

Pleasures of Mountaineering

Or

Mountain Climbing

Mountaineering, which in plain words means climbing mountains, is one of the most thrilling sports in the world. A mountaineer feels a sense of accomplishment when he stands aloft his chosen peak after hard trials and tribulations.

Mountains have a peculiar charm. The greenery, the snow, the flowers, the flora and fauna, and the springs and rivulets present a spectacle which is at once breath-taking and marvelous. Their charm is irresistible. The call of the mountains is compelling indeed to a lover of the mountains.

Ruskin said of mountains, "They are beginning and the end of all-natural scenery. In them, and in the form of inferior landscape that lead to them, my affections are wholly bound up."

Climbing mountains is not only a physical pleasure but a sport which satisfies man's basic craving for adventure and exploration. In fact, of climbing, man finds spiritual satisfaction. The first mountaineer must have climbed because of an irresistible urge to reach the mountain top. Perhaps he had heard of ghosts and evil spirits living on the mountain tops. Undeterred, however, and spurred by the longing to climb, he surged ahead. And lo! He was on the top. There was the wind and the cold but no demon. He was dead tired but his face glowed with a sense of achievement—a sense of being closer to Almighty.

Rock climbing and climbing on snow and ice are very difficult and require great physical stamina, training and practice. The climber must be in excellent health and should be sufficiently experienced. The best thing is to join a mountaineers' club. One must have a keen sense of priorities of time—when to talk, when to be in earnest, when to laugh.

In India, mountaineering as a sport, is making a steady progress. The Himalayan Mountaineering Institute was started in November, 1954. The Institute has been progressing by leaps and bounds. It organized an ascent on Mount Everest successfully. It has organized a number of successful expeditions to various high mountain tops in the country. Mountaineering as a

sport, is becoming more and more popular. Even girls are taking to it. It has indeed a good future.