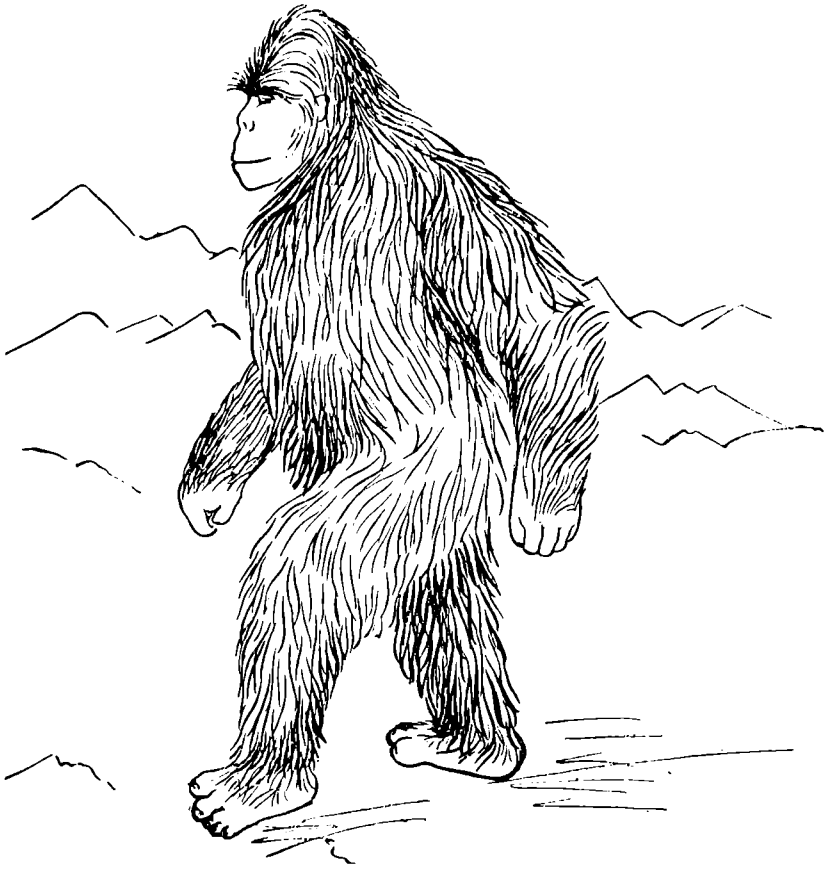


Fig 9. Reconstruction of the Abominable Snowman.

In conclusion I would like to discuss the ecology (mode of life) of the Snowman. As is well known, monkeys are mainly herbivorous animals. The human being is omnivorous. The Snowman is said to be an active predator, which is contrary to the food habits prevalent in primates. Similar changes of feeding habits are, however, known in other animals: the giant panda of South Western China which is very like a bear, and is actually closely related to the bears, peacefully feeds on young shoots of bamboo. Amongst the fossil primates there are some carnivorous bipedal creatures—the representatives of the Australopithecines, the creatures whose teeth resemble those of the Gigantopithecus, and one of whom (*Parantropus crassidens*) possessed a sagittal crest somewhat like the crest of the Snowman. The Australopithecines hunted such active animals as antelopes and baboons. It appears thus that the Snowman has gone further towards a carnivorous mode of life following a line already indicated in the fossil ape-man of South Africa.

That a higher anthropoid should live amidst eternal cold and snow

around the ice-fields of the highest mountains appears to be a paradox. There are, however, other similar zoological paradoxes. The musk ox lives on the rocks and glaciers of Greenland, in the same latitudes as the walrus and polar bear, whereas most species of wild cattle inhabit tropical and temperate countries. The higher anthropoid apes are also by no means restricted to countries with a hot climate: the mountain gorilla of Central Africa is found to live at altitudes of up to 9,000 feet, where the temperatures are comparatively low.

