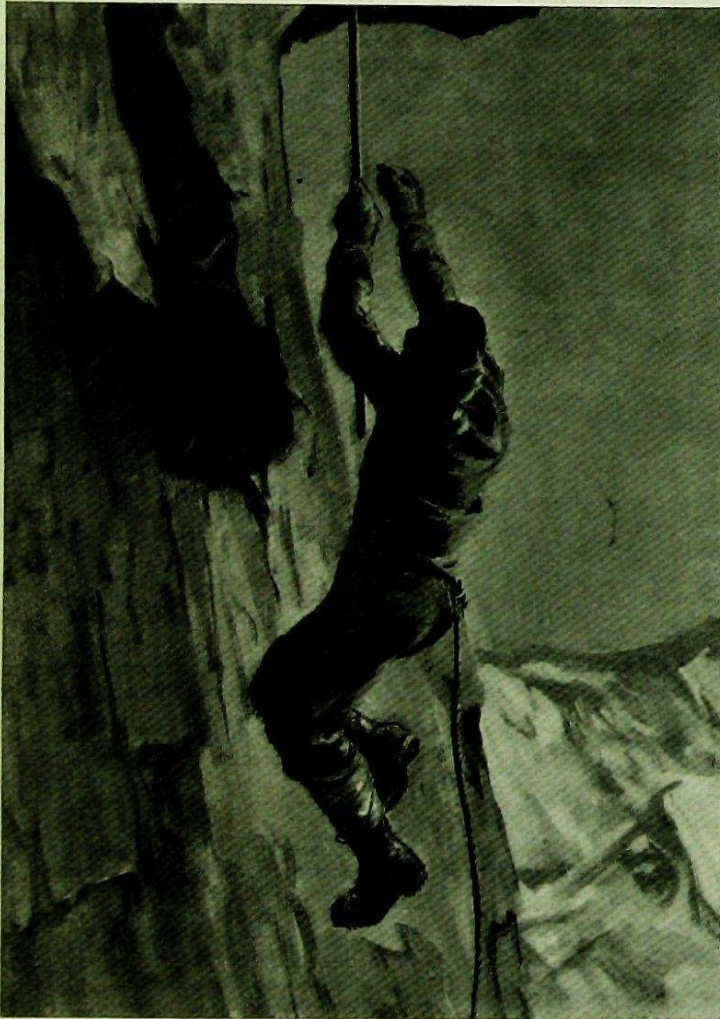


CONQUEST

By
LEONARD LEE

ILLUSTRATED BY W. H. D. KOERNER



He Slipped and Swung Free in Space, Dangling by One Arm Over the Glacier Two Miles Below

HAMILTON donned the headphones and adjusted the controls of the tiny portable radio; he motioned with one hand, and Langmuir leaned back from the stove to pick up pad and pencil. "Darjeeling reports," he wrote, as Hamilton dictated the incoming message, one letter at a time, "relayed from base camp. Alipore observatory warns monsoon approaching from East Coast Ceylon. Low-pressure area moving north from India."

Chase Hamilton swore suddenly as static blanketed the code signals; the leader's nerves, like those of the others', were taut from strain and altitude. In the dim and flickering light of the candle lamp he worked over the radio that was the sole link between Camp 6 and the outer world.

The slanting rays of the setting sun, throwing into glowing splendor the harsh beauty of Mount Everest, did not reach the tiny tent which marked the site of Camp 6; deep shadow covered the topmost point yet reached by the Hamilton Everest expedition.

snow-masked rock, along tiny ledges hanging sheer over cloud-filled space, up vertical slabs of rock with fingers and feet searching desperately for a tiny crack, a handhold, a moment's purchase. They had been at the end of their resources when they reached Camp 6, where Hamilton and Langmuir had been waiting for two days.

"Makaroff predicts clear here," resumed Hamilton from the radio, "for next thirty-six hours. Advises attempt tomorrow, as he expects break and heavy snow by May twenty-fifth at latest. Makaroff believes you will be forced abandon Camps 5 and 6 within forty-eight hours. Inform us your intentions. We will notify Camps 3, 4, 5 regarding relays. Message ends."

Hamilton read the entire message aloud from the slip of paper; his voice came thickly from his throat, rasped raw by the Tibetan dust that had attacked the expedition on their long march to the base camp. There was no sound when he had finished save the

The little oblong of brown canvas clung precariously to a narrow, sloping ledge, fifteen hundred feet below the highest spot on earth—Everest's unconquered summit, towering twenty-nine thousand feet up into the sky.

The three other men who crowded the tent were silent as Hamilton readjusted the controls; an altitude of more than five miles, where every breath was a laboring struggle for the oxygen that was one-third of normal in that rarefied air, did not encourage idle talk. Langmuir abandoned his pencil and turned back to his labors at the tiny solidified-alcohol stove, trying to nurse it to sufficient heat to bring the coffee to some degree of warmth; boiling the snow water was out of the question—their great altitude made hot drinks almost an impossibility.

Revere and Challoner lay spent in their sleeping bags, still exhausted from their struggle to reach the tent from Camp 5, an hour below. Camp 5 was only two thousand feet below 6, but it had taken them five hours to cover the distance. Five hours of incessant peril, over treacherous

labored breathing of the men. Makaroff, the expedition's weather expert at the base camp far below in the Tibetan valley, had done all he could; the decision would lie with Chase Hamilton. Advice he might ask from the others, but the final responsibility would be his; the leader of an expedition that has the temerity to attack Everest must be the commander, the absolute authority, and not a leader in name only. The life of every man in the tent might depend on his judgment; there could be no question of a divided command.

