

The first question which you will ask, and which I must try to answer, is the following:

‘What is the use of climbing Mount Everest?’

and my answer must at once be, It is no use.

There is not the slightest prospect of any profit whatsoever.

Oh, we may learn a little about the behaviour of the human body at high altitudes,

we willingly put the active capacity of our lungs to the test,

and possibly medical men may turn our observation

to some account for the purposes of aviation.

But otherwise nothing will come of it – neither positive nor negative.

We shall not bring back a single bit of gold or silver, not a gem, nor any coal or iron.

We shall not find a single foot of earth that can be planted with crops to raise food.

So it is no use, and you have to live with that.

Nevertheless, if you cannot understand that there is something in man

which responds to the challenge of this mountain, longs for it, and goes out to meet it,

that the struggle is the struggle of life itself upward and forever upward,

then you won’t see why it is so compelling for us to go.

What we get from this adventure is just sheer happiness.

And happiness, after all, is the end of life.

We don’t live to eat and make money. We eat and make money to be able to live.

That is what life means and what life is for.