I would like to point out that in the Himalaya Mountains there lives the Yak that is very nearly related to the extinct European wild cattle. In the steppes of Central Asia there still survives the *Equus przewalskii*—the wild horse, nearly related to the extinct European tarpan. Central Asia appears thus to be a sanctuary for several surviving kinds of large mammals which have become extinct in other parts of the world.

The greatest paradox, however, is the fact that until the middle of the twentieth century almost nobody has been able to observe such a large and interesting creature as the Abominable Snowman, although rumours about its existence and about its footprints on the snow have been circulating for about fifty years. I believe that this is a result of the nature of the animal itself. It appears to be a very powerful and active predator, perfectly adapted to the life in regions which are almost inaccessible to man, capable of moving swiftly from place to place, having sharp senses, and probably an intellectual development surpassing that of all other creatures except man. These qualities of the Snowman would account for the terror inspired by the mysterious creature in the indigenous population.

The eventual discovery and description of the Abominable Snowman will be an event of the greatest importance for science and will doubtlessly contribute extensively to zoology, zoopsychology, anthropology, and the theory of evolution.

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APPENDIX F

EVEREST HAS HELPED TO STOCK YOUR GARDEN¹

By F. Kingdon-Ward

(World-famous botanist and explorer who has introduced many new plants in Britain)

Mr. Charles Stonor, a member of the Yeti Expedition to the distant Nepal Himalayas, spent some of his time making a collection of plants, including more than twenty species of the fantastically beautiful rhododendrons for which the Himalayas are famous.

Ever since Sir Joseph Hooker, a century ago, revealed the great wealth of these flowers, many of which he brought into cultivation, they have been popular in Britain; and today there is no country in the world where so many species of these glorious trees and shrubs can be seen growing in gardens.

Since the beginning of the twentieth century, the vast mountain skeins of Western China, Southern Tibet, and Northern Burma, whose peaks are little inferior in height to those of the Himalayas, have been combed for new species.

But though these remote ranges have yielded many more than are known from the Himalayan ranges, nothing more gorgeous than the ruby-scarlet *R. barbatum* and *R. Thomsonii*, more magnificent than the Crimson Trees of *R. Falconeri* and *R. grande*, more spruce and elegant than *R. pumilum* and *R. lepidotum*—all Himalayan plants—has ever been found.

Nor should we forget that it was the discovery of these wonderful species a century ago which, after the lapse of fifty years, led to explorations further afield.

In the Himalayas they occur in broad belts, characterised not by one or two but by a dozen or two dozen species; that is to say, rhododendrons are stratified like many rocks.

As you climb from the plains to the snows, you pass through three main belts. Lowest is the sub-tropical forest belt, where rhododendrons are rare. Those that do occur are leggy shrubs with large

¹ Printed in the *Daily Mail*, 25 August, 1954.

flowers, often white or cream, and they grow high up on the limbs of mossy trees in the forest.

Above that comes the temperate belt, the equivalent of Western Europe in climate, with a large number of rhododendron species, scattered at low levels, but becoming more and more abundant as we ascend. Both trees and shrubs characterise the middle belt. At 9,000 ft. or 10,000 ft. we enter the true rhododendron forest, at its best composed almost entirely of big gnarled tree rhododendrons of several species, most of them between two and three centuries old. Another 2,000 or 3,000 ft. of climbing, more steeply now up the endless ridge, and with startling suddenness we emerge from the rhododendron and silver fir forest into the glaring light of day. We have reached the alpine slopes and the snow peaks wink and glitter above us, casting purple shadows at sunset.

Far below, the foothills slope down to the plains where men dwell. Before us rises the throne of the gods, and round it, spread out like a rich carpet, the rhododendron fairyland. There are miles of pygmy bushes, like heather in the Scottish Highlands, but foaming with flowers of almost every colour of the rainbow—yellow, orange, crimson, pink, purple, and violet quicken the scene.

Amid such overwhelming beauty one scarce dare speak. We have reached the limit of the rhododendron world in a cold bleak climate, where for six months in the year all plants sleep peacefully beneath a thick warm quilt of snow, while the gale howls over their heads.