Hamilton's face, hidden behind the two months' beard that masked each of them, was inscrutable; under the unkempt thick black hair, his eyes, swollen and red from the sun glare that had pierced through, despite colored goggles, swung slowly to each man in turn.

"Langmuir?" he questioned huskily.

There was no hesitation from the tall youth who crouched over the tiny stove. He had left college, halfway through his senior year, to join this expedition; five years of mountain climbing all over the North American continent had been only the foundation, the prelude, for this moment.

"Pike's Peak or bust," he answered, and laughed through his blond beard in sheer uncontrollable excitement.

Hamilton did not smile at the other's enthusiasm; for days he had been keeping a rigid rein on his own emotions. This altitude affected men strangely, he knew; Langmuir had been veering from joyous anticipation to blackest gloom, ever since they had gone above twenty-two thousand feet.

"Challoner?"

The shorter of the two men in the sleeping bags raised himself on one elbow. Challoner, oldest of the four in the tent—he was thirty-eight, past the accepted age limit for high altitude work—had twice before attempted to conquer Everest; his voice, despite his harsh breathing, was calm, his English accent marked:

"I assure you, Hamilton, that at the moment I'm much more interested in whether the chef can produce some coffee from that confounded little gadget than in possible monsoons, hurricanes, or typhoons. However—yes, by all means, I should recommend making the attempt tomorrow."

"And you, Revere?"

Knute Revere—known to the American members of the expedition, not unnaturally, as Paul—shook his head slowly from where he lay in his sleeping bag; half Swedish, half American, he was famous as one of the finest rock climbers in the world.

"I say no. We're behind schedule now, and if the weather breaks while we're up here, we're all dead men. Get out and get down while we have a chance. There's always next year."

The three men looked curiously at Hamilton, his unlit pipe gripped between his teeth, his bloodshot eyes staring into the flame of the candle lamp as though seeing something beyond the walls of the tent.

"Wait," he said at last, and undid the lashings that held the double flap closed; he made his way out of the tent.

The bitter-cold iciness of the wind ripped and tore at him as he stood erect in the snow outside; the thermometer had shown thirty below before the sun had gone down.

He looked out over an endless tumbled sea of cloud masses, rolling on and on to the far horizon. Through the clouds, the peaks of Chö-oyu and Gyachung Kang rose like islands, their white crests gleaming in the sun's afterglow; Pumori's snowy crags stood like a gray ghost in the distance.

Hamilton's eyes lifted from the billowing sea of white to the summit of Everest, looming directly above. He had to bend his head far back to see up the rough pyramid, its sides rising almost sheer from where he stood—fifteen hundred feet to the crest, where the wind constantly whirled Everest's eternal plume of snow out into empty space. Only fifteen hundred feet, thought Hamilton—five city blocks or so. Five blocks, and he would achieve the consuming ambition of his life—he, Chase Hamilton, would be the first man to stand on the summit of Everest. His brain was on fire with the thought, the desire, the chance of fulfillment of his greatest wish.

For long minutes, heedless of the searching fingers of the bitter cold, he stood studying the sky and staring at the summit; at last he nodded his head decisively and turned back to the tent.

The others watched silently as he re-entered the tent, impatiently brushing away the ice that his breath had formed upon his beard in those few minutes; he flexed his stiff fingers, silently motioned Langmuir to the radio.

"Base camp," Hamilton dictated slowly, when a nod from Langmuir told him communication had been established with the base in the Tibetan valley, thousands of feet below: "The attempt will be made tomorrow. Signed, Hamilton. Message ends."

The radio was silent for a moment when Langmuir had finished sending and the base had repeated the message; then the headphones chattered for an instant. Langmuir called the letters aloud—the message from the base camp was brief:

"Good luck."

II

SOMETHING of the tension had gone out of the air by the time the supper of beans, meat essence, barley sugar and coffee was finished. It was not that they had relaxed, so much as the knowledge that the final attempt was to be made at last, after all the weary months of preparation; zero hour was set.

Revere had been unable to eat; altitude affected some men in that manner, the leader knew. That settled Revere—he'd lack strength when it came to the pinches. And Challoner was running on his courage—no chance of using him tomorrow. That left Langmuir—Langmuir, whose nerves had been stretching nearer the breaking point every day. Hamilton cursed to himself, but no inner turmoil showed in his husky voice when he spoke.

"Langmuir and I will make the attempt," he said calmly. "We start for the summit at dawn. Challoner, you and Revere are in reserve. If we don't return by eight the next morning, you will make your way down to Camp 5 at once. Is that clear?"

The two men nodded; disappointment of any cherished last-minute hopes they masked in silence. There were thirty-five other men in the camps from base to 5 who had unhesitatingly sacrificed their chances of personal glory that one or two of their number might reach the coveted goal; Challoner and Revere realized that Hamilton had selected what he felt would be the strongest team.

Young Langmuir, exuberantly happy at being chosen, yet trying not to hurt Revere and Challoner by showing his exultation, broke the strained silence with hurried words:

"Tell me, Hamilton, do you think it would be possible to traverse the north face, cross the *coulair*, and make the final ascent directly up the western part of the north side of the pyramid?"

The leader shook his head.

