CLIMBING MOUNT EVEREST IS WORK FOR SUPERMEN

A Member of Former Expeditions Tells of the Difficulties Involved in Reaching the Top-Hope of Winning in 1924-by Establishment of Base Camps on a Higher Level.

Mount Everest?" This ques-| self wings. tion was asked of George Leigh Mallory, who was with both expeditions toward

the summit of the world's highest high as 21,000 feet. The second attempt mountain, in 1921 and 1922, and who is now in New York. He Mans to go again in 1924, and he gave as the reason for persisting in these repeated attempts to reach the top, "Because it's there," "But hadn't the expedition valuable climbing begins, for not even Los Anscientific results?"

"Yes. The first expedition made a geological survey that was very valuable. and both expeditions made observations and collected specimens, both geological and botanical.' The geologists want a stone from the top of Everest. That will decide whether it is the top or the bottom of a fold. But these things are byproducts. Do you think Shackelton went to the South Pole to make scientific observations? He used the observations he did make to help finance the next trip. Sometimes science is the excuse for exploration. I think it is rarely the reason.

"Everest is the highest mountain in the world, and no man has reached its summit. Its existence is a challenge. The answer is instinctive, a part. I suppose. of man's desire to conquer the universe."

This is pure romance, call it what else you will, and every man recognizes its touch. It leads into jungles and over dsep waters and up through the high thin reaches of the air. Its glamorous trail goes through the doors of movingpicture houses and up one flight to the chop suey restaurant. It beckons to all that is strange. It is inherent in the ' dares" of childhood. It makes the it sent the British Royal Geographical

HY did you want to climb climbed before without taking unto him-

The first expedition went out by the Royal Geographical Society and the Alpine Club cost £6,000 and only got as cost f11,000 and reached 27,235 feet. That leaves 1.700 fect to go, and there is no telling how much it will cost to make the last spurt. Moreover, it takes a long time to reach the place where geles claims the tallest mountain - for America, and Everest towers among the Himalayas. The last stage of the journey is a five weeks' tramp across the Tibetan plains from Darjeeling, mile after mile of bare earth and rock, with meager patches of dried growth in the lee of a ledge or in a slight depression, showing where a little moisture collected in the Spring and Summer. The rack animals live on this poor fare. The human natives, whom Mr. Mallory believes to be the least virile of the Mongols, pushed into this desolate corner by their stronger kin, fare hardly better on tsamfa, a coarse sort of barley ineal.

Plans for assault on Everest are laid as carefully as for a military campaign. That, aside from the grit and stamina of the climbers. is the most important factor for success. The lack of a cooking pot, an oxygen tank, a canteen or a rope, at the right spot at the right moment, may doom the expedition. The party was able to go that personally he can use with equanas high as they did by the establishment of a succession of base camps, the high- feet of eliff or ice wall any footing that est being at 21,000 feet. This meant that each camp must have supplies sufficient not only for the climbers, but also for mountaineers upon conduct during an timid boy dive from the pierhead, and the porters, who were to carry the equip- avalanche, or rather in an avalanche. ment necessary to make the next camp. If it is of rocks and ice, the affair must