Plant hunting is not "one long holiday," as some people think. It means long hours, hard labour, and considerable discomfort. Mr. Charles Stonor must have taken it seriously to bring back from Nepal so fair a collection of rhododendrons and other plants.

In these days it is no mean feat to find a new species in the Himalayas; but this, too, the *Daily Mail* Expedition hopes to have done, although the final identification of the plants brought back is not yet complete.

APPENDIX G

“DAILY MAIL” HIMALAYAN EXPEDITION, 1954

List of Firms who Supplied Stores and Equipment

CAMPING EQUIPMENT

Benjamin Edgington (Silver & Edgington Limited), 69 Great Queen Street, Kingsway, W.C.2. *Tents (specially made), Cooking utensils, Stoves, etc.*

Burmah Shell Oil Co. Limited. *Kerosene (supplied in India).*

Pindisports, Ludgate Hill, E.C.2. *Experimental tents.*

Stampers & Platers, 14 Holborn, E.C.1. *Prestige Pressure Cookers. Kitchen knives, etc.*

Easiwork Limited, 29 Goodge Street, Tottenham Court Rd., W. *Easiwork Pressure Cooker.*

Condrup Limited, 67-73 Worship Street, E.C.2. *Primus stoves, lamps and spares.*

CLOTHING: PERSONAL & SLEEPING

Benjamin Edgington. *Sleeping-bags, air beds.*

Robert Lawrie, 52 Seymour Street, W.1. *Sleeping-bags.*

Frankenstein (Manchester) Victoria Rubber Works, Newton Heath, Manchester 10. *Double air beds (Everest type).*

Dunlop Rubber Company Limited, Speke, Liverpool. *Rubber boots and shoes.*

P. B. Cow & Co. Limited, Factory Square, Streatham Common, S.W.16. *Li-Lo air beds.*

Grenfell Cloth. *22 Windproof suits (specially made for the Expedition).*

FOOD

Kings of Kingsbury (Sales) Limited.

Fortnum & Mason Limited, Piccadilly, W.

(The bulk of food was bought through Andrew Lusk Limited, Shippers and Packers, 78 Wapping Wall.)

George King & Co. Limited, Albion Food Mills, Kingsbury Road, Kingsbury. *Emprote.*

- H. W. Carter & Co. Limited, The Royal Forest Factory, Coleford, Glos.
Ribena Fruit Juice.
- Peek Freen & Co. Limited, Keetons Road, Bermondsey, S.E.16.
Biscuits.
- United Yeast Co. Limited, 241 City Road, E.C.1. *Yeast.*
- Twining Crosfield Co. Limited, Ibex House, The Minories, E.C.3.
(R. T. Wood.) *Tea.*
- Perrius Prepared Foods Limited, P.O. Box 232, Salisbury, Rhodesia.
Concentrated Food Products.
- L. E. Pritchard & Co. Limited, 262 Uxbridge Road, Hatch End,
Middlesex. (W. G. West. *Cream powder.*
- Palmer Mann & Co. Limited, Sifta Salt Works, Sandbach, Ches.
Sifta Salt.
- Three Cooks Limited, Worcester House, Reading, Berkshire. *Lemon-
ade powder, Fruit flavours & soups.*
- Oxo Limited, Thames House, Queen Street Place, E.C.4. *Oxo cubes.*
- George Romney Limited, 53 Highgate, Kendal. *Kendal Mint cake.*

MEDICAL SUPPLIES.