"No; that was Smythe's theory, you know. He and Shipton made a magnificent effort to reach the top with the Ruttledge expedition of 1933. In fact Smythe, after stomach trouble had forced Shipton to turn back, made a daring single-handed assault and reached a point within a thousand feet of the summit."

"I agree with Hamilton," Challoner put in. "I think Norton's route is the most practical. Of course, Mallory and Irvine climbed a different way in 1924, but Wyn Harris and Wager reconnoitered their route in '33 and chose the other in preference."

"Harris and Wager were the two who found the famous ice ax, weren't they?" Langmuir asked.

"Yes," answered Challoner, chewing on his pipe stem. "Harris found it, about an hour's climb above their Camp 6. It's Ruttledge's theory—and I'm inclined to agree with him—that it marks the spot where Mallory and Irvine fell to their deaths in 1924. Whether they ever reached the summit is a question no one can answer, although it seems very unlikely; it's eleven years since they started upward and were seen alive for the last time."

Hamilton nodded.

"Until 1933 no one knew anything of what had happened after that moment; ever since Wyn Harris found the ice ax—and there doesn't seem to be much doubt that it belonged to Mallory—the question of their fate has been argued among mountaineers."

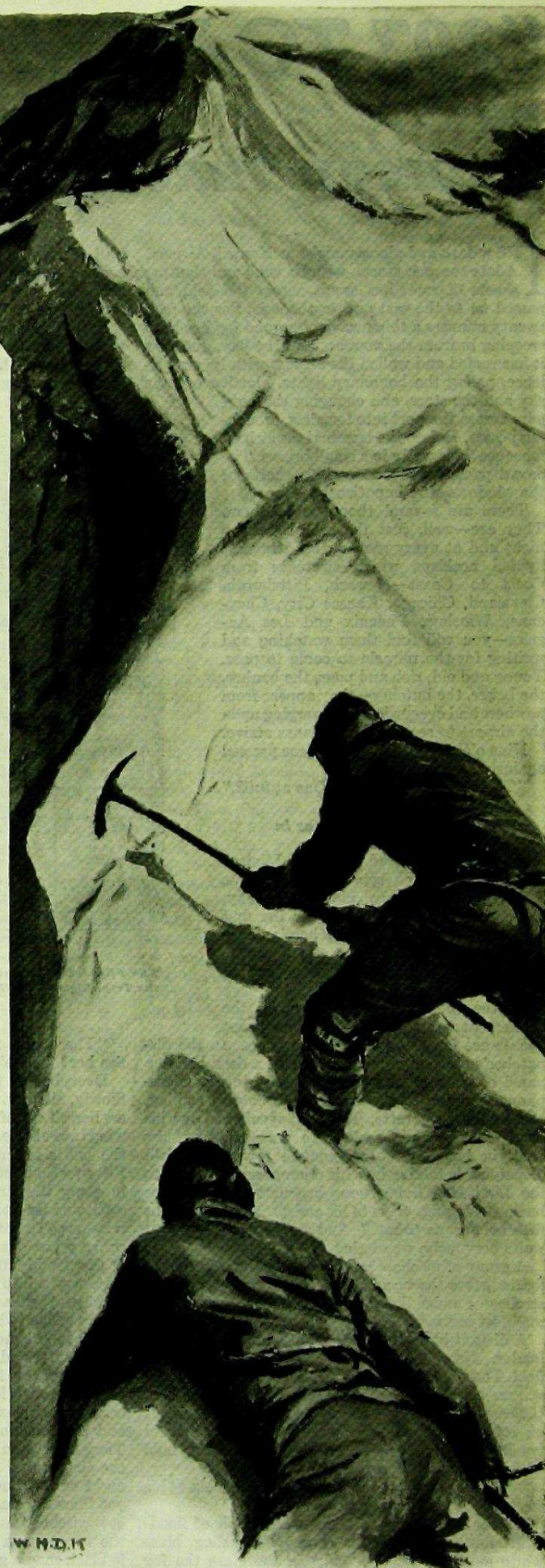
Langmuir leaned forward, his eyes curiously bright:

"They were brave men, Mallory and Irvine, fine mountaineers both. And yet they died somewhere between this spot we're at now and the summit. Why should Hamilton and I succeed where they failed? I'm beginning to think —"

"Shut up!" Hamilton rapped sharply; the boy must regain his control. "Forget about Mallory and Irvine! Plenty of men have been killed on Everest, but we're not going to be! Ruttledge brought every man of his party back in '33, and I'm going to do the same."

Langmuir sank slowly back onto his sleeping bag.

"Sorry," he muttered apologetically. "I sort of —"



Half an Hour of Precarious Labor, Cutting With the Fear That Each Stroke Might Start a Fatal Snow Slip, and They Had Crossed the Expanse

(Continued on Page 67)

(Continued from Page 65)

I glanced at her sharply, but I think that she was speaking more to herself than to me, and I don't think that she realized that her words had been revealing.

We began to walk back to the house. Suddenly Mrs. Leidner clutched my arm so violently that I nearly cried out. "Who's that, nurse? What's he doing?"

Some little distance ahead of us, just where the path ran near the expedition house, a man was standing. He wore European clothes, and he seemed to be standing on tiptoe and trying to look in at one of the windows.

As we watched, he glanced round, caught sight of us, and immediately continued on the path toward us. I felt Mrs. Leidner's clutch tighten.

"Nurse," she whispered. "Nurse." "It's all right, my dear; it's all right," I said reassuringly.

