

Relentless Mountaineering

During the terrible days of storm at camp VIII we thought seldom of the reasons which had brought us to the mountain, all our energy was focused on survival, we were trapped in three small mountain tents near the summit of the highest unclimbed mountain on earth, trapped by an endless storm of wind and snow which made impossible advance or retreat. All eight of us had been working for two months to establish this high camp and another one still higher from which two men might reach the top. All eight of us and many others had been planning for a year to make the expedition possible. During the ten days of hardship and disappointment, of pain and tragedy, which climaxed our venture, we spoke of the summit and of home, we remembered other storms and other critical times. Inevitably we would ask ourselves why climb mountains? And in the year that had passed since our ordeal we had asked that question many times and had answered it in many ways. Perhaps there is no single answer; perhaps each climber must have his own reasons for such an effort. The answer cannot be simple; it is compounded of such elements as the great beauty of clear cold air, of colors beyond the ordinary, of the lure of unknown regions beyond the rim of experience.

The pleasure of physical fitness, the pride of conquering a steep and difficult rock pitch, the thrill of danger, but danger controlled by skill are also there, It is perhaps the chance to be briefly free of all the small concerns of our common lives, to strip off nonessentials, to come down to the core of life itself, Food shelter, friends, these are the essentials, these plus faith and purpose and deep and unrelenting determination. On great mountains all purpose is concentrated on the single job at hand, yet the summit is but a token of success and the attempt is worthy itself. It is for these reasons perhaps mountaineers climb, and in climbing find something greater than accomplishment. There are many stories of expeditions that failed to reach its summit, of ventures made for sport and not for gain, of a team who face privation, danger and suffer much but gain more.

After man had conquered the planet's poles, its oceans, and its deserts, he had turned to its roof as the last frontier on which he could stake his claim. While the sport of mountaineering had begin in 1854 when Sir Alfred Wills ascended the Wetter horn (12,000 ft) in southern Switzerland, no one had yet conquered any of the Himalayan giants, in fact many experts had begun to doubt whether the ice, snow, the nearly vertical rock faces, the punishing cold, and above all the scant oxygen at such an altitude, would allow man to reach the summit of the world and return alive. However many mountaineering and scientific communities are determined to show they can.

Reading Test:

Fluency: ____/5 Pronunciation: ____/5 Understanding: ____/5 Meaning: ____/5

Comments: _____

Q. Write and learn the spellings of the underlined words in the text.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

11. _____

12. _____

Q. Write the meanings of the following words in the spaces provided.

a. seldom _____

b. venture _____

c. ordeal _____

d. expedition _____

e. unrelenting _____

f. inevitable _____

Q. Answer the following questions to the text, 'Relentless Mountaineering' in full sentences.

a. What does the writer mean when he says 'all our energy was focused on survival'?

b. How was the expedition organized?

c. Is there a simple answer to why people take up mountaineering? Explain your answer.

d. What different reasons does the writer give?

e. Who was Sir Alfred Wills, and why was he significant?

f. Why is it perceived as impossible by scientists to climb the Himalayan Mountains?