- Down Brothers & Mayer Phelps Limited. *Surgical instruments, etc.*
- Edward Gurr Limited, 42 Upper Richmond Road, East Sheen, S.W.14.
Stains.
- Arnold R. Horwell, 18 Christchurch Avenue, N.W.6. *Medical equip-
ment—polythene and glassware, etc.*
- Claudius Ash, Sons & Co. Limited. *Dental instruments.*
- Herts Pharmaceuticals Limited, Bessemer Road, Welwyn Garden City.
Dressing and Drugs.
- Horlicks Limited, Slough, Buckinghamshire. *Nulacin.*
- Guillaume & Sons Limited, Riverside Works, Alcester. *Surgical
needles, Sewing needles.*
- The Crookes Laboratories, Limited, Park Royal, N.W.10. *Hand
cream.*
- Lederle Laboratories Division, Cyanamid Products Limited, Bush
House, Aldwych, W.C.2. *Aureomycin, Vimagna.*
- Allen & Hanbury's Limited. *Drugs.*

CLIMBING EQUIPMENT

- Benjamin Edgington. *Ice-axes, crampons, rock- and ice-pitons.*
- Robert Lawries. *Ice-axes, crampons, snow goggles, anklets, climbing
boots.*

- Badges & Equipment, 435 Strand, W.C.2. *Compasses, signal whistles.*
Brocks (Crystal Palace) Fireworks Limited, Hemel Hempstead, Herts.
Verey light pistols.
John Payne & Co., Eastfields, Mitcham, Surrey. *Verey lights.*
Arthur Beale Limited, 194 Shaftesbury Avenue, W.C.2. *Climbing ropes, etc.*
Brown Best & Co., 44 Tarn Street, New Kent Road, S.E.1. *Everest rucksacks.*
Itside Rubber Co. Limited, Petersfield. *'Commando' rubber soles and heels, for climbing boots.*

PHOTOGRAPHIC EQUIPMENT

- Bell & Howell Co., 17 Hanover Square, W.1. *16 mm. Cine cameras, lenses, etc.*
Kodak. *Still and Cine film filters, etc.*
Agfa. *Colour film.*
Wallace Heaton Limited, 127 New Bond Street, W.1. *Exposure meters, filters, etc.*
Phillips Electrical, Shaftesbury Avenue, W.1. *Flash bulbs.*
Brocks Fireworks. *Photographic flares.*

BOTANICAL KIT

- Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. *Botanical kit.*

MISCELLANEOUS

- Brocks. *Fireworks.*
E.M.I. Factories Limited, Dawley Works, Hayes, Middlesex. *Tape Recorder, battery model.*
Badges & Equipment. *Miscellaneous clothing for Sherpas.*
Royal Geographical Society, Kensington Gore, S.W.7. *Nepal maps.*
Mellins Food Limited, 102 Naylor Road, Peckham. *Animal food.*
Young & Sons (Misterton) Limited, Crewkerne, Somerset. *Live-catching traps.*
Arthur Bale Limited. *Catching nests.*
Edgington. *Live-catching traps, Trap-making materials, Tools.*
Robert Dyer Limited. *Sundry tools.*
Dexion Limited, 189 Regent St., W.1. *Metal for trap-making.*
Sobranie Limited, 136/144 City Road, E.C. *Tobacco.*

British American Tobacco Co. Limited (Indian Dept.), Westminster House, 7 Millbank, S.W.1. *Cigarettes.*

E. J. Churchill (Gunmakers) Limited, Orange Street Gunworks, Leicester Square, W.C. *Ammunition.*

Ever Ready Battery Co. *Radio receivers.*

Imperial Chemical Industries, (Plastic Division), Black Fen Road, Welwyn Garden City. *Polythene bags.*

Paper Goods Manufacturing Co. Limited, Westmead Road, Sutton, Surrey. *Polythene kitbag liners.*

Rolex Watch Co. Limited, 1 Green Street, Mayfair, W.1. 1 *Rolex watch for each member of the Expedition.*

Penguin Books Limited, Harmondsworth, Middlesex. *Books.*

Scroll Pens Limited. *Supply of various types of Scroll pens.*

COMMUNICATIONS

Marconi's Wireless Telegraph Co. Limited, Marconi House, Chelmsford. 2 *VHU transmitting sets*, 13 *Walkie-Talkies, with spares (on loan).*

TRANSPORT

G. B. Dewar's Garages, Calcutta, India. 1 *Land Rover, Model 1954.*