The man came along and passed us. He was an Iraqi, and as soon as she saw him near to, Mrs. Leidner relaxed with a sigh.

"He's only an Iraqi after all," she said.

We went on our way. I glanced up at the windows as I passed. Not only were they barred but they were too high from the ground to permit of

anyone seeing in, for the level of the ground was lower here than on the inside of the courtyard.

"It must have been just curiosity," I said.

Mrs. Leidner nodded.

"That's all. But just for a minute I thought —"

She broke off. I thought to myself: "You thought what? That's what I'd like to know. What did you think?"

But I knew one thing now—that Mrs. Leidner was afraid of a definite flesh-and-blood person.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

CONQUEST

(Continued from Page 9)

"Forget it," counseled Hamilton easily, now that the crisis was averted. "What do you say we all turn in?" He forced a smile. "I've got a date I'd like to keep with a mountain top early in the morning."

III

HAMILTON could not sleep; the other three dozed in fitful snatches, half waking as they rolled against one another on the forty-degree slope on which the tent was anchored. Every few minutes a man would drag himself up to the higher side of the tent, only to start sliding down again over the sharp-edged rock as soon as he relaxed.

Young Langmuir tossed and muttered in troubled dreams. Hamilton, wide awake, stared at the tent sides that shook and drummed as the wind battered them, obstinately trying not to look at his wrist watch. At last he gave up the struggle; the radium dial showed a few minutes past midnight. Another five hours of this, he swore to himself, trying to still the pounding of his racing heart; one more symptom of the terrific height.

Inwardly he knew that his heart was not thumping solely because of altitude; the big moment of his life was at hand. He would not admit it, even to himself, but he would sacrifice anything, anyone, to win his goal tomorrow. Ever since he had been old enough to climb, Hamilton had thrilled to mountaineering. The Rockies, the Alps, new routes, more difficult ascents; but when he stood on the heights, there was always the realization that someone had preceded him. That was why Everest had flamed in his imagination ever since he could remember—Everest, the sole unconquered peak, the top of the world.

If Hamilton and the others had lived a few centuries earlier, they would have voyaged with Leif Ericson, Columbus, Magellan; the lure of the uncharted shore, the blank space on the cartographer's map, was in their blood. Some inner urge, unformulated in words, drove them to pit their strength against Nature. Hamilton could not describe the exultation that would be his if he should succeed; it was not just a question of fame and applause, certainly not of money.

He remembered all the months of work—choosing the membership of the expedition from the flood of applicants; laboring over the endless conferences and tests on clothing, apparatus, food, a thousand minutiae that forged the final chain. Then the trip and the long march through Tibet, the inevitable delays, the red tape, the hardships.

The native porters, many of them veterans of previous climbs, who were as keen on the success of the assault as the white men.

He saw again, in quick scenes like a disconnected motion picture, the struggle up the mountain after the establishment of the base camp. Acts of nerve and daring had become a commonplace, so often were they repeated.

Each camp set up on the mountain represented another victory, each higher step a more difficult task than the one before. But so far they had conquered Nature, had beaten the mountain without the loss of a life; he had led thirty-five white men and eighty natives until this moment, when all was ready for the grand finale.

Well, he had done all he could. The intricate system of relays, whereby the men "leap-frogged" in pairs from camp to higher camp, had brought him and Langmuir to Camp 6 for two days of acclimatization; a longer stay would weaken them more than it would help.

He stared at the vibrating tent top; "Tomorrow," his brain reiterated, "Langmuir and I are going on—to the summit. Hamilton and Langmuir—conquerors of Everest, Everest the unconquerable. We're going through or die trying." Conquest, conquest, conquest—the words took up the rhythm of the drumming wind; Hamilton slid off to sleep.

IV

HAMILTON opened the tent flaps and peered out at the sky for the tenth time since they had risen at 4:30.

"Still clear!" he exclaimed.

Langmuir, thawing his frozen boots over the alcohol flame, grinned at the words.

"You boys certainly look smart," Challoner rallied the two. "What the well-dressed horse will wear."

Hamilton smiled; the clear weather was a good omen.

"I don't know what you mean," he replied. "Are you inferring that three flannel shirts, four camel's-hair sweaters and two suits of long woolen underwear are hiding the manly beauty under this windproof? Or is it the three pairs of socks?"

"Three pairs!" exclaimed Langmuir, pulling on his partly thawed boot. "You're conservative; I'm wearing five."

They gulped beans and lukewarm coffee. Hamilton nodded and rose.

"Let's get going."

There was no formality about their departure; Revere and Challoner walked out of the tent with them, no emotion showing in their faces.

"Luck," said Challoner, carefully casual, and Revere echoed the word; the two waved briefly and turned away.

It was icy cold; the rising sun that gilded the crest had not yet reached the snow-choked gully that led steeply upward, a little to the right of the camp, and both men were suffering bitterly from the cold within half an hour.

Hamilton lifted his snow goggles from his fleece-lined helmet and motioned Langmuir toward him; they had been climbing unroped over firm snow.

"Rope up," he panted; the frigid thin air cut into their laboring lungs like a knife thrust.

Langmuir pointed across the steep slope before them, that angled upward far more sharply than any roof top.

"Going to cut steps?"

The leader nodded; half an hour of precarious labor with the ice axes, cutting with the ever-present fear that each stroke might start a fatal snow slip, and they had crossed the fifty-yard expanse.