You are all right unless you conflict should remain at that altitude for as and stores. Pack animals, mostly yaks, with a trajectory. There is little chance many as five days, since acclimatization were used across the plain and up the of dodging. Snow is another matter. would greatly lessen the strain of exerslopes as far as the glacier. Beyond that point the work was done by fifty por-Its tendency is to pull you under and tion. The chief obstacles to this scheme crush or suffocate you. The point of are that every day of good weather ters, men from the native State of Natal, endeavor is to stay on the surface and whose splendid strength and endurance must be used, and the difficulty of to keep your arms up above your head. finding a possible camping place. There hold out the hope of establishing camp In the avalanche which killed seven are no levels or adequate shelters. This at a still greater height. Other things besides time, money and porters and halted his own attempt to makes it almost impossible to sleep and reach the summit, Mr. Mallory found very hard to secure a tent. Some one executive ability were demanded of the himself "swimming on his back." Af has suggested that they blast a shelter expedition; the utmost quality of the the end the snow packed in such a way out of the mountain side, climbers, for instance. Perfect physical as to push him and others to the sur-If a returned explorer is properly pocondition is, of course, essential, face, instead of dragging them down. lite and becomingly modest, his manner for under the most favorable con-"It's easy enough to breathe," he exwill give you the impression that he of effort strain in the ditions plained, " and while you keep perfectly has done nothing that any earnest and those awful altitudes is such that still you feel all right. But when you industrious young man might not get normal fitness is not regained for try to move, you have a bad time getup and do. For instance, Mr. Mallory months after the ordeal. Good heart ting started. Then you have to pump will tell you that his real job is teachand lungs are the most important prereqso hard to keep going that you wear ing English literature and history at uisites. Even perfect organs would not yourself out. When I came back from the Charter House School for boys. He avail without long mountaineering expethe expedition, the muscles of my diawas in the habit of spending every Aurience. The men were picked on their phragm were tremendously developed gust in the Alps, and when he was Alpine records, not so much on the writjust from breathing." (N. B. Why asked to go with the Everest expedition, ten record of so many feet climbed in so wouldn't breathing rarefied air be spienhe thought he'd do it "for a change." many hours as on the reputations that did training for opera singers?) His chief interest is in writing, and he grow up through the gossip of moun-Oxygen, inhaled in small doses, will had a book on Boswell published a few keep you from freezing to death. This years ago. He could tell you a lot fact a part of the expedition discovered about Boswell if you weren't so obduring one night spent 25,500 feet above viously interested in mountains. sea level, in the grip of a furious storm. Be not beguiled, O armchair ex-

taincers: that so-and-so is a fearful fellow to keep up with, that another is fast and sure and never tires. They had need for every bit of their skill, experience and strength in this struggle. The insane wind threatened every minplorer! Stick to the comparative sc-Perpendicular travel is slow at best, ute to sweep them and their tiny tent curity of your subway strap. For this but on the higher slopes of Everest it off the slope, and the cold gripped them quiet young man's casual comment slowed down to 330 feet an hour-about with fatal creeping numbress, in spite raises the ghost of such a tremendous the length of a short city block, the disof their heavy woolen clothing, windadventure as the fireside mind can tance that a good runner can make in proofed and electrically heated. Hot scarce conceive; of crawling along knife ten seconds. Twenty-nine thousand feet drinks were impossible, because the edges in the teeth of a bitter wind; of of that is no week-end sport. water boiled at such a ridiculously low chopping footholds up the face of a wall For instance, no mountaineer experitemperature. Alcohol was a dangerous of ice; of moving on where each step ences vertigo. He wouldn't be one long stimulant, from the point of view of almay very reasonably be expected to be if he did. The reason the untrained mortitude, not morals. Oxygen was the the last, and yet taking that step, and tal feels dizzy on the-brink of a thouslast chance and the first whiffs brought the next, and the next after that; of and-foot drop is that his eyes find nothpushing up and up in spite of frozen fingers and toes, in spite of laboring the tingle of returning life. ing to rest on. The mountaincer's eye "Climbing in the Alps," said Mr. Malis trained to vast spaces all about, and heart and bursting lungs, until death is lory, "is wonderfully exhilarating, but certain just ahead, and then turning particularly beneath him. There is scientists say that, above 18,000 feet, back just as steadily, to wait for the rarely a vertical wall to be climbed. next opportunity.

altitude is physically and mentally de-Almost always there is a slight slope. pressing. Your perceptions are all and here a few degrees mean everyslowed down. For instance, toward the thing to the eye. Mr. Mallory says end we were making only 330 feet an imity at the sky end of a few thousand hour. In the Alps we would have been going at four times that rate, yet I didn't realize that we were climbing would serve him on lower levels.

slowly." Here is a useful hint for incipient Hope of ultimately reaching the very top of Everest depends largely on the increased use of oxygen and the estab-Society's and the Alpine Club's expedi- In all, the expedition carried something be left almost entirely to the avalanche lishment of a camp at 27,000 feet. One tion nearcr the sky than any man had over twenty tons of equipment, baggage itself. Its constituent parts bounce, scientist told Mr. Mallory that they

Ehe New Hork Times

Published: March 18, 1923 Copyright © The New York Times