During the next hour they made faster time, working their way over a sharply inclined slope of scree—rough-edged rocks that slipped and slid under them and cut through gloves and outer clothing. Every fifteen minutes the leader would signal for a pause, and they would lie outstretched, fighting for oxygen from the thin air. It seemed to Hamilton, as he rested, that for every yard they progressed upward, they were forced to cross three horizontally.

Langmuir inched his way along a ledge where Hamilton, his back cramped against an overhanging rock, sat panting for breath. The sun was up now, and the glare was stabbing through the goggles into their eyeballs.

"Seven-thirty," the younger man rasped painfully. "We've done well—over a third of the way."

"Yes, but look what's ahead. . . . Have a malted-milk tablet?"

The other reached for the tablet tin; it slipped from his stiff fingers and went sliding off the ledge, down, down, until it was lost to sight in the cloud-filled abyss below. Langmuir shuddered and looked up.

"There's the last thousand feet," the leader panted hoarsely. "When we've licked that, we've won."

Above him Langmuir saw only bulging rock, hidden in spots by ice and powdery snow that whirled and drifted past. It was as if some gigantic skyscraper had been transformed to harsh

(Continued on Page 69)

This Month ONE YEAR AGO

High-spot happenings during November, 1934



Nov. 1—Last night's closing of the Chicago World's Fair turned into a riot as thousands ran over the grounds destroying property. Figures given out show that nearly 39,000,000 visitors spent \$700,000,000 in Chicago during the two seasons of the Fair.



Nov. 13—Threat of "war" over Parker Dam site vanishes when Federal Reclamation Bureau stops construction work on Arizona territory and Gov. Moeur of Arizona withdraws his martial-law proclamation.



Nov. 14—Severe cold snap in many sections of country sends thousands of motorists hurrying to garages for anti-freeze. Some gamable on weather, putting in cheap "boil-away" liquids. Others, remembering last winter, fill up with Eveready Prestone.



Nov. 17—Thousands at Yale-Princeton football game shed overcoats as thermometer hits high for this time of year. Warm weather and hard driving evaporate much of the "boil-away" anti-freezes now in cars. Those using Eveready Prestone not bothered... it doesn't boil away or evaporate.



Nov. 25—Freezing weather sweeps down from north. Many cars using "boil-away" anti-freezes frozen up because of the evaporation of the anti-freeze during the warm weather of Nov. 17, 18 and 19. Evaporation left the amount of anti-freeze below the protection point. Cars using Eveready Prestone still have perfect protection and are unaffected by the freezing weather.

Don't confuse Eveready Prestone with alcohol or glycerine. Eveready Prestone meets every anti-freeze specification of the National Bureau of Standards, and is approved by car and radiator manufacturers. One shot lasts all winter. The price of guaranteed Eveready Prestone has been reduced again this year. Check the chart on Page 63 and see how little it will cost to have perfect protection against both freeze-up and rust in your car all winter long.

SPECIAL OFFER... A "Weather Wheel" which will help you to forecast the weather. Also "Weather as a Hobby"—a 48-page illustrated book, prepared by weather experts. Full of fascinating weather facts. Send 10c (stamps or coin) to National Carbon Co., Inc., P. O. Box 600-3E, Grand Central Station, New York, N. Y.

(Continued from Page 67)

uneven stone, battered and ribbed, its sides precipitous and overhanging in many places.

"Oh!" breathed Langmuir. "We can't do it!"

Hamilton's grip on his arm was like iron.

"We can! Damn it, you know we can! You've climbed worse faces than this in the Rockies!"

That was true, but Hamilton knew what was wrong—the man next to him was no longer normal. Altitude, a constantly racing heart, lungs fighting for oxygen that wasn't there, depression—all these combined to make Everest unconquerable. Once again the mountain was taking her toll, as she had so often in the past.

The leader knew that he, too, was more than a little affected; his mind was dull, his speech slow and labored; thoughts couldn't be put into words without great mental strain. Height even blunted the pain of his eyes and the weariness of his body.

"I'll try," Langmuir assented doubtfully. "But —"

The ascent began again. They had gone less than fifty feet along a narrow ledge that angled up the steep face when Hamilton's heart seemed to stop as he heard Langmuir shriek. Like lightning the leader jammed the pick of his ice ax into a crevice, every muscle tense, waiting for the rope that bound them together to drag him suddenly downward. A second, two seconds, each seeming an hour, passed; nothing.

Hamilton, spread-eagled on the bare rock, glanced to his left; Langmuir was there, lying flat on the little ledge.

"Hamilton!" he screamed. "Hamilton! I'm going back! I won't go any farther!"

The voice was hysterical.

"I won't, do you hear me! I'm going back!"

A blade flashed in the sun, and the severed rope dangled free where Langmuir had cut it. Hamilton cursed him through clenched teeth.

"Blast you, Langmuir!" he shouted. "Don't —"

The other looked up to see the leader edging back toward him along the ledge.

"Stay away from me, Hamilton!" he howled madly. "You want to make me keep on with you! If you come near me"—he made a wild motion with his ice ax—"I'll push you off! I swear I will!"

"He'd do it too," thought the leader. "I might as well try to help a maniac. He's insane; he'd just as soon kill us both. Well, I'm not beaten yet, in spite of him. I'm going on."

"All right, Langmuir!" he shouted. "Go on back, you yellow dog!"

There was no reply; Hamilton, glancing over his shoulder, saw that already the other was working his way back, fear lending him speed that he had not possessed on the upward journey. The leader swore and beat one fist against the rock.

"Damn him! They're all trying to stop me! I'll lick this cursed mountain if it kills me!"

He clung panting to the rock, his heart hammering wildly in the reaction of his anger. Hamilton was no longer normal—like Langmuir, he was more than a little mad. But his madness, unlike the other's, spurred him on; it made the mountain a malignant spirit, a living entity, fighting to defeat him. All his mind was centered and concentrated on one burning thought—to attain the top. Let

Everest do her worst. He started upward again.

HAMILTON had lost all track of time. Nothing had penetrated his consciousness for hours save the need to keep going upward, always upward. It was a nightmare in which he moved and toiled; a minute speck in that immensity, he was crawling painfully up a fissure that twisted along a vast slab of rock. He was little more than two hundred feet below the summit.

He reached upward and jammed the point of his ice ax into a crevice above his head. At that moment, without warning, he felt the tiny projection of rock that supported his right foot crumble away. He slipped and swung free in space, dangling by one arm over the glacier two miles below. Painfully, an inch at a time, his muscles cracking under the strain, he drew himself up with the arm that clung to the ax, his free hand frantically searching across the rock face for some purchase. His fingers found a crack and he hung there, trying to pump breath into his laboring lungs.

He no longer felt any emotion; altitude had dulled any capacity for fear or any other feeling. This last peril had been just one of countless such incidents that day. Rested, he began to climb again.

Then, as though to reward him in some measure, the mountain turned capriciously kind. The last hundred feet of the ascent sloped gently, almost easily, to a tumbled, rocky expanse that crowned the thousand-foot pyramid. Stumbling, reeling, he worked his way crazily along.

He stopped abruptly, and his goggled eyes swung upwards. His dazed mind could not, for a moment, accept the unbelievable fact of his conquest. Then, with no thought of his triumph, it came to him all at once that he did not have to climb any more. Hamilton slumped weakly down, sinking flat on the rocky surface as his muscles burned in an agony of reaction from the constant strain.

For minutes he lay prone, luxuriating in the sheer pleasure of relaxation; at last he forced himself to look at his watch. Half past twelve, he thought dully; have to be starting down soon.

And then, quite suddenly, all in an instant the realization of what he had accomplished swept over him. He staggered to his feet, his arms raised in exultation toward the sky; Hamilton felt like a god.

Heedless of the pain in his eyes, he ripped the goggles from his helmet. He walked stiffly toward the slope that led down toward Camp 6. He could see the ledge that held the tent, though he could not make out the canvas at that distance. Shouting wordlessly, singing aloud, he waved his arms frantically toward where he knew the tent was pitched. "They can see me with the binoculars from 6," he thought; "Revere and Challoner must be on watch—look, look at Chase Hamilton, conqueror of Everest!"

All about the horizon he could see an unbelievable panorama of beauty; a succession of majestic peaks, none equaling the height where he stood. He pulled a tiny miniature camera from a pocket of his windproof; he had to force his brain to calculate the lens setting and exposure. It was hard to still his panting breath so that the camera would not shake, hard to make stiff fingers work the little release.

A dozen pictures taken of the whole circle of the horizon, he turned to photograph the actual summit on

which he stood. And it was then that he saw it.

Something was firmly wedged in a crevice of rock, something that gleamed golden in the sunlight. Shaking, his mouth working, he moved toward the gleam like a man asleep. Automatically he slipped the camera back into his pocket and stretched nerveless fingers toward the shining thing. He wrenched at it; it would not come free. Frantically he pried at it with his ice ax, and it rasped loose from the crevice; he picked it up.

A thin cigarette case of gold, the carved letters of the monogram winked up at him in the sunlight: G. L. M.

Mallory, who had lost the famous ice ax; Mallory, who had died on the mountain eleven years before—Mallory's cigarette case.

HAMILTON stood trembling, the cigarette case clutched in his shaking hand. Already abnormal from strain and altitude, he had been in a state of indescribable elation an instant ago; now fierce hatred of the dead man swept over his unbalanced mind like a flood. What right had Mallory to rob him of his triumph?

And then, suddenly, it came to Hamilton that no one need ever know. Why must he tell the world what he had found? What good would it do a dead man to have the glory? Mallory couldn't hear the applause—Mallory was gone. It would be Hamilton, Hamilton who had beaten Everest.

Instinctively he glanced over his shoulder, and then laughed aloud, again and again. He drew back his arm to hurl the cigarette case away, then let it sink back to his side. "No," he thought, "they may still be watching from below; they might see it flash in the sunlight, might ask what I threw away. Play it safe; don't take a chance now. Take it along and drop it down the face over the glacier; no one will ever find anything in the snow at the bottom of that two-mile fall."

He smiled to himself and slipped the cigarette case into another pocket of his windproof. He would still be the conqueror when that was disposed of, and with the thought came a recollection of what he had been carrying at his belt. He reached down and unfastened a small steel chain, with a spike at one end, from the thick leather band that encircled his waist.

A plate of nontarnishing metal at the end of the chain bore the engraved words: HAMILTON EVEREST EXPEDITION, 1935. Friends back home had given it to him and told him to plant it on the summit; well, he would. With a few quick blows of his ax he drove the spike deep into the same crevice that had held the gold case.

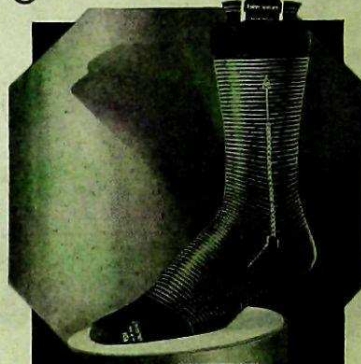
He felt in his pocket to make sure the case was still there as he turned toward the downward slope to begin his return. The little chain and the metal plate shone bravely in the sun, and he grinned; there was only a memento of one man's conquest on the summit now. He started the descent.

For the first few minutes of the downward trip his hatred of Mallory burned in his brain like fire. A little farther, he thought, and he would throw the case away. Away, down, down, where no one would ever see it, where no one could ever prove that Hamilton had not been the first.

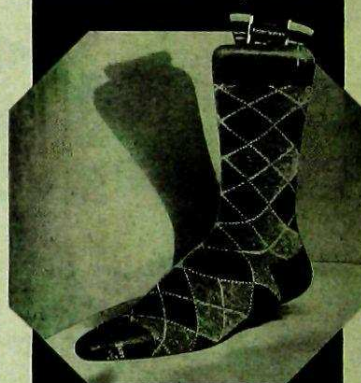
Gradually all thought of Mallory faded from his dulled mind. The mountain was forcing him to concentrate solely on the problem of the descent.

(Continued on Page 72)

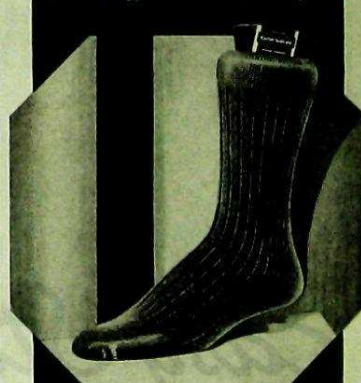
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Clocked Horizontal - 2 pairs \$1.00



Duncan Argyll - \$1.00 the pair

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Joe clears up a Foggy Situation



MR. ANDREWS: "... and put in some anti-freeze, Joe. Darned if I know what kind though... they all claim about the same."

JOE: "Yessir... they kinda confuse you. Lots of the ones that are based on alcohol don't say so on the label. They have some other name instead."



MR. ANDREWS: "Well... alcohol won't freeze, will it?"

JOE: "No... but it sure will evaporate, no matter what they call it! And if you use an anti-freeze that evaporates you're likely to get caught without protection. You need one that won't boil off... and that's Eveready Prestone."



MR. ANDREWS: "You mean if I put Eveready Prestone in now, it'll give me protection all winter long?"

JOE: "Sure! It has a rock-ribbed guarantee. It prevents freeze-up and rust for a whole winter. Eveready Prestone's the only anti-freeze we recommend... Contains no alcohol. I'll put it in now... and you can forget freeze-up and rust for the rest of the winter!"

Thanks to the greatest sales in history last winter, the price of Eveready Prestone has again been reduced. Turn to page 63 and see on the chart how little it will cost to have this guaranteed protection in your car this winter.

SPECIAL OFFER... A "Weather Wheel" which will help you to forecast the weather. Also "Weather as a Hobby"... a 48-page illustrated book, prepared by weather experts. Full of fascinating weather facts. Send 10c (stamps or coin) to National Carbon Co., Inc., P. O. Box 600—3K, Grand Central Station, New York, N. Y.

(Continued from Page 69)

In some ways it was worse than the ascent had been; Hamilton was moving like an automaton, habit alone guiding his overstrained body down the terrible heights. He no longer thought coherently; all feeling had deserted him; he moved and had his being in a tiny world that encompassed only the next few steps. His years of mountaineering experience were paying their dividends now; a foot at a time, endlessly, he kept on.

It was three hours after he had started down, though he had no idea of the time, when Hamilton collapsed at last. Totally exhausted, half blind, he lay on an outcropping of rock some two hundred feet above the spot where Langmuir had turned back; this was the end, he felt, rather than thought.

"Hamilton! Hamilton!"

The voice seemed to come to him through a dense fog. He shook his head, trying to clear it of the phantom sound; the cry was repeated, closer this time. He lifted his head a few inches and saw Langmuir creeping up toward him.

"Hamilton!" Langmuir shouted as he approached. "Did you make it? Did you?"

The leader nodded dazedly.

"Yes," he croaked raspingly. "I made it."

"God!" Langmuir panted as he reached the ledge; he gripped Hamilton's shoulder. "I can't say anything that'll add to what you've done!"

Hamilton heard the words faintly, like surf on a distant shore.

"I've come back to help you," Langmuir raced on. "I got my nerve back after I'd got almost to the tent. The others didn't see me, but all of a sudden—well, I started back."

He made a grimace of pain as he shifted his weight.

"Twisted my ankle," he explained. "That's why I've been coming along so slowly."

Only partly comprehending, the leader mumbled something; it was

enough to know that there was someone at hand to help. With Langmuir guiding his feet, the other forced himself on.

VII

HAMILTON felt himself lifting and swooping like a storm-tossed bird; then from a vast distance sounds beat insistently, interfering with the rise and fall of his flight. Painfully, his head throbbing, he opened his eyes to light that hurt; someone was trying to force open his clenched teeth.

"Here," a dim, misty apparition that gradually became Challoner's face was saying, "drink this, Hamilton."

Two more blurs beside Challoner slid into focus and revealed themselves as Revere and Langmuir; the moving thing above them was the tent top.

"He's coming to," Revere exclaimed, and grinned down at him. Hamilton opened his mouth and drank from the cup that Challoner held, and something hot that burned sent the blood pumping through his veins. He gulped again, greedily, and tried to sit up.

"I'm all right," he gasped weakly, as Challoner's hand pressed him back to the sleeping bag. "Where did you find us?"

Strength was flowing back into him as the hot brandy gave him stimulus; he ached all over, but his head was beginning to clear.

"Langmuir was dragging you down the couloir when we found you," smiled Challoner. "We'd been out looking for you ever since four o'clock—it's half-past eight at night now. The two of you"—he laughed—"were a fine team; you both seemed three-quarters dead."

"What happened, Chase?" Revere asked excitedly. "We saw you on the summit through the binoculars. The base camp wirelessly that they saw you too; it cleared enough for them to use the marine telescope for a few minutes, and they spotted you."

Hamilton saw Langmuir's eyes fixed on his; he felt curiously languid, as though nothing mattered. There was something, he knew, something he had

to remember. He wished he could think clearly for a minute, just for a minute, that was all. His hand, under the cover of the sleeping bag, touched his pocket, and he felt the outline of the cigarette case; memory flooded back upon him—that was it! Mallory's case; Mallory, the man who had beaten him to the top! Now he remembered!

"Langmuir wrenched his ankle about a third of the way up," he whispered huskily, his mind filled only with the thought of the thing in his pocket. "He wanted to keep on with me, but I ordered him to stop. If it hadn't been for him, I'd never have got back."

Hamilton felt his brain working normally for the first time since early that morning; at last he could think again. He was conscious of the gratitude in the other's eyes; well, he owed him something. Langmuir had evened up all right.

"Listen, Hamilton," he heard Challoner exclaiming, "don't you care about what I'm telling you? You're famous, man! You've done something no one else ever has! The base camp's been radioing messages for you ever since they sent out the news. Everybody on earth seems to be trying to congratulate you at once. You act as though you didn't know or care that you're the first man to conquer Everest!"

It was a long minute before the leader answered. Things seemed clearer now; that cigarette case in his pocket belonged to Mallory, who had conquered and died eleven years before; Mallory, thought Hamilton, who must have smiled even as he fell to his death, knowing in that last terrible moment that some day another adventurer would find the token of his victory over Everest.

Hamilton's hand went to his pocket, and he held out the cigarette case, flashing and glinting in the candlelight.

"Not quite the first," whispered Hamilton, and smiled up at Challoner's staring eyes. "Nearly—not quite."

KNOCKOUT

(Continued from Page 21)

was groping. His carnival training had given him contact with the world, yet, strangely, had sheltered him from it. Wonder Hamilton with his raucous voice, his penchant for boasting and his small-time showmanship, had operated the business. His transactions with the strong man had been of the simplest. He paid him a guaranty of so much each week and shared even money on the tickets sold to Flash's tent. So Flash could protect himself easily enough. He kept a tax record on ticket sales which Wonder dared not alter.

But the carnival life was itinerant. Those who passed before Flash became known as peasants in the parlance of the carnival. They were regarded as stolid. In truth, as stupid. And the standard of comparison was naturally the folk of the carnival. Inevitably, these folk welded themselves into a world apart. They grew together because they constantly were moving and never remained long enough in one place to form alliances of understanding or friendship with the world they watched passing in review. And herein was the shelter. Flash had seen a scamy world, but had not contacted it. He was traveled but unlearned. He

was worldly without worldliness. He was the flagpole atop the building and could not see the building.

In his dreams of the big gates he would draw, he necessarily thought in terms of the carnival. There would be tickets sold. These he and Scarp would divide just as he and Hamilton always had. The matters of commerce were simple enough. It was the matters of fighting and indebtedness that most occupied Flash. He had seen a single thunder shower cost 70 per cent of anticipated financial return for an evening. That part he knew. It was hazardous. In his heart glowed a warm appreciation and a warmer admiration for men who could gamble in huge sums such as Scarp and Hip handled in his own behalf. He promised himself a thousand times that he would not fail them; that come what may, he would be ready. And in the ring he would have died before losing.

Blount was in and out of their group. He went ahead of prospective matches. He paved the way with glowing publicity. Due to his efforts, each town they visited was a literal reception committee. Flash walked the path of local fame. He grew tired of his own picture and stories about

him. There came to him—and he was unconscious of this—a callousness toward expressions of vanity; an undervaluation of the inspired news items affecting him. This lent him poise.

Max telephoned them shortly after a contest which Flash won in a round with a well-timed right to the head.

"Scarp has signed for a match with Packer Lang," he announced. "It'll be a fine fight for you an' get some sugar too. Come over here. I made a deal with a big store here. They're goin' to handle publicity with me. Today you're four-column center on the front sport page! I got the artist to draw a picture from your photograph. You'll wow 'em!"

"Tell it to Shadow," Flash suggested.

"Hit that little runt over the nose for me," Max laughed. "Wait. Scarp is here. He's waitin'. Wants to say hello."

Scarpulati spoke: "Come over tomorrow, see? Come by plane. Watch for publicity at the airport. An' listen, punk. We're goin' to rib this gag with a big department store here. We've sold 'em a block of a hun'nerd ringsides already. You got to make appearances in their sports department. So learn to